

Soil awareness and education: some approaches in Scotland

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Objectives of Knowledge Exchange

- To raise awareness of the value of soil to society
- To develop methods and language appropriate to different sectors
- To convince politicians that our research should have continued funding
- To educate



Target audiences

1. Scientific community
2. Scottish and UK governments (+ Europe)
3. Other public institutions
4. Non Government Organisations (NGOs)
5. Commercial Companies
6. Land Managers
7. Politicians (Local, National, International)
8. The Public (possibly the biggest challenge across Europe?)

We find that different audiences require different approaches

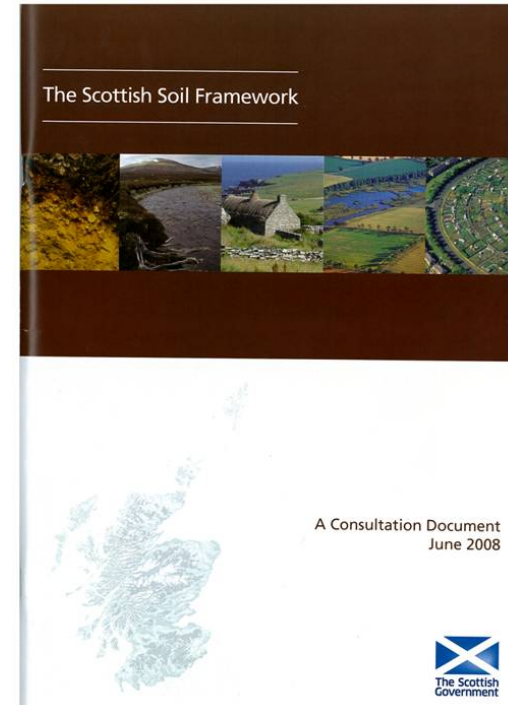


The Scottish Soil Framework

- Although written by SG policy unit, considerable input from scientists, including a six month secondment; positive interaction between policy and science

Key lessons:

- partnership working requires persistence in order to build up trust and maintain relationships
- a win-win situation. Policy gains from greater interaction with scientists.
- Scientists gain from greater recognition from politicians



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26th May – today!



Engagement with politicians

Joint working with Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) to produce briefing notes

Direct contact with politicians



The Public

- Engagement through education
 - Provision of web-based materials
 - School visits
 - Awareness raising with teachers
 - Qualifies as continual professional development (CPD)
- General public
 - Public events
 - Media coverage
 - Use of novel material
 - Targeting specific interest groups.



Educational initiatives

Resources on own and external website

Visits to individual schools

Teaching the teachers!

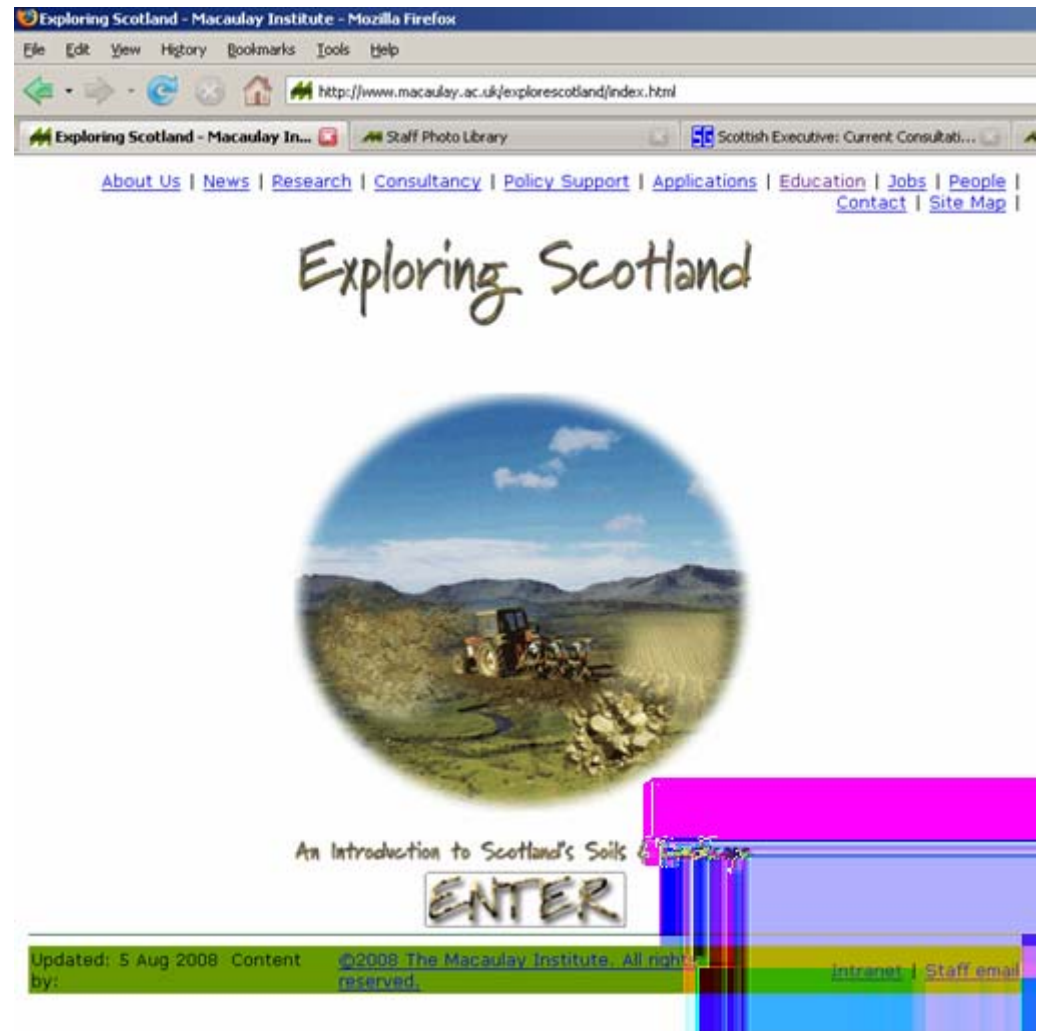
Lessons learned:

