

# The NETpositive Initiative



Fergus Ewing, MSP for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, using the NETpositive Tool with Philip McPherson of Darroch and Allan Ltd

## Background

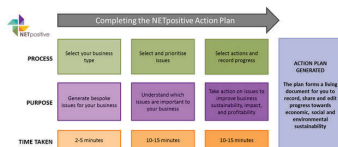
The term 'net positive' has recently been adopted at a corporate level to encompass the ambition for businesses to contribute more to society and the environment than they take away. Over the last twelve months, the collaborative NETpositive Initiative has set itself the overarching aim of leading research and stakeholder engagement around the term, with a particular focus on exploring what it might mean to be 'net positive' at the business and individual level. It is our ambition to support and enhance our understanding of what sustainability means at a grass-roots level, facilitating the future development of more targeted action-oriented information provision and stakeholder dialogue with hard-to-reach groups.

## Methods

We have encapsulated the NETpositive concept within a free online tool – developed in partnership with ESD Consulting Ltd – which, from a user's perspective, allows the generation of an impact appraisal and action plan to promote positive environmental, economic and social behaviour, whilst reducing negative impacts. Importantly, to enhance engagement, the tool is adaptable so that the issues and actions suggested can be customised (and are therefore recognisable) to different user types. The issues and actions selected, added, and prioritised by the user are recorded within a background database, enabling dissemination of information to key stakeholders and producing data for sector-wide research.

## Impact

The tool is currently being used within sectors where users are traditionally hard to engage, but where sustainability is a pertinent and important issue. Within Scotland, we are using the tool as part of a wider project on the sustainability of the construction sector. Outcomes and research resulting from this work will be presented to the Scottish Government in early 2014, with a focus on developing more equitable and sustainable public procurement. A student-focused version of the tool is currently being piloted within seven UK universities, with a focus on personal sustainability and career development, with results informing the university sector on pathways for enhanced student engagement on sustainability issues.



Grimston House  
University of York  
Heslington  
York, YO10 5DD  
[www.york.ac.uk/sei](http://www.york.ac.uk/sei)

For further information contact  
**Chris West**  
**+44 1904 32 4559**  
**[chris.west@sei-international.org](mailto:chris.west@sei-international.org)**  
[www.sei-international.org](http://www.sei-international.org)