



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

# Land Rights and Responsibilities: Self-Assessment Pilot Programme

Outputs, learning and evaluation  
2020-21



# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>01</b>
1.1 Overview	01
<b>2. Methodology</b>	<b>02</b>
2.1 Development	02
2.2 Selection	02
2.3 Scottish Land Commission Approach	04
2.4 Follow-Up	04
2.5 Information Management	05
2.6 Time Inputs	05
<b>3. Self-Assessment Outputs</b>	<b>07</b>
3.1 Self-Rating	07
3.2 Interpretation and Evidence by Principle	08
<b>4. Process Evaluation</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 Benefits	16
4.2 Limitations and Challenges	18
4.3 Suggestions for Changes	19
<b>5. Progress and Next Steps</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1 Progress	20
5.2 Next Steps	21
<b>6. Appendix</b>	<b>22</b>
Land Rights and Responsibilities Draft Self-Assessment Template (as used by the land owners)	

# 1 Introduction

## Overall Goal:

To achieve the Scottish Government's vision for a stronger relationship between the people of Scotland and the land, where ownership and use deliver greater public benefits through an accountable and transparent system of land rights and responsibilities.

## 1.1 Overview

The Land Rights and Responsibilities Self-Assessment Pilot Programme aimed to explore the effectiveness and workability of a voluntary review process of self-assessment against the Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS) principles for land owners and managers across sectors. It also aimed to improve our understanding of how the LRRS works in practice.

The Scottish Land Commission worked with nine land owners and managers to pilot a LRRS self-assessment template. All participants volunteered to take part. Different methods of engagement were used according to the expressed wishes of participants and to enable us to test different approaches.

The pilot project demonstrated that a straightforward and structured approach can be used to help land owners assess their activities across the whole range of LRRS principles and protocol expectations in a relatively easy manner. We identified a number of improvements that can be made to the pilot project process and template to remove barriers to participation.

### Key findings:

- Most participants found the process to be helpful and would use the process again as part of ongoing management plan reviews, or as an occasional reference to check progress is being made.
- However, a common theme in participant feedback was that the template could be simplified and use more open questions or prompts.
- Participants generally found the process easy and well explained once they got into it. However, almost all had difficulty getting started. As pilot participants, we had no examples of completed assessments to provide at the outset and were not able to give firm estimates of the time inputs likely to be required.
- A key element to the approach has been to recognise that this is a voluntary and informal assessment process, rather than a mandatory external review of practices.
- Templates could be more sector-specific, rather than focusing on a one-size-fits-all approach, and an eventual shift to online templates emerged as a preference.

# 2 Methodology

## 2.1 Development

A draft Land Rights and Responsibilities Review framework was developed with the [Good Practice Advisory Group](#) (GPAG) in November 2019. The framework outlined expectations for land owners, land managers and communities in relation to each of the LRRS principles, along with possible issues to consider and evidence to gather.

A prototype template LRR self-assessment template (included in the appendix) was developed from the initial framework. Minor amendments and updates were made to the template during the pilot, but it continued to follow the original framework headings. Some changes were made to reflect the later development of the [Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols](#).

We received useful feedback on the template from a major land agency company and from a PhD student conducting research around land use for rewilding. Both found the template easy to follow and a useful way to test delivery of LRRS principles across a range of land activities. Their constructive input and signposting to examples of assessment models used in other sectors has been extremely helpful. Their comments have also been included with overall participant feedback below as appropriate.

Participants were recruited and supported through the process in four cohorts led by the Scottish Land Commission, Community Land Scotland (CLS), Scottish Land and Estates (SLE) and NFU Scotland (NFUS) respectively. Each cohort reported separately and an overview report of all four cohorts has been prepared by the Commission. This approach enabled the template and different types of supportive processes to be tested across a range of sector interests, types of ownership and landholding size, and geographic location. This is a report on the Commission's cohort exclusively, but it should be noted that the approach developed throughout the pilot based on feedback from participants in this and other cohorts.

## 2.2 Selection

Participants were invited by the Scottish Land Commission to participate based on their likely interest in taking part and to provide a range of land owners. A summary of our participants is provided in the table on page 03.

Participant	Size and maturity	Main landholding	Other interests	Governance structure	Completed by
1	25,000ha, > 20 years	Nature Reserve	Community benefits, education	Charity	Reserve Project Officer and Regional Manager
2	1,027ha, 5 years	Native woodland	Joint community ownership and management	Charity	Project Manager
3	(5 tenanted farms) > 20 years	Agricultural tenancies	Some residential and commercial property	Charitable Endowment Trust	Professional land agents
4	26,000ha, >20 years	Rural estate and crofting tenure	Accommodation, hydro, forestry, business, tourism, local facilities, education, sporting	Charitable Trust	Chair and Estate Administrator (agent)
5	75,500ha, several generations	Rural estate	Sporting, housing, tourism, commercial, local facilities, agriculture	Private	Executive Officer
6	18,000ha, several generations, expansion in last 15 years	Agricultural	Residential and business development, renewables, hospitality, forestry	Corporate Trust	Beneficiary Trustee and Estate Director
7	37,600ha, 15 years	Rural estate and crofting tenure	Sporting, conservation, renewables, community facilities and infrastructure, business development	Community Owned	Chief Executive and Chair
8	Approx. 1,300ha, variable maturity of ownership	Largely urban	Mixed industry use	Non-Departmental Government Body	Director
9	54,000ha across 53 reserves	Nature Reserves	Conservation, community benefits, education	Charity	Internal team

Four other estates expressed an interest in the programme but chose not to carry out a self-assessment during 2020-21 due to lack of time available.

## 2.3 Scottish Land Commission Approach

All aspects of the pilot took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. No face-to-face meetings or site visits were possible, and all contact took place through online calls and meetings and by email.

### Light Support

For individual participants, an introductory call usually took place with one Scottish Land Commission staff member to outline the assessment process and the self-assessment template. This was followed by up to three programmed conversations to check progress, provide support and clarify any areas of uncertainty. Each support call lasted between an hour to 90 minutes.

Generally, we started with a LRRS principle that was likely to be most accessible for the organisation concerned: often Principles 5 (Transparency) and 6 (Community Engagement); or Principle 4 (Good Stewardship), depending on the focus and day-to-day activities of each organisation.

### Self-Directed

Four participants took the template and completed it with no intermediate support from Commission staff other than a broad outline introduction. They used only the notes provided in the template document and their previous experience of other assessment frameworks to guide them.

### Cohort Group

We also ran one mixed cohort group through a combination of online group discussions and individual follow-up conversations. The overall approach to the self-assessment template and an introduction to each of the LRRS principles was provided over four online sessions, covering:

- An introduction to the LRRS principles and the template format
- An introduction to and discussion around the expectations for LRRS principles (paired)
- Sharing of practical experience related to the expectations
- Sharing of practical experience of completing the self-assessment.

## 2.4 Follow-Up

A structured follow-up conversation took place by video call with each participant once assessments had been completed and submitted to us, regardless of the assessment completion route. The conversation focused on feedback to inform our evaluation of the assessment process, as well as on each LRRS principle to gauge participants' views on what the principles meant and the challenges in delivering them.

We also discussed any future activities or areas for improvement identified by the participants in their assessment. However, very few had completed this section of the assessments in advance. Reasons for this were mixed. Some related to the structure

of the template, which currently sits at the end of a lengthy evidence checking section. There was also uncertainty or lack of confidence about what might be expected next. Many also identified that current activities are ongoing or still evolving and felt that their next steps may be a continuation of existing plans rather than new activities.

