



**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE
INFRASTRUCTURE OF
VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS
IN SCOTLAND**

**A RESEARCH REPORT FOR THE HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
SCOTLAND (HEACS)**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team would like to thank all the participants who contributed their valuable time and insight to this research, by completing the questionnaires and taking part in the interviews and focus group discussion. A full list of participants is provided in appendix one.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to provide HEACS with an overview of the structure and operations of a cross-section of intermediary bodies in the voluntary sector and an assessment of the key characteristics that contribute to the successful and effective operations of such bodies. This is intended to inform wider work they are currently engaged in to develop recommendations for the future development of the infrastructure of the historic environment sector.

There is an extensive body of research – much of it commissioned by the government – that provides evidence of the important role that support intermediaries fulfil. Effective support and representation is key to achieving the full potential of the contribution that voluntary organisations can make to society and the economy. Relatively recent developments in areas like health and the arts have provided further evidence of the extent to which the work of front-line organisations can be enhanced by the support of intermediaries providing representation, co-ordination and support services.

The mapping exercise commissioned by HEACS in 2006, showed a relatively undeveloped support infrastructure in the historic environment sector reducing the scope of frontline organisations to influence policy and decision making that impacts on their work and benefit from effective networking and support. Recent government announcements regarding the proposed institutional changes relating to NDPBs have a direct bearing on this and make it even more important to address these concerns. HEACS, the public advisory body responsible for advising Ministers on all matters relating to the historic environment sector, is to cease to exist under the new proposals and Historic Scotland's remit and future is to be reviewed. This will further reduce those representing the interests of this sector.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the purpose of this study included a combination of desk research, electronic questionnaire, follow up semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. Full details of all the research participants who took part at each stage of the study are provided in appendix one.

Desk research

Extensive desk research was carried out at the outset of the study to inform the development of the survey materials, selection of appropriate cross-section of intermediaries and subsequent discussions and analysis. Reference was made to documentation and data from a wide range of websites, the SCVO database and record bank and recent research relating to the structure and operations of key national intermediaries. All government reports and consultation documents relating to the voluntary sector support infrastructure produced during the last five years were also consulted. A full list of the published documents referred to is provided in the bibliography and the intermediaries' websites are all listed in section 3.1 of the report.

Electronic survey

An electronic questionnaire was sent to seventeen intermediaries, double the number originally proposed. This gave us a wider range of intermediary types, and resulted in

a higher number of survey returns. Thirteen intermediaries responded to the survey (76% response rate) in comparison to the proposal which aimed for about seven or eight responses. In most cases the Chief Officer responded, but a few surveys were completed by Information or Development Staff.

The questionnaire covered the following areas – membership, governance, strategic missions/aims, functions/services/activities, funding and relations with government bodies and other key policy and decision makers and key impacts achieved. The questions and format were discussed with the HEACS working group prior to circulation to ensure all aspects of interest were covered.

Follow up interviews

Follow up semi-structured interviews were carried out with four of the survey respondents gathering more in-depth data about structural and operational issues and perspectives on what makes an intermediary organisation effective. These interviews were used to further explore key points raised in the responses to the questionnaire.

Focus Group

A focus group discussion was organised to explore views on the key characteristics that contribute to making an intermediary successful. Eight participants took part in the focus group discussion. This included a cross-section of intermediaries widely recognised as successful in achieving real impact. The discussion provided a valuable insight into the defining characteristics of a successful high impact intermediary and a wealth of useful recommendations that inform the conclusions and recommendations in section 5 of this report.

Analysis and recommendations

All of the quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the survey and reflections provided in the course of the interviews and focus group discussions have been analysed by the project team. The results of this analysis and recommendations arising from it are detailed in sections 3 to 5 of this report together with specific recommendations proposed by individual participants.

3.0 SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey findings are extensive so the detailed datasets and write ups are provided in the relevant appendices rather than in the main body of the report. A database collating all the questionnaire returns is provided in appendix 3 and appendix 6 provides a full note of the focus group discussions. This section provides an overview of the key findings that have informed the conclusions and recommendations in section 5, highlighting findings of particular interest.

3.1 The Structure and Operations of the Intermediaries Surveyed

The following table provides a summary outline of the structure and operations of each of the intermediaries surveyed, drawn from the desk research, questionnaires and interviews.

ORGANISATION - SUMMARY	
<p>NAME: Black & Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) WEBSITE: www.bemis.org.uk</p> <p>FOUNDED: 2001</p> <p>ABOUT: BEMIS is the umbrella body representing the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector throughout Scotland.</p> <p>SERVICES: Services include: Networking; Representation; Supporting the development of new black and ethnic minority voluntary sector group/organisations; Capacity Building; Training, including Management, Fundraising, Community Planning, and HNCs in Equality.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 150 organisations, plus small number of individuals MEMBERSHIP POLICY: OPEN to any organisation (voluntary, public and private), plus interested individuals.</p> <p>BOARD: 9 Board members MEETINGS: Bi-monthly meetings</p> <p>STAFF NO: 6 Staff – 5 Full-time, 1 Part-time STRUCTURE: Chief Officer; Director; 3 Officers (Information, Rural and Development); Office Manager</p>	
<p>NAME: Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) WEBSITE: www.befs.org.uk</p> <p>FOUNDED: 2002</p> <p>ABOUT: BEFS is a membership organisation supporting Scotland’s built environment by encouraging co-operation between the bodies that work with Scotland’s cultural places, and by promoting their interests.</p> <p>SERVICES: Services include: Networking, Information, Representation, Campaigning and Advocacy.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 19 Members, 8 Subscribers MEMBERSHIP POLICY: OPEN – Full membership for voluntary sector organisations, plus Associate (Subscriber) membership and Individual membership.</p> <p>BOARD: 7 Board members MEETINGS: Quarterly</p> <p>STAFF NO: 2 Part-time staff STRUCTURE: Co-ordinator; Administrative Assistant</p>	

<p>NAME: Community Care Providers Scotland</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.ccps.org</p> <p>FOUNDED: 1997</p> <p>ABOUT: CCPS is the association of voluntary sector organisations providing care and support services in Scottish communities. Its membership comprises the majority of the leading national non-profit and charitable service providers in Scotland. CCPS identifies, represents, promotes and protects the interests of its members, so that they can maximise the support they provide to the people who use their services.</p> <p>SERVICES: Services include: Representation; Consultation; Liaising with public sector; Networking; Conferences/ seminars; Research; Policy development; News and information.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 63</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: TARGETED – Open to all voluntary sector service providers.</p> <p>BOARD: 15 Board members</p> <p>MEETINGS: Quarterly</p> <p>STAFF NO: 3 Core Staff</p> <p>STRUCTURE: Director; Policy Manager; Administrator</p>	
<p>NAME: Community Transport Association Scotland</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.ctauk.org</p> <p>ABOUT: Provides training and information on accessible, voluntary and community transport and has been in the forefront of promoting minibus safety for over 15 years. Aims to provide community transport groups with the information, advice, training and support they need.</p> <p>SERVICES: Networking; Representation; Capacity Building; Technical support; Funding Advice.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 200</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: OPEN – open to voluntary sector (reduced rate) and non-voluntary sector organisations involved in community transport in any way</p> <p>BOARD: 18 Board Members</p> <p>MEETINGS: Quarterly</p> <p>STAFF NO: 5 staff</p> <p>STRUCTURE: <i>UK Chief Executive</i>; Director for Scotland; 3 Officers, Administrator</p>	

NAME:	Council for Scottish Archaeology [Archaeology Scotland]
WEBSITE:	www.scottisharchaeology.org.uk
FOUNDED:	1944
ABOUT:	The Council for Scottish Archaeology is a voluntary membership organisation that works to secure the archaeological heritage of Scotland for its people through education, promotion and support. CSA brings together those interested in archaeology and supports local archaeological action and initiatives.
SERVICES:	Education; Promotion of archeaology; Support; Advice;Information
MEMBERSHIP:	937 (800 individuals and 137 societies and institutions)
MEMBERSHIP POLICY:	OPEN – open to interested individuals and institutions
BOARD:	16
MEETINGS:	3 times per year
STAFF NO:	9 staff (7 Full-time, 2 Part-time)
STRUCTURE:	General: Director; Assistant Director; 4 Officers, 3 Administrators Publications: 4 Editors/ Managers
NAME:	Development Trusts Association Scotland
WEBSITE:	www.dtascot.org.uk
FOUNDED:	2003
ABOUT:	Aims to act as the representative body for the growing number of local groups and organisations being formed to promote social, economic or physical regeneration within their communities. It will lobby with government and public agencies for resources for local development trusts and groups. Also promotes policies of transferring public services and assets to community control.
SERVICES:	Networking; Events; Development support; Representation.
MEMBERSHIP:	130 (103 full members, 20 associate members)
MEMBERSHIP POLICY:	OPEN /TARGETED – Open to development trusts and others involved in community regeneration and social enterprise
BOARD:	12 Board Members
MEETINGS:	Quarterly
STAFF NO:	5 staff (4 Full-time, 1 Part-time)
STRUCTURE:	Director; 2 Development Officers; Office Manager; Administrator

<p>NAME: Employers in Voluntary Housing</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.evh.org.uk</p> <p>FOUNDED: 1978</p> <p>ABOUT: The Federation aims to enhance the ability of the Committee and staff in the voluntary housing sector to work together to develop homes which can be maintained at affordable rents for tenants within an overall financial viability.</p> <p>SERVICES: Information and advice; Consultancy; Networking and Events; Recruitment Service.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 171</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: TARGETED – targeted at Registered Social Landlords, but open to Public and Private Bodies</p> <p>BOARD: 14 Board Members</p> <p>MEETINGS: 5 times per year</p> <p>STAFF NO: 10 (8 Full-time, 2 Part-time)</p> <p>STRUCTURE: Director; Depute Director; PA; 2 Administrators; 2 HR Advisors; Recruitment - Manager, Co-ordinator and Administrator.</p>	
<p>NAME: Learning Link Scotland</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.learninglinkscotland.org.uk</p> <p>FOUNDED: 1993</p> <p>ABOUT: Works to advance the education of adults in Scotland by promoting and supporting voluntary organisations engaged in adult education.</p> <p>SERVICES: Representation; Campaigning; Organisational Development; Network Development; Capacity Building; Training; Information; Policy; Research.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 100</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: TARGETED - Open to all voluntary organisations engaged in the provision of adult learning opportunities in Scotland</p> <p>BOARD: 6 Board Members</p> <p>MEETINGS: Quarterly</p> <p>STAFF NO: 4 (2 Full-time, 2 Part-time)</p> <p>STRUCTURE: Director, Deputy director, Co-ordinator, Administrator</p>	