Must map onto teaching outcomes

Work with teachers

Must be in the correct language

Demonstrate what soils do as well as what they are



Connecting with the public

Soil is not immediately attractive so we:

Target public events

Use novel material

Use the media

Lessons learned:

Don't be afraid!

It is very satisfying

Most people are interested



Connecting with specific interests

Construction and planning
(with reference to soil sealing)

Land managers

Natural Heritage
Interests

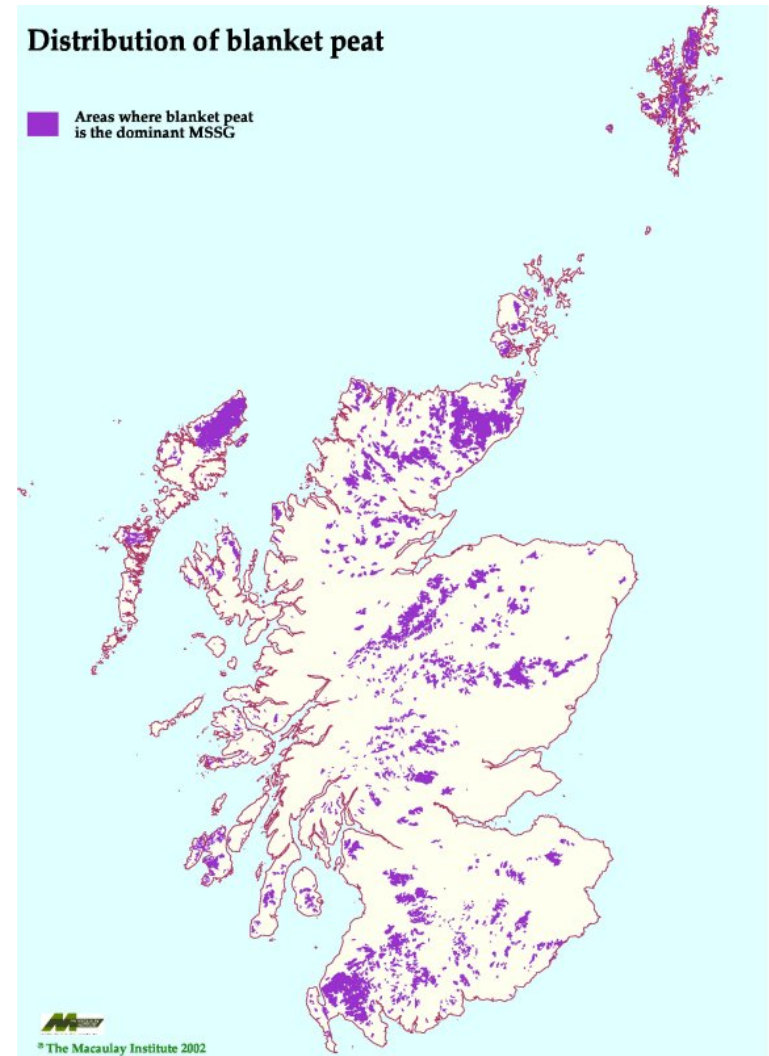
Everyone!



Connecting with the urban population

- Our biggest challenge?
- Rural communities retain some connection with the land; farming, forestry, history, survival...

Are there different cultural aspects of soil from throughout Europe that we can exploit to make our messages more 'exciting'?



ESBN Working Group

- Which sectors should we target?
- What criteria do we use to decide?
- What types of media do we use?
- Should we use specific topic areas to raise awareness e.g.
 - Climate change, food security, loss of habitats..?

Whatever we do, we must accentuate the positive benefits from, and the role of, soil to society