Regarding the potential for developing this process into an accredited or certificated scheme, we tested more formal assessment of self-evaluated ratings, looking deeper at outputs against individual protocol expectations for each Principle. However, challenges were apparent in this approach, such as verification of the ratings and comparison of ratings between organisations of differing scale and focus. Therefore, whilst an accredited or certificated scheme may be possible, it would be significantly more resource intensive. Consequently, the Commission input has primarily been to provide guidance, encouragement and support. We have not provided a formal assessment of participants' own self-evaluated ratings, other than to comment where we felt participants had significantly under-rated themselves due to a limited interpretation of expectations. Our draft feedback pro-forma has been limited to:

- A summary of evidence provided by the participants to demonstrate delivery of each principle
- A note of other evidence identified through discussions that could also be considered
- Suggestions for further areas for consideration identified during discussion
- Signposting to other good practice or resources
- Highlighting areas of good practice that could be shared with others.

## 2.5 Information Management

All participants were advised of our data protection protocols and alerted to potential freedom of information implications, and a statement was added into the template to highlight this. We did not seek commercial or sensitive information and participants were not required to submit documents or evidence referred to in their assessment. We did refer to information available in the public domain during our conversations, in particular, information available on organisation websites and social media accounts.

## 2.6 Time Inputs

The time taken by participants to complete the self-assessment template varied considerably depending on the size and complexity of the landholding, the number of people involved, and the internal approaches taken. Those with direct involvement in all aspects of day-to-day estate operations and administration and who were completing the assessment at a single community level generally completed the process quickly. Participants whose landholdings covered multiple estates or communities needed more time to obtain information from other colleagues. These participants had more difficulty splitting out organisational context and policy to a geographic community level.

After any initial familiarisation with the LRRS principles and LRRS protocol expectations, most assessments were completed within one or two days. Post-assessment calls took up to three hours with the lead person(s) for each organisation.

Some participants stated that having done an initial 'high level' self-assessment they would like to do it again involving other staff or governing body members to prompt a broader and deeper reflection of what they do and how they do it. This would require additional resources. Others stated that the initial assessment would have taken longer if supporting evidence had to be submitted with it.

Typical time for participants and Commission staff inputs are shown in the table below:

Activity	Individually supported Participants	Cohort Participants	Commission staff (individual support x 3)	Commission staff (cohort support x 4)
Introductory email and phone call	1.5 hrs	1.5 hrs	1.5 hrs	Charity
Familiarisation with LRR Statement and Protocols	0.5-2 days Self-directed			
Cohort briefing sessions		1 day (2 x 1.5hr, 2 x 1 hr sessions = 10 hours attendance + background prep)		0.5 day each (2 days set-up and initial prep + 2 days delivery) 2 staff at 4x sessions = 10 hrs input
Interim support calls	2-3 hours		0.5 day	
Assessment completion	1-2 days	1 day		
Post-completion follow-up call	2 hrs	2 hrs	0.5 day (2 staff)	0.5 day (2 staff)
Post-completion written feedback to participants			0.5 day	0.5 day
Collating and evaluating assessment outputs and feedback			1-2 days each	1-2 days each
<b>Total</b>	<b>2-4 days</b> approx	<b>2.5 days</b> approx	<b>2.5-4 days</b> approx	<b>2-4 days</b> approx



# 3 Self-Assessment Outputs

Review and evaluation were built into the pilot research approach from the outset to capture participants' own self-evaluation under each principle in the template and to discuss their experience of the supported assessment process overall.

## 3.1 Self-Rating

Participants were asked to rate their own assessment in terms of delivering each principle of the LRRS using a self-rating system, ranging from level 6 (excellent) to level 1 (basic). Ratings were entirely subjective, with the participants guided to use the evidence collated to consider which level they could comfortably demonstrate.

Whilst most participants placed themselves within a 'safe' range of 3 to 5, self-evaluation was highest across all participants for Principles 1 (Public Interest) and 4 (Good Stewardship), which we found to be closely linked. These principles also cover the broadest span of activities and so allow a greater scope of evidence to be applied (see table on page 8). In this cohort, participants with a key focus on conservation were generally able to assess themselves higher, particularly where they also have close connections with local communities of place and have been able to demonstrate broader community benefits alongside environmental stewardship.

Participants found Principle 3 (Diversification) hardest to demonstrate overall due to a narrow interpretation of land being made available for community ownership only and/or lack of available opportunities. One participant did not use this approach to self-evaluation and instead took a protocols-based approach, focusing on assessing whether they were meeting the expectations within the LRRS protocols. This was helpful for them.

Organisations with mixed or more diverse landholdings and at a single community level generally felt more confident and able to demonstrate higher ratings.

Participant	Principles						Average by Participant
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	
1	6	4	4	5	5	4	4.6
2	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.8
3	3	4	3	4	2	3	3.1
4	5	4	5	5	5	6	5
5	4	3	3	4	4	3	3.5
6	5	4	3	5	5	4	4.3
7	3	-	-	3	5	4	4.8
8	5	6	5	5	5	4	5
<b>Average by Principle</b>	4.5	4.3	4	4.5	4.5	4	

Scores based on self-rating system, ranging from level 6 (excellent) to level 1 (basic)

## 3.2 Interpretation and Evidence by Principle

This section will focus specifically on the use of the LRRS Self-Assessment template, reporting on the following:

- the interpretation of the LRRS Principles
- types of evidence used
- examples of good practice shared
- examples of improvements in practice self-identified.

Through the process a natural link which paired certain Principles together was found, based on the demonstrated evidence and practice used:

- **Principle 1** (Public & Private Interest Balance) and **Principle 4** (Good Stewardship)
- **Principle 2** (Diversification) and **Principle 3** (Community Ownership, lease and use)
- **Principle 5** (Transparency) and **Principle 6** (Community Engagement).

## Principle 1: Public & Private Interest Balance

The overall framework of land rights, responsibilities and public policies should promote, fulfil, and respect relevant human rights in relation to land, contribute to public interest and wellbeing, and balance public and private interests. It should:

- support sustainable economic development
- protect and enhance the environment
- help achieve social justice
- build a fairer society.

## Principle 4: Good Stewardship

The holders of land rights should exercise these rights in ways that take account of their responsibilities to meet high standards of land ownership, management, and use. Acting as the stewards of Scotland's land resource for future generations they contribute to sustainable growth and a modern, successful country.

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## Principle Interpretation

### Principle 1:

The participants generally found the language of Principle 1 daunting, which posed a challenge regarding engagement.

In feedback conversations this principle was often discussed last, after exploring how participants contributed to all the others, as interpretation of it and potential evidence often became more apparent then.

It was also easier in discussion to break the principle down into more tangible activities and outputs, such as: supporting sustainable development, protecting and enhancing the environment, helping to support sustainable local communities, and building a fairer society. Doing this meant that participants generally then found this a relatively easy principle to demonstrate in practice.

This was also the section in which broader context, socio-economic/demographic data and governance arrangements were captured.

## Principle 4:

The focus for all participants was about the use of land, rather than buildings, and about contributions to sustaining the natural environment, biodiversity and, in some cases, cultural heritage. Contributions to local economic resilience and mitigating the climate crisis often needed prompting (though some had also already been picked up under Principles 1, 2 or 3).