	<p>Non-respondent to survey</p> <p>NAME: Network of International Development Organisations Scotland (NIDOS)</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.nidos.org.uk</p> <p>FOUNDED: 2000</p> <p>ABOUT: NIDOS is a network of organisations which promotes the exchange of experience, ideas and information and provides a structure for the pooling of resources and more effective working on international development issues.</p> <p>SERVICES: Information; Representation; Working Groups on shared concerns/ knowledge sharing; Training; Advice and support.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 60</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: TARGETED – Full membership is open to any voluntary organisation with an international development remit; Associate Membership is available to the wider voluntary sector and non-voluntary organisations.</p> <p>BOARD: 6 Board members</p> <p>STAFF NO: 3 (1 Full-time; 2 Part-time)</p>
	<p>NAME: Scottish Disability Equality Form</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.sdef.org.uk</p> <p>FOUNDED: 1997</p> <p>ABOUT: A membership organisation which seeks to carry forward the shared agenda of the disability movement. Aims to consult, share information, identify key issues and raise their profile through constructive engagement with the Scottish Executive, MSPs et al.</p> <p>SERVICES: Representation; Campaigning; Networking; Research; Information; Advice</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 189</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: TARGETED – Open to all disability organisations and to individuals with any type of impairment.</p> <p>BOARD: 7 Board Members</p> <p>MEETINGS: Every 6 weeks</p> <p>STAFF NO: 5 Full-time staff</p> <p>STRUCTURE: Manager; 2 Officers; 2 Administrators</p>

<p>NAME: Scottish Environment Link</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.scotlink.org</p> <p>FOUNDED: 1987</p> <p>ABOUT: Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations. LINK provides a forum and network for its member organisations, enabling informed debate, and assisting co-operation within the voluntary environmental sector.</p> <p>SERVICES: Representation; Campaigning; Lobbying; Policy; Research; Specialist working groups; Networking; Information Sharing.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 34</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: TARGETED – Open to Scottish voluntary organisations working in the environment. ‘Subscriber’ and ‘Supporter’ membership available to other organisations and individuals.</p> <p>BOARD: 12</p> <p>MEETINGS: Quarterly</p> <p>STAFF NO: 8 staff (3 Full-time, 5 Part-time, of which 6 Core, 2 Project)</p> <p>STRUCTURE: Chief Officer; 7 specialist Officers</p>	
	<p>Non-respondent to survey</p> <p>NAME: Scottish Federation of Housing Associations</p> <p>WEBSITE: www.sfha.co.uk</p> <p>FOUNDED: 1975</p> <p>ABOUT: Aims to contribute to the provision of high quality, affordable housing and housing related services, and to the creation of sustainable communities, by promoting, representing and providing services to housing associations and co-operatives in Scotland, and by campaigning on their behalf.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP: 400</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY: TARGETED – membership open to housing associations, housing co-operatives, local housing organisations, plus Supporter membership available for not for profit organisations, local authorities and commercial companies.</p> <p>BOARD: 12</p> <p>STAFF NO: 28</p>

<p>NAME: WEBSITE: FOUNDED: ABOUT: MEMBERSHIP: MEMBERSHIP POLICY: BOARD: STAFF NO:</p>	<p>Non-respondent to survey</p> <p>Museums Galleries Scotland www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk</p> <p>1964</p> <p>SMC is the lead body for the funding, development and advocacy of over 340 museums and galleries in Scotland. Its aims are: - To promote recognition of the role played by museums in the cultural, social and economic vitality of Scotland. - To develop a national strategy for the provision of an effective museum service. - To promote good management, high professional standards and the effective use of resources by museums in Scotland.</p> <p>410 TARGETED – Associate membership is open to any organisations with charitable status and a collection. Full membership is only open to organisations registered under the Museums Accreditation Scheme.</p> <p>12</p> <p>32</p>
<p>NAME: WEBSITE: FOUNDED: ABOUT: SERVICES: MEMBERSHIP: MEMBERSHIP POLICY: BOARD: MEETINGS: STAFF NO: STRUCTURE:</p>	<p>Scottish Sports Association</p> <p>www.scottishsportsassociation.org.uk</p> <p>1983</p> <p>Aims to ensure that through effective consultation the interests of those national bodies representing sport and physical recreation in Scotland are properly represented and reflected in the deliberations of sportscotland and the government.</p> <p>Consultation; Representation; Lobbying; Networking;</p> <p>53 members (Full) TARGETED – open only to voluntary sports governing bodies, although there are also 17 associate members.</p> <p>10 Board Members 5 times per year</p> <p>1 Policy Director</p>

<p>NAME:</p> <p>WEBSITE:</p> <p>FOUNDED:</p> <p>ABOUT:</p> <p>SERVICES:</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP:</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP POLICY:</p> <p>BOARD:</p> <p>MEETINGS:</p> <p>STAFF NO:</p> <p>STRUCTURE:</p>	<p>Social Firms Scotland</p> <p>www.socialfirms.org.uk</p> <p>2000</p> <p>Aims to promote and develop new social firms throughout Scotland, and to help existing ones develop their capacity to create further employment for disabled or disadvantaged people.</p> <p>Business development support; Employment development support; capacity building; Training; Networking; Policy; Representation</p> <p>30</p> <p>TARGETED – Full membership open to full and emerging Social Firms. Associate and Individual membership also available.</p> <p>7 Board members</p> <p>Every 6-8 weeks</p> <p>4 Full-time Staff</p> <p>Chief Officer; 2 Co-ordinators; Finance & Resource Manager</p>
<p>NAME:</p> <p>WEBSITE:</p> <p>FOUNDED:</p> <p>ABOUT:</p> <p>BOARD:</p> <p>STAFF NO:</p> <p>STRUCTURE:</p>	<p>Non-respondent to survey</p> <p>Voluntary Arts Scotland</p> <p>www.vascotland.org.uk</p> <p>1998</p> <p>Promotes practical participation in the arts and crafts. Supports voluntary arts practitioners through their umbrella bodies, and individually if there is no such representation. Works with funders and policy makers to improve the policy environment for everyone participating in the arts. Aims to increase participation in the arts.</p> <p>12 Board Members</p> <p>1</p> <p>Executive Officer</p>

NAME:	Voluntary Health Scotland
WEBSITE:	www.vhscotland.org.uk
FOUNDED:	2000
ABOUT:	As the national network of voluntary health organisations, VHS works to maximise the impact of the voluntary sector on health improvement and health care. It does this through seeking a greater role for the voluntary sector in service delivery, fostering partnerships with the NHS and Scottish public sector, and supporting the development of local health partnerships and initiatives.
SERVICES:	Representation; Lobbying; Information; Support; Networking; Events and Seminars.
MEMBERSHIP:	320
MEMBERSHIP POLICY:	TARGETED – membership is open to any independent non-profit distributing organisation whose purpose is to improve health and health care in Scotland.
BOARD:	10
MEETINGS:	Bi-monthly
STAFF NO:	5 Staff (2 Full-time, 3 Part-time)
STRUCTURE:	Director; 3 Officer grades (Information/IT Officer, Development Officer, Office Manager) plus part-time Admin Assistant

3.2 The questionnaire and interview returns

The survey was sent to 17 intermediaries, which is more than the original proposal had planned. This gave us a wider range of intermediary types, and resulted in a higher number of survey returns. 13 intermediaries responded to the survey (76% response rate) in comparison to the proposal which aimed for about 7 or 8 responses. In most cases the chief officer responded, but a few surveys were completed by Information or Development Staff.

Survey respondents were asked whether they would be able to attend a focus group and/or take part in follow up telephone interviews.

Semi-structured telephone interviews were carried out with four of the questionnaire respondents to provide a more in-depth overview of their structure, operations and impact achieved and gain their perspective on what characteristics contribute to the success of intermediary activity.

Participants in the interviews were selected from the respondents not attending the focus group to ensure the widest range of views.

The semi-structured interviews built on the data collected in the survey, and were tailored to each respondent, covering most if not all of the following issue ‘clusters’: Membership development and representation; Board and Subcommittee structures; Staff and Staffing levels; Roles & Functions; Services & Activities; Income &

Sustainability; Relations with other intermediaries; Relations with policy-makers (national and local).

Telephone interviewees' comments on these operational issues have been integrated into this section of the report under the appropriate headings.

The participants were also asked in more detail about their achievements and impact if this was not clear from their survey response, and asked what from their perspective makes a good intermediary. They were also asked for any words of advice they would give a new intermediary and its funder. These comments have been integrated with the focus group responses and are included in section 3.3.

Membership

All respondent intermediaries are membership organisations.

All charge membership fees, but importance of this as a funding source spans the whole spectrum from 'Very Important' to 'Not at all Important'.

All respondent intermediaries have a database of members, which they use to communicate with members in a number of ways.

Size of membership varies significantly. Some intermediaries are very targeted, representing less than 30 members. Others have over 200 members, and have very open membership policies.

Almost all intermediaries have either private and/or public members – i.e. they do not restrict membership to voluntary organisations only.

Most intermediaries have seen their membership stay at roughly the same level in the last year, although all intermediaries interviewed were keen to increase their membership for a range of reasons:

“Our strength is not necessarily in our size, but in having a good mix of members”
 “We’re keen to see more members – not for fees or to make representation claims – but to ensure a healthy, vibrant community”
 “We estimate that at least 50 % of our sector are members. This high proportion is a big plus when it comes to credibility, and makes a real statement to policy-makers.”

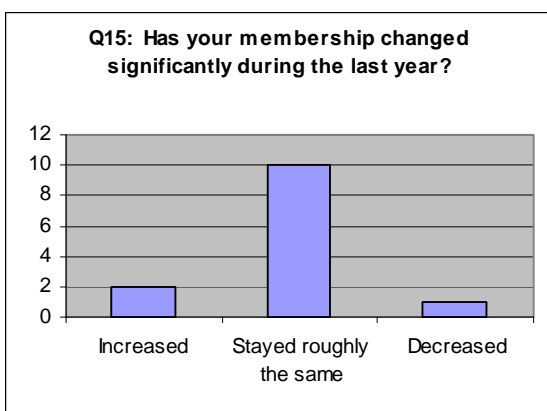


Fig 1. Membership

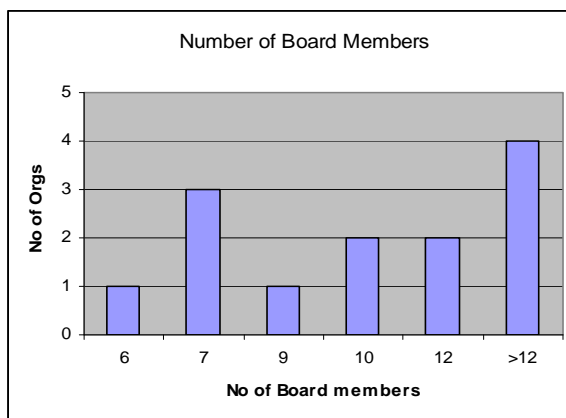


Fig 2. Board Members

Boards

The organisations surveyed had a wide range of Board sizes, with the number of Board members sitting anywhere between 6 and 18 people.

Of the organisations surveyed, 6 had representatives from the public or private sector sitting on their boards. There were some mixed views on this. Most of the telephone interviewees thought it had a positive impact on the organisation, but that voting

rights should be restricted as otherwise there could be conflicts of interest, particularly where the public sector body purchases services from the intermediary members.

