



Coherence in actor roles and responsibilities for achieving the objectives of land use policies in Scotland

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Why do actors matter for policy coherence?

- Policy coherence is important for enhancing the effectiveness of policies that aim to achieve land use transformations, but it remains poorly understood how coherence can be achieved in practice.
- ‘Functional coherence’ – the clear definition, allocation and consistency of roles and responsibilities to multiple relevant actors is an important component in how coherence may occur in practice.
- Functional coherence may support collective action and complementary outcomes, as well as avoiding duplication, interference and gaps, in actors’ efforts to achieve policy objectives.
- We therefore analysed a sample of 66 land use transformations policies to:
 - *Assess the extent to which actors are involved in delivering policy objectives, and whether the roles and responsibilities expected of them are clearly defined.*
 - *Identify concentrations of actors associated with multiple policies, and vice versa, which could indicate opportunities for coordination, or needs for it.*

Types of actor roles identified

- We identified 4 types of actor roles from interpretation of the responsibilities allocated to them in our sample of 66 policies. These are:
 - *Owner (usually Directorates)* - overall responsibility for policy development and accountability for achieving policy objectives.
 - *Making it happen* - mandated to ensure policy is implemented but may not have overall accountability for policy development or implementation.
 - *Helping it happen* - encouraged to voluntarily facilitate or collaborate on aspects of a policy, but not ultimately responsible for overall management or implementation.
 - *Affected/targeted* - practices and behaviours affected by a policy, encouraged to act in accordance with it, but no clear responsibility for policy development or accountability for successful implementation.

Inclusion of actors (1)

- Very many actors (257 overall) are referred to in some role in achieving the objectives of land use transformation policies.
- The number of actors tends to increase in roles with less responsibility (Table 1).
- Many policies refer to multiple actors, across the different types of roles (Table 2).
- However, we had expected to see higher proportions of policies refer to multiple actors in the roles of making and helping the policy happen, and we found surprisingly few references to those owning, managing and living on land in the affected/targeted category.
- We found steering strategies more commonly referred to multiple actors than primary legislation and instruments.

Table 1 - Number of actors in each type of role.

Type of actor role	Number of actors in that role
Owner	20
Making it happen	41
Helping it happen	208
Affected/targeted*	36

*This category included broad classifications of actors such as farmers, businesses, etc.

Table 2 - Number of policies with multiple actors referred to as having a role in achieving the objectives of our sample of 66 policies, split according to our categories of actor roles

Type of actor referred to	Policies with multiple owners	Policies with multiple actors 'making it happen'	Policies with multiple actors 'helping it happen'	Policies with multiple actors 'affected/targeted'
Government	22	28	33	4
Non-government	n/a	n/a	24	17
All	22	28	35	18

Inclusion of actors

(2)

- Many actors are connected to policies, and other actors, across multiple domains (indicated by the different coloured lines in Figure 1).
- E.g. Energy & Climate Directorate connects with policies in the Environment, Climate Change and Socio-Economic domains (highlighted by red square).
- The high numbers of connections suggest a strong intention for including relevant actors in achieving policy objectives and an awareness of the actors well-placed to do so.

Note on interpreting Circos diagrams:

- Each diagram shows a type of actor role, the policies and the actors they refer to in that role.
- Each line = a connection between a policy and an actor. Thicker lines = more connections.
- Policy and actor names are abbreviated.
- Letters = types of policy (see legend).
- Colours = policy domains (see legend).

