

Strategic Programme

A Rural Economy Resilient to Global and Local Change



The Economic Adaptation Theme is concerned with the ability of Scotland's rural economy to adapt to changing circumstances
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Vision for a low carbon economy
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Introduction

The Economic Adaptation Theme is concerned with preserving or enhancing the ability of Scotland's rural economy to adapt to changing circumstances, particularly the macro-scale challenges of trade globalisation and liberalisation, climate changes and the transition towards a low carbon rural economy. The rural economy continues to include land-based industries but increasingly needs to take account of the economic importance of other sectors such as tourism, recreation and rural residents for whom rural areas are not necessarily their source of income but are key factors in their quality of life.

Intended benefits from the Theme's research

The research in the Economic Adaptation Theme will provide improved support for the development of evidence-based policy in Scotland. Examples of policy benefits include:

- Assessment of the impacts of CAP reform on land based industries.
- Assessment of the impacts of globalisation and trade reform on land based industries and wider rural economy.
- Improved understanding of risks of climate change on agricultural (rural) sector and viable adaptation strategies.
- Improved understanding of how the adaptive capacity of Scotland's rural economy can be enhanced, particularly the role of policy and agricultural knowledge systems.

The Economic Adaptation theme will also provide an evidence base to key rural economy stakeholders (land managers, agencies and NGO's) presenting the economic and environmental impacts of drivers and adaptive responses.

Key policy areas supported

The research within the Economic Adaptation Theme intends to contribute across a wide range of national, European and International policies / agreements. Policy areas include agriculture, land use and rural development policies (2014-2020 Common Agricultural Policy – Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 Proposals, Land Reform Review, The Scottish Forestry Strategy and the Land Use Strategy); food and drink (Recipe For Success - Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy) climate change adaptation and transition to a low carbon rural economy (Climate Change Adaptation Framework; Low Carbon Economic Strategy and Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting our Emissions Reduction Targets 2013-2027 (Draft Second Report on Proposals and Policies)).

Outcomes and Outputs of the Research

Adaptation to change in land-based and other rural industries

This research tackles key policy issues of CAP reform, the consequences of changes in the balance of trade and how best to achieve robust adaptations that minimise the risks from climate change. It also seeks to synthesise lessons from these studies to identify policy options that will increase the underlying adaptive capacity of Scotland's rural economy.

The expected benefits from this area of work are: Improved tools for analysing impact of changes in key drivers on rural industries, Quantification of impact of CAP reform on land based industries and possible adaptation strategies, Improved understanding of impact of globalisation and trade reforms on rural sector and adaptation, Identification of viable adaptation strategies for land based and other rural industries to CAP and globalisation, identification of risks to land based industries of climate change and an Analysis of adaptation strategies to climate change

Developing a low carbon rural economy

This research is assessing the challenge of the transition to a low carbon rural economy (LCRE) in Scotland and aims to improve our understanding of the impact of global change on rural Scotland. The outcomes from this research will therefore contribute directly to our current understanding of the local impacts of global change.

The expected benefits from this research are to: Develop an understanding of the key components of a 'low carbon rural economy'. This includes: the sectors which might contribute (for example forestry, transport, housing, agriculture, energy, tourism); and the actors potentially involved (individuals, communities, the third/public/private sectors), propose potential pathways toward a 'low carbon rural economy' and examining the associated costs, benefits and acceptability of these, identify the key barriers and facilitators of a 'low carbon rural economy' at multiple scales, from individual through to national; suggest practical and appropriate ways to support rural Scotland in a transition toward a low carbon rural economy.

Related Research Activity

The research in this Theme also underpins policy-led activity financed through the policy advice and analysis (PAWSA) component of Underpinning Capacity. The datasets and methods have also been used in research within the Centres of Expertise on Climate Change, Water, EPIC and SPACE. The research has also been enhanced through participation in the EU FP7 projects: SMILE, GILDED, LOCAW.

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