Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan

Consultation Outcomes Report

Executive Summary

Between January and May 2023, a consultation on Scotland's draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan saw submissions from communities, businesses and the public. Alma Economics was commissioned to analyse the 1,598 responses, which found that overall, respondents wanted a fair distribution of benefits and costs of decarbonisation, governmental support at all levels, and upskilling of the workforce.

Overarching Themes

1. Importance of a supportive policy environment.
2. Upskilling and training are vital.
3. Diverse views on technology mix for decarbonisation.
4. Concerns about environmental impact.
5. Requests for detailed implementation plans.
6. Mixed feedback on the plan's ambition.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Vision

1. Broad support for Scotland's 2030 and 2045 visions.
2. Calls for clarity on implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
3. Requests for a more ambitious scale of objectives.
4. Need to address negative socioeconomic and environmental impacts.

Chapter 2: Preparing for a Just Energy Transition

1. A supportive policy environment is crucial.
2. Emphasis on financial support for low-carbon technologies and skills development.
3. Oil and gas sector workers should be aided in transitioning to other energy sectors.
4. Clarity is needed on public and business' roles.

Chapter 3: Energy Supply

1. Mixed views on renewable energy mix.
2. Policy environment to boost renewable investment.
3. Support for community-owned renewable assets.
4. Divided opinions on North Sea oil and gas.

Chapter 4: Energy Demand

1. Policy support for energy efficiency measures in buildings.
2. Emphasis on EV infrastructure and public transport improvements.
3. Agriculture: Transition to low-carbon sources and machinery decarbonisation.
4. Industry: Divided views on Carbon Capture, Usage, and Storage (CCUS).

Chapter 5: Creating the Conditions for a Net Zero System

1. Infrastructure investment for supply security.
2. Diverse energy mix; debates on nuclear and fossil fuels.
3. Emphasis on local energy self-sufficiency.

Chapter 6: Route Map to 2045

1. Calls for detailed clarity on the route map.
2. Mixed opinions on the ideal energy mix.
3. Concerns about increasing inequalities during the transition.

Impact Assessment Questions

1. Plan offers opportunities for protected groups but also poses risks.
2. Calls for government intervention to maximise benefits and mitigate risks.
3. Support for wider consultation and impact assessments.

Just Transition Plan Energy Outcomes

1. Broad agreement with monitoring and evaluation.
2. Suggestions for a more detailed approach and a wider range of indicators.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1. Emphasis on considering environmental and socioeconomic impacts.
2. Concerns related to local communities and natural landscapes.

While there's broad support for Scotland's energy transition, there's a clear call for clarity, more detailed planning, and a balanced approach that considers environmental and socio-economic impacts.

Richard Campbell
October 2023

SNIPEF Consultation Submission and Outcomes

The draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan consultation contained 50 questions, of which SNIPEF responded to ten. To aid brevity, only outcomes to questions that SNIPEF answered have been included. The full consultation outcomes report can be found on the Scottish Government's website.

Consultation Q1: What are your views on the vision set out for 2030 and 2045? Are there any changes you think should be made?

SNIPEF Response

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) supports the 2030 and 2045 visions outlined in the draft strategy. Each demonstrates a stepped progression in the commitments of the Scottish government to transition toward a low-carbon society and continue the technological, legislative, financial and policy framework developments over the last 20 years, as well as the overall desire by the public towards greater sustainability.

SNIPEF's position is that only a challenging vision and accompanying strategy will stimulate and instigate the needed changes to continue society's transition toward a more sustainable model.

SNIPEF does not have any suggested changes to the content of the visions themselves, but, like all visions, there must be a mechanism to 'reality-check' the viability and direction of the visions/strategy periodically. Visions are excellent strategic enablers, but only if they reflect the world, society or economy it aims to advance.

As we all know, circumstances change (politically, economically, technologically, and societally). As such, any future vision, current mission or strategy needs to be able to be reviewed and amended accordingly when legitimate reasons are identified.