“Public and private sector reps bring very valuable skills to the mix.”
 “We feel it’s good to have public sector board members, as it fosters understanding – often local authority people don’t really understand the issues facing people with disabilities, but sitting on the board often leads to better understanding”
 “Currently we have public and private sector board members, who have voting rights. However, we are reviewing this right now, in the light of a sister organisation down south where more than half of their current Board are public sector people. Our members deliver public services so we have to balance a good skills mix with their interests. Co-opted Board members seem to be the way forward”

Boards tend to meet between 4 and 8 times per year.

In addition, respondents indicated that they had sub-committees which meet as required, and Board members communicate via other means e.g. teleconference.

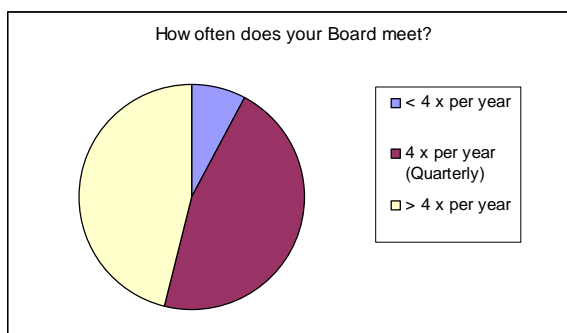


Fig 3. Board Meeting Frequency

The telephone interview respondents indicated that their organisations all had sub-committees, and that these worked well, particularly where the boards are large or where a small number of Board members have specialist skills. Sub-committees tended to be either long-term issue based e.g. Finance or Policy, or short-term ad-hoc working groups on Recruitment or HR issues.

Staff & Board Relationships: All telephone interviewees felt that Staff/ Board relationships worked very well. In general, only the Director attends Board meetings, but other staff update the Board as required, and Board members visit offices occasionally.

Staffing

All intermediaries surveyed had at least one paid staff member, although staffing levels tend to be relatively small, with a mix of full-time and part-time staff. A couple of intermediaries have project staff working on specific projects which have not been included in the totals below:

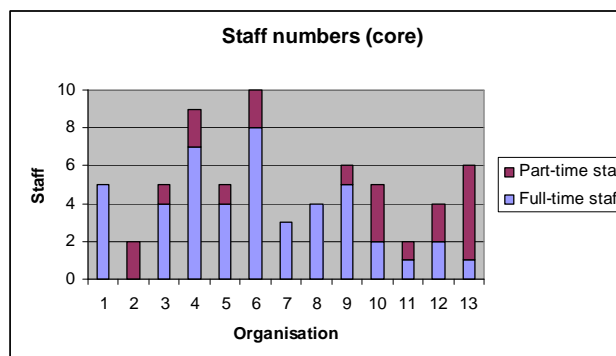
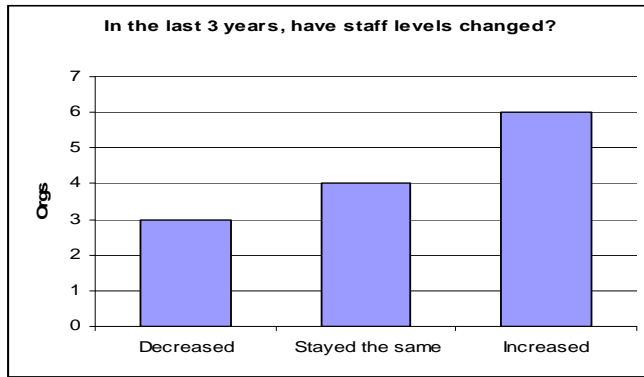


Fig 4. Staff Numbers: Full and Part-time



Staffing levels have in general increased over the last three years, but some organisations have seen a decrease, mainly as projects have come to an end.

Fig 5. Staffing Changes

In the telephone interviews, most of the respondents felt that their staff size was about right, although all of them were stretched and many said they would ideally have more staff.

“We could always do with a couple more staff! Having an extra member of staff or two would allow us to have greater impact as we could attend more meetings and sit on other projects, but also we could do proper consultations and focus groups.”

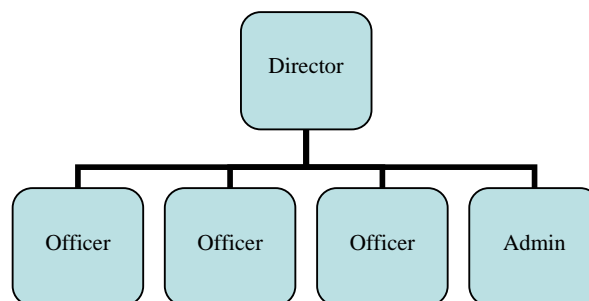
“All our staff are stretched and we could easily employ more staff to carry out roles –if funding was available. Having more staff has helped our team to increase our impact, and we could do much more”

“We’ve recently employed more staff to reach new organisations and provide support, but growing our staff isn’t really our aim – we’re investing in our members’ growth instead”

“One benefit of a small staff group is that working together in one office does make communication easier. Things get done quicker and it is easy for staff to share roles”

Staff structures tend to be compact and straightforward. The average organisation surveyed tended to be led by a Director or Chief Executive, supported by two or three managers or officers (e.g. Development or Information Officer; Policy Manager; Co-ordinator) and by an Administrator.

A common structure appears to be:



Strategic Planning

All respondent intermediaries questioned have a Strategic Plan.

Most intermediaries said they developed their strategic plan in consultation with their members only.

Roles And Functions

The survey respondents felt that their most important functions were, in order of importance:

1. Representation
2. Communication & networking
3. Policy and Research
4. Promoting Good Practice
5. Growth & Development
6. Brokerage and partnership building

All intermediaries surveyed fulfilled a dual role, balancing policy and lobbying work with practical support and information provision:

Key Role: Representing their members in public debates and consultations with the Scottish Government, NDPBs, and Local Authorities, carrying out policy work and consultations, and conducting research to underpin policies.

Key Role: Supporting members day to day work by facilitating Communication and Networking, and by providing practical support, e.g. providing members with information and services to support them in their day to day work, or organisational development support.

Policy & Research: The telephone interviewees all felt that producing reliable research and policy briefings was an important aspect of their representational role, with evidence helping make a case to government and funders on the importance of their sector and their sector's needs. Having the evidence "helped us make the case and gave us a seat at the table on an equal footing".

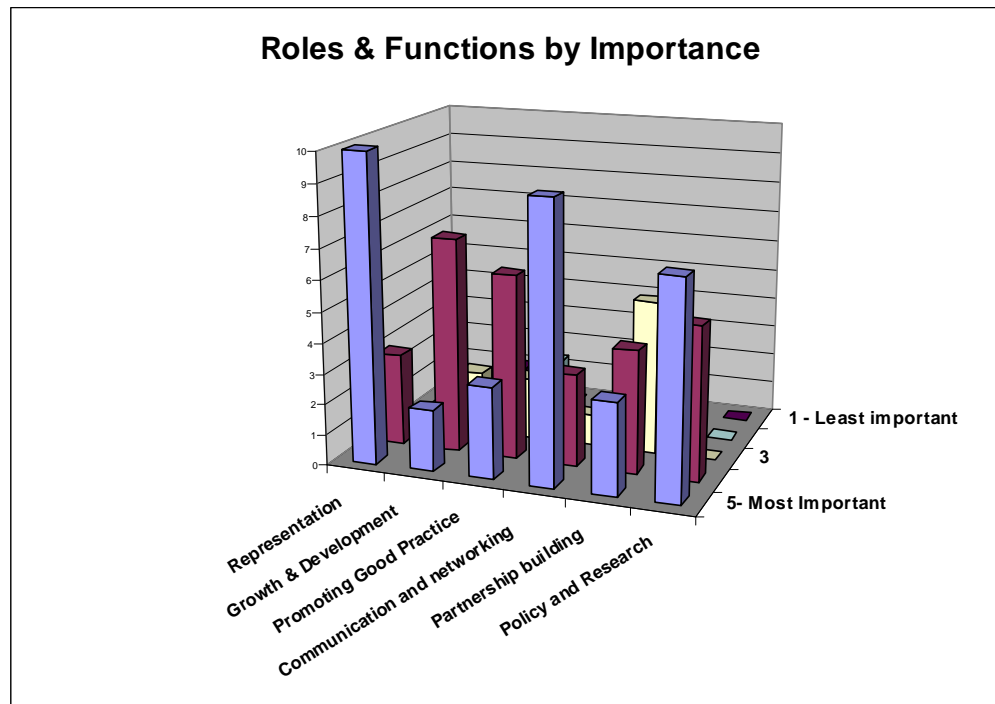


Fig 6. Roles & Functions

National Representation

All respondents meet regularly with the Scottish Government.

All respond to consultations on behalf of their members.

Most listed at least one or more policy / planning partnerships they are involved in.

Local Representation

Most of the survey respondents said that they primarily represent their members at a national level, but for all of the telephone interviewees, representing their members at a local level was becoming increasingly important, either in meetings with Local Authority staff, or in Community Planning Partnerships. The new funding environment has also meant that national intermediaries need to invest more time building and maintaining local relationships.

“We feel our role is changing, with the shift from Central to Local government. Up until now we haven’t seen community planning as a key part of our role. Now, we will need to work much more closely with the CVS than we have in the past, and learn a new role in how to influence planning and lobby at a local level”

“We need to get involved more at a local level – after all most of our members are not ‘policy people’ – they just want to deliver a good service locally to the people that rely on them”

“A drawback for us as a national intermediary is that we’ll need to familiarise ourselves with 32 different political environments BUT a big plus is that we are not funded by LAs and therefore can deal with them on more of an equal footing.”

Recent representation activities given by one Interviewee included:

- lobbying in parliament
- giving evidence to the Equal Opportunities Committee
- feeding in when SCVO gave evidence on behalf of voluntary sector in general
- jointly lobbying with other organisations on broad issues
- lobbying on single issues
- having meetings with Ministers (meeting a group of four MSPs next week)
- Meeting with Non-Departmental Public Bodies
- Using website to post news, consultations, and consultation responses

Services

Services tend to be targeted at a range of organisations – small, medium and large and are often available to non-members as well as members

Many intermediaries also provide services such as: organisational development, training and guidance, often in conjunction with other voluntary groups, public bodies or even academic bodies

Almost all of the intermediaries surveyed had conducted a Members Survey in the last 3 years, which has fed into the development of their current services and priorities.

