

## 1.0 Introduction and Context for Research

### Contents:

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2 The European Landscape Convention and the Research Context
- 1.3 The UK Context
- 1.4 ELC Implementation Key issues
- 1.5. Challenges involved
- 1.6 Justification for Project
- 1.7 Scientific Objectives, Project Brief and Output Summary
- 1.8 Understanding the Implementation of the ELC
- 1.9 Relevance of Policy Content Analysis in Relation to ELC Implementation
- 1.10. Policy Monitoring and the European Landscape Convention
- 1.11. Public Policy Analysis and the ELC as a new way to 'Frame' Landscape
- 1.12. Landscape Quality Objectives
- 1.13. Development of a Monitoring Framework
  - (a) Responsibilities and Tasks
  - (b) Objectives of a monitoring framework
  - (c) What is being monitored?
  - (d) Baseline Information
  - (e) Targets
  - (f) Evaluation and moderation
  - (g) Feedback
- 1.14 Conclusions

### 1.1. Introduction

This report contains a number of sections as listed in the Contents. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology and approach used in the research; Chapter 3, together with the Digest system (Appendix 6.1) and Analysis Tables (Appendix 6.2) form the Baseline for 2008; Chapter 4 details the Monitoring Framework. Supporting information will be found in the Reference list (Chapter 5.0) and in the Appendices.

This introductory chapter provides a summary of contextual information relating to the project including relevant background information concerning the European Landscape Convention (ELC) and its implementation, the project context, brief and outline, the administrative and policy context for the project, a short review of key areas within the literature relating to policy, monitoring and the ELC, the objectives and findings of the project and a summary of the Monitoring Framework.

### 1.2 The European Landscape Convention and the Research Context

The UK signed the ELC on Feb 21.2.2006, it was ratified it on 21.11.2006 and it came into force 1.3.2007 (see Appendix 6.5 for ELC text). Ratification of the ELC provided a new energy to those working in both policy and practice in relation to the Landscape. However the UK had been working towards ratification for some time, having signed the document in 2006, and it was recognised in Europe that the UK already provided good examples of landscape-related policy and practice. This was partially because the instigation for, and inception of, the ELC was from prominent figures in the field in the UK. The UK is also seen as a leader in thinking in this field. While the UK was consistent with the ELC, what was much less clear was the detail of how implementation of the ELC would occur and what difference it might have in practice.

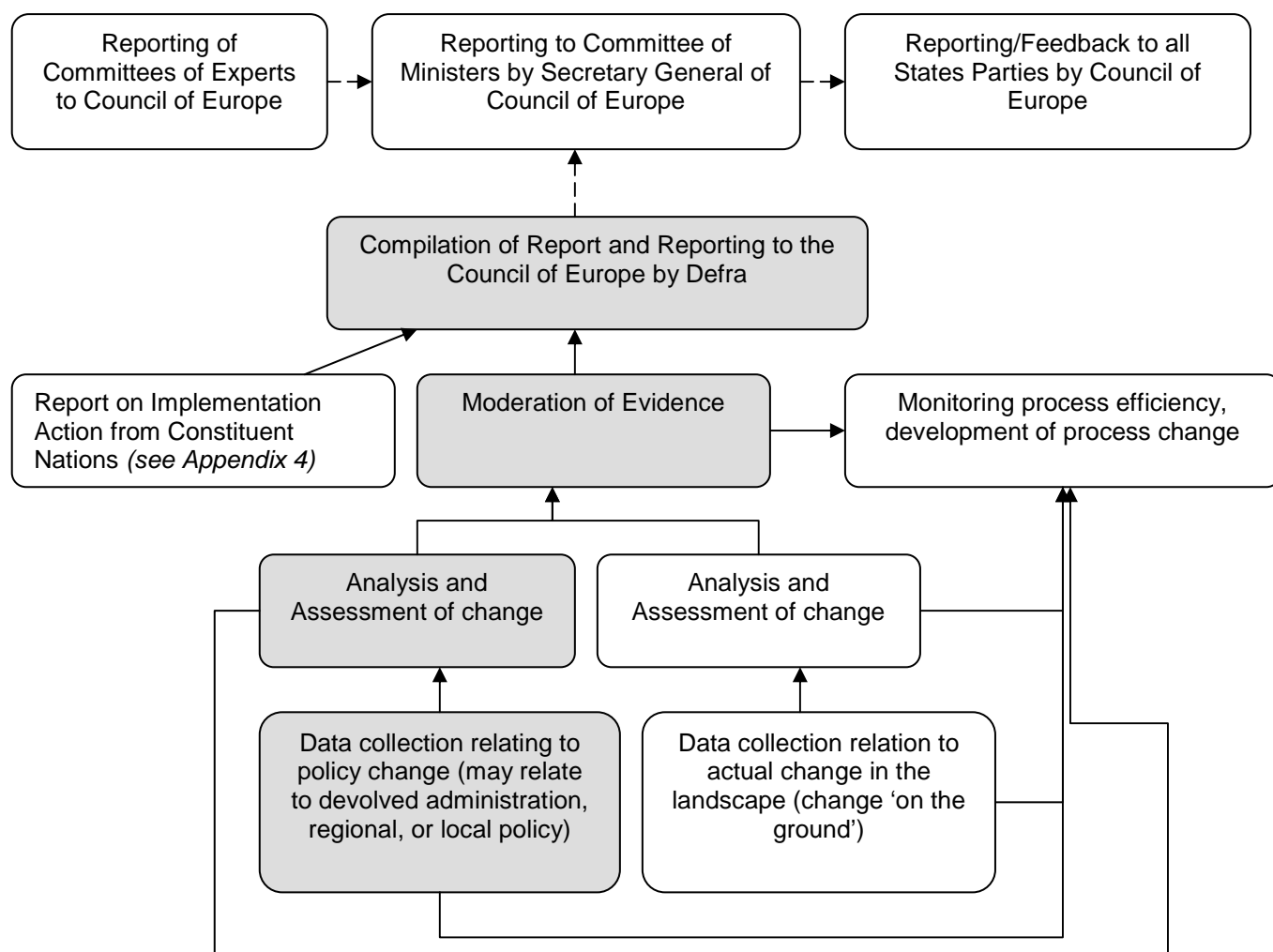
The Council of Europe is now focussing on the implementation of the Convention and has provided *Draft Guidelines for Implementation* which were adopted by the Committee of Ministers in February 2008 (CoE, 2008). The basis for implementation is set out in ELC

Articles 5 (General Measures) and 6 (Specific Measures). Implementation is now under way in a number of countries within Europe and some useful feedback is now emerging through the Council of Europe initiatives and commissioned research in a number of countries (e.g. ICPL, 2008). Conventions rely on agreement and consensus and the Council of Europe depends on Member States to develop their own implementation strategies, emphasising the need for creativity in the way authorities should 'draw up legal, operational, administrative and technical landscape-related instruments' (CoE, 2007a, p.4).

### 1.3 The UK Context

The UK's ratification of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) in 2006 placed a greater responsibility on each signatory nation to protect and manage all landscapes. In the UK the principal organisation charged with affecting this process was the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Defra, as 'State Party', has responsibility for reporting to the Council of Europe. Responsibility for ELC monitoring and reporting to Defra lies with the devolved administrations (Figure 1.1). A UK Monitoring Group has been established (devolved administrations and statutory advisers) chaired by Defra to oversee implementation activities.

**Figure 1.1 Responsibility, Reporting Structure and Monitoring Tasks relating to ELC Implementation in the UK**



NOTE: Shaded areas indicate the focus of this research.