Overall, SNIPEF believes that the vision's content is challenging but achievable; however, only if all interested groups and the public are brought into the vision and nurtured throughout its timeline.

As a federation of plumbing employers, we understand the importance of responsible and sustainable practices within our industry. We recognise the impact that the transition to a low-carbon economy may have on our sector and are ready to embrace its opportunities.

A successful transition requires collaboration across all sectors and an open dialogue between government, industry, and society.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents largely supported the Scottish Government's 2030 and 2045 visions, frequently praising its ambition concerning scale, goals, and potential opportunities for Scotland's population. However, this endorsement often came with critiques and suggestions for refinement.

One dominant criticism was the perceived vagueness of the vision's implementation details, with calls for clearer articulation of goals, monitoring, and progress evaluation. Some suggested interim targets between 2030 and 2045 to ensure consistency. The current wording, especially the phrase "this will deliver maximum benefit for Scotland", was seen as ambiguous, leading to possible varied interpretations and potential conflicts.

There were also calls for even greater ambition, with suggestions for tighter deadlines and more aggressive carbon reduction efforts. Several emphasised the importance of an internationally just transition and averting severe climate consequences.

A key theme was the equitable execution of the vision. Respondents pointed to the need to mitigate potential negative effects on local communities, including potential harm to biodiversity and residents from new clean energy infrastructure. They also underscored the potential for community benefits, such as local ownership of renewable assets. Another notable point was the urgent energy concern in island communities, specifically fuel poverty. Concerns about potential trade-offs between increased renewable infrastructure and environmental impact, especially on landscapes and soil health, were raised.

Consultation Q2. What more can be done to deliver benefits from the transition to net zero for households and businesses across Scotland?

SNIPEF Response

SNIPEF recommends a broad mix of actions to help deliver net zero benefits for households and businesses across Scotland.

1. Invest and promote more on energy efficiency measures: Energy efficiency measures, such as insulation and efficient heating systems, can help households and businesses reduce their energy bills and emissions.

When promoting energy efficiency to the public, we recommend that the information and benefits are focused on the foundation level of the energy hierarchy ie. reduce energy consumption through insulation, low-carbon heating technologies, improved housing stock etc. and the financial benefits they can offer householders.

2. Support the growth of low-carbon industries: The transition to net zero presents an opportunity to create new industries and jobs in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable housing and transport solutions, and low-carbon manufacturing.

However, the Scottish government must also support existing industries essential to the low-carbon transition. The plumbing and heating industry will be crucial for decommissioning, installing and maintaining low-carbon heat technologies in households (new build and existing stock) and businesses.

For this to happen, the government must recognise and commit to investing in plumbing apprenticeships and upskilling the existing workforce. SNIPEF is ready and waiting to assist the government in achieving this.

3. Increase access and understanding to renewable energy: By increasing access to renewable energy, households and businesses can benefit from cleaner, more affordable energy. The Scottish government can continue to support the development of renewable energy projects, such as wind and solar, and explore new technologies, such as hydrogen and carbon capture.

SNIPEF believes that more straightforward explanations of the various technology options available to reduce household heat energy would boost public confidence and understanding. As a suggestion, could an app be created that provides households or businesses with suitable heating options based on their personal inputted factors, and preferably one without overt commercial considerations?

4. Provide financial support: Transitioning to net zero can require significant investment, particularly for businesses. The Scottish Government can provide financial support, such as grants and low-interest loans, to help companies transition to low-carbon alternatives.

5. Encourage behaviour change: Changing public and business behaviour can be one of the most effective ways to reduce emissions. The Scottish government can provide information and education on the benefits of the transition to net zero and encourage households and businesses to take action to reduce their carbon footprint.

SNIPEF believes one of the biggest challenges is the mindset change needed in the public regarding heat sources for new or existing homes. After 30+ years of ‘selling’ the dash-for-gas benefits, the proposed solutions to our housing stock heating systems will need careful scripting and dissemination.