The most frequent services provided tend to be: Information and signposting, policy and research, representation and networking and events:

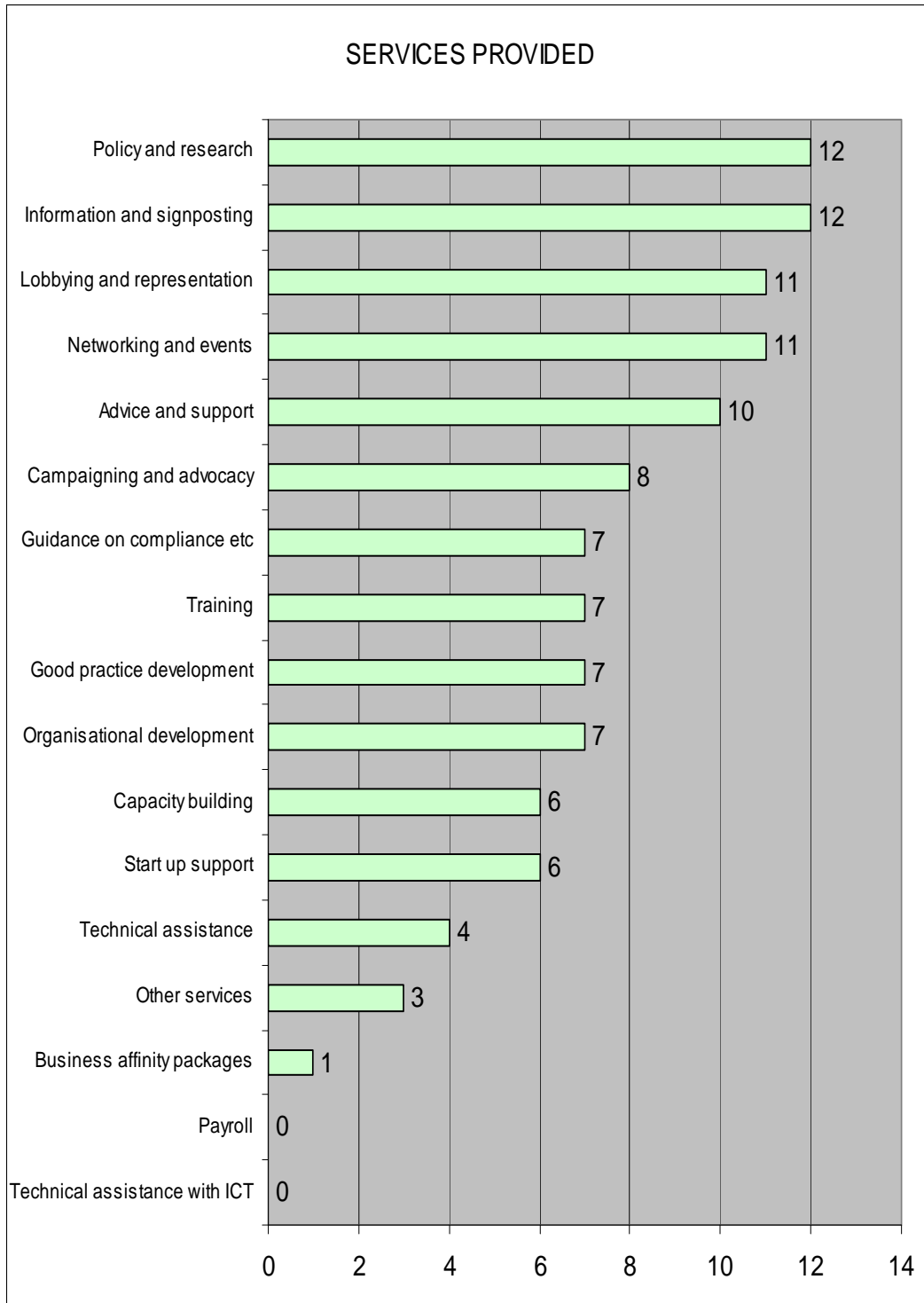


Fig 7 Frequency of Services Provided

Funding

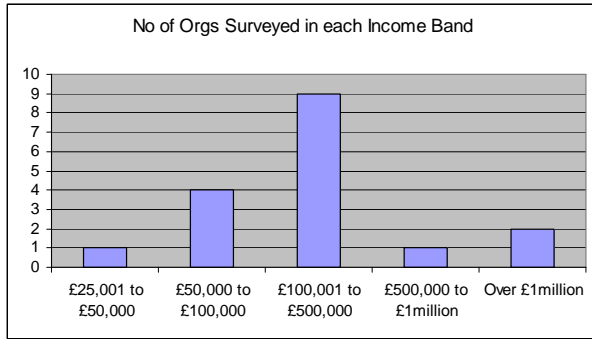


Fig 8 Organisation Income Bands

The majority of the organisations surveyed have an income of between £50,000 and £200,000 in the last year. Almost all intermediaries were in the Income bands £50,000 to £500,000 (income bands taken from SCVO database).

The most important source of funding reported was, as would be expected, central government, followed by membership fees, but most intermediaries require a basket of grant funding and self-generated money to carry out their activities. The majority surveyed receive core funding.

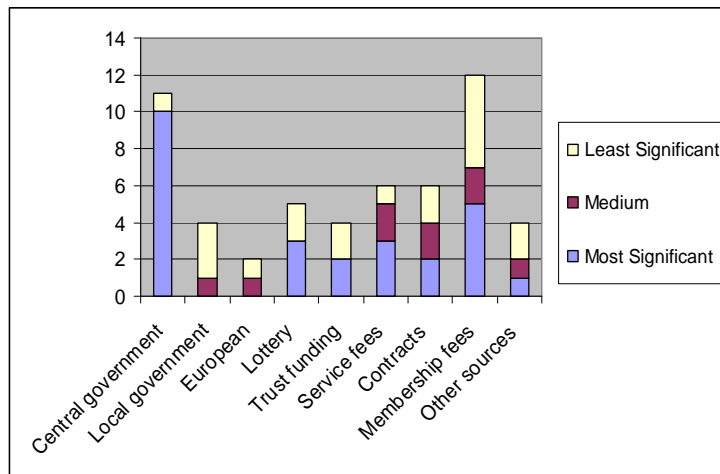


Fig 9 Types of Funding

Most intermediaries questioned are currently unsure about their financial sustainability. The telephone interviewees all felt that their relationship with their main funder (primarily the Scottish Government) was very good. However, interviewees were concerned that relying on one main source of funding opened them up to risk if funding priorities change. A number are already looking at ways to become more sustainable, looking in particular at social enterprise activities, e.g. charging consultancy fees, but most want to avoid charging members for services.

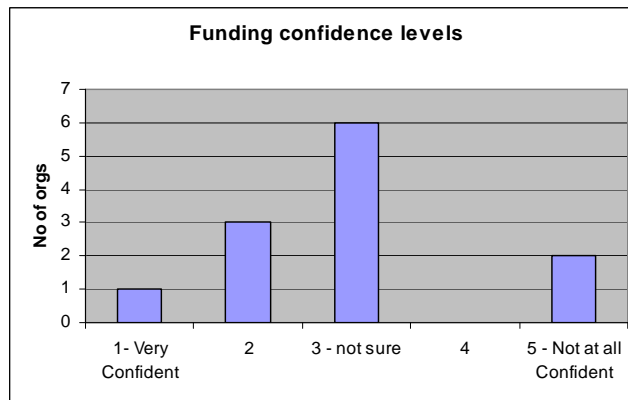


Fig 10 Funding confidence

Key Achievements & Making an Impact

The survey asked intermediaries to identify some of their key achievements and areas in which they have made an impact. The responses highlighted significant achievements in influencing policy and practice developments, including new legislation and government strategies, on behalf of voluntary organisations. Many had also achieved considerable progress in promoting and facilitating greater consultation, enabling voluntary organisations to get their views heard about matters that would directly impact on their work and service users. In-depth details of these achievements are provided in annual reports produced by the respondents. Examples given in the survey responses included:

***Concluding three years of successful development work with Community Health Partnerships (CHPs)**

***Reaching 70,000 hits a month to our flagship website**

More empowered Ethnic Minorities Voluntary sector through engagement, direct support and representation.

A higher and more positive profile for the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary sector and diverse communities in Scotland.

Capacity building for the community groups/projects, especially from under-represented communities, through direct support and engagement.

More acknowledgement and engagement of EMVS and communities/groups from isolated areas (i.e rural areas)

Better understanding of the diversity of the ethnic minority and their needs among the wider voluntary sector and the major stakeholders including policy and decision makers.

Facilitated stakeholder engagement (via consultation workshops) on a series of consultations coming out of Historic Scotland

Campaigned for a new system of auditing the 'state of Scotland's historic environment' - this is now happening

The survey findings indicate that it is not just the board and staffing numbers that effect the success of intermediaries and impact achieved but rather the skills mix and clarity of strategic objectives and functions. Some intermediaries with very few staff have achieved considerable impact in terms of influencing policy, legislation and practice. Strong leadership and analytical skills, good networking and clarity of mission and objectives are key to this.

- Become a recognised partner in consultation with the Scottish Government
- Influence on policy and work that will directly affect membership eg participation on wheelchair project board
- Continue to support and develop access panel network bringing number of active panels up to 50
- Commission research on needs of panels to help them develop support panels to make best use of one-off grant from Scottish Executive

3.3 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERMEDIARIES – FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP, INTERVIEWS AND DESK RESEARCH

The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion were used to explore the survey respondents' views on the key characteristics that contribute to the success of an intermediary.

Eight people participated in the focus group discussion. The group was asked to focus on the following issues:

What are the key characteristics of a successful intermediary?

What works well, what less so?

What helps achieve real impact?

What advice would you give to a new intermediary and potential funders?

The discussion provided valuable hands-on insight into the many factors that intermediaries need to be aware of in order to be successful and achieve real impact.

The dominant factors repeatedly referred to in the discussion were:

- The importance of developing strong and positive relations with all stakeholders, including members/constituents, central and local government, other public sector stakeholders and funders – gaining trust, credibility and recognition
- Good channels of communications to keep constituents well informed about activities and developments – good website is key to this
- Positive engagement with government, other public sector bodies and funders – mature 'critical friend' approach, able to challenge when appropriate regardless of funding relationship
- Clarity of purpose and strategic direction so that all stakeholders know exactly what to expect/ask of the intermediary

- The ability to be flexible and prioritise effectively in responding to needs and demands within often very tight resources. This includes using and helping to develop the expertise of board members, and facilitating members/constituents to act as well as acting on their behalf
- Working collaboratively to maximise the benefits of available resources, including sharing back office services and signposting to others in wider intermediaries network when appropriate

The development of **positive relations** with members and others whose interests they aim to represent and those they seek to influence is key to the success of an intermediary. Trust and credibility are essential for them to fulfil a truly representative function. The focus group highlighted the importance of having a real presence on the ‘policy and politics stage’ and having chief officers and board members ‘with clout’. However, they also emphasised the importance of soft skills and a sound familiarity with the philosophy, framework, approaches and networks of the sector. The ability to act as a conduit and signpost effectively were seen as key, rather than always having to rely on in-house expertise. The ability to act as a bridge between policy makers and frontline voluntary organisations was also highlighted.

Clarity of remit and role is essential, particularly when resources are limited, to ensure all are clear about what the organisations can and cannot offer. This point was repeatedly made in both the focus group and interviews. Linked to this, the ability to prioritise effectively and be clear when it is appropriate to deal with a matter directly (e.g. respond to a consultation) or refer it on to a member, other intermediary or other specialist in the field. “You can’t be everything to everybody”. Examples were cited of intermediaries that had tried to be just that and had difficulty in achieving any significant impact as a consequence.