In England, Natural England has been the primary organisation leading this process and has been supported by English Heritage. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has been given the same position in Scotland and has been working closely with the Scottish Government on understanding and implementing the principles of the ELC and in Wales the Countryside Commission for Wales (CCW) has been reporting to the Welsh Assembly and Defra. The administration of the ELC in Northern Ireland has not however been as straightforward. Owing to the changing structures of governance in Northern Ireland the role of landscape and landscape planning policy has resided with the Northern Ireland Department for the Environment (NI DOE). However as the structure of government in Northern Ireland changes in the near future it is expected that the newly formed Environment Agency Northern Ireland (EANI) will be responsible for ELC implementation.

Various actions and pieces of research relevant to this study have now been commissioned and completed by organisations in the devolved administrations. In October 2007 *A Framework for Implementation* was established with Natural England taking the lead to oversee the implementation of the ELC in England. Natural England's role is to be further developed through an *All Landscapes Matter* detailed policy and a *Natural England ELC Action Plan*. In Scotland, SNH has worked with the Scottish Government and other organisations in various ways related to implementation of the ELC including initiatives through the former Scottish Landscape Forum. A report in 2007 suggested that '*Scotland can improve on current practice and take better care of its landscapes, but this requires clear leadership on landscape matters by the Scottish Executive and key public bodies. The Forum recommends that the Convention's approach should be embraced and an action plan to deliver its requirements implemented, incorporating landscape considerations more fully into the host of decision- and policy-making activities*' (Scottish Landscape Forum, 2007). In addition, a number of recommendations were set out. Other research includes that by the International Centre for Protected Landscapes (ICPL) commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2007 which identified specific recommendations in relation to spatial planning, landscape policy implementation and education and training (ICPL, 2007).

In Northern Ireland, there is no specific research available relating to the implementation of the ELC. The report commissioned by the Northern Ireland Green NGOs Group and the Environment and Heritage Service of Northern Ireland (2007) focused on the '*economic significance of Northern Ireland's environmental economy and an analysis of the role of government policies and strategies in influencing its development*'. The legislative basis for the Northern Irish Department of Environment's actions is the *Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order* (NI) 1985 (NCALO) (NIEA, 2008b). The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) operates within the DoE. NIEA takes the lead in advising on, and in implementing, the Government's environmental policy and strategy in Northern Ireland. Although the recent *State of the Environment Report* (NIEA, 2008a) does not mention the ELC, it does summarise important landscape issues and is seen as providing a '*clear baseline and vehicle to promote awareness of the environment*'. It also identifies indicators relating to changes in the environment. The Northern Ireland Assembly has undertaken to publish Northern Ireland's first White Paper on the Environment during the lifetime of this Assembly. It will identify clear objectives in the fields of waste management, biodiversity and water, but it is unclear at this stage how much emphasis will be put on landscape issues related to the ELC.

Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has carried out significant landscape work, particularly in relation to seascape analysis. CCW states that it champions the principles of the ELC through its work with the Welsh Assembly Government. The gap analysis carried out in relation to the ELC articles is not yet publicly available. The CCW report (2004) from University of Gloucestershire - *European Landscape Convention: Implications for compliance within Wales and resource implications* - examined the compliance of Welsh landscape policy with the ELC and provided a legislative appraisal for the administration. The report outlined a scaled approach to landscape planning that explicitly reflected ELC Articles 5 and 6. CCW

also support the use of a multi-layered, scaled mapping process called LANDMAP incorporating professional and public perceptions of landscape quality. The report also outlined a range of areas where landscape monitoring was proposed including; the historic environment of Wales; the archaeological resource; seascapes; and the challenges of the urban-fringe.

#### **1.4 ELC Implementation Key issues**

There are a number of key issues and associated questions that can be identified in relation to the implementation of the ELC in the UK. Of primary importance is the performance of policy and organisations responsible for planning and managing the landscape - are existing policies adequate? How can we measure performance? Are additional policies required or can existing policies be altered to be more responsive to the demands of the ELC? How can organisations be assisted to enhance their policies in relation to ELC implementation?

The ELC indicates the sharing of expertise and understandings of landscape particularly between sectors and devolved administrations. It is important that UK initiatives therefore provide some understanding of the position and communication between the devolved administrations (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) in relation to responses to the ELC, in particular in relation to action and monitoring. A baseline for understanding the present situation throughout the UK is therefore a key issue. The work of the Council of Europe has shown that there is considerable benefit in examining the implementation experience of others; therefore providing greater coherence in the information available should aid the connectedness of approach to implementation developed in each part of the UK.

Communication of purpose is a particularly important issue within policy documents (see Bentrupperbäumer *et al*, 2005). The recent research carried out for Natural England (Roe *et al.*, 2007) showed that one of the problems in policy documents is that the expression of intent in relation to the ELC is often hard to identify. There are also issues of cross-sectoral thinking and linkages to address in relation to intent and language. The flow of information is a key issue, particularly how flows work between policies at the various levels, between sectors and, as a starting point, how the flow of thinking can be facilitated between the principles of the ELC and national policy. It is also important in the UK, where considerable work has been achieved on the ground that information can be fed back into policy development so that a variety of responses to the ELC can be encouraged.

Another key issue is that of monitoring and managing landscape change. Much useful work has been done in recent years relating to the theorising of landscape change, particular in relation to drivers of change and the connections between the drivers and the impacts. In terms of landscape a number of very useful tools have been developed to aid this understanding (e.g. EIA, Countryside Quality Counts (CQC)). The continuing focus on landscape change is indicated by the establishment of the Condition and Quality of England's Landscapes Project (CQuEL) which will report in 2012 and will assess change for the period 2004 to 2009. However the link between policy and impacts on the ground is still very difficult to determine because of the complexity of the processes and the range of influences on landscape change.

Rights and responsibilities in relation to landscape and, in particular in relation to ELC implementation are an important issue as is institutional capacity in relation to the ELC implementation. This is part of a wider issue relating to training and education and participation that is picked up in the ELC Articles, and of enabling organisations to be able to respond in an appropriate manner to the needs of the ELC.

#### **1.5. Challenges involved**

The challenges involved in implementing the ELC are considerable for government at every level and for relevant organisations. One of the main issues is the need to gain agreements on the priorities and needs in all the different areas that are covered by the ELC. The ELC is based on a number of assumptions, one of which is that all landscapes have a potential meaning and quality; but perhaps this issue of quality is not yet fully explored. What do we mean by 'landscape quality', and who is making (or should make) such a judgement?

In terms of policy there are some new challenges in relation to understanding the potential benefits and impacts of a new generation of approaches that are emerging to landscape management, such as an Ecosystem Services Approach.

In this particular research project there are some important intellectual as well as practical challenges, such as how do we assess the potentially 'unassessable' in terms of connections between the causes and effects of change? The key issue here is whether it is possible to disassemble impacts on landscape of the implementation of the ELC from other drivers of change.

### **1.6. Justification for Project**

It is important that the momentum that has been built up in relation to the ELC is not lost, but is built upon; however further work is needed in order to ensure that public money is spent wisely and well on this issue, and that organisations involved in implementation are able to respond efficiently. As has been identified, good baseline information must be the starting point for further action. We also need robust theoretical and methodological bases behind the policy and practice we wish to develop in order to ensure, again that money is spent well, but also that policies are sustainable. Further work is also required to ensure that agreement is achieved between those responsible for implementing the ELC at every level and that parties are fully 'signed up' to what is needed. There are a number of areas that need further work in order to take the next step in understanding what has already been achieved, what is working well, and what is being done poorly and what is yet to be undertaken. This project provides baseline information and a better understanding of whether we presently have suitable tools in terms of assessment and monitoring.

### **1.7. Scientific Objectives, Project Brief and Output Summary**

The overall objective of the project as set out in the brief was:

*'to establish a baseline of current landscape legislation, policy and other activities at appropriate spatial scales that collectively contribute to UK landscape protection, management and planning with respect to the ELC and to investigate the feasibility of assessing direct landscape change as a consequence of the ELC. This would include identification and assessment of methods for evaluating changes in landscape and their capacity to report on changes as a result of effects on current UK policies and legislation that may be made in response to the ELC'.*

The objectives of the study thus fell into two clear areas:

1. Review and analysis of existing policies;
2. Development of monitoring methodologies and techniques for landscape policies and change on the ground.

