

Multi-criteria evaluation

- Scoring the performance of management options against criteria requires stakeholders to make trade-offs between multiple values. It is critical that the questions put to stakeholders about how each management option contributes to each criterion are clearly defined and unambiguous in terms of context and scale.
- The scoring scale can be adapted to meet the needs of stakeholders and to manage uncertainty. It is generally easier for stakeholders to express ordinal or categorical choices on a relative scale rather than absolute preferences.
- Scoring can be carried out individually or within groups through discussion. The process should be designed by weighing up the level of conflict or tension against opportunities for stakeholders to reassess their positions through deliberation. An iterative process with discussion and opportunities to rescore may improve the search for compromise.

Analysis and interpretation of results

- There are several methods of applying criteria weights to scores and aggregating data to assess the overall performance of management options. Transparency should

be maintained and all conclusions from the combined criteria weights and scores should draw on discursive interpretation in addition to appropriate statistical analysis.

- Aggregating results may be a useful way of summarising views from groups or regions but no consensus should be inferred for individuals or groups without allowing time for further deliberation or there is a danger of generating false or unstable compromises.

Communication of results

- Visual methods are useful for representing uncertainty and managing differences of opinion and communicating the complex trade-offs required to meet policy goals. Patterns in stakeholder opinion can be displayed in several formats, including scatter, cluster, box and ordination plots. Such visualisations can form the basis for negotiating compromise, discussion about how to manage trade-offs, and help communicate the complex trade-offs required in policy making and environmental planning.

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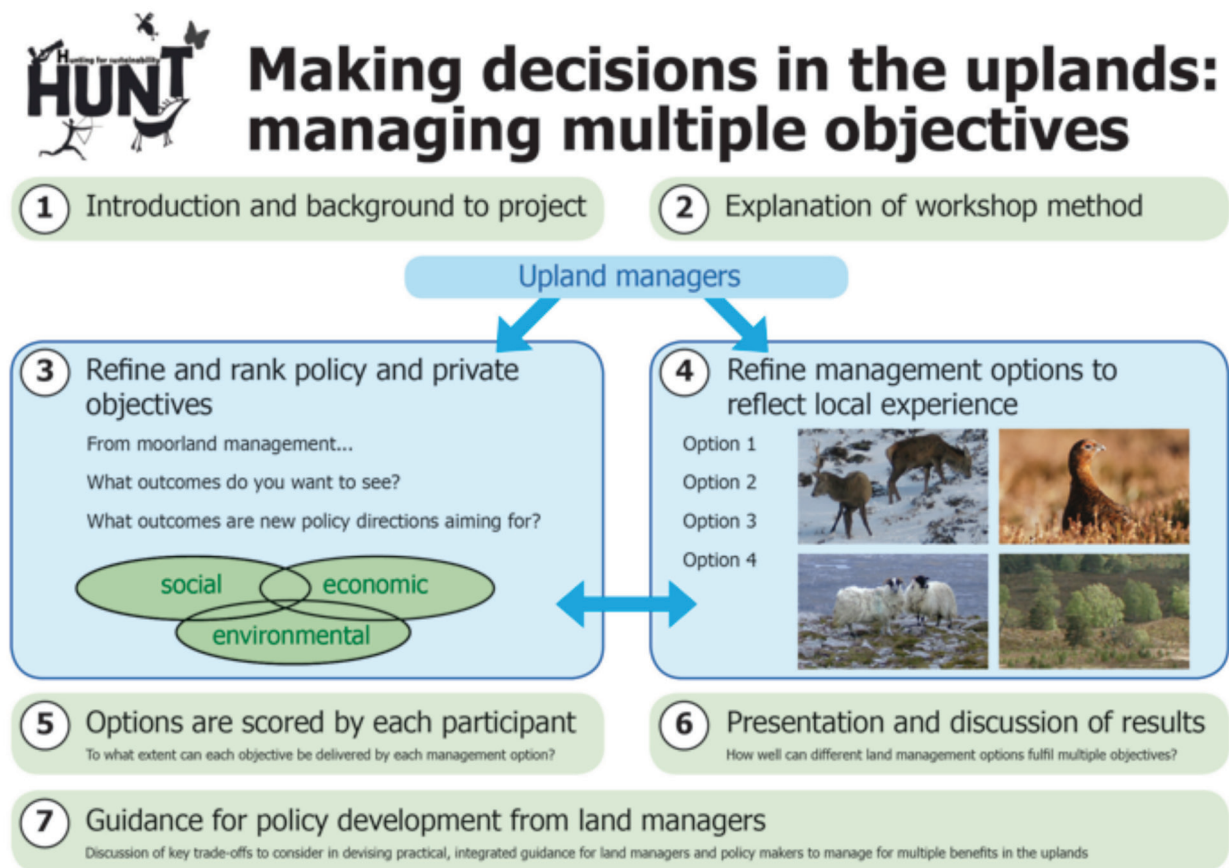


Fig.1. Summary of how MCDA models were used in Scotland to understand land management decision making and how that varied across stakeholder groups, between areas and from the local to the national. (Bryce et al. submitted).

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