

Edinburgh Communities Climate Action Network Founding Agreement: Feedback

Feedback from stakeholders in green
Responses from the network coordinator in blue
Changes in orange

Priorities, Membership and Structure

This document sets the foundations for how the Edinburgh Climate Action Network (ECAN) will function, and how the Edinburgh Communities Climate Hub will be designed.¹

1. Goal and Priorities

Overall goal:

To support communities in Edinburgh to create a just, thriving and resilient city.

Priorities to achieve the goal:

- Collaboration: create new spaces, and support existing spaces, where communities in Edinburgh can plan a shared path towards a just, thriving and resilient city.
- Sharing between communities: make it easier for communities to share resources, experience and projects.
- Access to supporting organisations: connect communities with other organisations (such as scientists, policymakers, funding organisations, other networks and umbrella organisations, professionals in relevant industries) which can support them.
- Influence policy: represent the interests of communities to local and national leaders.
- Outreach: get more people, from diverse backgrounds, involved in climate action.
- Create a Hub: design a Climate Resource Hub for which is made by, and for, all communities in Edinburgh.

Feedback on Section 1:

What is unclear in this section?

- *Is the hub a physical or digital space? Or both?*

Response: the Hub can be whatever Edinburgh communities need. The existing hubs in Scotland (such as NESCAN in Aberdeenshire) have decided to be purely digital spaces, but there has been demand for a physical space in Edinburgh. The decision on whether to have a physical presence or an online presence will be made by the working group.

- *What is the difference between the network and the hub (and the forum)?*

The network is a broad commons- its purpose is to connect everyone who wants to support communities; it will do this through providing information, contacts and events. The Hub will be created by the network: the purpose of the Hub is to provide resources for community climate action- this could be in the form of a physical space, expert advice, training, mentorship etc. Many of the details of the Hub are yet to be decided. The Network and Hub will be owned and

¹ This founding agreement might need to change as the network grows and learns. This can be done if network members agree collectively to change it.

led by Edinburgh community members and community groups; this means that the priorities and activities of the network are completely decided by Edinburgh communities.

The Forum is an Edinburgh Council-led initiative to support communities to work towards the climate goals already set out in Council policy. The difference between this and the network is that the priorities and activities of the Forum are therefore decided, ultimately, by local government strategy.

The Network and the Forum will work closely together, to be complementary and avoid duplicating events, services or efforts. The exact relationship between the Forum and the Network will be decided by the network working group.

What needs to change in this section?

- Suggest change Goal to Purpose and say To **engage communities in creating a just, thriving and resilient future for Edinburgh**

Thanks for the suggestion! The founding agreement has been changed accordingly.

- Suggest changing the word **different** backgrounds to **diverse** backgrounds

Thanks for the suggestion! The founding agreement has been changed accordingly.

What needs to be added to this section?

- Add priority to represent community interests upwards to city council / other city-wide bodies

Thanks for the suggestion! The founding agreement has been changed accordingly.

Feedback from survey and emails:

Carbon saving issues a priority?

Unsure whether this topic is the priority for all communities in Edinburgh. Suggest that the Network Working Group discusses, with climate science advice, what the thematic priorities of the network should be for the year of 2023. In the meantime, the Network will aim to be providing support to all climate action in Edinburgh, including that on carbon saving!

Advocacy and liaising with local and national government to give input and feedback.

Thanks for the suggestion! The founding agreement has been changed accordingly.

Perhaps more description on what classifies as 'other groups'?

Thanks for the suggestion! The founding agreement has been changed accordingly.

To be precise, I'd like to see not only sharing of the resources of the members, but ECAN raising funds or offering other resources (admin, marketing, other management functions, office space even) to be shared by the members. Is that what is intended?

Yes this is intended! In the short term, the network will help communities to share resources such as admin, marketing, management and office space. The funding for the Climate Hub could, in the long term, provide these things as a shared resource for the whole network (this will depend on what the network members decide is their shared priority for using the Hub funding, of course).

Please add a priority to represent community interests upwards to city council / other city-wide bodies

Thanks for the suggestion! The founding agreement has been changed accordingly.