For example, to assist behavioural change with the public, could more demonstrators of heating technologies be displayed through semi-permanent exhibitions or vacant shops in high-density public areas (shopping centres, etc.)? The Green Homes Festival content is an excellent example to model. The BRE site exemplars, Ideal Homes, etc, are also exceptional public events to showcase and explain these technologies.

6. Clarity and openness: Greater clarification on what is expected of the public and business within this plan is needed, alongside a more granular explanation of why we need to transition within the proposed timeline, ie. why today and not tomorrow? Remember, the 'saving the world' message does not necessarily address local or personal circumstances.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents overwhelmingly voiced a need for greater financial support for households and businesses transitioning to net zero, emphasising the significant investments required for this shift. Many suggested that the Scottish Government should offer increased financial support, primarily through grants, to facilitate the adoption of low-carbon alternatives. Concerns were raised about the current system, which combines grants and loans, making the transition cost-prohibitive for many households.

Another dominant theme was the potential benefits of transitioning to net zero, primarily achieved through developing renewable energy sources like wind and solar. Respondents believed increased access to renewables could provide households with more affordable and sustainable energy. They urged the Scottish Government to promote local renewable energy projects and explore new technologies like carbon capture, stressing the importance of clear information about available energy-saving technologies.

Lastly, respondents underscored the need for clarity and transparency around the policies and goals guiding the net zero transition. They sought more explicit communication on expectations, policy justifications, and specific objectives, highlighting the importance of a shared understanding of terms like "just transition" and the rationale for the transition timelines. Clear guidance on impactful actions and more detailed roadmaps for achieving net zero targets were emphasised to ensure optimal economic, social, and environmental outcomes during the transition.

Consultation Q4. What barriers, if any, do you/your organisation experience in accessing finance to deliver net zero compatible investments?

SNIPEF Response

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) has faced significant and concerning barriers in securing sufficient funding for the Modern Apprenticeship in Plumbing and Heating. This lack of funding could directly and significantly impact Scotland's ambitious net-zero targets.

SNIPEF draws funding from the Scottish Government's funding agency, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), to deliver Modern Apprenticeships in Plumbing and Heating. However, the funding process is long and administratively heavy. In addition, the lack of funding for new apprentice starts and trying to obtain additional places is complex and frustrating.

The funding processes need to be reviewed quickly and streamlined to help organisations like SNIPEF obtain funding more efficiently and match current and future demand from the next generation seeking to enter the profession.

The funding contribution levels for Modern Apprenticeships also need to be reviewed, as these have stagnated for over five years. If adequate funding is not in place by the start of the next academic year, a significantly reduced number of apprentices that the plumbing industry requires will commence their apprenticeships.

Securing the necessary funding will help to ensure Scotland's estimated 2.7 million households have access to the skilled workforce required to decommission, install and maintain new low-carbon technologies.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents expressed concerns over the financing challenges for net-zero-compatible investments in Scotland. A key issue highlighted was the lack of adequate funding for initiatives such as net-zero homes and hydrogen infrastructure. Many found existing grant funds limited and transient, making consistent project financing difficult. Besides financial barriers, respondents pinpointed hurdles in planning policies.

They stressed the need for supportive short-term policy frameworks to foster investments and a stable long-term policy landscape to maintain finance accessibility for large projects. Administrative challenges in securing finances were another focal point, especially for local authorities. They indicated that the brief application windows for funding are often restrictive and do not allow for comprehensive administrative processing. Simplifying and streamlining funding processes was suggested as a solution.

Consultation Q5. What barriers, if any, can you foresee that would prevent you/your business/organisation from making the changes set out in this Strategy?

SNIPEF Response

As the representative trade body for the plumbing industry in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) is fully committed to helping the government achieve the necessary changes and address the identified challenges outlined within this strategy.