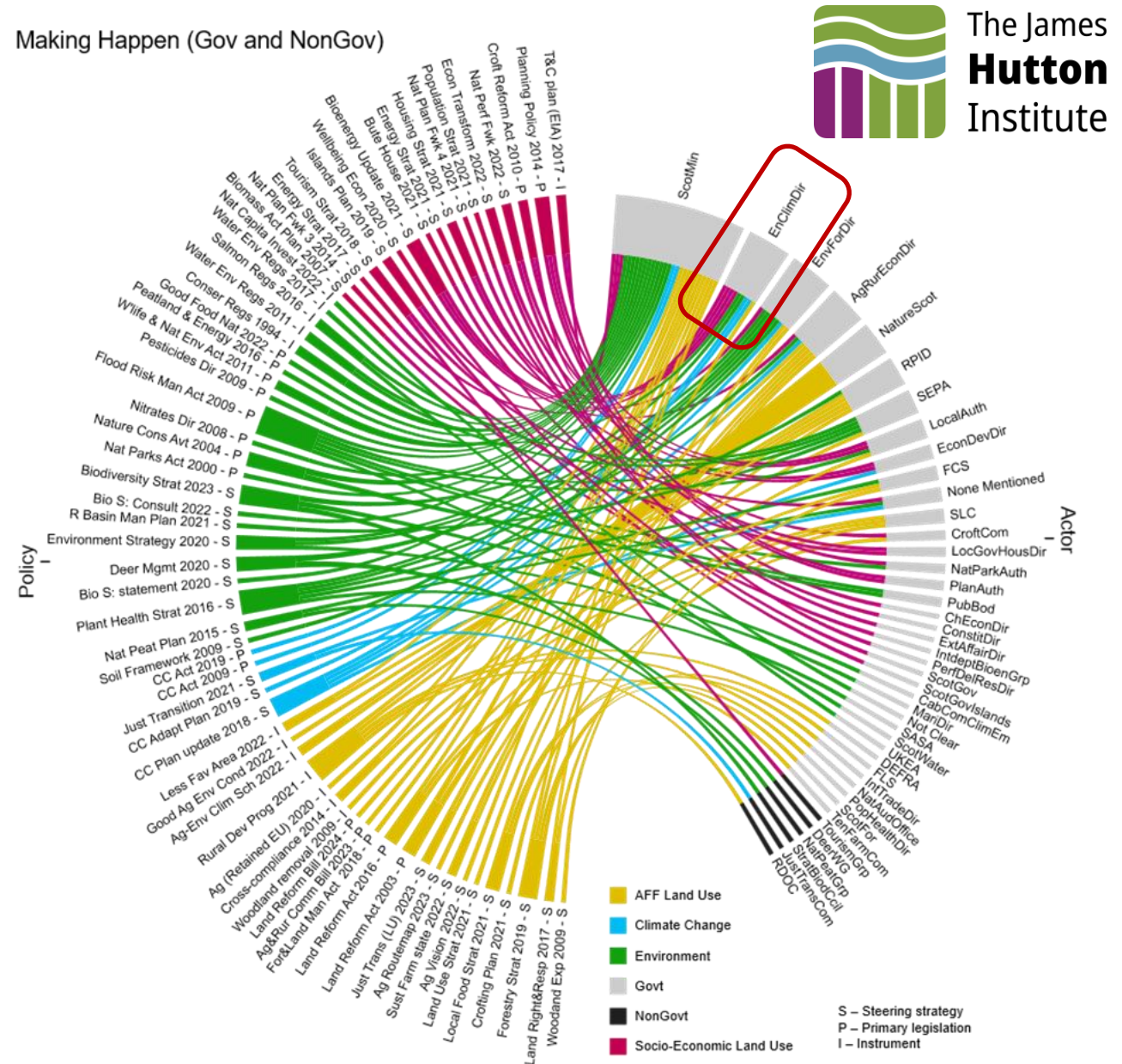


Figure 1 - Circos diagram showing policies connected to the actors they refer to as making it happen. Policies are colour-coded according to their policy domain, highlighting connections across domains.

Definition of roles & responsibilities (1)

Table 2 – Actors in each category of role for the Scottish Rural Development Programme

- For some policies, we were able to identify actors in each type of role.
- Table 2 shows the Scottish Rural Development Programme as an example.
- This indicates clearly defined roles in a cascading hierarchy of responsibility for achieving policy objectives.

