Scotland's environment

Gateway to everything you need to know about Scotland's environment

Scotland's Environment Web

Building the one-stop gateway to everything needed to understand and learn about Scotland's environment

www.environment.scotland.gov.uk

After-LIFE communications plan

natural scotland
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Project description

Scotland's Environment Web is an innovative partnership between Scotland's leading organisations working to protect and improve the environment. Using a range of innovative tools, it supports the work of its partners to make information and data on Scotland's environment more easily available and accessible.

Scotland's Environment Web has four main objectives.

1. Work in partnership with others, to create a data sharing website that is recognised as a credible source of information about Scotland's environment.

2. Adopt best practice to expand and share information about Scotland's environment with the rest of Scotland, UK and Europe.

3. To better understand the impact of changes to our environment to influence policy, focus attention and resources on dealing with the most serious problems - and do what's needed to protect our environment.

4. To educate and inform people so that more take an interest and active role in discovering, protecting and understanding the environment around them.

Our partners

Project achievements

Scotland's Environment Web has become recognised throughout the public sector as a best practice example of partnership working within the digital strategy/open data strategic frameworks being driven by Scottish Government. As a result, there is potential for it to become the digital hub for the Scottish environment sector.

Specifically the project has demonstrated:

● how engaging with the public can change behaviour and practices;

● how online tools can make information and data more accessible and more widely used to inform decisions;

● the value of providing a centralised gateway to trusted and authoritative sources of information in an increasingly cluttered landscape of web information;

● the benefits that come from agencies pooling resources and working together.

Supporting policy and legislation

The work achieved through Scotland's Environment Web supports the Scottish Government's policy for public sector organisations to make data and information more open for reuse and sharing, and supports the European Commission's ambitions for sharing public and spatial information (INSPIRE Directive).

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is Scotland's principal environmental regulator, protecting and improving Scotland's environment. It is also the lead agency managing Scotland's Environment Web on behalf of partners consisting of key environmental organisations.

Scotland's Environment Web helps SEPA and its partners deliver on Scotland's environmental policy and legislative charter - making sure that the environment and human health are protected, Scotland's natural resources and services are used as sustainably as possible, and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

Through Scotland's Environment Web, SEPA is continuing to work in partnership with other agencies, organisations and policy makers, to increase environmental understanding and build consensus on environmental priorities and issues.

Air quality and health

2,094 Deaths in Scotland each year

Value & transferability

The website is much more than a rich source of information. Through collective expertise and best practice, the partners have worked with SEPA to develop innovative tools that brings Scotland's environment to life for visitors to the site.

It has allowed the partners to learn from each other, and share knowledge, expertise and resources.

Put simply, it has revolutionised the way people access and work with environmental data. Scotland's Environment Web has attracted a new audience who are hungry to learn about their environment and are eager to make a difference.

- By working with teachers and visiting schools, Scotland's young people are more aware of their environment and are urged to think about how they can protect and improve it.

- People can now easily find out what's going on in their local area and they're supported to get involved.

- More people are recording and monitoring what's happening in their local area and reporting their findings. This gives a better overall picture of trends and highlights new and increasing risks.

Technology innovations

Open data: Scotland's Environment Web does not publish any of its own data. Instead, it harvests data from a range of different sources and organisations, making it open data. Some of this data is linked, which makes reporting to the European Union much easier and quicker. The project has been cited in the Scottish Government Open Data Strategy as a best practice case example of providing access to open data.

Data visualisation tools: Tools on Scotland's Environment Web give people access to detailed analysis about Scotland's environment in a highly visual way, making it easier to interpret and understand a wide range of published complex scientific data in interactive maps, graphs and charts. The tools search a range of different published data sets from the Scotland's Environment Web partners, ensuring users have confidence that they are using trusted and up-to-date published information.

Scotland's environment EcoHack

Communications strategy

Target groups

Interested members of the public/generalist professional

Partners and informed/interested public: users searching for information and data from a range of sources to give them a broad overview of the environment. They are often looking for a more localised view that relates to their own community or area of business interest.

Education

Users are teachers, education practitioners, students, and learners that are looking for tools, resources, information and data that support classroom based teaching and outdoor learning projects. They will be looking for information that reflects/links to the Curriculum for Excellence and can be tailored to meet their needs. localised view that relates to their own community or area of business interest.

Environmental/Technical Specialist

Users in this group (including those within SEPA, the other partners and wider environmental bodies with an interest in environmental policy, evidence-based policy making and applied research) are likely to require more in-depth data interactions, mapping, analysis, and research needs. Some of the more technical and specialist information will not be on Scotland's Environment website but, through an interconnected family of supporting partner and daughter websites, users will be quickly directed to information and data they need.

Past and present activity

An integrated approach to communications activities has been delivered over the course of the LIFE+ project, involving targeted publications, face-to-face events and conferences, social media, and distribution of newsletters to a database of stakeholders. The project has worked closely with communications officers in partner organisations to deliver clear and co-ordinated key messages, and to extend the reach and influence of Scotland's Environment Web through shared communications networks.