However, we foresee some barriers that may prevent us from doing so. These include:

1) A misunderstanding or underappreciation of the requirement for plumbing and heat engineer operatives to help in the transition.

There is a misunderstanding of the critical role that plumbing and heating engineers will play in transitioning Scotland to low-carbon heat energy options. Without this skilled workforce, the transition to low-carbon heating technologies will be significantly bottlenecked. Scotland will lack the plumbing and heating professionals to decommission, install and maintain low-carbon heating technologies in new and existing housing stock.

2. Funding gaps in apprenticeship funding and its direct impact on a just transition.

Our projections indicate an immediate and long-term reduction in plumbing and heating professionals due to a lack of apprenticeship funding placements. This lack of apprenticeship funding will directly impact our industry's ability to contribute to a just transition. Our industry supports many already marginalised communities, and this lack of funding will only exacerbate the situation.

The plumbing and heating industry has the talent, enthusiasm, and willingness to contribute to Scotland's transition to a low-carbon future. However, we need to see this support reciprocated, particularly in apprenticeship funding and recognition of the industry's critical role in achieving a just transition.

Consultation Outcome

The primary concern among respondents was the lack of clear, supportive policies for executing the Strategy. Greater coordination between local authorities and the Scottish Government was called for, emphasising a holistic, whole-system approach. This sentiment was especially strong among those in the energy and power sectors.

The second major barrier identified was potential skills gaps. Respondents believed there was an industry-wide lack of skilled professionals needed to implement the Strategy's changes. They recommended partnering with industry to ascertain existing competencies, identify skills gaps, and co-develop relevant training programmes.

The third significant barrier was inadequate infrastructure. Many from the energy and power sectors felt that the necessary infrastructure, both large-scale (like the electricity grid) and small-scale (such as smart meters), was either missing or outdated. This concern extended to limitations like interconnector capacity and the availability of smart meters, particularly in rural and island areas.

Consultation Q6. Where do you see the greatest market and supply chain opportunities from the energy transition, both domestically and on an international scale, and how can the Scottish Government best support these?

SNIPEF Response

The energy transition presents significant domestic and international market and supply chain opportunities for the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF).

Domestically

The energy transition presents opportunities for the growth of new or foundation industries, such as hydrogen production, carbon capture, and low-carbon and sustainable transport and housing solutions.

These industries will require the development and support or integrated supply chains, providing opportunities for companies across Scotland to become involved in manufacturing, installing, and maintaining these systems.

The Scottish Government can support these opportunities by investing in research and development, providing financial support for the growth of supply chains, and promoting Scotland as a hub for these new industries.

However, businesses also need the right people with the right training and skills. Direct and targeted funding in areas that can help deliver the strategy is required, such as increased apprenticeship funding for the plumbing and heating industry, ie, the people who will be required for the decommissioning, installation, and maintenance of future low-carbon heating technologies.

Internationally

Countries worldwide are looking to transition to a low-carbon economy, and Scottish companies can provide solutions and services to support these transitions. Scottish companies have significant opportunities to export their expertise and technologies in low-carbon energy production and storage.

The Scottish Government can support these opportunities by providing export support, building partnerships with other countries, and promoting Scottish expertise and technology on the international stage.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents frequently emphasised the energy transition as a major opportunity for Scottish industry and supply chains. The shift is seen as a chance for Scottish companies to participate in manufacturing, installation, and maintenance related to the necessary infrastructure, especially renewable energy systems. Benefits include reduced global carbon emissions and enhanced local energy security. Some respondents highlighted the potential of local manufacturing components for renewable energy, like wind and solar.

Another prevalent theme was the potential of Scotland's skilled workforce to support the domestic market while assisting global transitions to low-carbon economies. Scotland's expertise in low-carbon energy production and storage was noted as a potential export to countries undergoing their energy transitions.