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## Types of Evidence Used

Depending on the type of business or landholding that the participants owned or managed, participants were able to provide evidence of economic benefit through direct and indirect employment, local procurement and support to local businesses, good environmental stewardship of land resources, supporting viable communities, and contributing to community wellbeing.

This was the section where participants were most easily able to provide quantifiable evidence. Many were able to list membership of relevant organisations, participation in accreditation schemes, or good practice awards relevant to the key themes of the LLRS Principles. Some, but not all, could identify economic impacts or were able to track their contribution to socio-economic and demographic changes within the community. All participants were able to identify where land or buildings were not in full productive use and were at varying stages of considering future options for them, including by the community. There were significant overlaps between evidence provided for Principles 1 and 4.

Contributions to human rights and public interest included tangible examples: food, jobs, housing, work, cultural life, education, physical and mental health. Once these were discussed in feedback sessions, the participants were able to interpret Principle 1 more broadly and many more examples were identified through discussions post-completion than had initially been captured.

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## Examples of Good Practice

### Example 1

“We are a charitable membership organisation supporting public interest through natural conservation and restoration. This is demonstrated through peatland restoration work, contribution to local business sustainability, volunteering opportunities and a public engagement programme. Research and learning from the demonstration project are widely shared. Considerable investment has been made to visitor infrastructure, recognising the important role in the local economy, community heritage and well-being. A comprehensive management plan is in place and an economic impact assessment has identified long term benefits to the local economy through direct employment, local procurement, and increased visitor numbers.”

## Example 2

“We are a small charitable Trust. We employ a number of staff directly and support a number of independent businesses through leases of land or buildings, including at a local industrial complex. We have provided land and/or financial aid through our community benefit fund to support community-based organisations, business and community facilities. Heritage sites have been restored and land is being made available for affordable housing. The natural environment is closely monitored and managed through appropriate expertise and an up-to-date management plan.”

## Example 3

“Our partnership model ensures that the land/management is closely aligned with local aspirations and needs, with an agreed primary focus on the restoration of ancient forest. We have a long-term Forest Plan with environmental outcomes in place. We have a number of policies related to sustainability themes and work to accredited standards. We own the site in partnership with a community Trust and have a joint focus on supporting rural employment and social enterprise through the restoration of land for wildlife. We have created full time jobs and a number of local social enterprises are in development through leases to use the land, including a community venison project, community firewood and woodlot agreements. We also have a focus on meeting wider human rights through the provision of cultural heritage projects, outdoor education and plans for future path networks. This will also have positive impacts on current and future population demographics with a younger workforce, and better standards of living in the area.”

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## Examples of improvements in practice self-identified

- Review unused buildings and options for future use in liaison with local community forum
- Work with neighbouring estates to identify areas that might be suitable for affordable housing, along with leasing of our own land to support social enterprise to enable further local employment/development opportunities
- Manage the short-term impact of harvesting and removal of non-native species to reduce impact on the local community
- Current push on connectivity for people home-schooling and working from home, providing broadband in homes as part of the service
- Formalise arrangements for management and distribution of Community Fund.

## **Principle 2: Diversification**

There should be a more diverse pattern of land ownership and tenure, with more opportunities for citizens to own, lease and have access to land.

## **Principle 3: Community Ownership, lease and use**

More local communities should have the opportunity to own, lease or use buildings and land which can contribute to their community's wellbeing and future development.

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## **Principle Interpretation**

The participants all found it difficult to split out activities that contributed to these principles but broadly took Principle 2 as those that supported diversified use by individuals/businesses, and Principle 3 as those that support community use/benefits.

For some types of land owner, the opportunities for diversification were limited due to charitable covenants, the high nature value of the land, by existing community ownership, or by limited control of use due to occupation by tenant farmers or crofters with over-riding rights.

There is an over-emphasis on diversification through ownership and management in the template prompts. More emphasis on diversification of use and access to use of land and buildings in both Principles needs to be reflected to capture those citizen/community benefits.

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## **Types of Evidence Used**

Most participants were able to use quantifiable evidence for these Principles. This included numbers of:

- Sales (private and into community ownership)
- Leases (commercial)
- Land and property transactions
- Management agreements
- Crofts
- Agricultural tenancies
- Length of leases.

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## Examples of Good Practice

### Example 1

“Opportunities for diversification of ownership are limited due to purchase of the land for charitable use and the high nature value of the land. Within that constraint, there is a willingness to consider options for diversification of tenure and opportunities for community benefit through leases of land to local businesses and voluntary organisations. This is demonstrated through grazing leases, stalking rights, consideration of fishing leases, and a shared water supply agreement. Leases for use of land and freshwater need to be compatible with charitable objectives (nature conservation). Fishing clubs are therefore helping with local research to mutual benefit. Access to the land for recreation is facilitated by public boardwalks and footpaths. Funding has also been secured for some small areas of woodland planting, which will also include a public footpath.”

### Example 2

“Landownership in the wider area remains largely concentrated between a few large owners, including us. Half of the Trust landholding is controlled by crofting townships, with over 100 crofts & common grazings. The Trust has identified over 100 transactions [during current ownership] (including sales, leases, or other arrangement). These provide evidence of a positive attitude in favour of long-term leases and waiving of pre-emption rights. The Trust supports several businesses, facilitates collaborative projects with local groups, and supports a community company hydro-power scheme. Decisions about future transfer of ownership will be informed by discussions at the Community Forum. The estate has identified several buildings that are not in productive use and is open to suggestions for future use and ownership, though all require investment that could be prohibitive. The conduit for further discussions will be through the Forum. Land is being made available for further affordable housing developments, the creation of a community woodland, allotments and individual workshops. The Trust is open to considering requests from individuals or community groups but has had difficulty obtaining a consistent community ‘view’ on priority sites.”

### Example 3

“The estate is owned and controlled by community members. As a general principle, land assets are therefore used to create jobs and support the community, not to benefit the landowner. We are open to looking at making houses and parcels of land available where possible – generally though lease rather than sale to protect community control – and on favourable terms. Community ownership also comes with covenants and restrictions that might prevent onward sale. Large sections of the estate are in crofting tenure/grazing with very protected rights (over 200 crofts). Crofting land supports diversity of use, but also restricts availability for other uses, regardless of ownership. Our geographically large concentration of ownership can also raise false expectations within the community of powers and responsibilities – it is often assumed some statutory duties are held by the estate (e.g. roads, recycling etc).”

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## Examples of improvements in practice self-identified

- Decision-making process on approaches from businesses and individuals could be more transparent (such as criteria for and length of leases)
- A publicly available policy for responding to specific requests is needed for clarity and consistency
- Making sure plans/projects/activities continue to evolve and are supported by strong agreements and good governance.

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## Principle 5: Transparency

There should be improved transparency of information about the ownership, use and management of land. This should be publicly available, clear and contain relevant detail.

## Principle 6: Community Engagement

There should be greater collaboration and community engagement in decisions about land.

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## Principle Interpretation

All participants found these two Principles the most straightforward to interpret and evidence. They are short and easy to understand, and the expectations are clear.

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## Types of Evidence Used

Improved transparency of ownership evidenced by Registers of Scotland (RoS) Voluntary Registration. The accessibility of information about ownership through websites or other public media was also considered.

Frequency of communication with communities, including: social media outreach, regular use of websites, and through traditional channels such as local papers and notice boards.

