

NETWORK BRIEFING

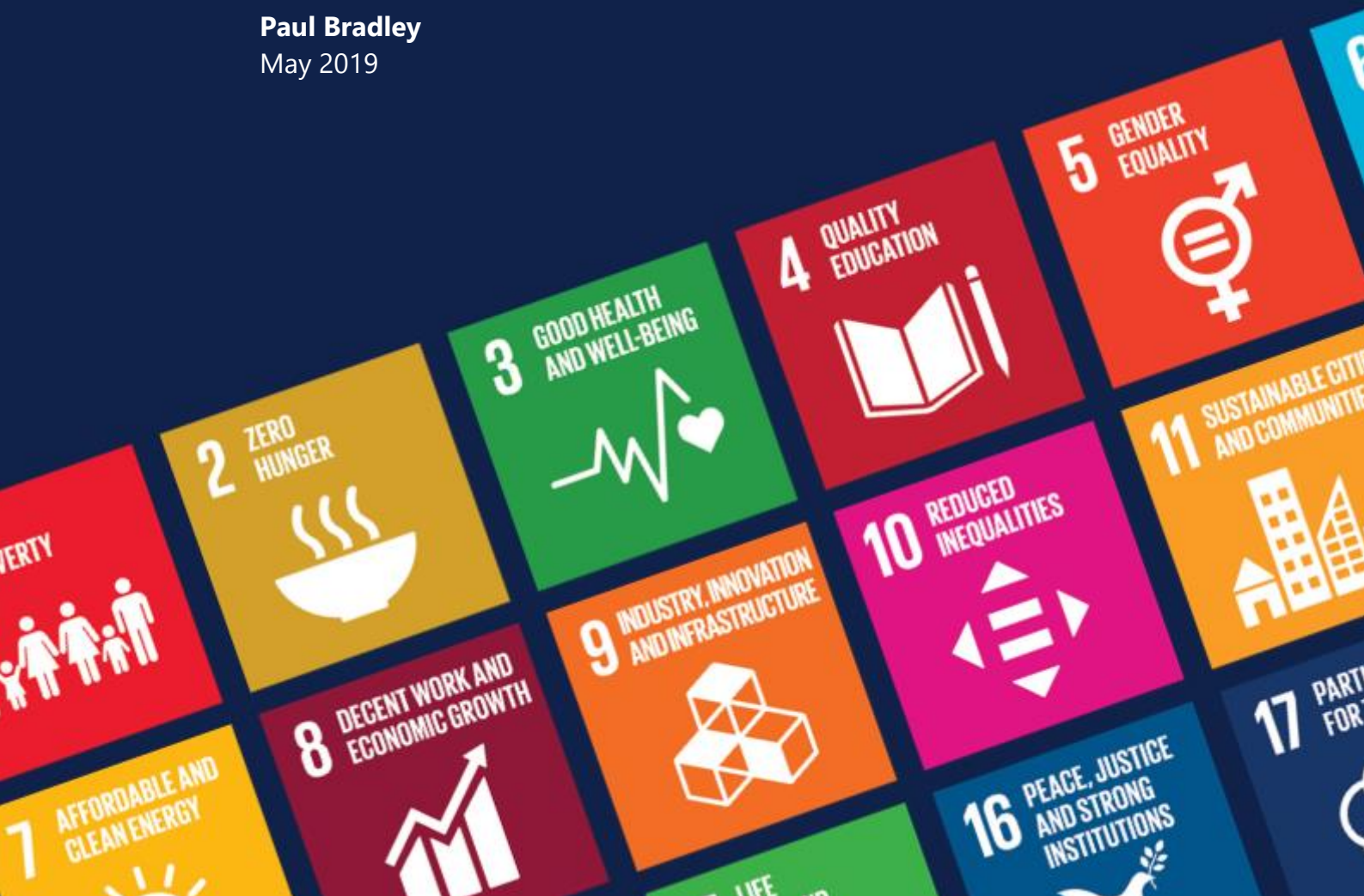
SDG
NETWORK
SCOTLAND

Shaping Scotland's SDGs community together

This paper gives an overview of how the Network has sought to increase engagement, connections and influence around Scotland's approach to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Next steps are presented to prompt further discussion and progress on Network development.