Lastly, developing offshore wind technologies was viewed as a major opportunity for Scotland, particularly in floating offshore wind. Scotland’s northeast region was spotlighted for its proximity to major wind projects and its inherent subsea engineering capabilities, giving it a competitive advantage in this sector.

Consultation Q7. What more can be done to support the development of sustainable, high quality and local jobs opportunities across the breadth of Scotland as part of the energy transition?

SNIPEF Response

Modern Apprenticeships are an excellent opportunity for individuals to gain industry-led qualifications that often lead to local job opportunities.

The Modern Apprenticeship in Plumbing & Heating is a high-quality, industry-recognised qualification of the highest standard, providing apprentices with an SVQ Level 3 (SCQF Level 7) qualification on completion of four years of service. It is an industry-approved qualification that provides both on-the-job training with the employer and off-the-job training at college.

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) oversees the Modern Apprenticeship in Plumbing & Heating and currently manages over 1,000 plumbing apprentices.

Our Modern Apprenticeship is continuously reviewed to meet the needs of employers, the plumbing & heating industry, and government ambitions, such as net-zero targets. We have added mandatory low-carbon modules to our qualification, including heat pumps, solar thermal, and rainwater harvesting, to equip the future workforce with the skills necessary to work on sustainable technologies.

To achieve net-zero targets, the Scottish Government needs to safeguard and ring-fence funding and apprenticeship new start spaces for the plumbing & heating industry, which will be at the forefront of helping to achieve their targets by training the workforce that will help install and maintain low-carbon heating technologies.

Our current apprenticeship new start numbers have been significantly reduced for 2023 and are over 140 places short of industry requirements. The industry requires at least 400 new start apprentices places each year to meet employer demand.

The lack of apprenticeship funding will directly impact the nation's net-zero targets as Scotland will not have the skilled and qualified workforce required to meet demand. This is not a speculative statement but one of evidence-based facts.

It must be a priority for the Scottish Government to ensure adequate funding is in place to support the growth of the plumbing & heating industry, provide financial support for research and development, and invest in low-carbon infrastructure to create a sustainable and prosperous future.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents frequently suggested the Scottish Government should actively facilitate training for future workers, emphasising financial support for education providers from the primary level up. Specifically, respondents called for sustained investment in STEM subjects in schools, vocational training in fields like electrical and mechanical engineering, and support for academic institutions to maintain a supply of skilled educational professionals. One proposal centred on the development of STEM-focused hubs in schools to promote hands-on learning and highlight career opportunities vital for achieving net zero by 2045.

A dominant viewpoint was the need to aid skilled oil and gas workers transitioning to other energy sectors, capitalising on their expertise for the green economy. Respondents advocated for training initiatives emphasising transferable skills, ensuring workers' adaptability across evolving industries.

A recurrent theme was the demand for clarity on the scheme addressing employment and skills in the energy transition. Specific calls for defining "green jobs" and guidance on upskilling strategies were made. Other concerns included promoting local manufacturing for job creation and the geographic distribution of training facilities, noting the lack of such facilities in Scotland's remote areas.

Consultation Q8: What further advice or support is required to help individuals of all ages and, in particular, individuals who are currently under-represented in the industry enter into or progress in green energy jobs?

SNIPEF Response

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) offers the following six suggestions:

1) Education and training

Develop specialised programs and scholarships targeting under-represented groups to encourage participation in low-carbon industries like plumbing.

Our STEM engagement has found a shockingly low awareness of how the plumbing profession and plumbers will be central to the low-carbon transition. our work in decommissioning energy-intensive heating systems and installing and maintaining low-carbon options will be critical to reducing energy consumption in homes.

Green jobs are more than building wind turbines, as a simplistic example. Many professions and trades are involved, from civil, electrical, and mechanical engineers to almost all construction trades, specifically plumbers and electricians.

2) Outreach and awareness

Organise campaigns and events to increase awareness about green energy jobs, targeting schools, colleges, and community centres. Showcase success stories of under-represented individuals who have positively impacted the industry.