Having a Community Engagement Plan in place to evidence greater collaboration and community engagement in decisions about land. For those without Engagement Plans in place, other types of evidence used included consultations, public events, surveys, AGMs and meetings.

Transparency of governance and decision-making processes relating to the use and management of land was also evidenced by how board members were elected; for example if the land is managed by a Trust or Charity, the sharing of appropriate meeting papers and minutes, and Management Plans being publicly available.



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## Examples of Good Practice

### Example 1

“Our Board is directly appointed by the community members through a transparent AGM process. Community Directors meet monthly, and minutes published, though we also need to consider the balance of information to be shared and not expose personal or commercially sensitive details. [Community] expectations of what is reasonable to be in the public realm are very high. Voluntary land registration is being considered on a phased basis within the resources available. We have a detailed website with clear information about the company structure and remit, and a proactive social media presence. Notices and adverts are placed locally as required.”

### Example 2

“We have a clear and informative website, and voluntary land registration is being explored on a phased basis. We undertook comprehensive engagement on our long-term Estate Plan to develop a community vision, proactively establish, facilitate and support the community forum. A community led land use plan has been developed since with external facilitation. Local observers now regularly attend our Board meetings, which are held locally, and we have a proactive local presence. Community engagement has taken the Trust by surprise – from very little interaction to proactive engagement – the richness has been phenomenal. Trustees are enjoying what they are doing and doing it voluntarily.”

### Example 3

“The estate owner set up the Community Action Plan, a SCIO whose mission is to encourage community planning in the area. Community Councils in the area have been supported and encouraged to develop their own Community Action Plan/Charette/Neighbourhood plan. So far 3/11 of the communities have done this, with early discussions on going with a fourth.”

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## Examples of improvements in practice self-identified

- Develop and publish a community engagement plan (identified by four participants)
- Websites:
  - Contact details could be more readily available on website
  - Improve ability to share relevant local information and consultation documents on website
  - Structure of ownership should be clear on website
- Contact information at local notice board
- Make minutes of last community meeting available
- Build LRRS protocols into business and estate management plans
- Ensuring we are open to working with new members of the community, not just the established ones.

# 4 Process Evaluation

## 4.1 Benefits

Comments in the feedback from participants identified benefits of undertaking the self-assessment process and are grouped under the following themes:

### Shaping the template

Participants were keen both to contribute to shaping the template and to gain an understanding of what is expected of them regarding land rights and responsibilities:

- We wanted to contribute to the development of the template to make sure it is accessible/useful
- Important for us to feed into the process to help share from and understand perspective – we're here for the long haul
- By doing it now, we can benefit from the support available.

### Cohort approach

Those who took part in the cohort approach did not necessarily complete the process any quicker or more easily than those with individual support, but generally found the wider discussions and interactions with other estate managers and Commission staff helpful:

- Cohort experience was useful to get perspective from other types of landowners dealing with the same issues – built bridges and removed some sweeping assumptions
- Cohort sessions were enjoyable and a good way of making connections to share issues and challenges and get to understand the principles better.

## Improving practice

Participants noted their desire to improve practice in relation to land management and ownership and found that self-assessment in this regard can be a useful exercise and can be integrated with management plans:

- It delves into every aspect of the estate, places our work in a larger context
- Logical continuation of our work with the Commission on community engagement – an opportunity to understand the protocols and expectations, drawing them together in how we can deliver our work
- We want to be as good as we can be as a landowner and as an example for others
- Our Trustees are highly aware of their responsibilities and reputation – the self-assessment will therefore fit well to satisfy them that they are delivering the LRRS expectations, and to identify areas where they can improve on that
- We would take the framework to use as part of management plan reviews at key sites and to prompt staff...to reflect more about the community impact of work...A painless way to prompt discussions on site
- A good way to take forward continuous improvement and identify potential wider community connections
- Self-Assessment will work well with other areas of work, including a social impact assessment of estate activities and community engagement planning.

## Understanding land ownership responsibilities

Gaining a deeper understanding of the LRRS Principles was a key theme that emerged among participants:

- Good for getting a proper understanding of the Principles and what's behind them – how they apply in our context.
- Interesting to understand the reasoning behind the protocols and to understand them in more detail. Very useful to make contact with Commission staff and know there are there to support, and other landowners.
- It's helpful to draw all the Commission good practice guidance and expectations together in the context of how they manifest for a working business. Much easier having everything in one place.

## Encouraging reflection

- The SA process provided a structured way to reflect on (and document with evidence) what we are doing well and what we could improve on
- It delves into every aspect of the estate and places our work in a wider context
- Useful for asking questions and prompting on actions that could be taken.

## Evidence of good practice

- A good opportunity to demonstrate to others what is already being achieved against historically embedded criticisms
- Potential to shout more about what we do
- Would recommend to others as a useful tool for reflecting on policies and procedures
- This could form part of our annual review – or be linked to our socio-economic reporting every 5 years as many of the parameters are the same
- Helps with funding, community engagement practices, management plans, accountability and transparency.

## 4.2 Limitations and Challenges

### Formality

The template as currently developed still feels very formal for most participants, with more focus on procedure than outcomes. It could include more challenge by placing greater emphasis on the ‘things to think about’ rather than evidence examples.

### Evidence

Very few participants completed the boxes for areas of good practice or areas for further improvement/next steps. The structure of the current Self-Assessment template is very evidence-focused and these areas were only teased out in follow-up discussions with the assessors. The format, language and layout need to be tweaked to make it a more reflective process and to encourage the recording of next steps.

### Audience

We found that the process as currently set up does not fit well for groups or organisations not already responsible for the management of land and buildings either as the owners or as agents for the owners. However, it could provide useful training around the expectations of modern land ownership for new or aspiring land owners.

### Data

We were also very aware of potential data protection and freedom of information requirements throughout the process. Our approach needed careful tailoring to ensure sensitive or confidential information was not disclosed. A relationship of trust was developed with each participant to provide both challenge and reassurance, and to ensure that assessments were open enough to be useful – that is to constructively identify gaps and areas for potential improvement.

## Approach

Assessments and evidence have been taken on trust. We have not made site visits or carried out an audit of documents referred to. The assessments have also been entirely internal to each organisation (usually carried out by a senior officer and/or governing body member), with no input from external organisations such as stakeholder partners or community bodies. Each organisation has been left to decide how or whether they want to share this or take suggestions for changes forward internally. Our feedback has therefore been limited to a summary of evidence provided to demonstrate delivery of each principle, along with suggestions for additional types of evidence that could be included and some suggested areas for follow-up, as identified in post-assessment conversations. Ratings have not been compared against other participants within the cohort.

## 4.3 Suggestions for Changes

Several constructive suggestions have been received from this cohort about how individual sections and/or the self-assessment template as a whole can be made more user-friendly whilst at the same time prompting more challenge. These are summarised below:

- The amount of information required can be onerous and time-consuming
- An online format could be preferable, with drop down options for some areas and the ability to auto-populate for repeat assessments
- Hyperlinking to protocols at each principle
- Focus more on 'things to think about' rather than asking for evidence to be provided, this will make it more reflective and less of a 'tick box' exercise; the prompts should be framed more positively to engage participants
- Move the evidence prompts and examples into linked guidance notes to make it less 'procedure' driven
- There needs to be less formality in the language used
- Some terms may need explained in more depth, for example what does the term 'land' encompass?
- Make clear that there are no absolute right or wrong answers
- The ability to circulate and publish the results of the self-assessment would be useful to gather concerns and communicate land changes to unstructured forums. Perhaps it needs to have a translated summary for it to be useable by others.
- Develop an accompanying route map with introductory video, graphics and blogs
- Develop separate guidance for completion to simplify the form, including evidence examples by principle/sector and a checklist of protocol expectations for each principle.