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Briefing purpose

Can current arrangements enable Scotland’s SDG Network to maintain and grow its community of influence around Scotland’s approach to delivering the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs/Global Goals), and what is required to develop its role further?

These are key questions for SDG Network Scotland following a successful 24-month period; the Network has transitioned from a meeting of 15 people concerned with a loss of momentum in Scotland, to a national coalition viewed as the principle mechanism for delivering Scotland’s national progress review with a growing membership of over 300 individuals and organisations.

The Network has played and continues to play an essential role in offering perspectives, challenge and support to see that the ambition of the Global Goals is realised in Scotland. It has been a learning process for all those involved in shaping the its work since 2017, providing a unique and open space for anyone wanting to play their part.

As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development increases in profile across government, parliament, civil society and business, it is hoped the Network can continue to play a key role in bringing different groups of society together.

This briefing provides a summary of the current state of play in the Network, reveals upcoming priorities and outputs from a recent workshop held with members of the Network who gathered to begin shaping the future of Scotland’s SDGs community together. Next steps, including information on wider engagement with the Network, features at the end.

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FORMING THE NETWORK

The Big Lottery Funded UK Open Government Pioneers Project was set up to secure progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through open government methods. Although forming a Scottish Network for the SDGs was not part of our original plans, it was clear that we needed to adopt a different approach to elsewhere in the UK in order to deliver a successful project.



Problem

Following the Scottish Government's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, the Government in many cases lost the confidence of those working closest to the SDGs in Scotland. There was very little communication from Government on the SDGs and stakeholders found it challenging to engage with the agenda.



Action

This led to a meeting in March 2017, convened by the Scotland Malawi Partnership, to discuss why momentum behind the SDGs had been lost in Scotland. The result was to create a space for stakeholders from all sectors and including the Scottish Government to come together, foster a constructive relationship and a real sense of collaboration.



Vision

Over the course of several months, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations facilitated conversations to map the current landscape, seek views on the challenges, problems and opportunities in front of this new coalition and to identify the gap it would fill. These workshops and meetings went on into the autumn with our planning geared towards activity in 2018.



Outcome

Over 300 people have joined Scotland's SDG Network since January 2018 and what started as small meeting of interested parties has progressed significantly through planning sessions, mapping workshops, task groups and developing Scotland's National Platform for the SDGs to form a coalition with growing influence on Scotland's SDGs approach.

ACTIVITY OF THE NETWORK

Since May 2017, the Network has developed organically through limited formality. The coalition has built plans in the open for these to be reviewed and critiqued, sought members to step up to working groups, took forward time-intensive work in facilitating the early stages of development, and now has an online presence in the form of a forum, website and social media.

Creating working space

SCVO has led efforts to create an actively engaged SDG community in Scotland through the Network's forum on Basecamp. Since the adoption of the forum in 2018, 305 people have joined the group to keep informed, collaborate and share information.

Building momentum and support

Over 80 organisations and 250 people were mobilised to sign our open letter on the SDGs. The First Minister committed Scottish Government to work with the Network and all Parliamentary Committees backed the SDGs, resulting in strong relationships being formed.

Informing the UK review

The Network submitted a briefing paper that led to meetings with UK and Scottish Governments on the Voluntary Review. The Network secured the first stakeholder engagement event outside of London, held with both the UK and Scottish Governments.

Opening-up the Scottish review

The Network set up Scotland's Voluntary National Review (VNR) Working Group, latterly joined by Scottish Government. The group has been influential in securing a call for evidence and public commenting period on Scottish Government drafts.

Receiving recognition

The Network's approach has been recognised widely, including by the Open Government Partnership and Obama Foundation. Selected to present on approach at OGP Summits in Tbilisi and Ottawa, as well as speaking engagements with Welsh Government.

Developing a national platform

SCVO set up globalgoals.scot, making Scotland the first nation in the UK to have a national platform for the SDGs. The site receives over 1000 unique visitors a month and is the top result on google when searching 'Scotland SDGs.'

Shaping the Scottish approach

A bespoke workshop was held with the Scottish Government to review and put forward ideas on the alignment of the SDGs with Scotland's National Outcomes. 40 members attended the session and many of the group's views were incorporated into the framework.