More work is required to explain the transition spectrum, the many assets and facets of the transition, how it makes a difference to our society (personal, local and global) and the options open to all people from all backgrounds and educational attainment levels.

3) Mentorship and networking

Establish mentorship programs connecting experienced professionals with individuals seeking to enter or progress in the green energy industry.

4) Equal opportunity policies

Encourage companies to develop and enforce equal opportunity policies that promote diversity and inclusion, address biases in recruitment and promotion, and provide a supportive work environment. Foster a culture of learning and growth to sustain long-term progress in increasing diversity and inclusion within the green energy industry.

5) Accessible resources

Ensure that educational materials, training programs, and job listings are accessible to people of all protected characteristics.

6) Career guidance and support

Offer better career guidance to help under-represented individuals navigate the job market and find opportunities open to them.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents frequently expressed the need for reforms in both primary and secondary education. A common suggestion was strengthening early-stage education, emphasising increased knowledge about climate change, green energy, and the net zero transition. A recurrent viewpoint was the importance of investing in STEM education, particularly for young girls who are under-represented in such fields.

“Emphasising STEM education from an early age is critical for green energy job prospects. Decisions on STEM subject affinity are often made early, potentially limiting green job opportunities for many."

"The persistent under-representation of girls and women in STEM points to the necessity of early interventions in the education system to enhance diversity."

Changes in higher education to support under-represented groups in accessing green jobs were another major theme. Respondents often advocated for financial backing for relevant university courses and expansive apprenticeships. Specialised programs and scholarships catering to under-represented demographics were suggested.

“To facilitate the transition to green energy jobs, extending apprenticeships to individuals of all ages could be beneficial.”

Another key theme was initiatives to raise awareness about green job opportunities among under-represented groups. Respondents commonly proposed campaigns, events, and targeted outreach programs as strategies.

“Enhancing awareness about green jobs, especially targeting schools and community centres, and spotlighting success stories from diverse backgrounds can elucidate the varied opportunities within the green transition.”

Consultation Q27. What further government action is needed to drive energy efficiency and zero emissions heat deployment across Scotland?

SNIPEF Response

1. **Launch a large-scale, long-term public awareness campaign**: Drawing inspiration from the effectiveness of COVID-19 messaging, promote the benefits of energy-efficient technologies and the behavioural changes required for using renewables in heating buildings. Encourage public demand for these technologies to boost supply chain confidence and investment. Provide increased financial support to consumers, such as grants and funding, to stimulate market growth and consumer confidence.

2. **Target supply chains with awareness campaigns**: Highlight opportunities for businesses in the renewable industry, offering strong signposting, information, and support. Address the differences between the renewable and combustion heating industries, including certification schemes, redress schemes, design requirements, and customer services. Provide ongoing financial support for reskilling and upskilling the current supply chains, with organisations like SNIPEF welcoming funding explicitly aimed at energy efficiency.

3. **Establish a dedicated energy efficiency fund**: Building on the success of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) in 2023, create a specific fund focused on the skills needed for energy efficiency. This fund will help alleviate businesses' financial risks when investing in new business streams, such as training costs, credit facilities, and time spent building field experience.

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4. **Implement affordable electric tariffs for heat pump users**: Ensure consumers have access to affordable electricity tariffs for heat pumps, both now and in the future. Support this by promoting green electricity generation in Scotland and the UK.

5. **Undertake energy market ref**orms: Task the UK government to ensure the electrical infrastructure (The Grid) can deliver the required electricity for heat pumps, as the Heat Pumps Sector Deal Expert Advisory Group recommended.

6. **Promote mass generation of green electricity at source**: Address issues with the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) system that may disincentivise heat pump installations due to electrical consumption. Amend EPC requirements to encourage the adoption of heat pumps and other green technologies as part of the transition to a sustainable future.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents predominantly highlighted the need for enhanced financial support and incentives to promote energy efficiency and zero-emission heat throughout Scotland. It was frequently argued that a significant boost in financial aid should be needed to help households adopt energy efficiency measures, particularly aiding low-income households who might face greater challenges during the net zero transition.