A number of tasks were therefore identified by the Research Team relating to this project:

- Task 1: Establishment of baseline information relating to current landscape policy
- Task 2: Development of a methodology to monitor and assess changes in legislation, policy and other activities
- Task 3: Establishment of standard criteria for a monitoring process

Task 4: Examination of reporting and evaluating real changes in the landscape

Task 5: Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

As the project developed it became clear that these tasks overlapped and the format of the final outputs from the project was shaped to reflect this.

The main outputs of the project are of two types:

**1. Final Report and Findings:** This includes a summary of findings from the literature, a methodological statement for the research, the baseline and the monitoring framework. Supporting data can be found in the appendices including the digest sheets with data relating to Part 3 of the Baseline, the results of the organisation capacity analysis, proformas and guidance relating to the Monitoring Framework and key reference documents.

**2. Administrative and Process Outputs:** In addition to the findings that are produced within this report format, there are a number of process outputs that are identified in Table 1.1. These were particularly important in relation to the development of the project and in monitoring the quality of the Final Report and Findings.

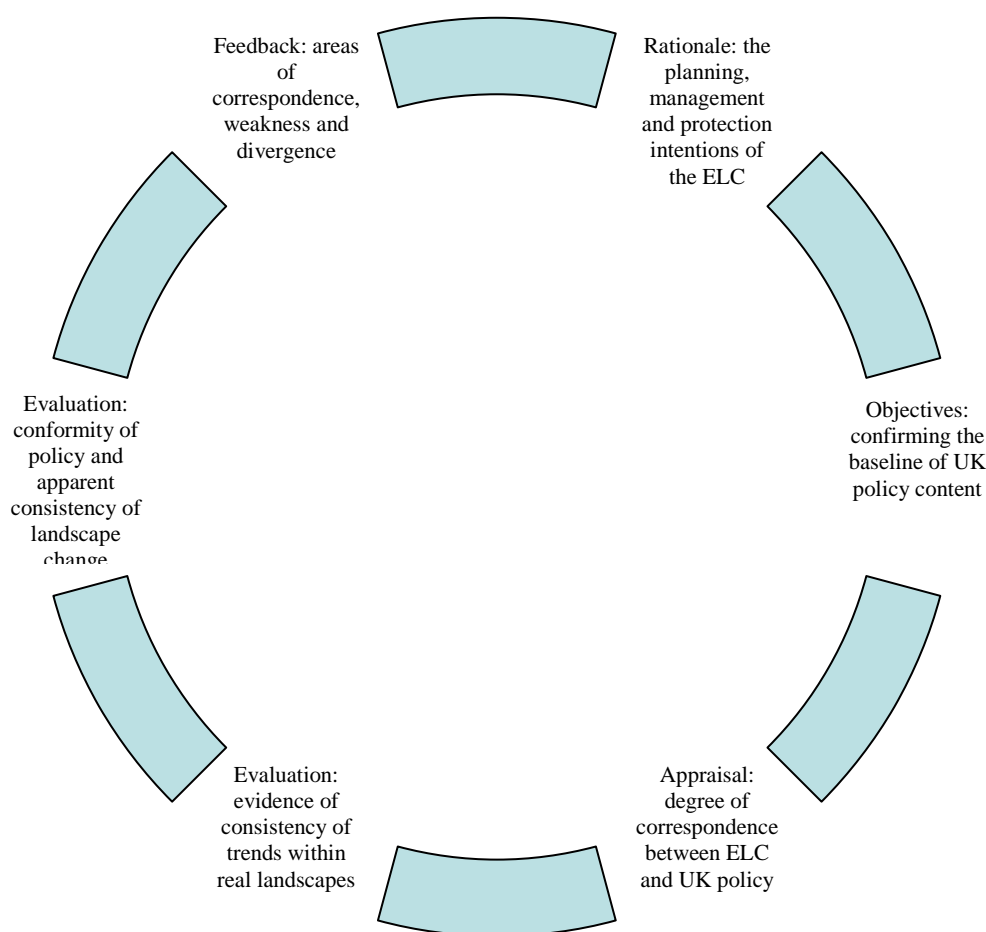
**Table 1.1: Administrative and Process Outputs**

<b>Output</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Format</b>
Project inception	Steering Group & Project Team	Meeting
Summary Notes for 4 No. meetings	Steering Group & Project Team	Email attachment circulated to Steering Group prior to next meeting as set out in the project brief.
Preparatory Papers	Steering Group & Project Team	Email attachment circulated to Steering Group prior to next meeting as set out in the Project Programme
Project Closure	Steering Group, Project Team & selected Stakeholders	Meeting and presentation

### 1.8. Understanding the Implementation of the ELC

The approach to the project and methodology used is set out in detail in Chapter 2. The project consisted primarily of a desk-based survey plus Research Team and Steering Group discussion. The project relied heavily on a 'teamwork approach' - the expertise of the individual members of both the Steering Group and the Research Team and in the frank exchange of information and views.

Figure 1.2 below summarises the approach to the research. This is based on the ROAMEF Cycle set out in the Treasury Green Book (HM Government, undated) and this provided us with the basis for both the Baseline and the Monitoring Framework.

**Figure 1.2. Understanding the Implementation of the ELC**

### 1.9. Relevance of Policy Content Analysis in Relation to ELC Implementation

Although there are examples of policy analysis in the literature, it was not easy to find useful examples of the kind of *policy content analysis* that was carried out in this project.

Generally it is understood that the aims of policy analysis are to illustrate previously under- or un-developed policy linkages or policy areas; improve policy making processes; improve the mechanisms through which policy is implemented; and/or strengthen organisational capacity of policy implementation (Collins, 2005; Pasteur, 2001). In this study the majority of the data were guidance mechanisms (policy statements), mostly in the form of policy documents, that guide land-use, planning and resource management across sectors. It is also understood in the literature that the linkages and paths of influence between the different levels (international, national, regional, sub-regional and local) are important for understanding policy (*ibid*). This present study was concerned with the international (European) to the UK national and devolved administration levels as a first step in this understanding. Therefore, this policy analysis is concerned with the policy processes and actors, the policy context, the policy statements (documents in our case) and the policy measures or content.

Statements are seen as a useful source of information, but *'can only be put into practice if they are translated into measures, such as laws, regulations, programmes or projects that facilitate implementation'* (Ibid p.5). It has been said that statements that are not supported by measures may mean that the government or policy-making organisation is not fully committed to the policy (Shankland, 2000 in Pasteur, 2001). In other disciplines it has been shown that although policy statements can exist on paper they are not supported by policy measures to facilitate their implementation (Collins, 2005). Evaluative criteria are most often linked to the outcomes of policies in policy analysis, although this was not the objective of this study. The following table (Table 1.2) provides a characterisation of policy which helps in understanding how policies influence and are influenced by a wide range of factors. This also then helps in constructing methods to interpret the content and meaning of policy.

**Table 1.2. Policy Characterisation**

Characteristic	What does that mean?
<b>Incremental and complex</b>	Policy is often based on experimentation, chance events, learning from mistakes, and a range of other influences.
<b>Shaped by policy narratives</b>	Different stories evolve to describe events. Some gain more authority and have more influence on policy decisions than others.
<b>Pluralist</b>	Many actors and interest groups can influence the policy process. There may be a range of mechanisms by which these different voices are heard.
<b>Informed by actor networks</b>	Certain individuals or institutions spread and maintain narratives through chains of persuasion and influence and inform policy.
<b>Political</b>	Power relations between citizens, experts, and political authorities mean that policy making is not neutral. Both personal politics and party politics influence policy decisions
<b>Influenced by practice</b>	Projects, and the practices of front line staff can have a strong influence on policy

(Source: Keeley and Scoones, 1999).