Increasing our online presence

The Network's Twitter account supports promotional activities and encourages membership. We secured over 1,000 followers in 3 months and it was vital in disseminating materials and opportunities to contribute to Scotland's review.

Collaborating to influence

The Network submitted written evidence to the UK Parliament on the UK Voluntary National Review, supported by 24 organisations, and a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on a Good Food Nation Bill, supported by nine organisations.

Sustaining the Network

A successful event was held with Network members in March to discuss the vision, mission and purpose of the SDG Network. Network members shaped the agenda for the session, and contributions at the event will feed into wider engagement online.

Upcoming priorities

There are a number of priority areas for the Network to take forward and be involved in between May and December 2019.

Publishing the Scottish review

The Network and VNR Working Group will support the dissemination of the Scottish Supplementary Review on SDG performance, to be published on 30th May 2019. The review will accompany the Scottish Government's baseline report on the National Outcomes, which will be tabled at the Scottish Parliament.

Advising the Oxfam/USW Snapshot

SCVO will continue to work with Oxfam Scotland and the University of West of Scotland to deliver a snapshot report from civil society organisations on SDG progress in Scotland. This includes a launch for the report in June 2019, adding to a growing evidence base that the Network can draw upon.

Forming international partnerships

We will make the most of opportunities for members to engage in international dialogue through our membership of SDG Watch Europe. The Coordinator will use a trip to the Open Government Partnership's international summit to forge new alliances to support international collaboration with the Network.

Increasing agency of members

We will encourage a greater use of collaborative approaches to briefings and submissions. A unique trait of the Network is its ability to restore agency to citizens through providing collaborative space to develop policy and influencing approaches.

Developing the Network

SCVO will build on the outputs of the recent workshop on Network development – held in March 2019 – to secure the input of the Network's wider membership on future plans. This includes agreeing our vision, mission, objectives and balancing necessary formality with strengthening our open philosophy.

Holding SDGs Conference 2019

SCVO is working with Scottish Power, Keep Scotland Beautiful and the University of Strathclyde to deliver a national conference for the SDGs on 23rd September 2019. We will promote the use of online tools and engagement to secure involvement of SDG Network Scotland.

Becoming equalities competent

SCVO will support the development of an action plan to secure the voice of people marginalised from decisions that affect them into the design and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals across the UK. This will support SDG Network Scotland's approach to becoming an equalities competent coalition.

Resourcing support and facilitation

SCVO will consider options for sustaining the Network beyond the Big Lottery Funded UK-wide Open Government Pioneers Project, which funded the initial work of SDG Network Scotland. This work will follow activities on developing the Network.



SNAPSHOT OF THE NETWORK

PARTNERSHIPS



NEW PARTNERSHIPS

FORMED WITH ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENT

VOICE



CREATED NEW OPPORTUNITIES

FOR PEOPLE TO INFLUENCE THROUGH BRIEFINGS AND EVENTS

OPENNESS



USED OPEN APPROACHES

TO ENHANCE AND WIDEN SCOTTISH DEBATE ON THE SDGS

INFRASTRUCTURE



SET UP DIGITAL PLATFORMS

TO LAY FOUNDATIONS FOR AND SUPPORT A GROWING COMMUNITY

400

MEMBERSHIP

HAS INCREASED FROM 200 IN DECEMBER 2018 TO OVER 300 IN MAY 2019

300

200

100

0

June 2018

October 2018

May 2019

TWITTER

1000+

FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER

HAVING SET UP ACCOUNT IN DECEMBER 2018

BRIEFINGS

4

BRIEFINGS SUBMITTED

IN COLLABORATION WITH MEMBERS SINCE SEPTEMBER 2018

VISITORS

1891

UNIQUE VISITORS TO GLOBALGOALS.SCOT

IN APRIL 2019, UP FROM 730 IN DECEMBER 2018.

CONVERSATIONS

30+

NEW FORUM CONVERSATIONS

ON THE NETWORK'S BASECAMP SINCE JANUARY 2019

PARTNERSHIPS & THE NETWORK

SDG Network Scotland was developed collaboratively with a range of Scottish organisations, and over its lifetime it has built strong links with many more key actors working on sustainable development in Scotland. The list of partnerships highlighted below is not exhaustive, but it does indicate of the broad nature of stakeholder engagement conducted by the Network's Coordinator and other key figures since SDG Network Scotland came into being. More work is required to map and build connections across Scotland's SDG eco-system.

