

# SCREENING REPORT

## STEP 1 – DETAILS OF THE PLAN

**Responsible Authority:**

Scottish Natural Heritage

**Title of the plan:**

Highlands and Islands Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund – Strategic Intervention 2018-2022

**What prompted the plan:**  
(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

This is a demand led proposal. The Fund will be crucial in delivering meaningful investment which will support the many communities and SMEs in the Highlands and Islands area.

Over the past two years, Scotland has welcomed an increased number of visitors who (through social media and other channels) enjoy access to many natural and cultural attractions. Many new 'honeypots' have developed and these play a specific role in attracting visitors and bring economic benefit to the local destination. This phenomena is very localised in Scotland and investment is required to: (a) provide quality experience at existing sites and (b) create new developments.

Given the geographical and economic challenges in the Highlands and Islands region this investment is highly unlikely to come from private investors.

Other European and national funding streams have been considered, however they do not provide the opportunity for significant investment and in most cases only support very localised development.

Whilst the Heritage Lottery Fund might support similar aims and objectives, applicants compete with the whole of the UK and only a fraction of funding has the potential to reach the Highlands and Islands.

**Plan subject:**  
(e.g. transport)

The delivery of an ERDF funding stream covering the Natural and Cultural Heritage projects delivering tourism benefits within the Highlands and Islands.

**Screening** is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Based on Boxes 3 and 4, our view is that:

☐

**An SEA is required, as the environmental effects are likely to be significant:** Please indicate below what Section of the 2005 Act this plan falls within

☐

Section 5(3)

☐

Section 5(4)

☒

**An SEA is not required, as the environmental effects are unlikely to be significant:** Please indicate below what Section of the 2005 Act this plan falls within

☐

Section 5(3)

☒

Section 5(4)

**Contact details:**

Eleanor MacDonald  
Project Hub Manager - Business Support Services  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Great Glen House  
Leachkin Road  
Inverness  
IV3 8NW

t: 01463 725213

e: [Eleanor.MacDonald@snh.gov.uk](mailto:Eleanor.MacDonald@snh.gov.uk)

**Date:**

17 April 2018

## STEP 2 – CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

### Context of the Plan:

The plan will set out the strategic way that SNH will deliver a Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund (NCHF) as part of the Scottish Government's current ERDF Programme for Scotland.

The Fund will target activity in the Highlands and Islands that supports development and promotion of natural and cultural heritage assets which have the direct or indirect potential to (a) create local economic and social benefit and (b) maintain or increase the natural capital assets of the Highlands and Islands.

The region's natural, historical and cultural heritage assets are significant within the Scottish and UK context. They are unique selling points for both the region and Scotland as a whole, linking directly to opportunities for the cultural and creative industries and tourism sectors.

### Description of the Plan:

The plan will describe SNH's overall vision, delivery methodology, priorities and associated outcomes for a Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund. It will be a high-level strategic document and will not explicitly cover details of projects and their possible environmental impacts. It will focus instead on a small number of high-level priorities, key actions and measures of success.

ERDF investment will aim to enhance natural capital, increase accessibility, improve visitor experiences and expand the associated products on offer. It will potentially improve jobs and productivity in related economic sectors (such as tourism) through sensitive management, development and coordinated promotion of these assets.

The Fund will support proposals for :

- Investment in the infrastructure supporting the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage assets
- Development of interpretation and interpretive media that promote and protect the natural and cultural heritage
- Improving accessibility
- Increasing the quality of sustainable development opportunities based on the region's heritage
- Promoting and developing the unique and distinctive natural and cultural heritage and related resources of the region through marketing campaigns to encourage new visitors and expand markets. These campaigns must be specifically focussed on the natural and/or cultural heritage.

Projects, including feasibility studies and work on the development of longer term legacy projects, to develop new products or services to communities, groups of enterprises and different sectors based on the region's natural and cultural resources.

### What are the key components of the plan?

The aim is to enhance the cultural and natural heritage assets of the Highlands and Islands and thus support sustainable economic growth.

