

Royal Scottish Geographical Society

Strategic Plan 2017-22



Vision

Promoting geographical understanding of people, places and the planet.

Main Areas of Work

RSGS is an educational charity and learned society, providing intelligent, insightful and informed commentary on world issues from a geographical perspective. Our objectives are to promote the study and wider awareness of geography and its contribution to the understanding of environmental, cultural and social issues, in Scotland and internationally. We do this by:

- ♦ *Engaging People* – running a programme of public talks, creating innovative public projects, operating a visitor centre, arranging exhibitions, and awarding medals that celebrate achievement.
- ♦ *Inspiring Learning* – working at policy and practical levels to develop and promote curricular-linked geographical teaching and learning in schools, and encouraging geographical study in universities.
- ♦ *Informing Debate* – publishing a magazine and an academic journal, organising seminars and workshops, promoting research-based knowledge to public and policy audiences, and generating media coverage on key geographical issues affecting society.
- ♦ *Making Connections* – working with diverse groups and networks, and with skilled and experienced volunteers, to expand our capacity and extend our reach.
- ♦ *Conserving Heritage* – continuing to develop well-preserved historical and contemporary collections of geographical artefacts, images, maps, books, other publications and the Society's archive.

To facilitate these activities, we operate a membership programme, generate income from a range of individual and organisational sources, and maintain effective governance, financial, operational and administrative systems.

Main Audiences

The main audiences for all of our work are:

- ♦ general public
- ♦ geographical professionals
- ♦ young people
- ♦ politicians and the policy community
- ♦ business world
- ♦ global geographical community

Current Priorities

The focus of attention for this Strategic Plan will be on Schools Education and Young People, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Local Action, and Collections, in addition to our Corporate Activities. We will review our progress using four indicators, seeking to increase our performance on each one over the next five years.

Indicator	Measure	Baseline	Target (<i>increase</i>)
<i>membership</i>	number of members	2,600	4,000 (54%)
	level of membership income	£77,000 pa	£125,000 pa (62%)
<i>resources</i>	total annual income	£170,000 pa	£260,000 pa (53%)
	unrestricted income included in total	£154,000 pa	£200,000 pa (30%)
<i>profile</i>	individuals' participation in outreach activities	11,440 pa	15,000 pa (31%)
	online and printed media engagement	10,000 online 100 printed pa	15,000 online (50%) 140 printed pa (40%)
	readership of <i>The Geographer</i>	10,000	16,000 (60%)
<i>credibility</i>	active involvement of academic geographers and policy community with RSGS	172 pa	200 pa (16%)
	active involvement of schools with RSGS	53 pa	80 pa (51%)

Corporate Activities

We will deliver the key operational activities that underpin the organisation, focusing on increasing membership and resources, enhancing our established priorities, heightening our profile, and further improving our credibility amongst target audiences.

In particular, we will:

- ♦ obtain greater financial support for RSGS through income generation, including donations, legacies and grants;
- ♦ reinforce the relevance of geography by establishing and promoting our views on key current issues through briefing papers and other means, through a wide variety of public talks, and by continuing to publish a quarterly magazine and an academic journal;
- ♦ build the profile and status of RSGS by increasing membership, by increasing the pool of people who can help us, and by maintaining and growing our network of contacts in our target audiences.

Schools Education and Young People

We will champion the value of a good geographical education and its place in the curriculum, develop and deliver high-impact low-cost activities, and act as a facilitator to help to smooth the transition from primary through to tertiary geographical learning.

In particular, we will:

- ◆ encourage geography teachers to get involved by integrating better with SAGT and with schools, especially through appropriate development of resources, CPD and visits (by RSGS and/or SAGT);
- ◆ encourage school children to study geography by raising its profile in schools from late primary onwards and promoting it as 'the subject of our time';
- ◆ continue to emphasise and exemplify the science content of geography and try to ensure that it is seen as STEM equivalent;
- ◆ continue our advocacy work with appropriate policy contacts, on Curriculum for Excellence, Broad General Education and other relevant matters as they arise;
- ◆ increase the extent of our work that is directly relevant to schools and young people;
- ◆ involve young people more in the work of RSGS.

Research and Knowledge Exchange

We will promote greater engagement with academic geographers, support academics in communicating their research to public and policy audiences, seek to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding, engage positively in debate in academic and political arenas, and reach out to the international geographical community.

In particular, we will:

- ◆ increase participation by hosting regular meetings and network events, communicating regularly with academic contacts, and supporting early career researchers;
- ◆ raise the profile of geography amongst decision makers and increase the impact of academic geography in policy circles, by developing our active network of influential contacts in different sectors;
- ◆ increase understanding of geography and geographical learning by acting as facilitator to develop the role of Scottish-based academic geographers on issues of relevance in various policy arenas;
- ◆ promote the value and skill set of geographers and geographical qualifications with employers;
- ◆ increase the content, range, reach and significance of the *Scottish Geographical Journal*, by selectively promoting it to academics in relevant research areas;
- ◆ raise international awareness of RSGS and support the value of geography to global issues, by building relationships with the international geographical community.

Local Action

We will encourage and support Local Groups to undertake promotional and income-generating activities, in order to build more of a sense of community, enhance our local presence, and promote geography and RSGS.

In particular, we will:

- ◆ strengthen our network of contacts in different sectors, and encourage Local Groups to assume more active approaches to outreach activities;
- ◆ increase audience numbers and improve audience experiences at *Inspiring People* talks;
- ◆ refresh and strengthen Local Group Committees where necessary, by engaging with a wider group of stakeholders (such as SAGT and HEIs) to encourage broader representation and membership;
- ◆ help Local Groups to collaborate with local schools on extending the most appropriate talks to schools;
- ◆ raise awareness of RSGS in areas where we do not have Local Groups, through appropriate events and publicity.

Collections

We will utilise and publicise our collections through events and articles, improve the quality of the collections through acquisitions and disposals, and promote RSGS's heritage to encourage greater public profile and support. Our approach is founded on the step-wise progression, *procure* → *process* → *preserve* → *promote*.

In particular, we will:

- ◆ raise the public profile of the collections by publishing articles and stories about interesting collections items and inspiring people;
- ◆ seek funding to restore/refurbish those parts of the collections requiring this, and work to provide a conservation-friendly environment in which to store and display these;
- ◆ increase access to the collections, through public and private events and exhibitions;
- ◆ encourage greater academic understanding of the collections by improving the accessibility of the Maps and Images Database (MID) and promoting formal research opportunities;
- ◆ maintain a pool of experienced Collections Team volunteers by identifying and recruiting younger volunteers.