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National Planning Framework 3 - National Developments Proposal Form	
Proposer	Plantlife Scotland
Contact details	
Date	12 December 2012
Title of development	National Ecological Network
Elements to be covered by national development status (list)	<p>A National Ecological Network, based on robust and healthy ecosystems, capable of sustaining the full range of ecosystem services upon which Scotland depends, is vital for Scotland's sustainable development.</p> <p>Starting with land held in public ownership and Designated Sites, these physical areas are the biological reservoirs that need to be linked and taken into account within the Planning System to reduce the fragmentation of habitats and increasing fragility of ecosystem services in ecologically functioning land. In effect the Scottish Government would be implementing Article 10 of the Habitats and Species Directive</p> <p>A well planned NEN built on sound ecological principles will protect the plants and fungi that are the basis of all ecosystems. This is the mechanism that can ensure that local Development Management is taken within a sustainable national context.</p>
Fit with criteria and statement of more than regional importance (guide - 500 words)	<p>A NEN can only be effective if delivered at a national scale, aiming to re-connect Scotland's fragmented ecosystems across mainland Scotland and its islands. This development provides a national green infrastructure, complementing the built infrastructure projects of NPF2. It delivers on the following criteria for NPF3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development, reducing unemployment and job creation. • Strengthening Scotland's links with the rest of the world. • Improving our digital, transport, utilities or green infrastructure networks. • Improving the quality of the built or natural environment • Adapting to or mitigating the effects of climate change. <p>Designing an effective NEN requires robust understanding and modelling of the elements that support ecosystem services. These services include resistance to disease, pollination, water regulation and soil fertility for example. For these services to continue to be available to Scotland's people, they require robust and diverse ecosystems, founded upon of self sustaining and genetically diverse species populations. These populations and the habitats they comprise are an essential consideration in proposals for development throughout the</p>

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	<p>country if Scotland is to retain the ecosystem services we all rely on.</p> <p>Plantlife has started developing this approach using Important Plant Areas (IPA), a target in the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), to which the UK and Scottish governments are committed through the Convention on Biological Diversity.</p> <p>Delivery of IPAs in Scotland is ongoing and progress in terms of their identification and management advice is good. However, Scotland is at a stage where the detail of how built development can adversely affect ecosystem functionality needs to be addressed within a national context. This will also contribute significantly to the Scottish Land Use Strategy and the Climate Change Adaptation Framework, which looks to an integrated approach for development and management in a changing and uncertain climate.</p> <p>These networks achieve 3 objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving the quality and resilience of Scotland's natural environment, 2. enabling species and habitats to adapt to climate change by linking fragmented ecosystems together and providing means for species to move from site to site 3. maintaining and protecting ecosystem services in the future. <p>It also provides the context for the development of effective green infrastructure in the long term, enhancing and protecting Scotland's natural environment, thereby protecting current and future income sources from green tourism.</p> <p>Scotland's international reputation for a high quality environment will be maintained through creating this network, and provides a market for skills development and job creation across Scotland.</p> <p>404 words</p>
<p>Location (description, map reference, or map)</p>	<p>The whole of Scotland, including islands</p>
<p>Public Engagement to date (guide - 100 words)</p>	<p>Plantlife is leading on delivery of IPAs across the UK and in 66 countries in Europe and across the world. See http://www.plantlife.org.uk/publications/important_plant_areas_around_the_world/</p> <p>Information on Scotland's IPAs is available here: http://www.plantlife.org.uk/scotland/wild_plants/important_plant_areas_scotland/</p> <p>Plantlife annually organises demonstration days where land managers and agency staff find out about the key features that maintain the value of IPAs. These always fully booked: over the last two years Plantlife has run 4 demonstration days, attended by 80 people in total.</p>

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Environmental Study / Assessment available? (yes / no)	No
<i>If yes, what significant effects were identified</i>	
Delivery timescale	<p>Target 5 of the GSPC states that by 2020, at least 75% of the most important areas for plant diversity of each ecological region protected with effective management in place for conserving plants and their genetic diversity. 96% of IPAs in Scotland currently have some level of protection mechanism in place for at least part of the site, although this not necessarily relate directly to the plants. 54% have species management plans in place for some of the species and 49% have protected area management plans in place. Again these plans do not necessarily cover the relevant plant species.</p> <p>Ensuring the long term survival of these areas is crucial to the continued provision of the landscape, species and ecosystem services that Scotland depends upon. Equally, the connections that maintain the network are essential, and identification and protection through the Planning System of these essential linkages needs to be implemented as soon as possible to reach the 2020 target.</p>
Development lifespan	Mechanisms to put in place effective management at 36% Of Scotland's IPAs, covering a total land area of 241,173 ha. This leaves 241,036 ha to be mapped and matched against accessible advice. Full support should be available by 2016, funding permitting.
Consents required	Consents will be required for individual developments that impact in the National Ecological Network. For this project to work, a full partnership approach will be required with mechanisms for appropriate management in place.
Visual representation of the development available? <i>If yes, please list and state if provided.</i>	Yes. Detailed maps for plant networks are available for the West Coast IPA (28,800 ha) and the Cairngorms National Park (18,410ha). There are also lower resolution maps available for 15 other smaller IPAs. GIS layers are available from Plantlife. SNH, SEPA and FCS already have access to layers as they become available. Maps are produced as funding allows.