We need to be really clear that the Network is a precursor to the planned Community Climate Action Hub funded initially anyway by Scottish Government. Don't be coy about it - get it up front right from the start!

This is true, but let's not forget the value that can be added by the network itself. If it works well, ECAN can be more than just a means to an end- it can continue to provide a space where communities continue to share information, inspiration, ideas and resources as well as running a Climate Resource Hub.

Confusion over names between ECCA(F?) and EC(C?)AN.

The document is called ECAN Founding Agreement, but the title line says Edinburgh Communities Climate Action Network. Which is it?

See above for an explanation of the difference between the network, the hub and the forum, and the plan for the working group to tackle this in more detail. In terms of the ECAN name, my personal opinion is that the "communities" can be seen as a small-c, addition to the name. I.e. it's the Edinburgh communities Climate Action Network (ECAN)- this reflects that the network is for communities, but that other groups are also involved in it. It also saves us from having to decide how to pronounce a clunky acronym like ECCAN! On a serious note, branding, name and communications will be discussed by the working group.

The document doesn't mention ECCA/EVOC but is it in fact now a joint project? The priorities to reach the goal seem to have a high degree of commonality with ECCA.

See above for an explanation of the difference between the network, the hub and the forum, and the plan for the working group to tackle this in more detail.

2. Membership of the Network:

ECAN will have two kinds of members. **Community members** will have access to network information, events and decision-making. **Supporter members** will have access to network information and events, but will not participate in decision-making.

Community members: *individuals or community groups based in Edinburgh, who want to contribute to a just, thriving and resilient city.*

- A community member should be: not-for-profit, based in Edinburgh, led by its members, and open to new members.
- A community group does not have to be a formal legal entity.
- A community group can represent a geographic, thematic or identity-based community.

Supporter members: *groups or organisations that are not community groups as defined above, but want to support communities in Edinburgh, to create a just, thriving and resilient Edinburgh.*

- A supporter member may be, for example: a public authority, private enterprise, academic institution, national / international not-for-profit, a not-for-profit which is not owned by its community, another network / umbrella organisation.

Feedback on Section 2:

What is unclear in this section?

What needs to change in this section?

What needs to be added to this section?

- *How do we become members? Is there a cost?*

A membership form will be sent out on the network mailing list and put permanently on the network website. There is no cost to membership.

Feedback from survey and emails:

This democratic structure needs to be elaborated-

Thanks for the feedback! This is on the topics to be covered by the working group.

To ensure inclusivity, could make this a 'working clause' that can be amended as and when needed should it become apparent it is beneficial for more than community led groups/individuals to be involved.

Thanks for this feedback! See footnote 1 in the Founding Agreement. I am also considering a detailed plan for how, and when, the Founding Agreement can be reviewed and changed.

It is a bit clunky this phrasing (referring to survey phrasing) as it implies voting etc which is not generally how decisions have been taken so far in SCCAN. ECAN could / should adopt consent-based decision making and interlinked working groups like SCCAN.

Thanks for this feedback! Decision-making processes will be decided in detail by the working group. I hope the phrasing of the founding agreement is more clear than that of the survey, please feedback again if you'd still like it to change.

3. Structure: ECAN Working Group:

There has been lots of great feedback about the working group. Please bear with us while we absorb this and work out a process that is good enough to get started.

Purpose: To work on behalf of network members, to establish the Network and **prepare an action plan and funding application for the Hub.**

Timeline: Meetings every two weeks from late March to June.

The Working Group will be made up of 8-12 ECAN members: 4-8 community members and 4 supporter members. Community members of the **working group** will be responsible for making final decisions, while supporter members will participate in meeting discussions and offer advice.

ECAN members can volunteer themselves to be part of the working group, via the membership form, and via a link on the ECAN website. From those who volunteer, a group will be selected to have a wide spread of expertise and community representation, fulfilling the following criteria:

The four **supporter members** should, between them, have expertise in these areas:

- Community-led development
- Edinburgh / Scotland climate policy
- Climate science and technology
- Funding structures and third sector regulation
- Represent as wide a variety of sectors as possible

The four - eight **community members** should, between them, represent:

- One volunteer-led group
- One group working in low-income areas
- Two groups working with/ representing two different minority groups
- As wide a geographic spread as possible.