Effective representation and leadership skills are a key requisite to achieve real impact. Many of the focus group participants and interview respondents emphasised that, to be successful, an intermediary must be able to represent their constituents’ views confidently and be able to articulate complex views. One respondent also added that intermediaries need to have ‘strategic know how’ to take the lead, respecting members views but having the skill to lead where there is no consensus or where there is resistance to change.

Independence and the ability to challenge policy and decision makers are considered essential for an intermediary to be effective. The focus group considered this role to be crucial and there was general agreement with the view expressed by one member of the group that it “makes an important contribution to maintaining a healthy, democratic environment that is so central to good policy development”. It was highlighted that this is a complex area because, as the survey findings confirm, the majority of funding for intermediaries comes from central government sources and difficulties do sometimes arise when intermediaries, in receipt of government funding, find themselves in a position where they need to challenge government policy. It was suggested that it requires a mature ‘critical friend’ approach in relations between the public and voluntary sector that has been achieved to a greater extent in some areas than others. Reference was also made to the importance of being able to

stimulate debate and raise new issues with government as well as reacting to government led policy development and consultations.

Good communications is key to ensuring all stakeholders are kept fully aware of what the intermediary is progressing and helps to ensure clarity of expectations. The importance of being equally accessible to large and small organisations was stressed in the focus group discussion. Needs and expectations vary across a diverse range of organisations and it is important to be able to pitch the support and communications appropriately. The use of case study material to promote successful working practices and demonstrate impact provides a useful tool. A good website and use of electronic discussion fora is also very important in this context but can be difficult to resource. The scope for more emphasis on **shared services and collaboration** to maximise resources available for this and similar common activity areas was highlighted in the focus group discussion and interview responses. There are an increasing number of shared service programmes available to intermediaries to access, including IT, HR, legal, finance and marketing services, and awareness and use of these can greatly enhance the success of an intermediary by releasing time and resources to focus on their core representative and support functions.

The **key role of board members** to the success of an intermediary was highlighted on the focus group discussion. An effective board needs a good balance of strategic and operational skills and political know-how. Board members with particular expertise and political clout - “people who move in the same circles as the movers and shakers” - can provide considerable support to the organisation in achieving real impact.

4.0 DETAILED CASE STUDIES

This section provides detailed case studies about the development and impact of two intermediary organisations of particular relevance to the historic environment sector. HEACS will already be aware of the work that BEFS and the Council for Scottish Archaeology do, as a result of their involvement on the infrastructure working group.

4.1 *Scottish Environment LINK*

About Scottish Environment LINK

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations. As a network body, it is strongly membership led, with 34 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. LINK provides a forum and network for its member organisations, enabling informed debate and assisting communication between member bodies, government and its agencies and other sectors within civic society.

LINK's main aims are to facilitate the exchange of ideas, and to ensure that the environment is represented and fully recognised in the development of policy and legislation affecting Scotland at local, national and international level.

History

In 1987, the inaugural meeting of the then Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Link was held. 14 NGOs agreed to sign up to the new campaigning body. The potential strength of an environmental campaigning organisation had already been tested in the 1982 campaign against the development of skiing in the northern corries of the Cairngorms. The organisations involved recognised that “by acting together, the various objecting bodies had been much more than the sum of their parts” and that the joint campaign had given the organisations an opportunity to share experience and bounce ideas off one another.

Almost from the start, working groups on specialist environmental issues were set up, such as fish farming and forestry. These Task Forces remain an important feature of the way that Scottish Environment LINK works, with 11 task forces active today.

The First 20 Years

Scottish Environment LINK recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, and a report entitled *A Strong Coherent Voice: Reflections on the First Twenty Years of Scottish Environment LINK* was produced, looking back over the first twenty years of the organisation. The report is intended to reflect on two decades of experience, and draw lessons for the next 20 years from past successes and challenges. The report celebrates twenty years during which the influence of LINK member organisations has grown hugely in Scotland, and comes at a time when the environment is higher on the political agenda than ever before. The report attributes much of this rise in status to the huge growth in support for LINK member bodies over the period, their combined membership today exceeding half a million people - 10 per cent of the Scottish population. But Scottish Environment LINK itself has played a critical part in raising the profile of the environment sector, as the ‘glue’ that welds together these diverse organisations into an effective, unified network with one strong voice.

Activities & Achievements

Strong leadership from an experienced board helped the organisation gain access to the corridors of power in its early days, but the organisation faced a constant struggle of knocking on closed doors. LINK’s campaigning role has altered dramatically since the days before the Scottish Parliament – it is not seen as a lobbying group made up of fringe ‘environmentalists’ but is regarded as a valuable stakeholder consultee by the public sector, with members “suddenly finding that doors were being opened to usher them in”. The new political landscape brought increased recognition, albeit along with an increased workload.

A key to LINK’s success has been its flexible lobbying and representation role. LINK often offers a concerted voice, but where members’ opinions differ it gives them the space to disagree while still respecting the views of their colleagues. As a separate body, LINK also allows large non-political members to back a political campaign without alienating their members, or add their voices to a campaign which they may not be regarded as ‘experts’ on. Smaller organisations benefit from the weight that the ‘big players’ carry, ensuring that the concerns of local groups are heard by ministers. LINK has been instrumental in bringing a wide range of voices together on key issues such as national parks by organising conferences.

Recognition has also come from the publication of reliable and authoritative reports. These include *the State of the Scottish Environment 1991* which set a benchmark for future SEPA reports and *Protecting Scotland's Finest Landscapes* which broadened the national parks debate out to include rural development and cultural perspectives, which became key elements of the Labour proposals for national parks in Scotland.

Working with the new Parliament

As well as reports, a document was compiled for the new parliamentarians in 1999 to introduce them to the '*environment movement in Scotland*'. The '**everyone**' campaign also helped highlight the environmental agenda in the new Parliament. It was run for both the 2003 and 2007 parliamentary elections and has been one of LINK's most successful campaigns, making six demands for a better environment for Scotland.

Working with the Public Sector

Scottish Natural Heritage has supported LINK financially from the start, and believes that there is real value in having a sounding board of independent bodies who will comment pro-actively, frankly and coherently on policy issues. And any fears that public-sector funding and an increased closeness to Government could silence LINK's campaigning voice have proved unfounded.

Task Forces

Part of LINK's success has been the creation of specialist Task Forces, which are groups of members and sometimes co-opted organisations working together on issues of mutual interest, exploring the environmental issues and developing advocacy strategies to promote these to other interests, the public and decision-makers. These Task Forces (or 'sub-committees') allow members to focus on specific areas of interest, and lead on targeted campaigns. The current task forces are detailed below, each led by a different member organisation representative.

Agriculture, Convenor - Mandy Gloyer, RSPB Scotland

Biodiversity, Convenor - Deborah Long, Plantlife Scotland

Climate, Convenor - Clifton Bain, RSPB Scotland

Deer, Convenor - Duncan Orr-Ewing, RSPB Scotland

Freshwater, Convenor - Andrea Johnstonova, RSPB Scotland

Landscape, Convenor - Helen McDade John Muir Trust

Marine, Convenor - Calum Duncan, Marine Conservation Society

Planning, Convenor - Anne McCall, RSPB Scotland

Scottish Environmental Fundraising Forum Convenor - Steven Gardner, SWT

Sustainable Scotland, Convenor - Dan Barlow, WWF Scotland

Woodland, Convenor - Angus Yarwood, The Woodland Trust Scotland

4.2 Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)

About DTA Scotland

Development Trusts come in many different shapes and sizes, but share key common features: they are independent and community owned and managed; they seek to achieve the sustainable regeneration of a community, particularly through the development of community assets; and they aim to generate income through trading activity, with surpluses reinvested in the organisation or community.

DTA Scotland aims to help local people set up development trusts and help existing trusts share expertise, learn from each other and work more effectively. The Association also aims to influence government and others at national and local level, and to build support and investment for the development trust movement.

History

Following a DTA UK conference, the few scattered members based in Scotland realised that there was a real need for a dedicated Scottish body. DTA Scotland was established with the support of Senscot (Social Entrepreneurs Network Scotland) and ASTIS (Association of Small Towns in Scotland). Funding came from a range of funders, primarily Communities Scotland, who were keen to support the regeneration work of the DTA, and the Royal Bank of Scotland. DTA Scotland was formally established during the summer of 2003, with a small staff team consisting of a CEO, a development officer and an administrator.

Building Membership

In the early days, much of DTA Scotland's efforts went into building membership, raising awareness of DTA Scotland's existence and of the potential of development trusts. That initial leg-work paid off and DTA Scotland has seen one of the fastest rates of membership growth of any intermediary. By January 2008 membership stood at 103 full members and 20 associate members. New members are currently being encouraged in urban areas, and a number of local housing associations with a 'wider action' remit have recently joined.

Current Activities & Priorities

During the initial phase the majority (75%) of the membership came from rural communities. At its strategic review in 2005 the Board of DTAS agreed that focussing on urban areas should be a priority for the next period. Since then DTAS has been awarded a 4 year funding package from the BIG Lottery Dynamic and Inclusive Communities programme (DInC), which has allowed DTAS to employ an urban-based development officer and a part-time administrator as well as running a series of training seminars designed around the needs of the membership. Training courses to date have included: *How to run a Successful Community Café*, *Business Ideas Generation*, *Business Planning* and *Community Retail*. However, although increased staff levels have allowed the Association to reach out into new areas, the organisation does not see further growth as the key to its future success, instead preferring to achieve its goals through encouraging investment in its members and through partnership working with other community support bodies.

Partnership working

Partnership working has always been key to the way DTA Scotland works. Right from the start, the Association has worked closely with other infrastructure bodies, including ASTIS, Senscot, the Social Enterprise Coalition and the Community Business Scotland Network. DTA Scotland regularly meets with ministers and lobbies for its members on single issues, but often collaborates with other networks on campaigns such as the current 'Local People Leading' initiative where partners including Senscot, the Community Woodlands Association and Community Recycling Network Scotland have come together to represent the wider interests of the community sector with one voice, to campaign for strong and independent communities.

DTA Scotland sees its role as an enabler, not necessarily the ‘doer’, and is keen to see members and local networks of members lead on new initiatives. Part of the DInC funding has therefore been used in an innovative new approach to offering support to the more inaccessible areas of Scotland by commissioning two member organisations to carry out development work locally on their behalf. The pilot areas are the Orkney Islands and Skye. DTA Scotland believes that the best expertise lies in its members. It can provide support to new members, but does not aim to ‘provide’ expertise, instead preferring to provide the meeting spaces and communication channels for members to share their knowledge and experience. The annual conference, for example, brings together development trusts from very scattered geographies across Scotland, who would otherwise rarely have the opportunity to meet.

