



WWF Scotland
The Tun
4 Jackson's Entry
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

Tel: 0131 659 9100
scotland@wwf.org.uk
wwfscotland.org.uk

WWF Scotland Briefing: 2019-20 Programme for Government

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SUMMARY

WWF Scotland welcomes the publication of the Programme for Government which sets out a strong response to the climate emergency with several welcome commitments. If carried through, these will slash emissions and deliver benefits to people and the Scottish environment now and for years to come. At a time when all eyes are likely to turn to Scotland ahead of UN Climate talks in Glasgow, it's vital to implement and, critically, build on these policies in the Budget, Infrastructure Plan, Climate Plan and other mechanisms. We welcome the acknowledgement from the First Minister that there is much more to do to deliver on the climate emergency - much detail needs to emerge in the coming weeks and months to ensure these commitments are fleshed out and that new commitments come forward.

Whilst this is a strong first response to the climate emergency, it is vital that we see further action to tackle the nature emergency, in the form of an Environment Act to prevent a loss of environmental protections and restore nature in the event of Scotland leaving the EU.

Highlights from this year's Programme for Government commitments include:

- An £11bn mobilisation of public procurement to support the climate emergency response
- Mobilising a £3bn Green Investment Portfolio
- The primary mission of the Scottish National Investment Bank will be to ensure transition to net zero
- Regional land use plans to maximise the potential of every part of Scotland's land to contribute to the fight against climate change
- Development of guidance on sustainable, climate-friendly and healthy diets
- Additional resource for emissions-reducing investment through a Green Growth Accelerator
- A consultation on ultra-low emission city centres by 2030
- New standards to reduce energy demand and associated carbon emissions within new buildings, including an end to fossil fuel heating
- A Scottish Low Carbon Heat Funding Invitation with at least £30m of support for projects
- Commitments to decarbonise internal flights and rail and water services.

ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

A [recent poll](#) showed 1 in 3 people in Scotland are more concerned about climate change than they were a year ago and that 70% want to see greater policy action in transport, food and homes to tackle climate change. This is against a backdrop of a surge of public support for climate action, with the school strikes movement gaining significant momentum in Scotland and internationally.

Ahead of the Programme for Government, WWF Scotland along with a group of civic and business leaders—forming the Climate Emergency Response Group—set out its [12-point plan](#) to tackle the Climate Emergency.

We welcome that a range of these actions have been included in the Programme for Government as part of an ambitious response in tackling the climate emergency and look forward to how these are implemented in the coming year.

Below, we assess the PfG against the asks of the Climate Emergency Response Group.

CERG Ask	Scottish Government Response	Next steps and implications
Mobilise the £11bn of annual public procurement to support the product and service innovation the climate emergency response needs	£11 billion of annual public procurement to support our climate emergency response, including consulting on legislation to require public bodies to set out how they will meet our climate change and circular economy obligations.	We welcome this as a first step to ensure public procurement is used in a long-term and strategic way and look forward to more detail. This will help lead and stimulate new markets for climate-friendly goods and services. Implementation of this strategic approach will rely on developing expertise, capacity and resource in public bodies, and we hope to see this explored when consulted on.
Produce public guidance on sustainable, climate-friendly, healthy diets	Commitment to work with business, the public and the third sector to develop guidance so more people are encouraged to eat more locally-produced, sustainable and healthy food that supports our aims on climate change.	There is a growing public understanding of how diet choices impact on our environment. Official guidance will provide advice and support to individuals and organisations on how they can best put that understanding into practice. This should be implemented alongside a widespread programme of public engagement.
A £100m Agricultural Modernisation Fund	Creation of a new Agricultural Transformation Programme.	The big test of this commitment will be how its addressed in the budget process later this year and if it secures additional funding of £100m for zero-interest loans for investments and improvements securing emissions reductions. Any programme should be future-looking, identifying the ways in which climate change will require farmers to build resilience to changing weather and to reduce emissions, and should work with farmers to support them with these changes. Training and knowledge transfer will also be vital in the success of this type of programme.

Make regional land use plans for maximising the potential of every part of Scotland's land to contribute to the fight against climate change	Make regional land use plans for maximising the potential of every part of Scotland's land to contribute to the fight against climate change.	This is a very welcome commitment and the timeframe proposed is critical. The test will be how this is resourced and delivered.
Initiate 4 new Green City Region Deals	Additional resource for emissions-reducing investment through a Green Growth Accelerator – referred to by the CERG as a 'Green City Deal' – combining public and private investment to transform cities and regions.	Scotland's cities have a key role to play in Scotland's response to the climate emergency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase productivity and connectivity through low-carbon transport projects - Increase attractiveness for inward migration and investment, as cities are made more liveable; - Improve health, as air is cleaned up, and active travel encouraged. This is a welcome commitment but we will need to see more detail on the scale and scope of these accelerator projects.
Signal that every one of Scotland's city centres will be vehicle emission free by 2030	To consult on Scotland's ambition to make the transformative shift to zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030 by engaging extensively with key sectors, in particular with the bus sector.	Transport emissions make up a quarter of Scotland's climate emissions and are not yet falling – indeed in some years there have been year-on-year rises. <p>This, combined with funding for transport, is a welcome step. However, a legal basis would have a strong signalling effect.</p>
Establish a public-interest company to invest in and operate Carbon Capture and Storage infrastructure	Explore with partners their proposals on Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) to inform Scottish public sector response to the UK consultation on CCUS business models. Working with the Scottish National Investment Bank to explore how to support the full-scale commercial deployment of CCUS in Scotland.	The vast majority of Scotland's path to climate neutrality will be achieved through using energy more efficiently and switching from burning fossil fuels to using renewable electricity. However, the government's independent advisors say CCS has the potential to be part of the solution particularly for the industrial sector. With the limited funding available, it is important that SNIB funding is prioritised for approaches in buildings, heat, transport, agriculture and other sectors.
Enhance building standards to deliver zero-carbon homes and buildings	Set new standards to reduce energy demand, and associated carbon emissions, within new buildings by 2021. Requirement for new homes consented from 2024 to use renewable or low carbon heat. For non-domestic buildings, ambition is to phase in this approach from this date	The decarbonisation of heating and buildings is a key next step for Scotland's journey to net-zero and this signal from Scottish Government is a welcome move. However, we believe it could move faster, with our ask being 2021. <p>Enhanced standards must ensure that new buildings are climate-proof and will not require costly net-zero retrofitting.</p>