### 1.10. Policy Monitoring and the European Landscape Convention

*Europe's Living Landscapes*, edited by Pedrolí *et al.* (2007), provides a useful snapshot of a number of landscape policy, planning and management tools now being developed and used throughout Europe. The focus is on how to counteract the loss of quality in landscapes.

In relation to change, two important points emerge from Pedrolí *et al.*'s analysis of the existing situation. The first is that most landscape change decisions are made at the regional and sub-regional levels:

*'Although most countries are engaged in regional planning procedures at larger scales and longer time intervals (e.g. every 10-15 years), significant landscape change decisions are mostly taken at the regional and sub-regional level and with much greater frequency. In most cases, small groups of local politicians, land owners and technical experts exchange plans, comments and reviews and arrive at compromises. The resulting plans e.g. land consolidations, afforestation, drainage or urban development schemes, being executed in their community or province. One look at the density of Europe's administrative system gives a different meaning to the notion of 'bottom-up': European landscapes are changing continuously at the level of*

*each administrative unit and under a driving-force regime that receives its signals and funds from the global, European and national markets' (Pedroli et al., 2007 p.12).*

The second point is the lack of integrated thinking at every level:

*'The EU lacks a vision that specifically focuses on the effects of ...change on landscape as an integrated concept' (Ibid, p.13)*

*Defining implementation targets for the European Landscape Convention requires the commitment of both national and international institutions. One of the most pressing challenges in this respect is the question of whether these institutions will be able to move from a competitive, sector-oriented style of governance towards an integrated, landscape-oriented form' (Ibid, p.14)*

The ELC relates to planning, designing and managing the landscape. The overall indicators of ELC implementation can be seen as:

- The condition of the landscape
- The way people regard and use the landscape

These rely to a considerable extent on natural and social processes, but they also rely heavily on policy and regulation of the landscape. Policies and guidance help to manage the condition of the landscape and they should reflect community attitudes to the landscape. If we regard the ELC as now providing us with the baseline that encapsulates our overall attitude to landscape which then affects our use and management of it, then monitoring policy change in relation to the ELC is important.

In order for the UK to use the ELC in this way, methods are required by which policy change indicators can be established and tools by which change on the ground be measured. What is required is to identify what trends are occurring; what is the significance of the change; and how that change is recorded, summarised and then used to inform policy development. Monitoring can indicate that change has occurred, but it is not always possible to identify *why* that change has occurred. Thus, connecting policy change with change on the ground is desirable but very difficult in the case of the ELC because of the large number of variables involved. What *is* possible is to identify indicators that provide a picture of change in policy and change on the ground independently and compare these against a baseline condition.

It is recognised that key UK decisions in relation to the landscape are made at the local level. This is primarily because the UK is a 'plan led system' rather than a zoning system as seen in many other European countries (Lloyd and Peer, 2005). This means that there is considerable difference in the resulting landscape and land-use decisions that occur at the local level and thus the way that such decisions are made, including the information that is used by those responsible for decision-making, is of particular importance. In terms of monitoring of policy and change on the ground, the point to consider is how such monitoring information can be formulated so that it is useful, and then how the relevant organisations/bodies actually use this information.

Policy monitoring is useful if:

- It shows whether policy is changing to effect better consistency with the ELC according to the key policy indicators identified; change monitoring occurs through comparative analysis against a baseline survey.
- There is change on the ground that concurs with the key policy indicators; change monitoring tools need to be identified that allow for comparative analysis of the situation on the ground over time.

The questions that emerge from this in relation to monitoring in the UK in particular are:

- At which levels are landscape change decisions occurring predominantly?
- Is there integrated thinking in policy, institutions and sectors in relation to landscape change?

- Do existing organisations have capacity for integrated landscape-oriented thinking as set out by the ELC?

It has been suggested that landscape governance should reflect the needs of the local civic society grounded in their own specific landscapes – cities and sub-regions are considered as a ‘local state’ rather than sub-units of the national state (Gorg, 2007). The idea is that this local scale is most appropriate for dealing with complex, locally-anchored problems. Article 4 of the ELC states that the principle of subsidiarity should be employed, or that decisions on the landscape should be taken by those as close as possible to the people affected by the issues being addressed. However it is also recognised as important that there is opportunity for decisions to be made at all levels of decision making in order to ensure that ‘*both individual and collective*’ assets of the landscape are preserved<sup>1</sup>.

In terms of a monitoring framework therefore it is important to:

- Monitor whether ELC thinking is filtering into the lower levels in particular;
- Monitor whether there is capacity within organisations at all levels to implement the ELC.

Research has already indicated the need for guidelines to act as a facilitator to organisations particularly at the regional and local levels (Roe *et al.*, 2007), and recent initiatives have provided guidelines and a checklist to aid the integration of the intent of the ELC into plans, policies and strategies (Natural England, 2009). Monitoring responses to these initiatives will provide some indicator of organisational capacity and understanding of the ELC.

### 1.11. Public Policy Analysis and the ELC as a new way to ‘Frame’ Landscape

In understanding how implementing the ELC will affect UK policy, an assessment of existing policy needs to be undertaken. It is important to understand the context and the frame under which such an assessment can be developed.

Three key points have been identified as important in policy analysis:

1. Examining the processes by which policy meanings are transmitted to its intended audience;
2. Identifying the intended audience;
3. Establishing how the audience interprets the meaning of the policy.

The first issue of transmission is being dealt with in a number of ways and through various initiatives by the Council of Europe and the UK Government through Defra and others. In terms of the ELC the intended audience is clear; it is all stakeholders of landscape - that means everyone in Europe. However, in the case of policy, primarily it is the various stakeholders who interpret and implement government policy and guidance. The third point is the key point that this present project aims to assess: to what extent and how is the meaning of the ELC presently reflected in policy?

It is important therefore to look not just at ‘what’ a policy means, but ‘how’ it is interpreted. In the baseline assessment (Chapter 3), questions were formulated to examine a simple yes/no response - to determine what in relation to the ELC frame *is* reflected, and then an opportunity provided to expand upon *how* it was reflected. Language and communication emerge as key issues here. The issues of language and interpretation are areas of some considerable academic study (see for example Campbell, 2003; Benson, 2004; Fisher, 2003; Eco, 1990, 1992). In the study carried out in 2007 (Roe *et al.*, 2007) policies were specifically examined to determine whether the intent of the ELC was reflected either explicitly or implicitly through the language used. For example, the issue of the use of proxies for ‘landscape’ was examined. This is a difficult issue because language is used by different

---

<sup>1</sup> See Prieur, 2006. Article 4 stipulates that: ‘*Each Party shall harmonise the implementation of this convention with its own policies*’.

sectors and groups in different ways, thus 'environment' is not used in exactly the same way by planners as by hydrologists, and landscape architects would have subtle differences in meaning again. There are also temporal considerations in the use of language to consider, particularly when trying to compare interpretations of policies that are currently being used, but which date from different periods. The key conclusion to any examination of policy language is the need for greater clarity and precision, but this *'should not be confused with over-simplification, a failure to grasp the complexity of the underlying issues or an unwillingness to get to grips with tensions inherent to different ways of understanding'* (Campbell, 2003 p.390).

A frame is *'an organizing principle that transforms fragmentary information into a structured and meaningful whole'* (Gorp, 2001 in Fischer, 2003 p.144), or a principle of organization that directs the significance we give to public actions (Fischer, 2003). The principles are influenced by the cultural, social and other contexts. In the case of the ELC, the frame is the lens by which we interpret the text, and this interpretation in the UK is based on the way we regard our landscape, the legal and regulatory context, etc. Framing is a dynamic process, so the way we interpret the ELC will change as we gain more insight and better information into landscape processes as well as in response to social and cultural change and influences. It is useful to think in terms of a frame because it provides a direction for action *'a basis for persuasion, and a framework for the collection and analysis of data'* (Rein and Schoen, 1993 p.153). The community viewpoint will determine what is regarded as important in relation to the collection of data in relation to the ELC as well as determining the key points for assessment.