Helping members help themselves

As a network focussed infrastructure support body, DTA Scotland’s impact can perhaps be best seen not in its own achievements but in those of its members. Not only are these members’ successes responsible for creating vibrant local communities in their own area, but their experiences and skills can be a resource for development trusts in other areas hoping to establish similar projects.

Examples of recent member successes include:

Cumbrae Community Development Company (CCDC)

CCDC was formed in 2002 after a sustained period of community action which focused on the saving and restoring of a landmark building - Garrison House - which has significant civic and architectural importance, and is sited in the main village of Millport. CCDC has successfully managed to preserve and develop Garrison House as a resource and focal point for the local community. Today Garrison House is completely remodelled inside, with a partly-glass roof. It houses the Museum of the Cumbraes, the Garrison Café, the local library and the Cumbrae Local Post Office, for which North Ayrshire Council pays rent, and a GP surgery rented by NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

Out of the Blue, Edinburgh

In 2007, the Out of the Blue Arts & Education Trust celebrated the opening of Edinburgh’s newest multi-arts hub. Following the closure and demolition of the Bongo Club arts venue and studio spaces, Out of the Blue worked hard to find a new home. A B-listed former army drill hall in Leith was identified as a potential venue. Following a lot of hard work and a multi-million pound refurbishment, the drill-hall now features some 50 artists’ studios, a major exhibition space, rehearsal space and a licensed café, and is open to the public six days a week, giving Leith a valuable and vibrant new arts space.

5.0 DESK RESEARCH – Additional contextual information

A broad body of research has provided clear evidence that appropriately tailored support and representation is key to achieving the full potential of the significant contribution that voluntary organisations can make to society and the economy. This includes three studies commissioned by the Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government) Voluntary Issues Unit and Communities Scotland Social Economy Unit as part of a wider review of the voluntary sector between 2003 and 2006: A Review of the Support Needs of the Voluntary Sector (Rocket Science 2006); The Support Needs of Social Economy Organisations (Glasgow University TERU and Simon

Clark Associates 2003); and Support Infrastructure for the Social Economy (SQA and SCVO 2003).

A developing and evolving voluntary sector support infrastructure exists at local and national levels, providing a variety of roles and functions to facilitate the work of voluntary organisations. There are now established national intermediaries covering many sub-sectors within the wider voluntary sector (eg sports, arts, health, housing), providing specialist support and representation to organisations in specific fields of work. A number also focus on providing mutual support to those working in particular roles such as fundraisers, chief officers and trainers. At a local level, Councils for Voluntary (CVS) provide generic support to organisations in areas like funding, constitutions, charity registration, compliance, legislation and policy development and assist individuals/groups setting up new organisations. They also play an increasingly important role in facilitating voluntary sector engagement in community planning. Established Networks exist for both local and national support intermediaries. These are co-ordinated and serviced by SCVO and members meet regularly to discuss and address issues of common concern, exchange information and knowledge and lobby collectively when appropriate. They are also increasingly developing joint initiatives and shared services to maximise the use of available resources. This survey focuses specifically on the national intermediaries but close and productive working relations between those working at a national and local level is key to providing the comprehensive support and representation that frontline organisations need.

The relatively recent development of dedicated sub-sectoral intermediary bodies in areas like health and the arts has highlighted the extent to which the work of frontline voluntary organisations can be enhanced by the support of such bodies. They have enabled frontline organisations to influence policy development and decision making that impacts directly on their work and the members and service users they support. And have provided much needed support, advice, networking and exchange services to support them in their work.

The mapping exercise commissioned by HEACS in August 2006 showed the relatively undeveloped support infrastructure that currently exists for voluntary organisations in the historic environment sector, providing supporting evidence of the need for more investment in this area.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The voluntary sector support infrastructure has been steadily developing over recent years and there are now established national intermediaries covering many specific fields of work, for example sports, arts, health and housing. Summary details of the national intermediaries included in this survey are provided in section 3.1, together with more detailed case studies about two of particular relevance to the historic environment sector - Scottish Environment LINK and DTAS - in section 4.

Intermediaries vary in the terms of the functions and roles they perform and services they provide.

The key roles include the following:

- Representation and lobbying – informing constituents of current policy issues, facilitating consultations and development of views and communicating these views to policy makers, service planners and funders
- Growth and Development – providing tailored direct support services to meet existing needs and identify unmet support needs; identifying new opportunities, supporting start-ups and growth in response to changing needs and circumstances
- Promoting good practice – facilitating sharing of good practice among constituents and promoting developments in good practice and new standards
- Communication, information and advice – providing access to constituents for government, policy and planning partnerships and other public and private sector bodies; providing information and advice
- Brokerage and partnership building – proactively identifying opportunities for organisations to work together; bringing together voluntary organisations and public/private sector organisations for joint co-operative policy making, planning and service delivery; networking and mutual support
- Policy and research – improving understanding of the needs and issues of your constituents; collecting and providing information and ideas on needs, role and developments within voluntary organisations to influence policy, planning and service delivery

Of these, representation, communication and networking, and policy and research were regarded as by far the most important areas by those intermediaries included in this survey. The survey findings have highlighted the importance of an appropriate skills mix in both the board and staffing complement to ensure that these functions are fulfilled effectively and achieve real impact. A sustainable and diverse funding base is also fundamental to this to ensure appropriate resourcing and continuity of activities and the ongoing development of robust communication channels and strong, positive relations with members/constituents and policy/decision makers.

The voluntary sector support infrastructure has been subject to extensive research during the last five years, much of which has been commissioned by central government. However, most has focused on mapping and describing the infrastructure as opposed to considering what success and impact it has and what characteristics contribute to it achieving that impact. Although there was not time or resources in this study to analyse success and impact in any depth, we did use the opportunity to ask the intermediaries surveyed what impact they considered themselves to have had and what factors contributed to achieving such impact. Their responses to this, detailed in section 3 of this report, are key to the recommendations made below.

Recommendations

Research commissioned by the government during the last five years has provided clear evidence of the importance of quality support and representation for frontline voluntary organisations to assist them to achieve their full potential contribution to society and the economy. The Jura report (2006) showed the historic environment sector to be fragmented and relatively unsupported and the evidence suggests that a bespoke intermediary is needed to support and represent organisations working in this area.

Sustainable funding is crucial for an intermediary to achieve real impact. Adequate start up funding should be identified at the outset to cover the costs of setting up the organisation and to fund core staff, office accommodation and related costs for the first three years. Additional ongoing funding would need to be secured by the Board and staff during this period to ensure its future sustainability.

A steering group should be established to progress the setting up of the intermediary. This should comprise at least six representatives from voluntary organisations in the historic environment sector with an interest in support issues and two advisory members with direct hands-on experience in the development and provision of support. Subject to their agreement, BEFS and the Council for Scottish Archaeology should be represented on this group to ensure continuity and the benefit of the background work already progressed.

The brief to the steering group should include the following:

- 1 agree the remit, strategic objectives and core functions that the intermediary will pursue;
- 2 ensure clarity regarding the impact seeking to achieve. What will success look like?
- 3 agree the proposed membership base whether to be restricted, targeted or open and whether to extend to other sectors;
- 4 identify generic support, shared services and networks to link into;
- 5 confirm the staffing and board skills mix necessary to achieve the agreed objectives;
- 6 identify the operating costs necessary to achieve agreed objectives and identify other funding sources to complement the start-up funding (including potential contracts, trading and service fee income);
- 7 set up the new organisation, including constitution, charitable registration, recruitment/establishment of new board, identification of suitable office accommodation; and
- 8 induct and support new board members, ensuring appropriate skills mix, and assist with staff recruitment.

SCVO would be pleased to work with HEACS and the steering group to progress these recommendations.

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A Rapid Evidence Assessment of the Benefits of Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure - Infrastructure National Partnership / NCVO 2006

A Vision for the Voluntary Sector - Scottish Executive 2005

Mapping the Gap - SCVO 2005

The Support Needs of Social Economy Organisations – Glasgow University TERU and Simon Clark Associates 2003

Support Infrastructure for the Social Economy – SQA and SCVO 2003

Change Up: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector - Home Office 2004

Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure: Summary of consultation responses - Active Community Unit March 2004

Voluntary & Community Sector Infrastructure - Home Office 2003

Intermediary websites as listed in section 3.1

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Research participants

Questionnaire recipients

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN SCOTLAND
BUILT ENVIRONMENT FORUM SCOTLAND
COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS SCOTLAND
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION
DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND
EMPLOYERS IN VOLUNTARY HOUSING (EVH)
LEARNING LINK SCOTLAND
NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS SCOTLAND (NIDOS)
COUNCIL FOR SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGY
SCOTTISH DISABILITY EQUALITY FORUM
SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT LINK
SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS
SCOTTISH MUSEUMS COUNCIL
SCOTTISH SPORTS ASSOCIATION
SOCIAL FIRMS SCOTLAND
VOLUNTARY ARTS SCOTLAND
VOLUNTARY HEALTH SCOTLAND

Survey respondents

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN SCOTLAND
BUILT ENVIRONMENT FORUM SCOTLAND
COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS SCOTLAND
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION
DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND
EMPLOYERS IN VOLUNTARY HOUSING (EVH)
LEARNING LINK SCOTLAND
COUNCIL FOR SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGY
SCOTTISH DISABILITY EQUALITY FORUM
SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT LINK
SCOTTISH SPORTS ASSOCIATION
SOCIAL FIRMS SCOTLAND
VOLUNTARY HEALTH SCOTLAND

Interview respondents

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN SCOTLAND
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION
DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND
SCOTTISH DISABILITY EQUALITY FORUM

Focus Group participants

BUILT ENVIRONMENT FORUM SCOTLAND
LEARNING LINK SCOTLAND
COUNCIL FOR SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGY
SCOTTISH SPORTS ASSOCIATION
VOLUNTARY HEALTH SCOTLAND
<i>SCVO</i>
<i>HEACS</i>

Appendix 2 - Questionnaire survey form

1. Infrastructure Questionnaire

The aim of this research is to provide HEACS with an overview of the structure and operation of a cross-section of umbrella/intermediary bodies in the voluntary sector and an assessment of the key characteristics that contribute to the successful and effective operation of such organisations.

SCVO has identified twenty leading-edge intermediaries, including your own organisation, and are seeking your assistance in the form of a brief questionnaire. Most of the questionnaire involves simple Yes/No questions, but we plan to get more in-depth in follow-up discussions.

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS:

1. Your Name

2. Organisation

3. Job title / role

4. Telephone number or Email

2. Membership Information

1. Are you a membership organisation?

Yes

No

2. How many members do you have?

3. Do you have a database of members?

Yes

No

4. Do you produce a public directory?

Yes

No

5. Are any of your members public or private organisations?

Public

Private

6. Do you charge a membership fee?

Yes

No

7. Are the membership fees key to the funding of your services?

Yes

No

8. Is your membership clearly defined?

Yes

No

9. How do you attract new members? Please give a couple of key examples

10. How do you keep in touch with members? Select all applicable

emails

newsletters

website

meetings/in person

Other (please specify)

11. Have there been any significant changes in your membership during the last year?

Yes

No

If yes, please give a brief indication of what these changes have

been

3. Governance and Structure

1. How many Board members do you have?

No of Board members

2. How often does your Board meet?

3. What skills mix do they provide?

Finance

Legal

Fundraising

HR

Other _____ (please _____ briefly list) _____

4. Are public or private sector organisations represented on your Board?

Public

Private

5. How many paid staff does your organisation have?

Full-time staff _____

Part-time staff _____

FTE (Full Time Equivalent) _____

6. In the last three years, has the number of staff

Increased

Decreased

Stayed the same?