# 5 Progress and Next Steps

## 5.1 Progress

The in-house research pilot carried out by the Scottish Land Commission has developed our understanding of how the LRRS principles can be used to demonstrate and develop good practice in land ownership, use and management.

The pilot demonstrates that a straightforward and structured approach can be used to help land owners assess their activities across the whole range of LRRS principles and protocol expectations in a relatively easy manner. Participants for our in-house cohort were drawn from across Scotland including private estates, charitable trusts, environmental charities and community owners. Improvements have been identified that will make the process and self-assessment template format easier to understand and to complete. In their initial feedback, participants identified the challenge of initial familiarisation with land rights and responsibilities. Time, or anticipated time requirements, have been barriers for some, and this has been taken into consideration for our next steps.

Since the initial pilot process, we conducted follow-up contact with Phase 1 participants to capture and evaluate learning and actions taken since the self-assessments were completed. This highlighted that those participants had found the self-assessment process useful in cementing the LRRS principles, identifying gaps in practice and informing their thinking on land management decisions. Some land owners gave specific evidence regarding how they have implemented certain actions identified in the pilot process. For example, a number of land owners have informed us that they have implemented actions relating to transparency, such as providing information on ownership structures on their websites, as well as ensuring that clear lines of contact are made available to the public.


## 5.2 Next Steps

In light of the learnings from this pilot process, improvements are being developed to further develop the assessment tool. These include:

- Updating the current self-assessment template, taking feedback from the pilot phase into account to simplify the format and to move away from a scoring system for evaluation purposes
- Working with partners to develop a jointly supported cohort of members to test the evaluation questions and develop evidence examples relevant to sectors less involved in the pilot
- Working with key public sector agencies to identify how the self-assessment template, or a version of it, can be used to support such agencies to embed the LRRS principles in their work as land and property managers through development of appropriate internal strategies and policies
- Continuing to work with individual estates and organisations to develop and test the evolving template as opportunities arise and/or to inform other support inputs; and
- Testing options for delivery to inform recommendations for ongoing use at the end of the pilot, for example considering who carries out the self-assessment and how this is done (i.e. in-house/external/light touch, or accreditation).

# 6. APPENDIX

## Land Rights and Responsibilities Draft Self-Assessment Template (Phase 1)

Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement	 Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba gov.scot	<b>Landowner:</b>
		<b>Prepared by:</b>
		Name
		Designation
		Date

*As a public body, the Scottish Land Commission falls under the requirements of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to disclose any information (including electronic communication) that it may hold on a particular topic when requested to do so by a person or body. If we receive a request for any information held in relation to any information included in this document, we will be obliged to consider releasing it. If this causes concern, please let us know before you submit your information so that we can discuss it with you. We will let you know if we receive any such request and seek your view. Exemptions may also apply. For the avoidance of doubt, the final decisions with regard to questions of disclosure and non-disclosure shall be with the Scottish Land Commission.*

*The Scottish Land Commission is the controller of the personal data provided by you in any communications with us. More information about the management of your personal data is available at [www.landcommission.gov.scot/privacy-policy](http://www.landcommission.gov.scot/privacy-policy).*



## Introduction

This template sets out the key expectations for how land owners and communities can deliver the principles of the Scottish Government's [Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement \(LRRS\)](#). It provides a framework to help land owners and the people who work for them to complete an assessment of their activities against these expectations. The LRRS sets out a vision and principles for land use, management, and ownership in Scotland. The Commission's work on the effects of scale and concentration of ownership made several recommendations to Scottish Ministers. These include:

*1.3 "We recommend that the Scottish Government introduce a statutory review underpinned by Codes of Practice to ensure accountability in the operation of landholdings in relation to the LRRS"*

*3.1 "We recommend landowners review the operation and governance of their land holdings to optimise opportunities using the principles of the LRRS framework".*

Our stakeholders have indicated a clear willingness to support a voluntary review process to help landowners to consider their own operations and governance against the LRRS principles, which will in turn influence the development of a statutory review. Land owners undertaking a voluntary self-assessment will be supported by the Scottish Land Commission to complete the process of collating and assessing evidence, and to identify areas of good practice that can be shared with others. We will also provide information and recommendations to participants to enable them to assess and improve their operations and governance in line with the LRRS principles. Voluntary self-assessments will help to test the emerging framework and identify any changes required such as additional questions or evidence that would enhance its usefulness as a tool and may inform the structure of future statutory reviews.

### How to use the template

This template should be used alongside the LRRS principles and our LRRS protocols to demonstrate how the principles are met by current activities. Each section summarises the key issues and expectations for each principle, with space for you to provide a summary of your own practice, based on the evidence you have collated, and to identify any areas for potential improvement. You are asked to provide a score of your own performance, which will then form the basis of discussion with Commission staff.

The assessment will look at how the evidence you have collected contributes to the delivery of each of the six LRRS principles. Our analysis will look at your current and future plans, and your approach to negotiations, discussions and communications, taking into account public interest priorities. We will provide information and recommendations to help you develop action plans to assess and review your operations. Evidence should be collated in an appropriate electronic or paper file format for verification. So that you can demonstrate the impact of your activities and any changes over time, a normal business plan review timescale of **3 to 5 years** would generally be a reasonable period for your evidence. However, this will vary depending on your organisation and local circumstance, and longer or shorter periods may be appropriate for some evidence. The important thing is that you choose an appropriate period for the information and how you have decided on it.

## Guidance

LRRS Principle	Relevant Protocol / Guidance	Link
All	Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (LRRS)	Scottish Government <a href="#">LRRS</a>
1	Protocol: Land ownership by Charities	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Protocol: Land ownership by Private Trusts	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Practice Guide: FAQs for Charities and Trusts	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Watch: Webinar 'Land Ownership by Private Trusts and Charities'	Commission <a href="#">YouTube</a>
2	Protocol: Diversification of Ownership and Tenure	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
3	Protocol: Negotiating Transfer of Land to Communities	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Practice Guide: FAQs and Route-map and case studies on Diversification and Negotiated Transfers	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Watch: Webinar 'Diversification of Ownership and Tenure and Negotiating Transfer of Land to Communities'	Commission <a href="#">YouTube</a>
4	Protocol: Good Stewardship of Land	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Practice Guide: Supporting Information for Good Stewardship of Land	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Watch: Webinar 'Good Stewardship of Land'	Commission <a href="#">YouTube</a>
5	Protocol: Transparency of Ownership and Land Use Decision-Making	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Practice Guide: Land Use and Management Template	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
6	Protocol: Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Scottish Government's Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land	Scottish Government <a href="#">Guidance</a>
	Practice Guide: Developing an Engagement Plan and Route Map, FAQs, case studies, templates & resource guides	Commission <a href="#">Website</a>
	Watch: Webinar	Commission <a href="#">YouTube</a>

## Measuring Performance

When we ask you to assess your own performance using a score, the following guidelines may help you to think where you currently sit. Your score is unlikely to be the same for all principles. Use the evidence you have collated to think which level you can comfortably demonstrate now. Your actions for improvement may be identified from gaps in evidence, or what you assess might be required to reach the next level within a reasonable timescale.