Scotland

<p>The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations set up and develop Scotland's SDG Network and GlobalGoals.Scot</p>	<p>UN House Scotland offer strategic guidance and lead on developing their SDG Advocates Programme for citizens to get involved</p>	<p>Scotland Malawi Partnership were founding partners of the SDG Network and have worked closely with the SCVO on developing GlobalGoals.Scot</p>	<p>Keep Scotland Beautiful are one of the first charities in Scotland to align their work to the SDGs and are regular contributors to network development</p>
<p>Scotland's International Development Alliance provide links to international NGOs and are the lead network voice on international issues</p>	<p>The Scottish Government's National Performance Unit work closely with the Network to monitor SDG performance since SDG/NPF alignment in 2018</p>	<p>Scottish Power is a leading supporter of the SDGs and the organisation works with the SDG Network on the 2019 Global Goals conference</p>	<p>Strathclyde University have shown a growing interest in the work of the SDG Network, especially on student-led vertically integrated projects</p>
<p>The Scottish Parliament's SPiCE Team are in regular contact and use the Network for latest updates to share within Scottish Parliament.</p>	<p>Glasgow Caledonian University, including Business School and Vice Chancellor's Office, provide links to students, business and venue space</p>	<p>Institute of Chartered Accountants Scotland set up and support the SDG Reporting Stakeholder Group, focused on business reporting on the Goals.</p>	<p>Scottish Environment Protection Agency set up and run the SDG Reporting Working Group and support communication channels into Network</p>
<p>Gaia Education provide technical and expert advice to the Network on matters relating to the United Nations and SDGs</p>	<p>Sustainable Scotland Network provide the SDG Network with links into local authorities and share a growing interest in the SDG agenda</p>	<p>Business in the Community Scotland are the most active body representing businesses engaged in the SDGs in Scotland and are contributors to the Network</p>	<p>One Stone Advisors are a consultancy B-Corp working with business on sustainable strategy and reporting and are key contributors to the Network's development and National Review activities</p>

Project Scotland

collaborated with SCVO and IDEAS to secure Erasmus Funding for the Youth Voice in Sustainable Democracy Project

Scottish Human Rights

Commission contribute to the Network's National Review work and provide advice on human rights approaches to SDGs

Oxfam Scotland

lead on the Scottish Business Pledge and work with the SCVO and UWS on the independent snapshot of Scotland's SDG performance

The International Development Education Alliance

are partners in developing the Youth Voice in Sustainable Democracy Project.

United Kingdom and international

UN Global Compact

Network UK is the network for UK business that have pledged support for the SDGs. We speak at events and share information on each other's activities

UKSSD are the lead UK stakeholder network linked to the SDGs. We liaise regularly with their Coordinator to keep both groups abreast of developments

DfID are the lead UK Department responsible for the SDGs. The Network has contacts at the department, having submitted briefings on the UK National Review

BOND are the lead UK international development stakeholder linked to the SDGs. We feed into Bond's SDG Steering Group through The Alliance

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for SDGs

at the UK Parliament is chaired by Lord Jack McConnell. We maintain contact with the group on an ad hoc basis.

Newcastle University have offered support to Network activities and were responsible for carrying out the Scottish Government's baseline assessment on SDG performance

The Wheel has played a leading role in the delivery of Ireland's SDGs implementation plan, and their input has helped shape our approach in Scotland.

African SDG Youth Summit has expressed interest in connecting with young Europeans/Scots through the SDG Network and the Youth Voice in Sustainable Democracy Project.

DEVELOPING THE NETWORK

Shaping our SDGs community together

In March 2019, a cross section of the SDG Scotland Network gathered in Edinburgh to explore the network's shared meaning and vision. The purpose of the meeting was to:

'Help us to better understand and plan for how we maintain momentum, build on what's been set up and bring in some new ways of working that provide ownership, shared responsibility and inclusive space to ensure we're as prepared and agile as possible.'