Scottish Rural Development Programme	Actors
Owner	Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate
Making the policy happen (gov)	Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate; National Audit Office; RPID; DEFRA
Making the policy happen (non-gov)	Rural Development Operational Committee
Helping the policy happen (gov)	NatureScot; Scottish Forestry; Local authorities; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Scottish Enterprise; SEPA; Islands Authorities
Helping the policy happen (non-gov)	Scottish Land and Estates; Scottish Crofting Federation; Environment LINK; Local Action Groups; CONFOR; Community Woodlands Association; Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; National Trust for Scotland; Scottish Rural Network; NFUS; Highlands and Islands Agricultural Support Group; Farming Opportunities for New Entrants
Affected/targeted by the policy (gov)	None mentioned
Affected/targeted by the policy (non-gov)	Farmers; crofters; land managers; communities; forestry sector

Definition of roles and responsibilities (2)

Affected (Both)

- However, it was rare for us to be able to identify actors in every category for a policy. Especially for the categories:
 - Helping it happen (28 policies no govt actors identified; 42 no non-govt actors identified)
 - Affected/targeted (37 policies no actors identified – shown by the ‘not clear & ‘none mentioned’ categories highlighted by red squares in Figure 2).
- Concerning as clarity around the responsibilities of those expected to implement change on the ground is crucial for achieving transformation.
- Additionally, use of high-level and non-binding language, as well as references to broad entities such as ‘Scottish Government’ or ‘Scottish Ministers’ made it difficult to ascertain precise responsibilities for specific actors.