Implementation of the ELC across Europe by countries using their own frames for reference will provide useful and interesting information which in turn will be fed back into the re-framing process. It is important to recognise this as a dynamic process within the assessment framework and allow for change in interpretation of the text, particularly the Articles of the Convention. All those involved with the interpretation of the ELC can be seen as participants in this evolving frame. This is also an interactive process; as the interpretation changes, so the frame changes, so implementation changes, so the feedback changes and the practices and thinking of those involved changes etc. It is important that those involved remain open to the discussion that their practice and outlook changes.

The frame for the ELC implementation and assessment can be taken primarily from the Convention text itself. Since the UK was highly influential in the development of the ELC text, the text can be seen to embed much of the thinking – or the principles – by which landscape was already being planned, managed and designed in the UK. The preamble of the Convention primarily establishes the principles (the frame) under which the Articles are then detailed.

In terms of examining how the implementation of the ELC changes our framing of landscape, different sectors will of course already be working with different frames or outlooks. Conflicts sometimes arise because groups may focus on different elements of a policy, particularly in relation to importance. However the ELC provides a new frame and thus opens up new possibilities for working together for the good of the landscape<sup>2</sup>. It may also be the case that focussing on particular Articles of the ELC may be necessary in relation to different sectors as long as there is an understanding that this is appropriate and that the framing of landscape (i.e. the principles behind the approach to landscape) are consistent with the overall ELC frame.

In the UK the overall frame for the way we understand landscape is now well discussed and documented (see for example Olwig, 2007; Wylie, 2007; Cosgrove, 1984; Thompson, 2000; Selman, 2006). The draft overall analysis of policy trends (Chapter 3.4) carried out under this

---

<sup>2</sup> Fischer (2003:147) uses the example of sustainable development as an example of how a new or 'alternative frame' can provide a new discourse that many different groups can 'buy into'.

project provides a clear focus of how policy frames landscape in the UK. Three examples of how the ELC may potentially alter the framing of the way we consider landscape in the UK are therefore:

- **Protectionism:** We have a strong planning system that sets out planning, design and management of the landscape as desirable. Protection of 'valuable' landscape is a very strong part of both the statutory system (that reflects community values) and the way we think about landscape i.e. some landscapes are considered more valuable than others. This is an example where the ELC has brought new thinking. Although protection is still upheld, the emphasis is on understanding that *all* landscapes have some value and the ELC applies equally to all landscape irrespective of its condition or character.
- **All landscapes:** the implication of the ELC is that all landscapes should be covered by policy as appropriate. The ELC specifically includes all types of landscape in all kinds of conditions. In the UK there is still a predominant view that 'landscape' is rural, and generally of high scenic quality, both within policy and in popular thinking.
- **Land ownership:** is another very strong tradition in the UK. Those who own the land by law have traditionally had the right to determine the management and use of that landscape. Although the ELC does not pronounce specifically on this, the indication is that landscape is a community good and thus it sets out the principle of participation for all stakeholders in decision-making concerning the planning, management and design of the landscape.

Understanding the ELC as a new way of framing landscape is important for two major reasons:

1. Implementation of the ELC requires more than an 'old wine in new bottles' approach. All sectors and stakeholders involved in landscape need to understand and accept this.
2. It is potentially a very powerful and constructive tool for enhancing and protecting landscapes, but it requires 'buy-in' to the notion that it is important, new and radical.

However, just as the framing of sustainable development is under constant re-interpretation and has taken governments, statutory bodies and other groups concerned with the environment many years and much guidance and discussion to provide adequate responses to the original demands of the Rio Earth Summit and Brundtland's Agenda, implementation of the ELC is likely to require much discussion, experimentation, feedback and reporting between practitioners, academics and policy-makers in order to achieve the vision that inspired its authors.

### 1.12. Landscape Quality Objectives

The whole issue of landscape quality is an interesting one, both in terms of its conceptual basis and its practical expression, interpretation or articulation in policy and practice. The perception of quality (attribute) may not be the same as the quality of the thing itself because perceptions of quality are inextricably linked to value. Some key questions are:

- What do we mean by '*improve the quality*' (Fairbrother, 1972)
- Who decides on quality? (who *should* decide on quality?)
- What has this got to do with planning, management and protection of the landscape?
- Can you have a high quality landscape that is an 'ordinary' landscape?

The importance of the issue of quality has been understood for some time and is expressed in initiatives such as Landscape Character Assessment, Countryside Quality Counts project (CQC) and Condition and Quality of England's Landscapes Project (CQuEL). CQC provides a systematic assessment of how the countryside is changing. It helps in the understanding of

where change is occurring and whether change matters to people, in terms of the way it affects the things within and about landscape that people value. This information can be used to inform decision-making and policies for achieving sustainable development - enhancing and maintaining the character and quality of our countryside for this and future generations. (Source: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/index.html>). CQuEL is due to report in 2012 and will assess change for the period 2004 to 2009.

The issue of quality related to ordinary landscapes is more complex than measuring what is generally considered to be 'high quality' such as through 'tranquility' assessment or in evaluations relating to protected landscapes. Most landscapes are valued in multiple ways (Stephenson, 2007). Reviewing uses of landscape quality across different sectors has highlighted that the use of, and understanding of, landscape quality differs depending on the audiences being engaged and the focus of the research (Roe *et al.* 2008). In addition, previous research relating to policy in England shows that within existing policy the definitions of quality are weak, patchy and unclear. The problem here is that if quality objectives are not defined within policy, how can quality be monitored? Indeed if we don't know what quality is (and remembering that 'quality' can mean attribute), how can we define and understand what quality we are looking for, how can we begin to monitor, understand and respond to change in the landscape? Antrop (2006) also suggests that defining landscape qualities is more important rather than trying to define a common or single concept or language relating to landscape, because each context may influence the terms used, particularly the context of change and future functioning.

Landscape Quality Objectives are given considerable prominence within the literature in relation to the ELC. These are referred to specifically in Article 1 and Article 6 of the ELC (Box 1.1).

Box 1.1.

**Landscape Quality Objectives in the ELC:**

*Landscape quality objective" means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings"*

(Article 1 Definitions)

*Landscape quality objectives: Each party undertakes to define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed after public consultation.....*

(Article 6D Specific Measures)

Monitoring change against Landscape Quality Objectives (LQOs) has been identified as particularly useful by the Council of Europe within the *Guidelines for Implementation*. References to LQOs are frequent in this document, but they are also somewhat unspecific as to what LQOs actually are (see Box 1.2. for some examples) which makes identifying them within a policy content analysis difficult.

Box 1.2.

**Landscape Quality Objectives: Extracts from Council of Europe (2009) Guidelines for Implementation of the European Landscape Convention**

*The various competent authorities, at their respective levels, prepare **landscape quality objectives** highlighting the particular characteristics and qualities of the landscapes concerned and specifying what steps should be taken to protect, manage and plan them. These objectives should be included in spatial and urban planning documents and policy documents in other sectors...*

***Landscape quality objectives** represent the end result of the process of devising landscape operations, which implies knowledge production, public consultation, policy formulation and action and monitoring strategies.'*

*The **objectives** should constitute the preliminary guidelines for drawing up the measures to be taken to protect, manage and plan landscapes and manage them over time.*

***Landscape quality objectives** should be defined by general landscape policy instruments for the different levels (national, regional, local, etc.) and formally implemented by town and country planning and development documents, as well as by sectoral instruments; in return, these documents can make a specific contribution to the formulation of landscape quality objectives.*

*...**landscape quality objectives** (landscape plans, area development plans with a landscape content, etc.)*

In a Council of Europe seminar focussed on Landscape Quality Objectives, Zoido (2006) agreed with this by suggesting that although quality objectives have been identified by the ELC as one of the most important aims (Article 6) these have '*not been sufficiently developed in any of its different dimensions, neither conceptual, procedural or in its implementation*' (p363). Two major actions are needed (see Zoido, 2006) to define and approve LQOs: (1) include all the knowledge on the territory/landscape, and (2) establish the sequence of validation from participation to scientific verification and regulation, to political implementation in planning and management tools. This second point is relevant to this project, in that it supports the establishment of processes that aid ELC implementation. The change that Zoido (2006) also identifies as needing to take place '*from protection to management and regulation criteria*' (p364) is a major challenge in the formulation of landscape policies. Luginbühl (2006) - expert to the CoE - identified that '*the formulation of landscape quality objectives is a complicated task*' (p.103) which links knowledge to action and is strongly concerned with future landscape conditions. Further characteristics also identified include:

- '*the formulation of landscape quality objectives has to be seen in a context of the knowledge of the facts, in other words of the dynamics underway which transform landscapes*' (p.103);
- a concern to plan for future landscapes in a way that incorporates the value systems operating
- that there must be social equity (shared use of natural and cultural resources).