**Level 6: Excellent** – outstanding, sector leading

Activities are models of best practice and demonstrate contribution to the public interest to a high degree. Levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

**Level 5: Very Good** – major strengths

There are few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not harm the public interest.

**Level 4: Good** – important strengths with few areas for improvement.

There are important strengths in practice, but also some aspects in which improvement is required. There is capacity and a positive attitude to improve within a reasonable timescale.

**Level 3: Satisfactory** – some strengths with several areas for improvement.

Strengths have a positive impact, but just outweigh weaknesses. Weaknesses may not have a substantially adverse impact on the public interest but reduce the overall positive impact.

**Level 2: Weak** – room for considerable improvement.

There are some strengths in current practice, but also important areas for improvement. Weaknesses may diminish or harm the public interest.

**Level 1: Basic** – just starting out, requires significant improvement, or not applicable to current activities.

There are many weaknesses that require an urgent and sustained course of action.

## Your Context

<b>Name of organisation / landholding</b>		
<b>Location of landholding(s)</b> <i>(include local authority / area / community settlement/s)</i>	(you may wish to include a map)	
<b>Size of landholding(s) in hectares</b>	<b>Maturity of Landholding:</b> Length of Current Ownership / Tenure	Up to 5 years/ 6 to 10 years / 11 to 20 years / more than 20 years
<b>Main purpose / existing use of land / buildings</b> <i>(select all that apply and include a brief description / explanation as required)</i>	Sporting / Forestry / Conservation / Renewables / Farming / Crofting / Marine / Housing / Tourism Accommodation / Tourism Business / Community Business / Community Facility /Amenity / Training facility / Commercial Business / Commercial Office / Manufacturing / Other (please describe below)	
<b>Type of organisation</b> <i>(select all that apply)</i>	Trust / Charity / Community owned / Public / Non-governmental organisation / Private / Unincorporated association/ Company Ltd by Guarantee/ SCIO / CIC/ Bencom/ Other	
<b>Governance structure/ any significant controlling interests</b> <i>(describe Board / committee / other decision-making structures)</i>		
<b>Staff structure / number employed</b> <i>(you may wish to include a structure chart)</i>		
<b>Any associated businesses</b> <i>(e.g. trading subsidiaries, other related businesses or stand-alone companies that contribute all or part of their surplus to your business)</i>		
<b>Associated memberships / regulators</b>		
<b>Do you have a business plan or strategic plan?</b>	Yes / No – and	
<b>Any other relevant information, including alignment with local or national strategic plans, for example</b>		
<b>Main contact name</b>		
<b>Email address</b>		
<b>Telephone number</b>		

**Principle 1:** The overall framework of land rights, responsibilities and public policies should promote, fulfil, and respect relevant **human rights** in relation to land, contribute to public interest and wellbeing, and **balance public and private interests**. It should support sustainable economic development, protect and enhance the environment, help achieve social justice and build a fairer society.

The key issues for your review to consider here are the strengths and opportunities relating to:

- the realisation of human rights such as rights to food, housing, work, cultural life, education, and mental and physical wellbeing
- sustainable development and / or productive social, economic or environmental use of land and buildings; and
- recognising an appropriate balance of public and private interests.

Questions to think about:	Suggested Evidence (guidance only)	Y	Comments on evidence, including any figures available (see introduction for guidance on timescales).
If you are a Charity or a Trust, are you following the Scottish Land Commission <i>Land Ownership by Charities or Land Ownership by Trusts</i> protocols?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the land contribute to the economic development of the community? If so how? Are there future economic development initiatives for the land?</li> <li>- What economic opportunities are there on the land? Is the land being managed in an environmentally sustainable and beneficial way?</li> <li>- Does the land contribute to fulfilling and respecting relevant human rights? (e.g. food, jobs, housing, work, cultural life, education, mental and physical wellbeing)</li> <li>- What impact does the land use/change have on current and future population/demographics and standard of living?</li> </ul>	Number of jobs provided		
	Jobs created or lost through changes to land use		
	Number of businesses supported e.g. through leases of land or buildings, grant funding, professional advice		
	Environmental management plan and outcomes		
	Sustainability policy and outcomes		
	Changes to local demographic profile / population trends because of changes in land use		
	Changes to local standard of living / employment opportunities because of changes in land use		
	Trends in availability of permanent and affordable housing in the area		
Any other relevant evidence:			

### Summary of Your Current Position for LRRS Principle 1

Considering all the evidence you have demonstrated for Principle 1, how well have you contributed to the delivery of the following:

- You can identify public interest priorities in relation to your land
- You recognise the appropriate balance of the public interest and private interest
- You can articulate your contribution to realisation of human rights.

On a scale of 1 (basic) to 6 (excellent) how do you rate your overall achievement? Tick the relevant symbol and give a short summary of your reasoning here (see notes on page 4 for further guidance.)

1 2 3 4 5 6

**Area of good practice to share with others**

**Areas Identified for Improvement**

**Principle 2:** There should be a more **diverse pattern of land ownership and tenure**, with more opportunities for citizens to own, lease and have access to land

The key issues for your review to consider here are the strengths and opportunities relating to:

- Risks of localised land monopoly are reduced
- Members of the community have access to land to develop and grow businesses, housing, social enterprises, or community facilities.

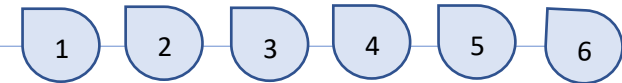
Questions to think about:	Suggested Evidence	Y	Comments on evidence, including any figures available (see introduction for guidance on timescales)
- Are you following the Scottish Land Commission <i>Diversification of Ownership and Tenure</i> protocol?			
- How diverse is ownership of land in the local area – how many owners are there? Is there one majority owner, and if so, what impact does this have? - Is the extent, use and condition of landholdings reviewed regularly? - Have you initiated a sale, lease or working arrangement with residents, small businesses or community organisations on your land? - How has that process been dealt with? - Have any residents, small businesses or community organisations approached you about acquisition, lease or use of land? - How have any such requests been dealt with? - Do you have a policy or procedure for dealing with such requests? What does it say? - What was the outcome – and were all parties satisfied with this outcome?	Number of owners and relative power to control land use decisions in the area.		
	Number of requests for sales, leases, partnership working, or other collaborative working arrangements.		
	Number of actual sales, leases and other collaborative working arrangements.		
	Evidence of a regular review about whether the extent of landholding remains necessary, is it in productive use, good condition and contributing to core objective. Are there opportunities for sale, lease or partnership ventures, for example?		
	Your decisions taken about the transfer of ownership to or management of land by others and the reasons behind them.		
	Copies of policies and procedures.		
	Evidence that title burdens and clawback arrangements are reasonable and do not retain unreasonable control of land after sales.		
	Are there any options agreements in place over all or part of your land? If so who do they benefit?		
Any other relevant evidence.			

## Summary of Your Current Position for LRRS Principle 2

Considering all the evidence you have demonstrated for Principle 2, how well have you contributed to the delivery of the following:

- You are open to approaches by residents, small businesses, or community organisations relating to ownership, lease and use of land and their reasons for requiring the land
- You have taken steps to enable diversification of ownership when selling land (for guidance please see Protocol for Diversification of Ownership, FAQs and guidance on voluntary methods for diversifying ownership)
- The current ownership, management, or use of land does not create any barriers to sustainable development.

