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(sent by email to scotplan@gov.scot)

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30 April 2020

## **National Planning Framework 4 – National Development proposal**

Dear sir or madam,

With regards to your invitation to propose ideas for National Developments in relation to your National Planning Framework 4 consultation, we would like to propose that the Scottish government establish an “open category” such that any large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic project is considered a National Development.

We recognise that National Developments are normally defined as specific sites and so this proposal is unusual in suggesting an “open category”. Our proposal is motivated by the fact that large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic projects are all extremely similar and socially and ecologically benign. Consequently, we suggest that the government could help unlock new solar projects of this type by recognising their commonalities and establishing a simplified and expedited process for securing planning consent for these projects.

We have documented our proposal in the attached form as requested, and we hope you find our suggestion to be helpful and constructive.

Should you wish to clarify or discuss anything with us, please consider us to be at your disposal.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.

Mob:  
Email:

A black rectangular redaction box covering the mobile phone number and email address of the sender.



## National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a [Respondent Information Form](#) and return it with this form to [scotplan@gov.scot](mailto:scotplan@gov.scot).**

Name of proposed national development	Various large scale solar photovoltaic projects throughout Scotland.
Brief description of proposed national development	The development of a number of ground mounted solar photovoltaic projects that exceed the current 20MW NPF hurdle for major electricity generation developments.
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Various sites across Scotland where the essential features of the conceived developments would be similar.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	The developments would each exceed the current Schedule 1 threshold in the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 for electricity generation, and they also exceed the Schedule 2 threshold of both the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations and the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations.
When would the development be complete or operational?	The conceived developments would be operational before 2025, although some may be subject to electricity network access constraints or delays.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	No. The conceived developments are complex to develop and are all in various stages of maturity. We are responding to the NPF4 invitation to submit projects on the basis that we expect the developments to be ready for formal submission within the next 9-18 months.

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria (maximum 500 words):

Large scale solar projects are not only compatible with the National Development Criteria, but increasing evidence from existing developments around the world suggests that well designed solar projects can be quite beneficial.

The proposed developments:

[Climate Change] aim to generate material quantities of renewable electricity in Scotland using solar photovoltaic technology. This technology is proven to be socially, ecologically and environmentally benign, and has a been proven to have a very short carbon payback period.

[People] cause no emissions and through careful design, will discretely evidence society's ability to meet its energy requirements in a socially benign and sustainable way. It is believed that more individuals will consider installing their own renewable energy generation if they become aware of larger nearby schemes.

[Inclusive growth] will create durable employment in Scotland particularly to operate and maintain the assets for 30+ years. Projects will not be built on prime agricultural land, and so will help add value to lower value land that would otherwise be marginal or fallow thus unlocking new revenue for landowners typically in the agricultural community. Solar generation is also compatible with sheep grazing so where appropriate, projects will enable 'dual use' of the land.

[Place] will be deliberately designed to increase biodiversity and natural capital value. The latest research suggests that biodiversity benefits can extend well beyond the site boundaries, and that the solar sites do act as biodiversity havens for insects and animals. Solar developments are relatively low to the ground and so in Scotland will have a very limited visual impact, and now incorporate special glass that essentially eliminates any concerns about reflections.

## Keep In Touch

For more information and other resources



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<https://blogs.gov.scot/planning-architecture/>



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