These kind of interpretations of the ELC provide useful information that helps in policy analysis, because although specific reference may not be made to 'landscape quality

objectives' a number of the characteristics mentioned by more detailed interpretations may be obvious in the policies examined.

### 1.13. Development of a Monitoring Framework

The general understand of a 'monitoring framework' is a supporting structure that checks, controls, warns or keeps a record of something. Monitoring frameworks are now commonly used in many areas to understand change. A number of principles and/or characteristics can be identified for a monitoring framework and a number of key elements that such a framework should identify (see Table 1.3).

**Table 1.3 Components of a Monitoring Framework**

<b>General Principles/Characteristics of a Monitoring Framework:</b>	<b>Elements that a Monitoring Framework must identify</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified responsibilities</li> <li>• Moderation system</li> <li>• Co-ordinated system</li> <li>• Transparent and clear</li> <li>• Repeatable</li> <li>• Baseline available for comparative assessment</li> <li>• Clear targets</li> <li>• Capacity to monitor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring responsibilities</li> <li>• Monitoring tasks/procedures</li> <li>• Objectives of monitoring</li> <li>• What is being monitored</li> <li>• Baseline information</li> <li>• Targets</li> <li>• How evaluation and moderation should occur</li> <li>• How and where and to whom feedback must occur</li> <li>• Identification of good practice/exemplar practice may be useful</li> </ul>

A monitoring framework may consist of a number of procedures, but the overall framework itself is also often a procedure or process that provides guidance to those responsible for monitoring. Monitoring may be used simply to understand what change is occurring in a particular situation, or to provide information that can then be used as evidence that will influence the development of policy or practice. Monitoring may be voluntary or compulsory. There are a wide range of applications for monitoring frameworks. The following discussion of components therefore focuses primarily on requirements for monitoring under the ELC.

#### (a) Responsibilities and Tasks

The Council of Europe Guidelines (2009) for implementing the ELC, state that there is a requirement for States to monitor policies and implementation on the ground. Criteria and instruments for landscape policies are recommended (Box 1.3) based on the presumption that the ratification and development of the principles of the ELC are likely to provide an improvement in the condition of the landscape, in connections between people and landscape, and in the potential landscape has as a resource. However it is not possible to predict the effects of implementation of the ELC on the ground therefore a monitoring framework that provides support to the recording of change is particularly important. This research focuses on policy change and identifies tools that are potentially useful in identifying and monitoring change on the ground, but also in potentially linking policy change to change on the ground retrospectively.

## Box 1.3. ELC Implementation Guidelines

**II.2. Criteria and instruments for landscape policies**

*The fundamental stages in the process leading to landscape action are:*

- *knowledge of the landscapes: identification, description and assessment;*
- *definition of landscape quality objectives;*
- *attainment of these objectives by protection, management and planning over a period of time (exceptional actions and measures and ordinary actions and measures);*
- *monitoring of changes, evaluation of the effects of policies, possible redefinition of choices.*

*Participation, consultation, pooling of ideas and approval (between institutions and the population, horizontal and vertical) should be organised at all stages in this process. Here, the regulatory framework should concentrate more on principles than specific operational methods, which should be left to more technical instruments that can be more easily modified over time (implementation rules, appendices, etc.); they should encourage creativity in the research and experimentation which are already in hand in different states or which form part of collaborative action between several states.*

Source: CoE, 2009

The ELC itself does not specify a monitoring framework, however, each States Party provides a report (on a 2 year cycle) to the Council of Europe. The last report (T-FLOR 2008) was published covering the period 2007-8. Section 4 of this report identifies Defra as leading the UK on all issues relating to the Convention with a UK Monitoring Group involving the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as their respective Agencies concerned with landscape. Article 4 of the Convention (see Box 1.4) indicates that responsibilities may be further devolved, and in the UK, these lie with the devolved administrations of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly and with Defra for England. A simple proforma (see Appendix 6.4) is used to report Action to Implement/Monitor the ELC by the devolved administrations (*Constituent Nations*). The information gained from this proforma is used by Defra in compiling the overall monitoring report to the Council of Europe.

In addition, Article 10 (see Box 1.5) designates Committees of Experts to monitor and report on the overall implementation of the ELC throughout States Parties. All these responsibilities can be seen as a series of related tasks that are clearly devolved to appropriate individuals and organisations as shown in Figure 1.1. (In this Figure the shaded areas indicate the areas covered in this report (however note that policies covered in the baseline assessment are at national not regional or local level).)

## Box 1.4. Division of responsibilities at national level

**Article 4 – Division of responsibilities**

*Each Party shall implement this Convention, in particular Articles 5 and 6, according to its own division of powers, in conformity with its constitutional principles and administrative arrangements, and respecting the principle of subsidiarity, taking into account the European Charter of Local Self-government. Without derogating from the provisions of this Convention, each Party shall harmonise the implementation of this convention with its own policies.*

Source: CoE, 2000

It is important to assess the capacity of organisations, etc to take part in a monitoring process. This is particularly important in relation to the subsidiarity principle and devolved responsibilities with regard to the ELC. There is little point in devolving responsibilities to agencies and organisations which do not have the capacity to carry out the required tasks. Capacity may relate to financial factors, staff expertise, training, support and time, available tools and guidance.

Box 1.5 ELC Text Concerning Monitoring

**Article 10 – Monitoring of the implementation of the Convention**

*1. Existing competent Committees of Experts set up under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe shall be designated by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.*

*2. Following each meeting of the Committees of Experts, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit a report on the work carried out and on the operation of the Convention to the Committee of Ministers.*

*3. The Committees of Experts shall propose to the Committee of Ministers the criteria for conferring and the rules governing the Landscape award of the Council of Europe.*

Source: CoE, 2000

(b) Objectives of a monitoring framework

The overall objective of the monitoring framework proposed in this project is to evaluate the success of the implementation of the ELC within a range of policies at the UK national and devolved administration (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) levels. This is done by measuring specific indicators to validate or otherwise substantiate the effects, consequences or results of implementation activities on the principles of the ELC. The monitoring outcomes are expected to be used to help develop more policies and actions that result in change on the ground that is responsive to the principles, intent and the activities specified in the Articles of the ELC. Consideration of the outcomes will be within an adaptive monitoring framework that acts as a decision-support for policy-makers to verify and alter, as needed, policy with regard to landscape protection, planning and management in response to the monitoring outcomes. The rationale for establishing a monitoring framework for ELC implementation can therefore be seen to achieve the following objectives:

- to provide a monitoring process that can allow evidence to be collected against a baseline
- to provide evidence of what works in policy in relation to the ELC
- to provide a more sophisticated picture of the relationship between policy and actual change
- to provide information in relation to institutional/organisational capacity
- to ensure that those who have responsibilities under ELC implementation in the UK fulfil their responsibilities
- to provide a process that achieves evidence for reporting to the Council of Europe and thus fulfils UK obligations under the ratification of the ELC

(c) What is being monitored

The proposed monitoring framework will support the monitoring of performance in national policy in the UK against the requirements set out in the ELC. In order to monitor and gauge

performance a 'comparator' is needed. In the case of the ELC there are no hard and fast recommendations within the Convention, although there is much useful documentation and examples now emerging from the implementation of the ELC in a number of European countries. Analysis by the Council of Europe Experts can also provide useful information for use within a monitoring framework to analyse performance. In the case of the UK, the baseline provided by the project will give information relating to policy against which future performance can be monitored. The baseline is therefore the first stage in developing a monitoring process. The monitoring framework needs to be able to identify performance against the original baseline, whether change has occurred and whether there was a *need* for change to move in the direction of the target, itself in greater accord with the ELC. Monitoring a range of policies can also provide information on consistency of response to a particular outside influence such as the ELC.