On a scale of 1 (basic) to 6 (excellent) how do you rate your overall achievement? Tick the relevant symbol and give a short summary of your reasoning here (see notes on page 4 for further guidance).



**Area of good practice to share with others**

**Areas Identified for Improvement**



**Principle 3:** More local **communities** should have the **opportunity to own, lease or use** buildings and land which can **contribute to their community's wellbeing and future development.**

The key issues for your review to consider here are the strengths and opportunities relating to:

- There are opportunities for community ownership or lease of land and buildings
- A negotiated 'willing seller / willing buyer' approach is used where relevant.

Questions to think about:	Suggested Evidence	Y	Comments on evidence, including any figures available (see introduction for guidance on timescales)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Are you following the Scottish Land Commission Negotiated Transfer of Land to Communities protocol?</i></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have any community organisations approached the landowner about use, lease, or access to land?</li> <li>- Is there a policy / procedure for dealing with such requests? What does it say?</li> <li>- Does it consider opportunities for communities to acquire land or properties?</li> <li>- How have these requests been dealt with?</li> <li>- What was the outcome and were all parties satisfied with this outcome?</li> <li>- Have you initiated a sale, lease or working arrangement with community organisations on your land? What was the outcome and were all parties satisfied with this outcome?</li> <li>- Are there any actual or perceived barriers that prevent communities from leasing / using land?</li> <li>- Why are these barriers a problem and what is / could be done about them?</li> </ul>	Occupancy rates or level of use for community managed assets		
	Number of sales of land / assets to local community organisations		
	Copies of relevant policies / procedures for the sale or lease of land or buildings to community organisations		
	Notices of proposed sales to community organisations		
	Joint valuations		
	Evidence that title burdens and clawback arrangements are reasonable and do not retain unreasonable control of land after sales		
	Any other relevant evidence		

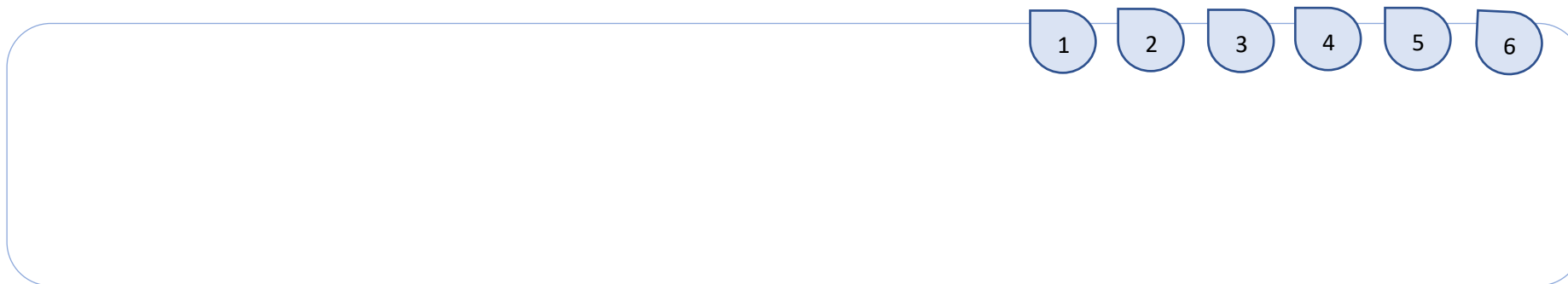
### Summary of Your Current Position for LRRS Principle 3

Considering all the evidence you have demonstrated for Principle 3, how well have you contributed to the delivery of the following:

- You are open to approaches by community organisations for the ownership or use of land or buildings for community benefit
- You can demonstrate reasonable behaviour in term of timescales and conditions for sales / leases
- You can articulate the community benefit arising from such sales / leases.

On a scale of 1 (basic) to 6 (excellent) how do you rate your overall achievement? Tick the relevant symbol and give a short summary of your reasoning here (see notes on page 4 for further guidance).

1 2 3 4 5 6



**Area of good practice to share with others**

**Areas Identified for Improvement**

**Principle 4:** The holders of land rights should exercise these rights in ways that take account of their **responsibilities to meet high standards of land ownership, management, and use**. Acting as the stewards of Scotland’s land resource for future generations they contribute to sustainable growth and a modern, successful country.

The key issues for your review to consider here are the strengths and opportunities relating to:

- High standards of land ownership, management, and use that contribute to better and more productive economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes
- Having an active and productive management approach
- Contributing to sustainable and productive use of land resources and the public good.

Questions to think about:	Suggested Evidence	Y	Comments on evidence, including any figures available (see introduction for guidance on timescales)
- Are you following the Scottish Land Commission Good Stewardship of Land protocol?			
- How is the land managed? - Are land or buildings in good condition and used productively? - Are long-term social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts considered? - Does land management contribute to public benefits and local or national strategic goals, now and in the long term? - Have any issues been raised by others about the way land is managed or used? If so, how were they dealt with? - Is the land (or any part of it, including buildings) vacant or derelict? - Are there any barriers to its sustainable and responsible management and use? - What are the aspirations / future strategy for the land?	Strategic land management plan in place		
	Accreditation awards		
	Participation in voluntary schemes or awards		
	Plans to bring derelict or vacant land back into use, including interim use and / or plans options for lease, disposal or collaborative uses		
	Employment opportunities		
	Affordable and permanent housing supply		
	Social, cultural and environmental benefits		
	Any action taken or recommendations made by a regulatory body, and changes made to the use or management of land as a result		
	Any other relevant evidence		

### Summary of Your Current Position for LRRS Principle 4

Considering all the evidence you have demonstrated for Principle 4, how well have you contributed to the delivery of the following:

- You have an active and productive management approach that does not have a negative impact on the local community, other land users, or neighbouring properties
- Your activities promote sustainable development of land by contributing to better and more productive economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes in the long term
- You can demonstrate responsible governance.

On a scale of 1 (basic) to 6 (excellent) how do you rate your overall achievement? Tick the relevant symbol and give a short summary of your reasoning here (see notes on page 4 for further guidance).

1 2 3 4 5 6

**Area of good practice to share with others**

**Areas Identified for Improvement**

**Principle 5:** There should be **improved transparency of information** about the **ownership, use and management of land**. This should be publicly available, clear and contain relevant detail.

The key issues for your review to consider here are the strengths and opportunities relating to:

- You have transparent contact and management information
- You can demonstrate a fair and transparent system of decision-making and communication.

