

TOWARDS A STANDARD METHODOLOGY FOR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT ANALYSIS OF SUB-NATIONAL REGIONS

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Since Wackernagel and Rees' initial development of the ecological footprint (EF) as a concept in the 1990's there has been widespread interest in the methodology. The National Footprint Accounts, now published in WWF's Living Planet Report, currently measure the EF per capita for more than 250 countries and provides the 'global EF standard', both methodologically and in terms of global environmental sustainability (supplying an average world resident's EF and the average biocapacity available per world resident). This interest, plus an independent and detailed critique commissioned by the European Parliament's Scientific, Technical and Options Assessment, has led to the inclusion of the EF within the European Commission's Common Indicator set for assessing regional sustainability (ECIP). EF studies from Europe demonstrated broad differences in the application of the methodology and a wide variation in data sources used, which made comparisons between regions problematic. A panel of practitioners from across Europe demanded that a standard methodology be developed according to basic criteria: 1. Compatibility with National Footprint Accounts 2. The EF should be disaggregated into components 3. National datasets should be readily available Europe-wide 4. The model should be interactive to facilitate scenario development. The ECIP project produced the Stepwise methodology, a basic European EF standard. Stepwise has been extended and revised for a Scottish study, representing the first time a detailed and informative analysis has been applied to a sub-national region, compatible with the NFA. This paper describes Stepwise as applied to Scotland as part of a study for the Biffaward Programme on Sustainable Resource Use.