Activities have included the following:

- Communications toolkit for partners
- SEPA View and articles featured in other publications
- Project newsletters
- Videos and podcasts
- Presentations at conferences and events
- Extend web presence through social media e.networks – Twitter (ScotEnvironment), facebook (Scotland's Environment Web) and Instagram (#ScotEnvironment)

- Press releases
- Digital brochures
- Project briefing notes
- User journey videos

- Project Web pages http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/about-us/lifeplus-project/
- Noticeboards displayed at offices of SEPA and key partners
- SEWeb promotional material – pop up standards and other event merchandise
- SEWeb partnership conference – September 2011
- International conference – 13 March 2015
- Hackathon event – 30 & 31 May 2015

Further information can be found under 'Communications Material' on the Scotland's Environment website.

Future activity

The continued success and future development of Scotland's Environment Web is largely dependent on maintaining existing, and attracting new, users to the website. Continuing to work closely with partners, the After-LIFE Communications plan aims to:

Promote Scotland's Environment Web and partnership to those targeted audiences who have an identified interest and use case, establishing the web site as the clearly identifiable and recognisable first place to visit when searching for environmental information and data in Scotland.

This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Grow the role and remit of the Scotland's Environment Web Partnership Communications Group, continuing to work collaboratively, share key messages and promotional content, and extend the reach and influence of digital marketing and promotional activities through an integrated communications network.

- Develop a forward programme of communications themes against which website product marketing and partner promotions can be tailored. This programme will be regularly reviewed and updated according to news, events and shared communications opportunities.

- Ensure Scotland's Environment website and products are referenced in all relevant SEPA and partner media/digital communications on related topics, all partner websites include appropriate web links and referrals, and that staff in all organisations are aware of and have access to the tools to champion the use of Scotland's Environment Web.

- Gather improved website user metrics and engage with users to ensure website structure design, products and key messages are appropriately targeted and inform future developments.

- Evaluate After-LIFE communications plan activities against website performance metrics to identify and further implement the most effective tactics.
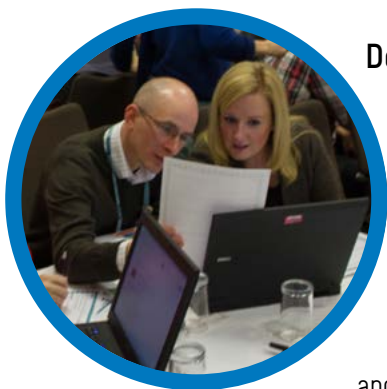
Delivering objectives

This After-LIFE Communications plan is supported by a more detailed and regularly reviewed communications schedule that is owned and delivered by Scotland's Environment Web partner organisations – via the communications group.

The Partnership Communications Group works together to:

- bring together the lead contacts for communications across partners to provide oversight and guidance, establish links to communications activities, and champion Scotland's Environment Web to their respective colleagues;

- agree key messages to ensure consistent communication across the partnership;

- develop engaging communications content that can be shared, tailored, and adjusted to the appropriate use;

- contribute to a digital newsletter and online blog to drive new users to the website;

- support dynamic responses to online conversations via established e.networking groups;

- identify and nurture champions across the Scotland's Environment Web partnership who can contribute to online content (including blogs, videos, feature articles), speak at meetings and presentations, garner interest and raise awareness of Scotland's Environment Web within their peer groups and stakeholders they work with on a regular basis;

- evaluate communications activities and share experiences and learning to optimise the impact across the partnership (examples of some of the evaluation methods that will be undertaken are shown in Annex 1).

Examples of After-LIFE project communications activities that have recently taken place include:

- Promotion of the launch of a new section to the website, Get Learning, at the end of August 2015. This included articles in SEPA View and other publications, presentations to well over 200 teachers, distribution of leaflets at events, a letter to every school in Scotland, and shared social media promotion between Scotland's Environment Web, Education Scotland and other partner communications channels. Since it was launched, this new section is already accounting for 15% of the total website page views with nearly 4000 visits in September.

- The Learning about air quality teaching package for schools was launched in September 2015 at the Scottish Learning Festival. At the launch a presentation and demonstration of the package was given by staff from SEPA and Education Scotland and pupils from several of the schools that piloted the project earlier in the year. The launch was accompanied by a SEPA View article, media release and social media.

- Promotion of Our Environment Competition. The winners of the 2015 competition were announced during an event for participating schools held at the Scottish Parliament on 24 September (SEPA View article, press release, videos and social media). The launch of the 2016 competition also took place in September (video, social media, leaflets, letters to every school in Scotland).

Annex 1: After-LIFE Evaluation

The After-LIFE communication plan will be regularly reviewed and the effectiveness of activities evaluated. The following are some of the evaluation methods that will be used:

- monitoring the number referrals to Scotland's Environment website from partner and other websites, and other external digital sources;

- the number of presentations and website demonstrations carried out and monitor against any notable increases in traffic to the website and related products;

- number of staff newsletters and briefings circulated by all partners and monitor against any notable increases in traffic to the website and related products;

- number of ideas, queries and web page comments submitted to seweb.administrator@sepa.org.uk and 'Contact us' related to promotional activities; annual website survey results on views about Scotland's Environment Web;

- number of Scotland's Environment Web mentions in partner led communications activities/press releases and monitor against any notable increases in traffic to the website and related products.