7. How is your organisation structured?

If you have an organisational chart or similar, please just forward this to ilse.mackinnon@scvo.org.uk

8. Are you part of a UK-wide body?

Yes

No

Comment? _____

4. Strategic Mission / Aims

1. Do you have a strategic plan?

Yes

No

Comment? _____

2. What are your mission, vision and aims? (If these are clearly stated in your annual report please send a copy to ilse.mackinnon@scvo.org.uk)

3. When developing/reviewing your strategic plan do you consult with

Members only

Wider voluntary sector

4. Do you carry out regular membership surveys?

Yes

No

Comments?

5. Do you use a specific quality assurance framework? (eg EFQM, Big Picture)

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>

6. Do you comply with/have you been awarded any specific quality standards (eg Investors in People) within the last two years?

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>

7. Do you promote any quality standards to your members?

Yes

No

5. Roles & Functions

1. What do you consider your key roles and functions to be? Please rate the following list 5 (most important) to 1 (least important)

	5 - Most Important	4	3	2	1 - Least Important
Representation					
Growth & Development					
Promoting Good Practice					
Communication					

and networking					
Brokerage and partnership building					
Policy and Research					

6. Services and Activities

1. Are your services available to:

members only

voluntary organisations in your sub-sector only

all voluntary organisations?

Comment

2. What is your area of operation?

National

Specific Region

Specific geographic community

3. Are your services targeted at

small organisations

medium organisations

large organisations

all three

4. Do you target services to specific segments of the wider sector, e.g. black and ethnic minority groups, remote/ rural organisations, or social enterprises? If yes, please specify below

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>

5. What services do you provide? Please tick all those you provide in the following list:

- Start up support
- Capacity building
- Organisational development
- Good practice development
- Networking and events
- Information and signposting
- Advice and support
- Lobbying and representation

- Training
 - Campaigning and advocacy
 - Guidance on compliance, new legislation and good practice
 - Policy and research
 - Technical assistance with funding applications, charity set ups etc
 - Payroll
 - Business affinity packages
 - Technical assistance with ICT
 - Other services
- Other (please specify) _____ briefly

6. How do you deliver these services?

Deliver all services ourselves

Some services delivered jointly or by others on our behalf

7. Do you circulate signposting information about services provided by others or refer requests to other agencies?

Yes

No

8. Do you circulate information about the work of your members and the wider voluntary sector to external bodies?

Yes

No

7. Income and Sustainability

1. What are your main sources of funding? Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the most significant source:

	5 - most significant	4	3	2	1 - least significant
Central government					
Local government					
European					
Lottery					
Trust funding					
Service fees					
Contracts					

Membership fees					
Other sources					

2. Do you receive any core funding?

Yes

No

3. Do you apply full cost recovery principles to your funding submissions/contract tenders?

to some

to most

to all

4. How confident are you about your organisation's financial sustainability on a scale of 5 (very) to 1 (not at all)

	5 - Very Confident	4	3	2	1 - Not at all confident
Confidence level					

8. Relations with other Intermediaries

1. Please list any national or local partnerships/networks with which you are involved

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>

2. Do you jointly deliver any services with other intermediaries (eg training, advice)? Which services and with which organisations?

3. Do you share any back office functions with other intermediaries or buy in services from others (eg payroll)? Which functions and with which organisations?

9. Representation and relations with policy makers and funders

1. Do you hold regular meetings with representatives of the following (please tick all that apply)

Scottish Government

Scottish Parliament

Local Authorities

Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Funders

Other

Other (please specify)

2. Do you respond to consultations on behalf of your members / constituents?

Yes

No

Comments

3. Are you involved in any policy / planning partnerships? Please list any key partnerships below

1

2

3

4

4. In what other ways do you represent the interests of your members / constituents?

Please give a couple of bulleting points

10. Impact and Achievements

1. What have your key achievements been during the last year? (If this is provided in your annual report please forward a copy to ilse.mackinnon@scvo.org.uk)

2. Can you provide examples of the impact your work has had on policy, service and/or funding developments over the last three years? (Bullet points are adequate, or if this is easily available in your annual report, please forward a copy to ilse.mackinnon@scvo.org.uk)

11. Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

We may want to follow up some of your responses to specific sections, e.g. Recruiting new Members, Governance or Activities in a bit more depth.

1. Would you be prepared to take part in a Focus Group or telephone interview?

Focus Group

Telephone Interview

Telephone number

Appendix 3 – Follow up interview format

About the Interviewee (prefilled)

Name:

Org:

Tel:

Length of service with org:

Attending Focus Group? Y / N

Date interviewed:

Length of interview:

Introduction: Explain the aims of the telephone interview

This research has been commissioned by HEACS - the Historic Environment Advisory Council Scotland. They are looking at the gap in infrastructure provision for the built environment and have commissioned SCVO to do some research into the ways in which successful intermediaries in other sectors currently work, the different ways in which they support their members.

FOCUS group will be looking generally at ‘what makes a good intermediary’

Also conducting TELEPHONE interview which will look specifically at how a number of successful intermediaries operate, exploring some of the issues raised by the survey in more depth, in particular – your Services, Funding sustainability, and your relationships with other intermediaries and public sector bodies.

We’d also like your thoughts on what makes an intermediary organisation effective
Your responses will be confidential, questions should be general, but please say if you don’t wish to answer something.

About the Intermediary

Membership

Size of Membership –

what proportion of your potential ‘sector’ are actually members?

Do you think the size of your membership matters in terms of your representation role?

What do you think is the most effective way of keeping in touch with your members?

How do you use your database in this process?

Do you think the size of your members (if they're small or large or of mixed size) affects the way you operate?

You said you CONDUCT MEMBERSHIP SURVEYS – how regular are these?

What do they feed into?

Policy direction

Services

What changes in your membership have you seen in the last year or so?

Ask only if they responded Y in Q

How do you attract new members?

Do they want to attract new members?

Governance & Structures - BOARD

How do you recruit new Board members?

What current skills mix does your current Board have? Are there any gaps?

How do you ensure a good mix?

What training and support do you provide for your Board?

Does the Board have sub-committees? Y / N

If YES:

Subcommittee1:

What does area does that cover?

How often does it meet??

Subcommittee2:

What does area does that cover?

How often does it meet?

Does having sub-committees work well? Y / N

Governance & Structures - STAFFING

In the questionnaire you said the number of staff has [**increased / decreased**] in the last 3 years.

Why was that?

What effect has more/ less staff had on your organisations impact?

In the questionnaire you say the number of staff has [**stayed the same**] in the last 3 years. Do you find the existing level of staffing adequate?

Prompt: are there activities you would like to carry out but you can't due to lack of staff?

Strategic Mission:

Prefill via desk research – any questions?

Quality Assurance frameworks

Quality standards

What was the driver behind these standards?

Roles & Functions

In your Q you considered your most important functions to be (*circle relevant heading below*). **Why have you identified these roles?**

Representation

Growth & Development

Promoting Good Practice

Communication & Networking

Brokerage & Partnership Building

Policy & Research

Services & Activities

How do you develop and review your existing services?

Which services do you think your members value the most?

Have your services changed significantly in the last 5 years?
Due to membership demand? Or funding?

Do you charge for your services – and is this a major income source?

Income & Sustainability

Funders

if only 1 or 2 - Do you worry about funding sustainability?

If many funders- do you feel dealing with lots of funders is good in terms of sustainability, or does it make planning your services more difficult?

How would you describe your relationship with your funders?

Full cost recovery

Have you got any additional comments to make about full cost recovery?

Relations with other Intermediaries

How closely do you work with other intermediaries?

How much of your time and efforts does networking take up? What are the benefits?

Do you work locally with groups, for example CVS?

Representation and relations with Policy Makers and funders

In your questionnaire you said you regularly meet with (circle below) –

Scottish Gov

Parliament

LAs

NDPBs

Funders

Other?

Do you feel you get invited as an equal partner, or do you have to push to get meetings? Has this always been the case?

In your questionnaire you say you [**RESPOND to**] consultations on behalf of your members.

What consultation process do you tend to follow with them?

In what other ways do you represent the interests of your members/ constituents?

And as a national body, how do you interact with community planning at a local level? (link to CVS question)

How do you feel about your impact at a local level?

(prompt: do you feel it is your place?)

Impact & Achievements

Key achievements – expand on Q response

Impact – expand on Q response

Do you think this could have happened without you?

And finally, the focus group will be looking at this next week, but from your perspective, what makes a good intermediary?

What advice would you give a newly formed intermediary?

(prompt: what do you wish you'd known when you first started out)

And what advice would you give any funder of that intermediary?

Appendix 5 - Focus group: full note of discussion

HEACS Focus Group

Tuesday 11th March 2008

Attendees

Chris Robison	Scottish Sports Association
Eila Macqueen	Council for Scottish Archaeology
Helen Tyrrell	Voluntary Health Scotland
Jayne Stuart	Learning Link Scotland
Jo Robertson	Built Environment Forum Scotland
Jackie Petitqueux	SCVO
Ilse Mackinnon	SCVO
Malcolm Bangor-Jones (observer)	Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS)

Introduction

Jackie Petitqueux (JP) thanked everyone for attending, and briefly outlined the background to the research and the proposed purpose of the focus group.

HEACS is the public advisory group that provides independent strategic advice to Scottish Ministers on matters relating to the historic environment sector.

Infrastructure development is one of key issues they are currently looking at and they have set up working group chaired by Liz Burns to focus on this. A mapping study carried out by Jura Consultants in 2006 identified a very dispersed, unsupported sector, which would potentially benefit from an infrastructure support body. HEACS are therefore keen to collect information on the structure and operations of a cross section of intermediaries in the voluntary sector and key characteristics of successful intermediaries to inform their thinking and development of recommendations in this area. A survey and telephone interviews are collecting data on specific operational issues and the focus group is intended to complement this by providing a wider hands on perspective of what contributes to the success of intermediaries and their ability to achieve real impact.

The focus group today aims to explore the following wider issues:

- What are the key characteristics of a successful intermediary?
- What works well, what less so? What helps to achieve real impact?
- What advice would you give a new intermediary and potential funders?

Key Characteristics

As an intermediary, you have a body of stakeholders that need your presence on the policy and politics stage in Scotland.

A good intermediary needs to have soft skills and be familiar and comfortable with the philosophy of the sector. It doesn't have to be about an intermediary being at the forefront on all issues, but it can act as a conduit, enabling members. Not leading from the front but alongside its members.

