SPECIES on the EDGE
Gnèithean air an Oir

Our partnership approach and its impact on sectoral change



Thematic review at a glance

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How Species on the Edge is helping shape the future of conservation



Overview

In addition to supporting the recovery of threatened species, Species on the Edge set out to test new ways of working that could have value across the wider conservation sector.

By bringing organisations together around species recovery, community engagement and multi-taxa working, the programme has generated practical experience of delivering conservation collaboratively and at scale.

This review explores whether that experience is beginning to influence what happens beyond the programme itself. It finds encouraging signs of change, from stronger partnerships and new approaches to conservation delivery, to learning being used in new projects, funding bids and local decision-making. Wider sectoral change will take time, but Species on the Edge has created important foundations on which future conservation programmes can build.

Key impacts

- **Stronger collaboration:** Species on the Edge has strengthened relationships across the conservation sector and increased confidence in delivering large-scale collaborative programmes.
- **A stronger evidence base:** New ecological data, practical experience and learning are helping fill evidence gaps and inform future species recovery.
- **Changing approaches to conservation:** The programme has reinforced the importance of combining specialist species expertise with multi-taxa, place-based and community-focused approaches.
- **Learning is already travelling:** Species on the Edge learning is informing new partnerships, funding bids, local conservation approaches and other collaborative initiatives.
- **Influencing future investment:** The programme is contributing to conversations about the value of longer-term, flexible funding that properly invests in collaboration and coordination.

What made the difference

Species on the Edge created the space, resources and scale needed for organisations to work together in ways that would have been difficult alone.

Bringing specialist expertise together with area-based staff helped organisations share knowledge, build stronger relationships and coordinate activity across species and places.

The programme also recognised that successful species recovery is about more than ecological interventions. Working with communities, volunteers, land managers and local organisations became an important part of delivering conservation and building its longer-term legacy.

Importantly, partners were able to test approaches and adapt as they learned what worked in different contexts. This combination of collaboration, shared expertise, local relationships, learning and flexibility has produced knowledge that can inform conservation beyond Species on the Edge.

> **"SotE will still be referenced in five years, whether as an example of what well-funded projects can achieve or as proof that collaborative approaches work."**
>
> Stakeholder

Key findings

1 Relationships are an outcome, not just a means of delivery.

Species on the Edge has built stronger networks, trust and understanding between organisations, increasing confidence and readiness to collaborate again. But these relationships will need continued opportunities, coordination and investment if they are to remain active after the programme ends.



2 Learning only creates wider change if it travels.

The programme has generated valuable learning about species recovery, people engagement, partnership working and multi-taxa delivery, with examples of it already being applied elsewhere.

The next step is to share that learning more deliberately with practitioners, organisations, decision-makers and funders so that influence does not depend on individual relationships.

3 Strategic change needs to be designed in from the start.

Sectoral change means different things to different people, and its long-term nature makes it difficult to demonstrate within a single programme.

Future programmes should be clear from the outset about what they want to influence, who they want to influence, how change is expected to happen and how progress will be recognised.



Species on the Edge has shown that sectoral change starts with how people work together. Stronger relationships, shared learning and greater confidence in collaboration have created foundations that can influence future conservation practice, partnerships and investment.

Read the full *Our partnership approach and its impact on sectoral change* Thematic Review

Explore the evidence, practical examples and recommendations behind these findings. Coming soon - available from our website: **www.speciesontheedge.co.uk**

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