“There's an urgent need to amplify the financial assistance for households to integrate low-carbon solutions to meet the ambitious 2030 goals, considering the current pace of adoption.”

The subsequent major theme was the advocacy for large-scale improvements in building insulation. Many respondents, primarily individuals, posited that insulation upgrades should be approached collectively, such as simultaneously insulating entire streets or neighbourhoods instead of isolated efforts per building.

“A coordinated approach, where entire streets or neighbourhoods are upgraded together by a single organisation overseeing various processes, is more logical for insulation enhancements and potential heat networks.”

Another recurring theme was the call for government initiatives to amplify public awareness regarding energy efficiency and zero emissions heat adoption benefits. Respondents suggested prolonged public campaigns to elucidate the advantages of energy-saving technologies and the behavioural adaptations essential for renewable heating solutions. By doing so, they anticipated an increased public appetite for such innovations.

“To effectively promote energy efficiency in Scotland, especially in older households, a comprehensive public engagement strategy highlighting the merits of energy-efficient and low-carbon homes is essential. This campaign should inform homeowners and landlords about the available support and guidance.”

Consultation Q43. What, if any, additional action could be taken to deliver the vision and ensure Scotland captures maximum social, economic and environmental benefits from the transition?

SNIPEF Response

To the public:

1. Utilise localised messaging with relatable examples: Instead of relying on grand, overarching messages, focus on delivering localised, tangible examples to communicate the importance of environmental and sustainability issues. This approach will help make the subject matter more accessible and relevant, particularly to those without disposable income, to make significant lifestyle changes. By highlighting the personal and local benefits of the transition to low-carbon solutions, the message becomes more compelling and relatable to a broader audience.

2. Establish a recognisable transition brand: Develop a visible brand identity to emphasise the benefits of sustainable projects and initiatives. Just as the EU flag symbolises the advantages of EU membership, or the "Made in the USA" label and green markers on UK car registrations convey specific messages, a common brand identity for projects related to the low carbon transition can help people understand how various initiatives fit into the broader strategy. This shared identity, spanning from domestic installations to large community projects, will create a sense of cohesion and reinforce the significance of the transition.

For business:

1. Develop robust local supply chains: Support the growth of local businesses and manufacturers in the renewable energy sector. This will promote job creation, economic growth, and self-sufficiency while reducing the environmental impact of long-distance transportation.

2. Foster public-private partnerships: Encourage collaboration between the government, private sector, research institutions, and non-profit organisations to drive innovation, share resources, and leverage collective expertise.

3. Incentivise green investments: Offer financial incentives, such as tax credits, grants, and low-interest loans, to encourage businesses and individuals to invest in renewable energy technologies and infrastructure.

4. Regularly review and update policies: Continuously monitor the progress of the energy transition and adapt policies and strategies as needed to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents to this query echoed sentiments from prior discussions. A dominant theme was the desire for the Scottish Government to cultivate an environment conducive to investment, underpinned by robust stakeholder consultations, especially involving local communities and authorities.

“The commitment made by the first minister to prioritise local community interests should be central to the draft energy strategy. Collaborating with local communities will ensure the benefits are realised by the people of Scotland and not just large corporations.”

“It's pivotal for the Scottish Government to position Scotland as a prime destination for businesses and individuals committed to profitable and sustainable solutions. This will catalyse job creation, revenue generation, and emissions reductions vital for sustainable growth and a just transition.”

Another theme highlighted the importance of understanding the human implications of the transition, ensuring it doesn't aggravate existing disparities. This perspective was commonly shared by individual respondents and non-energy sector organisations.

“A central objective should be to address and rectify societal injustices and disparities. Without this focus, the strategy risks widening the equality gap.”