Often an intermediary just has to be very familiar with sector landscape and know where to go to get answers and where to sign post members.

Recognise that expertise isn't just in intermediary but lies within its members

Expertise - Some intermediary staff are 'allowed' to represent issues on behalf of their members to politicians, even if they are not experts in that specific field. Their strength may lie more in knowing who to speak to and how to speak to them.

Remit –

- A clear remit is important

Not just what will it do, but what won't it do?

Who are its members?

What should its role be?

When is it appropriate to respond to a consultation, when is it better to put the consultation out to others? And when is it best for both the intermediary and its members to respond.

Most intermediaries are very small in terms of turnover and staff, so have to be fairly firm about remit, and to balance the cost of responding to a consultation when this may take staff away from other activities.

You can't be everything to everybody.

If intermediaries were to do all the things that members want, it would leave very little time for policy and consultation work

Some intermediaries have failed in the past by trying to be the 'doers' as well, but you can't be everything

(Doers in the sense of service deliverers –not doing in the sense of policy development, workforce development and intelligence, which has to be part of remit)

If leadership is good then it can be quite a powerful place to be, so you need to be clear about how you operate: do you do things for, with or against people?

Credibility is also important, as is being recognised as the first point of contact for a particular issue or sector

Representation

Representation issues

- when can 'the intermediary' have a view?
- What level of members backing gives you a mandate?
- And how can you represent a very diverse membership when they disagree on an issue?

As soon as government knows there is a forum for something they come to it expecting 'a view'

'Representation' can be a loaded word, and oversimplifies the role of an intermediary

There are times when a majority view on something is adequate, but when there are very different views among the membership it is much better to put forward any existing view to a consultation, so that that the consulting organisation knows there are differences and issues. It is important that you try to articulate these views properly in written responses

E.g. The majority of members view is A, but a minority view is B for X, Y Z reasons.

(Example given – sports organisations had differing views on uses of Loch Lomond – SSA have to represent both the fishers and canoeists, but also the jet-skiers and speed-boat users. Both views have to be included in the consultation, and don't weaken the intermediary's voice.)

This is in fact a big issue because if you are a members and a view is put forward in your name that you disagree with then it gets tricky and members are likely to resign

You can't really represent fully the views of 350 member organisations, but you can hope to articulate their concerns and wishes, e.g. on issues like the Compact and funding. Other subjects though can be divisive

Government **expects leadership** and for intermediaries to confidently 'represent' members views

- a successful intermediary should be able to this, and
- should have a good knowledge of all members and their views and be able to articulate complex views on issues

Independence

Often majority of funding comes from government, which can make speaking out against a funder and their priorities and policies difficult

Where conflicts of interest exist you

- have to have the ability to challenge public sector
- challenge what the government sees the role of intermediaries as being

This requires mature 'critical friend' approach in relations between public and voluntary sector

Acknowledge that debate is needed for good policy, and that requires a healthy, democratic environment

Funders need to acknowledge that Intermediaries are not a one-way conduit, but that members want to feed into policy

The current climate seems to see the voluntary sector as a public service delivery mechanism – we have to be careful about where that mood leaves the roles of campaigning, advocacy and policy.

Important to stimulate debate and raise new issues with government as well as reacting to policy developments and consultations

Sector and intermediaries also need to negotiate right from the start with policy makers, not just go to press and moan about something they are doing or propose to do

You need to show you have teeth and are prepared to use them, but much better to work **with** policy makers if you can

A good intermediary is responsible for developing and maintaining good channels of communication, but recognise that national politics (Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament) is very different from local (Local Authorities, NHS Boards)

Do a different dance depending on who you are dealing with

MSPs see intermediaries as helping them in a dialogue with the sector, but civil servants see them differently, more in a 'services' way

The political game can be a struggle for intermediaries who don't link into MSPs as often.

Need to be careful who you work with as there is the danger of coming across as a single party org.

An intermediary really has to think about how the relationship between them, the civil servants, MSPs and their members works

Not just about 'consultation' which implies a reactive attitude only

A good intermediary will stimulate ideas and spark debates, identifying issues from members concerns. However, it can be more difficult to raise a new issue, than one that's already on the table.

Communication with Members

Need to communicate well with members so fully aware of what doing and ensure clarity of expectations

Members small and large

- you need to be careful you don't just end up speaking to the larger members
- smaller organisations need to know that you value them, and need to know what it is you can do for them
- small members tend to expect very different things, e.g. more practical services, or help with funding
- members are often impressed by little things like funding help, but that doesn't mean you should try to satisfy this and lose sight
- very big organisations on the other hand sometimes don't think they need you at all – "we'll do our own policy work, thank you"
- you need to pitch your support right
- can be good to ask them what they need and supply them with something small that they need – strengthens relationships

Evidencing impact

- if you are doing a good job, and are in with a Bill from the start, you often don't appear to be doing anything. People can't see that you're shaping policy from the start.

(if you get together banners and march on parliament then it is very high profile, but that's not good policy work – it should never have reached that stage)

- Make sure that members know they can raise an issue with you, even if it is 'small', and make clear what it is you can do about it

Even a single issue can be useful for demonstrating impact, and can make a useful case study

- help members to understand how they can use the intermediary

Good Practice models / case studies

Very good to try to create / collect these, based on outcomes from events or training etc, but they can be difficult to solicit, requiring a fair bit of leg-work on the part of the intermediary

- you may need to think about how you, as an intermediary with members who have members themselves, reach beyond and into that second tier which is often where the great case studies are

Often you don't have to do everything, you just need to help share and empower. Make sure that when you contract out a piece of work you think about how to widen the benefit to your members, e.g. encourage a trainer to produce a toolkit for other members or for future use

Electronic communication tools

Could be good to have a message board or electronic forum, which allows people to discuss issues, share info and post requests for practical support or resources

With consultations etc it would be good to be very clear **who** in the organisation communications are going to, and whether they are best person to deal with this or if they are too busy to forward on to appropriate person so it gets overlooked

Website – need to think how much of your tight resources and staff time are spent on creating a really good website. Having a good website can be a real plus, but is there a danger of losing out on policy, information and research staff time

Sharing Resources

- a good intermediary should understand what their members are doing and what resources they currently have, and should try to reduce duplication and facilitate shared costs etc
- could look at lessons from other intermediaries
- technical capacity is important, and members often appreciate intermediaries having info on technical resources

Examples of sharing resources

- Sport Scotland provide members with access to four independent consultants who can be employed on an ad-hoc basis and give affordable access to HR, IT, Finance and Marketing. The IT consultant can be even more affordable if members club together

- another intermediary pools the HR skills of their members or partners

- some intermediaries use services supplied by SCVO, e.g. Payroll or IT
- others have the staff skills in-house and therefore the potential to provide consultancy to others

In the future will intermediaries look different? Should new targets be identified? Are sustainable mechanisms being put in place? More emphasis should be placed on the development of shared back office services and collaborative approaches to delivery, including awareness of wider intermediaries network and signposting/referral opportunities

Successful forward thinking intermediary needs to develop more flexible ways of working. New more flexible approaches to staffing within limited resources (eg core and associates model)?

Self-generated Funding

lobbying activities benefit Government, but no public body tend to cover costs of responding to consultations, attending steering groups or meetings

An intermediary therefore need to carefully consider other sources of funding, including – should it ‘sell’ its expertise, and if so to who?

- You have to balance your ‘charitable’ aspect with an enterprising, sustainable way of operating, e.g. may wish to sell publications, but you also want as many members as possible to access them and pick up your publications

One intermediary felt they were in a bit of a funding ‘no mans land’ as they are currently moving away from being core funded, to be funded on an FCR basis. This move away from thinking in terms of core and project funding to a focus on projects that deliver strategic outcomes is quite a cultural shift in the nature of the relationship between funder and funding recipient.

The intermediary may feel like it is sitting in a financial no-man’s land between grants, and may need to think of themselves and their role rather like a consultant would

Board

Tying in to representation, there are so many important events and meetings to attend that the intermediary sometimes has to decide when is it best

- staff members to attend
 - a delegate from the membership to attend
 - a Board member to attend
- a good Board is key to a good intermediary
 - the paid staff of a small intermediary can’t attend every steering group themselves, but it is their role to ensure that an appropriate representative of the intermediaries membership is on board

Often the chair or other named officials give 150%, but it may also be that the Board can and want to do more

- 'Good' Board members attend board meetings and bring enthusiasm to the work of the organisation, but it can be tricky to expect expertise at a very strategic level
- If they are interested then Board members should be able to familiarise themselves with complex issues, perhaps with the support of other members and staff

One of the intermediary's raised a point that their Board is trying to deal less with policy issues and focus on strategic direction. A sub group from the Board deals with more detailed operational issues in supporting the Chief Exec. The org believes that policy discussion should take place between members (who have the expertise) at workshops and our quarterly meetings of members.

Another CE said they encourage individuals on the Board to take on pieces of policy work if they have relevant expertise.

This is sometimes the case for the other intermediary, but they differentiate between when a Board member is acting in their role as a Director of the organisation, and when a Board member is acting as someone with relevant expertise in an issue that they are dealing with.

A good board needs a good mix of skills and a balance between:

1. Operational skills – skills in the practical running of a small organisation, and
 2. Strategic skills – skills in policy and negotiation
 3. also political know-how - having a board member who can easily get the ear of politicians is no bad thing either!
- an intermediary is weakened and loses its ability to represent members if the Board members operate in silos and only seek to advance their pet issue.
 - as a small intermediary, particularly one just starting out, it can be very difficult to get the necessary skills mix and broadness of view from a small pool of members, who may be very skilled in their own field but not have much experience in managing a national intermediary
 - this skills gap can be addressed in a number of ways, e.g. allowing co-opted members on to the Board
 - to be successful an intermediary may need to look carefully at its Constitution to ensure it is written in a way that supports it and helps it grow, e.g.
 - defining eligibility for full Membership,
 - deciding if Associate Membership will be allowed,
 - deciding on whether co-opted Board members will allowed, and if so how many.
 - deciding on the recruitment and ongoing role of Staff
 - an intermediary also needs to recognise if tensions start to appear between the priorities of the Board and the staff of the organisation, and try to deal with these as soon as they arise

What helps achieve real impact?

An easy way to achieve impact is to have someone on the Board who moves in the same circle as the movers & shakers

Advice to a new intermediary and potential funders

The potential funder needs to be made aware of this piece of research!

It may stop government funders having a very set idea of what they want to see set up

- a funder needs to recognise that if an intermediary is doing its job well it may well be saying awkward things, acting as a 'critical friend'
- you can't just expect to set up an intermediary for your own convenience; it has to be a real forum for discussion
- expectations on both sides need to be clarified
- Full Cost Recovery principles should be agreed, including covering the costs of attending meetings

Advice to a new intermediary:

Ensure clarity regarding who the membership will be and what issues there to address, what trying to achieve for the historic environment sector

Avoid duplication. Keep in touch with wider intermediaries network and refer on to others when more appropriate. Be clear where strengths are and avoid trying to be all things to all people or working in areas where lack expertise.