Questions to think about:	Suggested Evidence	Y	Comments on evidence, including any figures available (see introduction for guidance on timescales)
- Are you following the <i>Scottish Land Commission Transparency of Ownership and Land Use Decision Making</i> protocol?			
- Are details about who owns or has significant influence over land or buildings and the extent of landholdings readily available?	Website content (news, blogs, posts, useful information)		
- Has the Registers of Scotland voluntary process for registration of landholdings been used?	Plans are available to the public, online and physically		
- Are contact details, clear and sufficiently detailed and available online?	RoS voluntary registration		
- Are plans for use and management of the land openly shared and available in summary form if appropriate?	Copies of adverts, notices or signs displayed locally or placed in the local press		
- How do you communicate with local people?	Minutes of meetings or other discussions (as appropriate) that are available to the public		
- How does the community communicate with you?	Plans to bring derelict or vacant land back into use or to prevent land from becoming vacant or derelict		
	Any other relevant evidence		

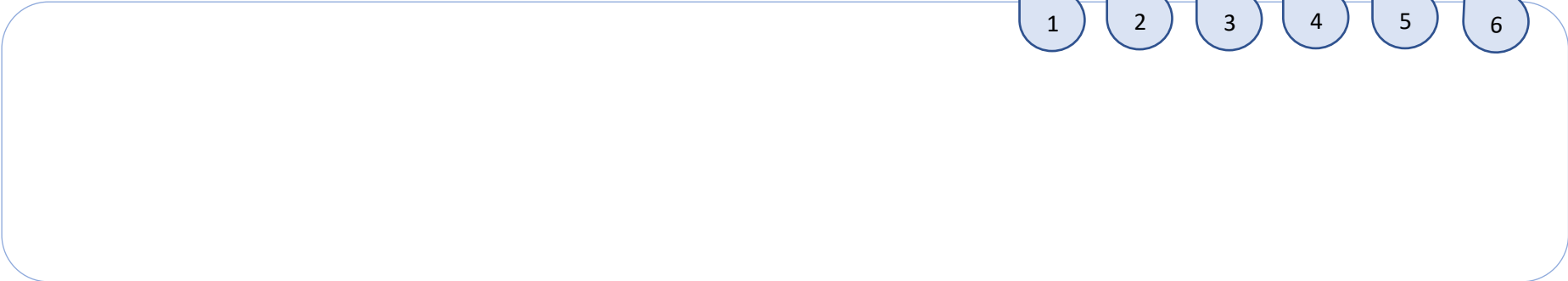
### Summary of Your Current Position for LRRS Principle 5

Considering all the evidence you have demonstrated for Principle 5, how well have you contributed to the delivery of the following:

- Contact information is readily available for the landowner and for those with local decision-making power (a landowner or agent, for example)
- You communicate clearly and proactively about plans for the management and use of land
- Reasonable and helpful information is made available in a clear, timely, and accessible fashion.

On a scale of 1 (basic) to 6 (excellent) how do you rate your overall achievement? Tick the relevant symbol and give a short summary of your reasoning here (see notes on page 4 for further guidance.)

1 2 3 4 5 6



**Area of good practice to share with others**

**Areas Identified for Improvement**

**Principle 6:** There should be **greater collaboration** and **community engagement** in **decisions about land**.

The key issues for your review to consider here are the strengths and opportunities relating to:

- Mutual responsibilities for community participation and engagement.

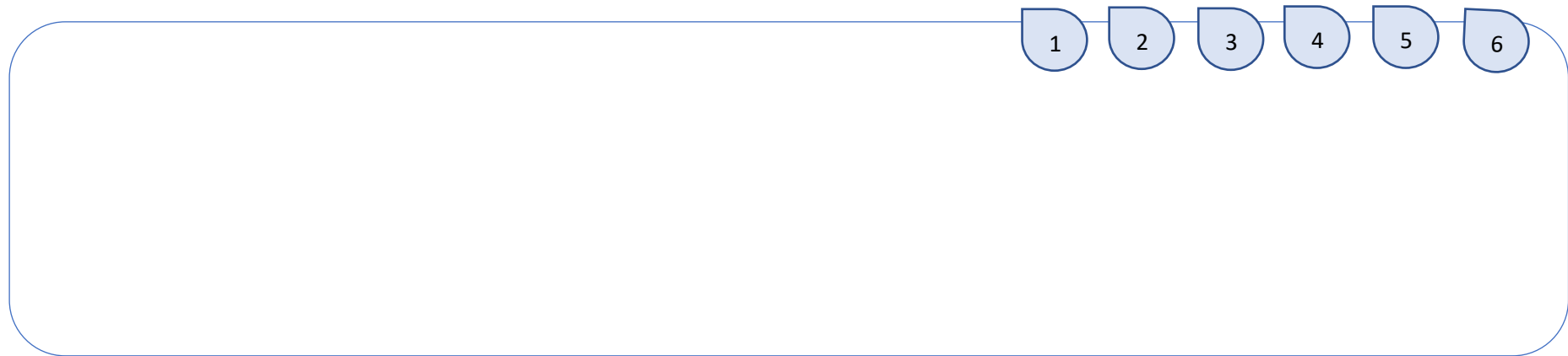
Questions to think about:	Suggested Evidence	Y	Comments on evidence, including any figures available (see introduction for guidance on timescales)
- <i>Are you following the Scottish Land Commission Community Engagement in Decisions Relating to Land protocol?</i>			
- Have requests for meetings or information been reasonably accommodated? - Is there a community engagement plan in place? - Has the community been given the opportunity to influence any development plans? - Has information about anticipated changes been provided early enough for there to be a reasonable opportunity for community views to influence decisions? - How has the community been engaged in decisions about land? - Are appropriate arrangements in place for recording actions and decisions from engagement activities? - Has the community been given feedback on how views have been considered in decisions made?	Community engagement plan developed and published		
	Minutes of meetings		
	Documents relating to consultations / surveys		
	Copies of relevant correspondence		
	Feedback from consultations / surveys		
	Contact details		
	Website content Any other relevant evidence		

### Summary of Your Current Position for LRRS Principle 6

Considering all the evidence you have demonstrated for Principle 6, how well have you contributed to the delivery of the following:

- There is genuine engagement and collaboration with the local community
- Communities are supported and encouraged to participate in a positive manner
- Concerns, questions and requests for information are responded to in a timely manner
- Information about land use decisions is accessible and easy to understand.

On a scale of 1 (basic) to 6 (excellent) how do you rate your overall achievement? Tick the relevant symbol and give a short summary of your reasoning here (see notes on page 4 for further guidance).



A large rounded rectangular box for writing a summary of reasoning. At the top right of the box, there is a horizontal scale with six numbered circles (1 to 6) that can be ticked. The circles are light blue with a darker blue outline and contain the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 respectively.

**Area of good practice to share with others**

**Areas Identified for Improvement**



**Landowner Evaluation of the Self-Assessment Process** (To complete in discussion with SLC at the end of the review process)

1. Why did you decide to complete a voluntary self-assessment?
2. Are there other areas of work that it supports or adds to? How useful has it been in developing you thinking for your land / business management plans?
3. Will you be using the framework on an ongoing basis or is this a one-off exercise for you?
4. Was the process easy or complex to complete?
5. How much time did it take / what resources were needed / who needed to be involved?
6. Are there changes required to the framework, including any additional questions or evidence suggestions?
7. Is there any other support or guidance required to help others complete a similar self-assessment?
8. Would you recommend the process to others? And why do you say this?
9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

**Assessor Report** (for completion by Scottish Land Commission Assessor after the self-assessment is completed)

To what extent has the landowner been able to demonstrate delivery of the LRRS principles and how have they done this? Has their evidence been tested / verified?

Does the evidence available support the landowner's self-assessment? If not, why / what additional evidence may be required?

What suggestions or information can be provided to help the landowner improve future operations and governance in line with LRRS principles?

Are there areas or particularly good practice that could be shared with others as a case study?

## Assessor Report for Scottish Land Commission

Assess the benefits or limitations of the framework, including the time and resources required to complete it.

Identify any changes required to framework, including additional questions or evidence that would enhance its usefulness.

Identify any additional information or supporting material required to help landowners complete a self-assessment.



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

## Contact us

- @ [info@landcommission.gov.scot](mailto:info@landcommission.gov.scot)
- 01463 423 300
- [www.landcommission.gov.scot](http://www.landcommission.gov.scot)

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