The strategic aims are:

- Employment generation (economic local benefit)
- Safeguarding the asset (natural and cultural)
- Creating infrastructure to support sustainable business growth
- Supporting SME sector
- Supporting communities / social & local benefit
- Raising the quality of the product
- Encourage new visitors and expand markets

	<p>The plan itself will describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Introduction and Background:</b> the context, aims and purpose of the ERDF Nature and Culture Fund.</li> <li>– <b>Eligibility Criteria (Applicant and Proposals)</b> – the strategic outcomes and priorities for the Fund and who is eligible to apply, etc.</li> <li>– <b>Assessment and Decision Making Processes</b> - the methodology for delivering the fund, and</li> <li>– <b>Monitoring:</b> methods to monitor progress in implementing the plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Have any of the components of the plan been considered in previous SEA work?</b></p>	<p>This is a plan which sits within the existing ERDF framework of policies, plans and strategies that have been subject to SEA (<a href="#">ERDF Programme for Scotland SEA Assessment</a>).</p>
<p><b>In terms of your response to Boxes 7 and 8 above, set out those components of the plan that are likely to require screening:</b></p>	<p>The content of the plan will be high level, presenting broad outcomes, direction &amp; priorities. These are procedural in nature and, in themselves, unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects. Whilst the Plan will determine the way SNH's delivers funding for projects, these projects will have to go through a planning or other determination process. These processes will ensure that environmental effects can be avoided or minimised.</p>

**STEP 3 – IDENTIFYING INTERACTIONS OF THE PLAN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AND  
CONSIDERING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY INTERACTIONS (Error! Reference source not found.)**

Plan Components	Environmental Topic Areas										Explanation of Potential Environmental Effects	Explanation of Significance
	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Water	Air	Climatic factors	Material assets	Cultural heritage	Landscape	Inter-relationship issues		
<b>Introduction and Background:</b> the context, aims and purpose of the ERDF Nature and Culture Fund.	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	This section of the plan is purely descriptive and explains the reasoning behind the development of the Fund and as such will have no effect on the environment.	This element of the plan purely sets the context for the funding and development of the ERDF Nature and Culture Fund. This is not likely to result in neither significant environmental effects nor significant cumulative effects.
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b> (Applicant and Proposals) – the strategic outcomes and priorities for the Fund and who is eligible to apply, etc.	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	Here the plan will cover the high level strategic outcomes and priorities for the Fund and who is eligible to apply, etc. It will also cover which elements of the natural and cultural heritage that might be impacted upon through fund investment.	<p>The content of the plan will be high level, presenting broad outcomes, direction &amp; priorities. These are, in themselves, unlikely to result in neither significant environmental effects nor significant cumulative effects.</p> <p>Whilst the Plan will determine the way SNH's delivers funding for projects, the funded projects themselves will be subject to usual regulatory controls or have to go through a planning (or other development determination) process. These processes will ensure that environmental effects will be considered and either avoided or minimised.</p>

Assessment and Decision Making Processes - the methodology for delivering the fund, and	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	This section deals purely with process and management of the Fund. There will be no new significant environmental effects arising from SNH's Highlands and Islands Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund	Whilst the Plan will determine the way SNH delivers funding for projects, the projects themselves will be subject to usual regulatory controls or have to go through a planning (or other development determination) process. . These processes will ensure that environmental effects will be considered and either avoided or minimised.
Monitoring: methods to monitor progress in implementing the plan.	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	This part of the plan will cover monitoring the implementation of the plan - including financial management and delivery of individual projects. Environmental impacts will not be monitored <i>per se</i> but, where appropriate, may be addressed through other formal planning processes.	Whilst the Plan will determine the way SNH delivers funding for projects, the projects themselves will be subject to usual regulatory controls or have to go through a planning (or other development determination) process. . These processes will ensure that environmental effects will be considered and either avoided or minimised. SNH's management of the project and assessment process also means that it is unlikely that any significant cumulative effects will arise.
Example: Revision of standards for replacement of windows	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	Potential for noise reduction, improved energy efficiency, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, likely effects for building owners/tenants and potential impacts on properties with value for cultural heritage.	Potential for significant effects identified, particularly given the national and human health focus of the proposal. Potential for significant cumulative effects (positive and negative) also noted for several topic areas, including human health.

## STEP 4 – STATEMENT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE SCREENING

### **Summary of interactions with the environment and statement of the findings of the Screening:**

(Including an outline of the likely significance of any interactions, positive or negative, and explanation of conclusion of the screening exercise.)

This plan works within a policy framework that has already been subject to SEA, ([ERDF Programme for Scotland SEA Assessment](#)).

The content of the plan will be high level, presenting broad outcomes, direction & priorities. These are, in themselves, unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects.

Whilst the Plan will determine the way SNH's delivers funding for projects, the projects themselves will probably have to go through a formal planning (or other development determination) process. These processes will ensure that environmental effects will be considered and either avoided or minimised.

We conclude, therefore, that there are no new significant environmental effects arising from SNH's Highlands and Islands Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund – Strategic Intervention 2018-2022.

When completed send to: [SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or to the SEA Gateway, Scottish Government, Area 2H (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ.