Finally, some respondents stressed that the energy strategy shouldn't outright dismiss nuclear and fossil fuels. They argued that a balanced energy mix, incorporating traditional and renewable sources, can yield optimal benefits for Scotland.

“As we pivot towards low-carbon solutions, like offshore wind and hydrogen, we must recognise the prolonged necessity for oil and gas. Harnessing these resources domestically can support numerous jobs, contribute taxes, and allow us to regulate our environmental emissions – a smart choice for Scotland's economy.”

Consultation Q47. Is there further action we can take to ensure the strategy best supports the development of more opportunities for young people?

SNIPEF Response

The Modern Apprenticeship in Plumbing & Heating presents an excellent opportunity for young people to engage with low-carbon and renewable technologies, which are crucial for achieving Scotland's net-zero ambitions.

This apprenticeship includes a mandatory low-carbon module, introducing apprentices to renewable technology. It offers optional training in Low Carbon Technology, covering heat pumps, solar thermal, and rainwater harvesting, all contributing to reducing carbon emissions.

To best support the plumbing & heating industry's actual needs, the Scottish Government must ensure adequate funding and new start placements for the Modern Apprenticeship in Plumbing & Heating.

Unfortunately, recent reductions in Skills Development Scotland's apprenticeship placements in 2022 and 2023 have limited opportunities for young people. For instance, SNIPEF Training Services, the Plumbing & Heating Industry Managing Agent, recruited 359 apprentices in the previous year but was awarded only 258 contracts this year due to funding cuts. The demand for our apprenticeships now exceeds the allocated spaces, resulting in fewer opportunities for young people.

By providing sufficient apprenticeship placements that cater to the plumbing & heating industry's needs, the Scottish Government can reassure employers who recruit apprentices, thereby creating new opportunities for those interested in pursuing careers in our sector. With full support, this initiative will help achieve the Scottish Government's net-zero targets by training the future workforce in plumbing, heating, and renewables.

Furthermore, introducing an employer grant or incentive scheme, coupled with additional funding for new apprentice placements, could encourage more employers who do not typically recruit apprentices to create new vacancies within their businesses. This approach would further expand opportunities for young people and support the development of a skilled workforce for a sustainable future.

Consultation Outcome

Respondents to this topic primarily voiced the need for skill development by revamping educational and training systems. Many suggestions revolved around introducing changes in school curricula and emphasising apprenticeships and training opportunities. The goal of these suggestions was to equip the Scottish workforce with the expertise and credentials necessary for the execution of the strategy's proposals.

“Young individuals today are keen on a comprehensive approach to green job opportunities, emphasising robust education and training avenues. There's an urgent need to educate and guide more youth towards the green energy sector, ensuring they are met with fair wages and working conditions. Furthermore, topics like climate change and green energy must be introduced early in educational systems to nurture a generation genuinely enthusiastic about these causes and the broader vision they symbolise.”

Some respondents underscored the pivotal role that main players in the energy sector can assume in fostering the acquisition of pertinent skills and competencies. They believe this collaboration can ensure that youth are granted a holistic grasp of the dynamic energy employment landscape.

“Harnessing the capabilities of Scotland's renewable energy developers can be monumental in delivering education, apprenticeship, and employment prospects for the nation's youth. Leveraging well-established enterprises, supply chains, and budding developmental trends can endow young individuals with an exhaustive comprehension of climate change, green energy, and the evolving employment milieu.”

Another recurrent theme centred on the need for sustained interaction and collaboration with young individuals. Ensuring their viewpoints and requirements are perpetually factored into the policymaking mechanism is essential.

“The youth of Scotland are grappling with escalating living expenses, exacerbated by the stark absence of affordable housing and land accessibility. It's imperative to prioritise their interests during the Just Transition and subsequent strategies. The government should actively engage with the younger demographic, incorporating their visions for the future. This collaboration can manifest through specialised task forces or inclusive consultation frameworks.”