Indicators are commonly used within monitoring processes to act as signs to what is occurring. However, where indicator status may be uncertain, the Articles of the ELC can provide the indicators. Indicators are usually used in conjunction with a baseline and targets, although the ELC does not provide any quantifiable end point that can be discerned as a target. This provides some difficulty in terms of measurement of achievement, but it also provides considerable flexibility for interpretation (which is the objective of the way the ELC text is written).

Generally, indicators may be identified as quantitative or qualitative and research relating to sustainability has shown that it is often useful to use both in assessments (Ghosh *et al.*, 2006; Moles *et al.*, 2007). Bell and Morse (2003) have provided particularly useful summary information relating to indicators and criticise those who use the problem of lack of data as a restriction on indicator selection as this simply maintains the *status quo* of any given situation. They recommend a more creative outlook to the use of indicators even in the face of such difficulties. A pragmatic outlook is required and it is important to consider what you would like to know *and* what you need to know (i.e. the development of practical indicators).

The importance of 'indicator integration' is identified in the development of indicator frameworks. There are two characteristics of indicator frameworks which can cause problems:

- Complexity – individual indicators may be sensible, but the concentration on the detail may mean that the bigger picture is lost;
- Compromise – a framework may not show immediately the possible trade-offs between some indicators and others.

In this study, both overview indicators and detailed indicators have been identified relating to the specific elements of Articles 5&6, to try and get around this problem of not seeing the bigger picture. It should not be assumed that policy-makers need only to see the bigger or overall messages from the indicators. Providing a transparent view of the key points embedded in the detail is also important for policy-development, for understanding by a wider public and to ensure robustness. Indicators can be aggregated into one table or diagram (visual integration) or to provide an indicator index based on numerical values<sup>3</sup>.

Indicators may be weighted in relation to a target goal (e.g. poor-good) rating. There is a problem with this in that it relies on a value judgement to be made which may be contentious. More complex analysis checks indicators against an 'acceptable level' which is given a numerical value. Again the problem with this is that a numerical value needs to be given to the acceptable level in order to allow for measurement. In the policy planning process indicators are useful primarily to explore policy development options, and as communication tools (Bell and Morse, 2007). In order to be useful, indicators need to be set and measured on a regular basis. Research relating to the development of measurements of sustainability at settlement level has shown that useful analytical indices can be created by aggregation of

---

<sup>3</sup> AMOEBA/RADAR/Star diagrams may be useful here (see Bell & Morse, 2007).

indicators (Moles *et al.*, 2007). An example of how indicators could be useful in ELC implementation is in relation to communicating to particular sectors the key areas that such sectors need to address to increase their alignment with the ELC thinking.

In relation to the kind of performance indicators that are assessed in this study, once a 'yes' answer can be given, then the level of the 'yes' may be discussed further. This is why both a yes/no provision is given in most of the questions in Chapter 3 of the baseline evaluation form system, plus the opportunity to provide a more detailed summary of the extent of the alignment. Indicators are also useful because they can be related to targets where these have been identified. In the case of ELC implementation, broadly speaking, the target is conformity with the ELC within policy and practice in the UK. The ELC Articles can be used to set out the key indicators:

- General indicators can be identified from Articles 1 & 2
- Detailed indicators from Articles 5 & 6.

The decision as to whether any particular performance is 'adequate' is obviously a value judgement that would be taken in relation to targets and is not part of this project. However it is possible to identify exemplars which may help the development of performance towards the desired objective.

The indicators developed are set out as 'nested' indicators in that overall 'big picture' information relating to intent and understanding of the ELC can be extracted as well as detail relating to Articles 5 & 6.

Bell & Morse (2007) also recommend seeing indicators within a learning process rather than solely in terms of defined targets. They also counsel against getting too embroiled in the technical issues of indicator use, but rather to consider how indicators can be used to bring about desired change. The amount of data that needs to be collected can be determined by assessing whether it is possible from an analysis of the data to answer the following questions:

- How good or bad is the current situation?
- Do trends show that it is getting better or worse?
- How far is the current situation from established/desired thresholds/targets?

The evaluation/summary of the analysis should therefore help to provide some response to these questions.

#### (d) Baseline Information

A *baseline* provides a snapshot of the current state using available data. The first stage in any monitoring process is to collate baseline data. This provides the basis for monitoring change and identification of particular issues that arise. There are always gaps in baseline data and this can be seen in positive terms in that the gaps are likely to indicate the need for further policy/guidance development. If it is understood by all parties involved that gaps are inevitable, then this is a good starting point for the realisation that a practical approach is needed for the collection of baseline data. Agreement on scoping is therefore important. It is understood that baseline information may need to be revised as new information emerges.

Existing information that could be considered as part of overall baseline evidence includes the statement of the UK situation as regards ELC implementation which was provided in T-FLOR (2008) NLP ELC 2007-2008 (United Kingdom statement) (CoE, 2007). This document provides an initial snapshot or baseline provided by each State government to the Council of Europe. The assessment document completed by the UK Government states that many areas of landscape policy and most implementation is devolved to '*more-or-less arms length government agencies*'. In England, Natural England and English Heritage are the most important agencies; in Scotland, lead landscape policy responsibility rests with the Scottish Government Rural Directorate. Other Government agencies with landscape interests and

responsibilities include Historic Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Government's natural heritage advisers; Welsh agencies are not listed, but these are generally recognised as Countryside Council for Wales and Cadw. The exception is for Northern Ireland. There is no specific landscape policy document except in Northern Ireland where 'Shared Horizons' is a Statement of Policy on Protected Landscapes developed by the Environment and Heritage Service, an agency within the department of the Environment. Local Authorities in Northern Ireland have very limited powers in respect of landscape.

A range of other information has now emerged that could be considered as part of the overall 'UK Evidence Baseline'. Such a baseline might include evidence relating to policies and/or evidence from ground survey etc. There are a number of issues to consider here, one of which is that these documents date from different periods. The overall baseline might include information from the following studies:

- Roe *et al.* (2008) for Natural England
- Ahern and Cole (2009 a,b,c) for Natural England
- ICPL (2007) for the Scottish Government
- Scottish Landscape Forum (2007) for Scottish Ministers
- Dwyer and Selman (2004) for CCW

Baseline information is generally collected using indicators that will provide a picture of change or trends. These can be identified as trends of change over time and trends in performance. Trend data is useful for showing the implications of performance related to business-as-usual (Scott Wilson, 2006) i.e. would the situation get better with *no intervention* by Government/Agencies? Part of the project analysis provides some indication related to overall trends in policy using the ELC principles as the indicators against which trends can be assessed.