Should there be more volunteers than places in the group, the final criteria will be used to select the final group. If there remains too many volunteers, those with matching profiles will be approached to discuss their availability to invest time into the role, those with the most time will be selected, or role-sharing may be arranged.

Feedback on Section 3:

What is unclear in this section?

What needs to change in this section?

- *Would it be possible to call the group **ECAN General Circle** as in the description of Sociocratic decision-making at <https://bit.ly/sociocracy101>? Working group implies one of several groups supporting the whole. I note the term steering group is used in the text.*

I hesitate to use "circle" which refers to a specific system that many people have not been trained in. While I would also suggest that the working group functions based on the recommendations of sociocracy, this needs to be decided by a group which represents the breadth of members in the network. The network working group will discuss decision-making processes and group names as a priority.

- *Should the whole membership have a role in electing the steering group / general circle?*

An election is unlikely to reach all of the communities we want to have engaged, who have limited capacity to put time and thought into the process. I've elaborated the process for choosing the steering group in the functional details document.

What needs to be added to this section?

- *How do people put themselves forward to join the group?*

There will be a link on the ECAN website to put yourself forward. The ECAN membership form will also include the opportunity to put yourself forward for the working group.

- *How will members be selected if there are more nominations than places? [Consider using the sociocratic election process on page 4 of the above short intro]*

Thanks for the feedback! See the functional details document for an explanation of how this will function.

Feedback from emails:

Again could make this a 'working clause' that can be adapted over time. I.e; add more members or less etc. Clarify how many members?

Thanks for this feedback! See footnote 1 in the Founding Agreement, and also "Keeping the network flexible" in the functional details document.

Suggest changing the title of the working group to General Circle or Steering Group. Not sure that these people will be "managing" ECAN or the Hub - need to be clear they are serving the wider membership in bringing forward proposals to implement the vision

Thanks for this feedback! I am hesitant to use sociocracy-specific language such as "circle" which not everybody understands, and to use "steering" which suggests hierarchical leadership more than "working" does. The Working Group will discuss decision-making processes and group structure to make a final decision on this. Finally, yes, the role descriptions of working group members (see functional details) make clear that WG members are serving the whole membership.

Will this be selection by vote, or will ECAN choose? If the latter, how to ensure it is transparent and criteria is clear.

Thanks for this feedback! See the functional details document for criteria and selection process.

Strongly suggest the adoption early on of sociocratic decision making / dynamic governance - as described briefly in <https://bit.ly/sociocracy101> and as practiced by SCCAN more generally.

While I would also personally recommend the network functions based on the sociocratic approach, this is a decision that has to be made by a group which represents the breadth of network members and Edinburgh communities. Decision-making processes will be discussed by the network working group as a first priority. This seems contradictory to the above point which says "Any group or individual can be a member of ECAN, but only community-led groups and individuals will make decisions about what the Network does and how it is structured."? If external non community / advisory members are chosen, it would be good to ensure the terms are clear.

Thanks for this feedback! Please see a description of the roles of "supporting members" of the working group and "community members" in the functional details document.

Not really sure what role organisations like EVOC or ECC might have but wary of them taking an over-bearing role.

Thanks for this feedback. The working group will discuss how to work with other umbrella organisations, to make sure that there is collaboration without any organisation having too much influence.

Feedback on the whole document:

Why is there no mention of preparing the Business Plan / Action Plan / Application to Scottish Government for funding for the Hub? This is really where everything needs to be clear and absolutely civil society led.

Thanks for this feedback. I've clarified in the purpose of the working groups that "designing a Hub" also means preparing an Action Plan and application.

Will meetings be online? Please look into carbon neutral websites and servers.

This will depend on the availability and preference of working group members, but if online we will look at the lowest carbon way to do it. This will also be a focus for developing the ECAN website.