Founding principles

Networks tend to have fluid membership; people move in and out of them based on how much they personally benefit from participating. Having a common vision informed by shared principles is one of the most important elements to promote network cohesion. Based in the experience of the network of 305 members, participants mapped the following principles which have been informing the development of the Network so far:

Trust	Supportive	Common ground	Shared values
Grounded	Openness	Contributions	Transparent
New partnerships	Organic	Inclusion	Welcoming

Vision and mission

After many rounds of visioning dialogues participants came up with a series of definitions aimed to be accessible to those interested in joining the network and as a source of permanent motivation for existing members. In the open government fashion and recognising that visioning is an ongoing process of focusing intention with no end, the following ideas will be shared with members of the SDG Network for further discussion:

Vision

Group A: Scotland's beacon for delivery of the SDGs

Group B: We step up, connect and harness the energy of the diverse voices in Scotland, to maximise the positive impact of the SDGs.

Group C: Mobilising people around the SDGs to create a better, flourishing Scotland and World.

Mission

Group A: Achieving the SDGs Goals through collaboration, advocating, connecting, empowering, amplifying, representing...

Group B: Global challenges solved locally...together

Group C: Mobilising around the SDGs for a flourishing Scotland and World

Developing the Network

The second movement of the workshop reflected on how to strengthen the vitality and viability of the Scotland's SDG Network by anchoring the experience of communities of practice within the network. Following natural systems patterns by avoiding the creation of a 'super organisation'; and relating with all those who are working for or in contrast to the SDGs were some of the insights generated collectively.

Viability

- Easy to access
- Not beaurocratic
- Relevant
- Inspire rather than oblige
- Supportive
- Measuring impact
- Hooks – link to other plan and initiatives
- Link in mission and vision statement and revisit vision adaptation
- Commitments from members
- Look at ecology, evolution, extinction
- Be prepared to make difficult choices
- Dignity
- Value based – collective vision but recognise diversity

Vitality

- Valued and encouraged members
- Recognising people's contributions
- Increasing networks and cross germination of networks
- Inventive
- Cool, fresh, adaptive and relevant
- Progressing and active
- Dynamic
- People do not want to miss out
- Action focused
- A meeting point
- Members contributing and initiating
- Common interest groups
- Shared thread between different interact groups
- Urgency
- Deep philosophical questioning
- Value based
- Recognise importance of nature
- Pioneer different process. E.g. non-patriarchal, inclusive

Next steps

The workshop provided a space to reflect and unite the diversity of the SDG Scotland community in a shared purpose. Communicating this clearly will make it easier for new potential members to decide whether they might be interested in joining. It was a step in the journey towards making the SDGs an agenda owned by all, in Scotland and in the world.

Much of this work connects with securing greater transparency in the work of government and other stakeholders working on the SDGs, supporting and promoting opportunities for co-creation and collaboration in Network activities, growing the agency of Network members, and ensuring a shared vision for SDG Network Scotland that maintains and builds upon an inclusive and open approach.

Working Group

Given the increasing profile of and expectations on the Network, it is important to determine priorities and activities in a way that can continue to be supported by an overall approach that sustains and develops the Network.

Network members have started to discuss the coalition's purpose, objectives and ideas for governance arrangements. This next phase will allow members of the SDG Network that were unable to attend the March workshop to add to the discussion.

To deliver this work, we will set up a short life working group to focus on shaping the purpose, objectives and ideas for governance arrangements with the support of the wider membership.

SCVO – responsible for resourcing the Network – is no longer in receipt of funding from the Big Lottery Open Government Pioneers Project. We feel that cementing our agreed values, philosophy and vision/mission for the Network is an important step that should drive future decisions on resourcing, rather than these important elements being driven by funding.

Remit of working group

Based on this briefing, the outputs from the March workshop, and further discussion with Network members, the group will develop a set of proposals for the Network's Vision and Mission. It will also make proposals for a set of core values that connect with how we work as a Network and a series of objectives.

Following this, the group will also consider and provide a selection of ideas for governance that is simple and in keeping with our open philosophy. All work will be developed openly using Google Docs and input from the wider membership will be sought.

Ask of members

We are looking for a small group of members that can give enough time to meet in person and/or participate in online calls via Zoom. It is likely that this group will meet once every two weeks and it is hope that proposals will be in a good position by mid-August.