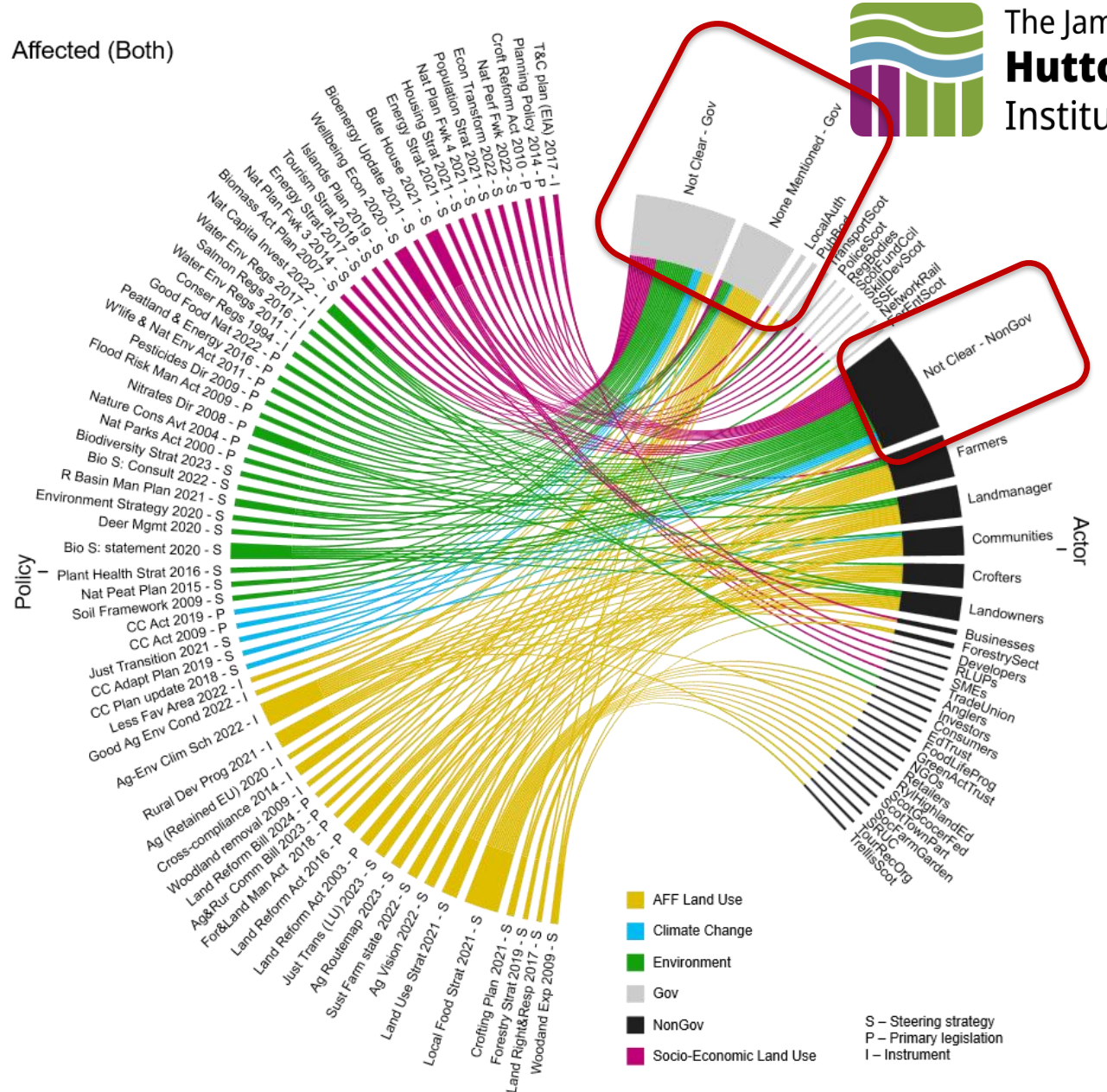


Figure 2 - Circos diagram showing the sample of 66 policies connected to the actors they referred to as affected/targeted by the policy. For 37 policies, we were unable to clearly distinguish which actors were affected/targeted.

Opportunities for coordination

- We looked for actors responsible for coordinating actors across multiple policies and did not find any actor with this responsibility.
- However, we identified instances where actors are connected to concentrations of policies.
 - E.g. Agriculture & Rural Economy, Environment & Forestry, and Energy & Climate Change have the role of owner for many policies (see highlighted in red squares in Figure 3).
- We also identified policies with high concentrations of actors.
 - E.g. 2021 Crofting Plan, 2018 Climate Change and 2019 Climate Adaptation Plans, the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy Consultation, and the 2021 Rural Development Programme
- These concentrations could both indicate opportunities for coordination, and areas where coordination is most needed to ensure actors work together effectively.
- The creation of an actor responsible for coordinating and monitoring coherence across the policy environment could help with this.

