Executive Summary

The premise of this submission is that the RPP2 does not sufficiently address the need for environmental movement organisations (EMOs) to work as part of a network with public, business and civic interests, to help achieve the targets laid out in the document. This will negatively affect the ability of the Scottish Government to reach the emissions targets laid out in its report.

The emissions cuts put forward by the RPP2 will require the collective support of non-government actors including businesses, environmental organisations and citizens. The important role that networking plays across these assorted actors should not be under-estimated in its ability to enhance cooperation, share best-practice, and facilitate innovation. The RPP2 makes frequent reference to the notion of ‘working together’ to reach the targets (e.g. 2.2.5, 2.14.1), but it is unclear how the proposals within RPP2 will enhance that collaboration, especially at the level of EMOs.

I make the recommendation that the Scottish Government establishes a forum for government, business, civic and EMO actors to share their experiences and expertise with one another. Existing fora are not cross-cutting and do not reflect the government’s recognition of the important role that EMOs play in climate policy development and implementation.

An Important Opportunity to Involve EMOs

I wish to first draw attention to the important opportunity that the RPP2 offers for developing platforms through which EMOs, business, public and civic bodies are able to build systematic, resilient and productive networks.

The increased commitment of businesses and public sector bodies to the climate change agenda offers new opportunities for EMOs to engage with these actors. Furthermore, the Scottish Government’s own commitment to abating climate change recognises the need for systematic engagement across the spectrum of interests:

‘we need the continued support of our partners in the public and private sectors, the involvement of activists within the environmental NGO movement and, most importantly, the participation of individual families within Scotland’ (Forward)

EMOs are a valuable asset in working towards the ambitious emissions reduction targets laid out in RPP2. For government, EMOs play an important role in helping to shape public perceptions of environmental issues, offer expertise in a wide variety of environmental issues and participate in the development of legislation at all levels of governance (a). EMOs also work as ‘delivery partners’ for government legislation and are therefore central to the fabric of the Scottish Government’s work on climate change (2.14.4). EMOs are often able to be more flexible than government, leading to faster consultations and amendments to their strategies, and more immediacy for the input into government policy.
EMOs also have an important role to play in helping the businesses to address their climate change responsibilities. In this way, EMOs can act as a ‘strategic bridge’ that helps to reconcile environmentalism with business interests and to develop innovation within the business community (b).

**Building on Existing Fora**

The RPP2 recognises the important roles played by non-government organisations outlined above:

‘The third sector has a central role too. Non-government organisations rally support and activity across Scotland, and in many cases act as delivery partners’ (2.14.4)

The RPP2 does not however offer any suggestions about how to engage with the third sector. This is a concerning omission within the report, but one that could be rectified by building on the Scottish Government’s existing infrastructure of climate change fora.

I am aware of a number of successful initiatives supported by the Climate Change Scotland Act (2009) and the RPP1 (2011) to engage with businesses, public bodies and civic actors.

For businesses there is a well-developed suite of resources available, including the Scottish Energy and Resources Efficiency Service, Climate Change Business Delivery Group, Prince of Wales’ Mayday Network and, from April 2013, Resource Efficient Scotland. While these bodies are tasked with helping their audience to reduce their own emissions, they will not play a role in facilitating collaboration amongst ‘business, third sector and public sector’ interests that they aim to represent (c). At the level of the citizen and the community the Scottish Government has provided the Greener Scotland Initiative and the Climate Challenge Fund.

The principal climate change networking forum supported by the government is the Public Sector Climate Action Group. This group is populated by representatives from Scottish public bodies and the Chair of Climate 2020 who is able to act as a representative of the business community.

I propose that a similar kind of forum should be established, but one that includes a far greater range of participants, including representatives of EMOs with the opportunity for dialogue across the two groups. A multiple stakeholder forum would provide an opportunity for its members to share the challenges and opportunities that arise in working towards climate change abatement. It would furnish these stakeholders, whose contact with one another is (especially in the case of EMOs) often ad hoc, with a stable and systematic framework for their interactions, and enhance the quality of their collaboration. This submission will not discuss the details of such a forum, rather I seek to highlight the benefit that it would bring, not least because it would go some way to addressing the Scottish Government’s aim that climate change abatement is an inclusive process (2.2.5) and that EMOs have an important role to play (2.14.4).

The author is aware that there is an appetite amongst the EMO community in Scotland for greater networking opportunities, both within that community, and within a broader framework that encompasses business and government representation.
These concerns were discussed most recently with the author of this submission at a workshop for environmental actors at the University of Edinburgh (d).

The EMO community as a whole is not sufficiently well-resourced to finance such systematic opportunities for dialogue with other stakeholders, but the Scottish Government, at the centre of a number of existing climate change bodies and networks detailed in 4.3-4.4, would be well-placed to develop this opportunity.

Concluding Summary and Recommendation

EMOs will play an important role in implementing the proposals of RPP2 and achieving the emissions reductions targets. They have well-developed capacities to engage with the general public in this area, established roles as delivery partners for government policy, and specialist expertise of benefit to both business and government.

The policies and delivery mechanisms that will be developed as a result of RPP2 offer a significant opportunity to capitalise on the benefits that EMOs bring to the government’s efforts in this area.

Although the RPP2 recognises the importance of EMO actors in the delivery of report’s targets, it does not suggest any mechanisms through which they might be involved in the iteration and delivery of these targets. Furthermore, the Scottish Government has already developed a suite of initiatives that help to engage the business and civic communities with these proposals, but not EMOs.

The recommendation of this submission is that the creation of a forum, into which the interests of multiple stakeholders across the spectrum of public, civic, business and EMO actors would be fed, is one way in which this omission could be corrected. Such a body would provide a stable and systematic platform for the inclusion of EMOs in the government’s work towards climate change abatement, enhance the opportunities for innovation and extend the reach of the government’s policies into the community.

References


(d) The workshop ‘Environmentalism in Europe’ was held at the University of Edinburgh of Friday 8 February 2013 for stakeholders from environmental
organisations and environmental researchers. A report detailing the themes and suggestions discussed in the workshop is available from the author:


**Biographical note**

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