Useful points emerge from an examination of literature related to guidance for Impact Assessment (DBERR 2009a, b) to provide an *evidence base*. In relation to this study useful points are:

- *'An evidence base should include a mixture of narrative, analysis and research that support the answers given on the summary pages' (DBERR, 2009a);*
- *Information should 'stand up to external scrutiny – i.e. it should be accessible to the lay reader, and external parties with an interest'(Ibid)*
- *The 'Evidence Base should address any risks or uncertainties associated with the policy options or proposal under consideration'(Ibid)*
- *'It should be consistent with the HM Treasury Green Book guidance'(DBERR, 2009b; HM Government, undated)*
- *It should be a 'focussed document supporting the summary pages'(Ibid)*

#### (e) Targets

Targets are commonly used with indicators to identify the gap between the existing state (baseline) and a desired state. The ideal state may be difficult to achieve and so often a target state is identified that is more realistic. This is a useful way of thinking about how the baseline may be used. Each indicator may have a target and/or an aggregated target can be identified. Although it is clear that the ideal state in relation to this project is to achieve policies across the devolved administrations that are fully in sympathy with the principles, intent and Articles of ELC, this project is not about identifying ideal or realistic targets; such decisions are outside the remit of the project. This project is about providing the baseline from which such decisions on targets may be developed.

A different threshold target may be developed for each indicator and the acceptability of deviation from the target can then be assessed. Targets may be developed in conjunction with a range of stakeholders with an interest in, for example, the specific sectors. Each

stakeholder will have a different 'reference system' or frame for working with the landscape and the ELC and will be working within their own discourse<sup>4</sup> in relation to the ELC.

The Council of Europe identifies Landscape Quality Objectives as a particular focus in terms of providing targets for landscape change within the ELC (see Box 1.6).

#### Box 1.6. Landscape Quality Objectives

##### Extract from 'Definition of Quality Objectives' Section II.2.2.

The definition of quality objectives should be based on knowledge of the specific characteristics and qualities of the places concerned, and identification of their dynamics and of potential as well as of how landscape is perceived by the public. Certain landscape questions or aspects may receive special attention. Landscape quality objectives represent the end result of the process of devising landscape operations, which implies knowledge production, public consultation, policy formulation and action and monitoring strategies.

**Extract from 'Principal characteristics of the analysis process and of landscape action plan for inclusion within general landscape planning instruments and within sectoral instruments'** (Appendix 1 Examples of instruments used to implement the European Landscape Convention)

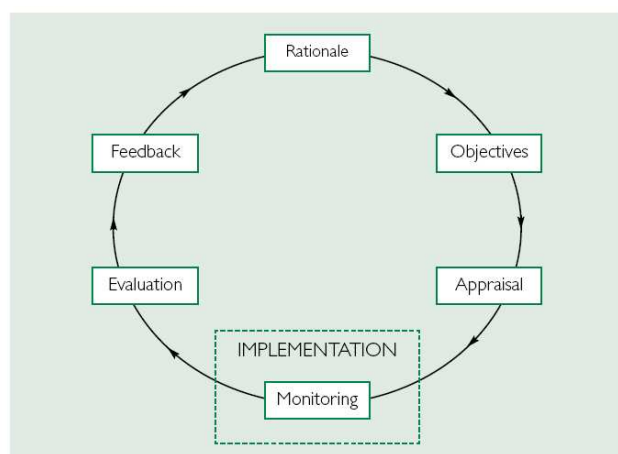
Section 7: It is essential to have a means of monitoring landscape changes and the effectiveness of operations. This should help in the process of reviewing and reformulating landscape quality objectives and of redefining all phases of landscape policy and its resources on a periodical basis.

Source CoE, 2009

#### (f) Evaluation and moderation

The Treasury Green Book sets out the ROAMEF cycle as the guide to the broad policy cycle that includes monitoring that is the focus of the present project. Consideration of the ROAMEF cycle was useful in informing the construction of the ELC Monitoring Framework. The Green Book specifically links the monitoring stage to the to the policy implementation process (see Figure 1.3).

**Figure 1.3 The ROAMEF Cycle** Source: *Treasury Green Book (undated)*



<sup>4</sup> Jacobs (2006) has used discourse analysis to understand the urban policy implementation process and as a way to analyse 'some of the power and ideological conflicts that influence the deliberation of policy implementation (p.40). He identifies the growing interest in the important role of language in the policy arena.

Implementation research literature also provides some useful insights in relation to the evaluation and monitoring of policy implementation. Where a new policy or programme implementation process is being examined there may not be any similar model or prior research to use as the basis for constructing an implementation assessment, so a frame of reference for evaluation may be developed from other programmes and the identification of 'best practice' examples may also be helpful. These best practice exemplars may be identified by experts in the field. However there are drawbacks with using primarily experts because the criteria for assessment of 'best practice' and the frame of reference may not be the same as other potential stakeholders. Thus this kind of research needs to be backed up by '*objective standards of program performance*' (Werner, 2004:131). In the case of the present research the model for implementation assessment is derived from Council of Europe guidance, existing experience provided in the literature and through discussion with UK Agencies. The rationale for the monitoring framework model is contained within the evidence baseline (report and data).

Recommendations for good implementation research comprise:

- Adequate and accurate data collection;
- Accurate programme description so that judgements of the success of a programme are clear and correct;
- The fairest standards for assessment are those set by the program plans and expectations, but may include other perspectives e.g. social values.

Thus in this project there is a need to justify data collection methodology and methods, to ensure that the ELC itself is the basis for judging the success of implementation and also to take into account other perspectives e.g. those relating specifically to the UK in relation to public attitudes to landscape and existing policy traditions which represent public attitudes to landscape.

The literature distinguishes between implementation research/studies and impact evaluations. Implementation studies<sup>5</sup> are a broad and relatively new area of study and so do not have recognised technical standards and tools to establish causal connections, nor best practice research practices or approaches. In impact evaluations it is common to use a comparative analysis whereby the effects of a particular policy or programme are considered in relation to what might or would have happened in the absence of the particular policy/programme. The debates are generally about how to measure this information. This project potentially incorporates the need to consider both implementation evaluation and impact evaluation. This is normal for the assessment of policy and social programmes (Werner, 2004). Impact evaluation relates to monitoring actual change on the ground, while implementation evaluation relates to monitoring the process by which the ELC understanding is transferred through policies at every level and to how all parties' awareness, attitude and knowledge changes as a result of the ELC implementation process.

Public participation is identified by the Council of Europe as an essential part in the monitoring process (see Box 1.7). Exemplar practice may be particularly helpful in the evaluation stage of a monitoring process.

---

<sup>5</sup> Implementation research is defined by Werner (2004) as a '*general term for research that focuses on the question "What is happening?" in the designing, implementation, administration, operation, services and outcomes of social programs*' (p.1). Implementation studies 'assess and explain', they also what is desired or expected and why is it happening?

**Box 1.7: Monitoring Change***G. Make use of public participation*

All action taken to define, implement and monitor landscape policies should be preceded and accompanied by procedures for participation by members of the public and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim of enabling them to play an active role in formulating, implementing and monitoring landscape quality objectives.

Source: CoE, 2009

**(g) Feedback**

In order for the monitoring process to act as a learning process, feedback should occur between every level and between all organisations shown in Figure 1.1. Again, the feedback process can be considered as a 'nested' process whereby feedback occurs between organisations and agencies working at a particular level, but also then between different levels. Feedback entails some kind of evaluation and reflection on what is learned through monitoring. In order for feedback to be most constructive it is also generally understood to be a two-way or interactive process. Within the spirit of the ELC this should include feedback to and from stakeholders and the public as well as agencies and other States Parties. A decision concerning the appropriate level of feedback and to whom, needs to be outlined in the monitoring framework.

**1.14. Conclusions**

This chapter provides the context for the research in relation to the implementation of the ELC and a number of relevant areas concerning policy monitoring. The findings from the literature discussed above have been fed into the development of the methodology (see Chapter 2) for the main research which is set out in Chapters 3 (Baseline) & 4 (Monitoring Framework). It is clear from this discussion that there are a number of issues relating to ELC implementation that are rapidly changing and there is constant new information emanating from the UK and other European countries in the area of landscape.