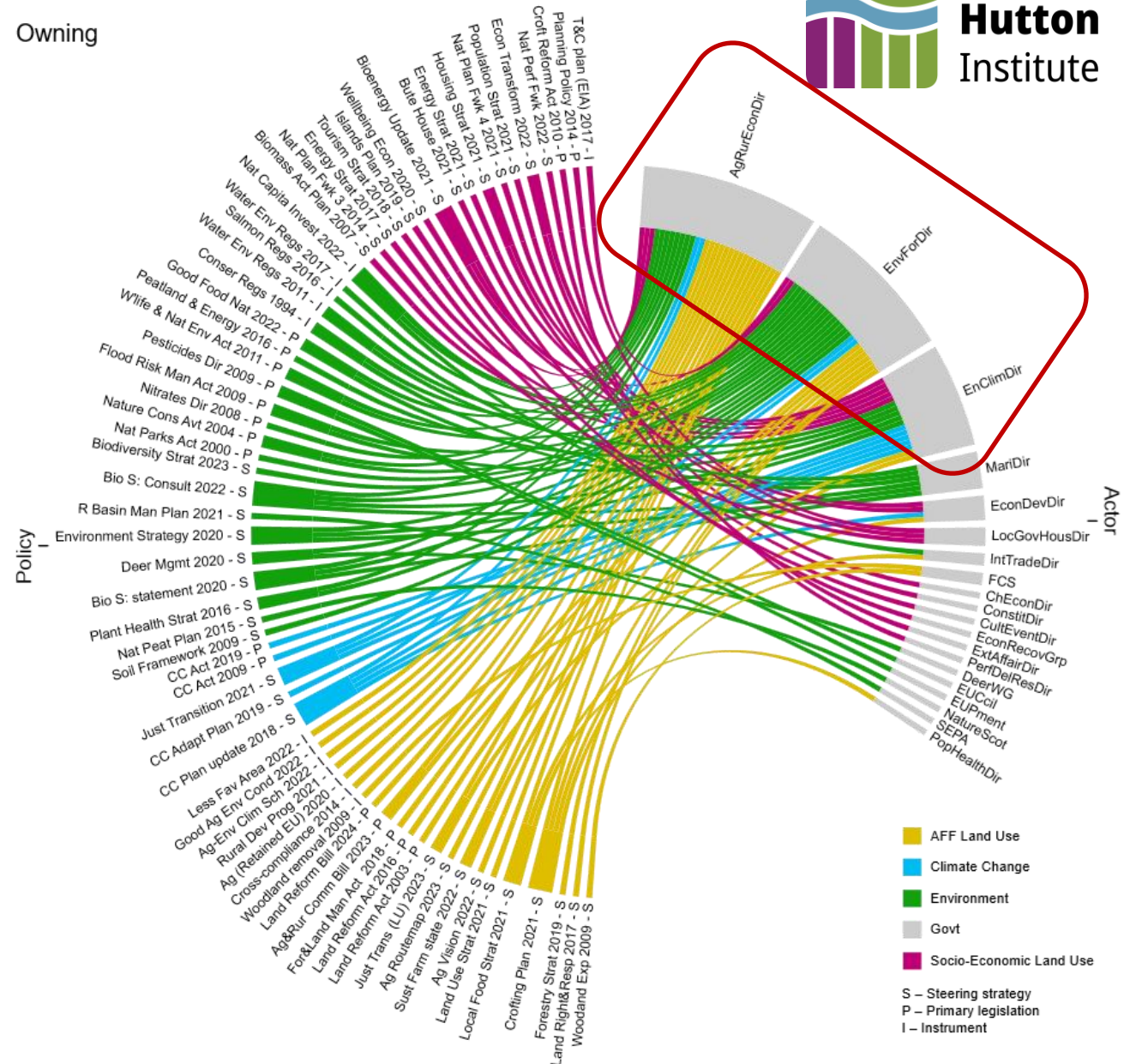


Figure 3 - Circos diagram showing policies connected to the actors they refer to as owners, highlighting concentrations of policies associated with the AgRurEconDir, EnvForDir, and EnClimDir.

Conclusions

- **Strong inclusion of actors and some evidence of clearly-defined roles and responsibilities:**
 - The many actors referred to by the 66 policies in our sample, and the connection of actors to multiple policies across domains, suggest a strong intention for including relevant actors in achieving the objectives of land transformation policies.
 - In some cases, there is also evidence of roles and responsibilities being clearly defined and allocated across levels of responsibility.
 - This suggests there are conducive conditions for actors to work together in a coherent way.
- **Gaps and challenges:**
 - We found gaps in how roles and responsibilities are allocated, particularly for actors associated with crucial implementation at the ground level.
 - We also found issues with unclear and non-binding definition of roles and responsibilities, as well as uncertainties around the potential for conflict, confusion, duplication, and actors' capacity to carry out the responsibilities expected of them.
- **Opportunities/needs for coordination:**
 - The Agriculture & Rural Economy, Environment & Forestry, and Energy & Climate Change Directorates are connected to high concentrations of policies.
 - Several strategies, particularly the 2021 Crofting Plan, 2018 Climate Change and 2019 Climate Adaptation Plans, the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy Consultation, and the 2021 Rural Development Programme have notable concentrations of actors.
- **Implications:**
 - The creation or allocation of an actor with the primary role of coordinating actors across the policy environment may support actors to work together effectively. The well-connected actors we identified may be well-placed to take on this role.
 - Clearer allocation of roles and responsibilities to actors doing ground-level implementation would be advantageous, since these actors are essential for land use transformation through implementing changes in land management practices.
 - Systematic monitoring of coherence between actors, and its outcomes, may help to ensure that challenges are identified and addressed and that the outcomes of these policies truly work towards land use transformation.

Potential Next Steps

- Linking the actor coherence analysis with the systems modelling
 - Exploring the coverage of different actors within the models
 - Identifying the roles and responsibilities expected of different actors in the models and mapping them onto the four categories of roles
- Conducting actor coherence analysis on the new Rural Support Plan
- Other things we could do:
 - Exploring actors' perspectives on the policies they are expected to work on and who they are expected to work with
 - Monitoring how effectively actors are working together
 - Identifying conflict and divergence, and how actors deal with these.