<p>Accelerate Scotland's energy efficiency retrofit scheme, using regulation and public funding to support almost all homes and buildings in Scotland to reach at least EPC Band C by 2030 and zero-carbon by 2045</p>	<p>To publish an updated position in our Energy Efficiency Route Map in December 2019 to accelerate the improvements of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings in our homes</p>	<p>Responding to the climate emergency means speeding up this programme significantly to be on course to almost all buildings having EPC Band C ratings by 2030. We have been asking for an acceleration of this for several years, so we look forward to seeing an updated position in December 2019.</p> <p>We would also like to see the forthcoming budget at least doubling the fuel poverty/domestic energy efficiency budget to accelerate standard while at the same time eradicating fuel poverty.</p>
<p>Create a Scottish Heat Pump Sector Deal that provides clear long-term market signals for the accelerated installation of heat pumps in Scotland</p>	<p>Wider than this with the Scottish Low Carbon Heat Funding Invitation targeting a minimum of £30 million of support for projects, including heat pumps, that demonstrate innovative and low carbon ways of heating buildings</p>	<p>Heat pumps are the key technology that will deliver the majority of heat decarbonisation in Scotland, with the CCC stating that there should be of the region of at least 10 million heat pumps (including many hybrid heat pumps) operating in UK homes by 2035.</p> <p>It is welcome to see low carbon heat being treated as a priority but the scale of the finance is not transformational. We need to see more detail as it emerges.</p>
<p>Complete plans for how we generate the renewable electricity needed to reach net-zero climate emissions</p>	<p>Next Energy Statement will set out the extent to which renewable and low carbon energy generation will need to combine in order to meet net zero, and we will monitor progress on an annual basis</p>	<p>While Scotland has already made huge strides in decarbonising its electricity generation, the integrated decarbonisation of heating and transport will require very significantly increased renewable electricity generation and an energy systems approach.</p> <p>We therefore look forward to seeing these plans in the next energy statement.</p>
<p>Dedicate the Scottish National Investment Bank to delivering on the Climate Emergency</p>	<p>The primary mission of the Scottish National Investment Bank will be to ensure transition to net zero.</p>	<p>This is a welcome commitment bringing with it up to £200m - a significant investment in the zero-carbon transition. We would like to see this legislated for as an amendment in the Scottish National Investment Bank Bill.</p>

ADDRESSING THE NATURE EMERGENCY

Whilst this Programme is a strong response to the Climate Emergency, it is vital that we see further action to tackle the nature emergency. We note that the Programme for Government includes welcome commitment to increase funding for the Biodiversity Challenge Fund and forestry creation; however, this will not be enough to address the growing pressures facing nature. Whilst a commitment has been made to underpin the EU environment principles and future environmental governance arrangements within the Continuity Bill, we still need a statutory environment strategy, setting targets for nature recovery.

We are in a biodiversity crisis, with one in eleven species in Scotland at risk of extinction, and this is inextricably linked to the climate emergency. In recent months, over 22,000 people have called for a dedicated Scottish Environment Act to protect and restore nature. Given the huge risks of no deal and continued uncertainty around Brexit, it's even more vital that the Scottish Government brings forward legislation to ensure crucial existing environmental protections are not unravelled and to set out a clear, ambitious strategy to protect and restore Scotland's nature.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Scottish Water to be zero carbon by 2040
- Establishment of a National Forum on Climate Change
- Increased forestry creation in the coming year and £5m additional investment
- Commitment to develop a national nitrogen balance sheet – we would like to see this put on a statutory basis in the Climate Change Bill

NEXT STEPS

These are important steps forward and we welcome the Scottish Government taking on board the package of the solutions offered by the CERG. We look forward to these being built on in coming months. If delivered fully, beyond consultation and consideration, along with budget alignment and a refreshed Climate Plan fit for a climate emergency, these commitments could be the start of a transformational programme. Over the coming months, we'll be continuing our work on what a climate emergency package will look like. This will include the launch of a new report with Vivid Economics and a report in the autumn on measures to reduce agricultural emissions. We look forward to feeding these into the Green New Deal work as it develops.

Contact	Lyndsey Croal, Public Affairs Manager
Email/Tel	lcroal@wwfscotland.org.uk ; 07515 683440
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