

Land data transparency and analysis: Scotland

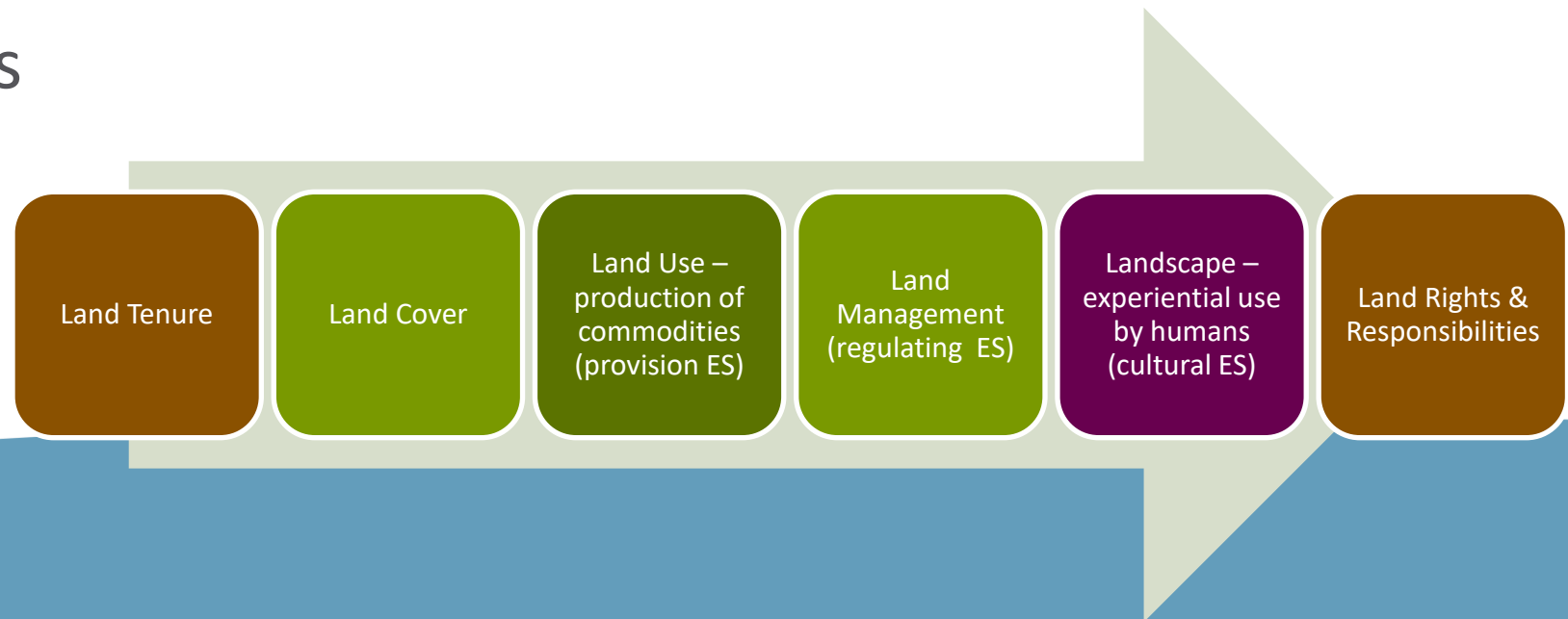


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Keith Matthews, Dave Miller, Annie McKee – Scotland's Land Reform Futures, International Symposium, Aberdeen, 11-12 November 2025

Review of Land Ownership Data

- Transparency – levels of ambition
 - Government – administration
 - Analysis – within and for government
 - Stakeholders
 - Agencies
 - Communities
 - Individuals



Review of Land Ownership Data

- No single source maps ownership boundaries and links them to owners.
- 18 Sources
- 10 Criteria
- 4 States
 - Functional
 - Partial
 - Limited
 - Uncertain
- 2 Recommendations

Table 1: Summary of datasets and characteristics¶

Dataset	Coverage		Ownership Granularity	Mapped	Tenure	Historic (from)	Updated	Access	Cost	Shareability	
	National	Goal									
Agriculture	Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) & Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS)	6.5M-ha	□	Business User	Parcel	Part	2000	Annual	DSA	□	No
	June Agricultural Census (JAC)	6.2M-ha	□	Holding	LPIS/No	To-2021	1991	Annual	DSA	□	No
	Croft Lands	13k-ha	□	Business User	Parcel	Part	2000	Annual	DSA	□	No
Forestry	National Forest Ownership	0.6M-ha	□	Public Estate*	Parcel	Part	No	Annual	Open	None	Yes
	National Forest Inventory	1.5M-ha	□	Public and Private**	Parcel	No	2010	Annual	Open	None	Yes
Registers of Scotland	Land Register	4.2M-ha	Part	Title	Parcel	No	1981	Yes	Record	High	No
	Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land	Being Built	Being Built	Individuals and NNP	via Land Register	Owners/Tenants	2022	Yes	Record	None	No
	Register of Community Interests in Land	□	□	□	□	Part	2004	Rolling	Record	None	No
	Register of Applications by Community Bodies to Buy Land	□	□	Individuals and NNP	No	No	2018	Rolling	Record	None	No
	Crofting Register	□	□	Individuals	Title	Part	2012	Rolling	Record	None	No
Private	Who Owns Scotland	5.24M-ha	Part	Individuals	Holding	Owner-only	2001	Rolling since 2022	Sub	Low	No
Other	Crown Estate Scotland	□	□	□	Parcel	Owned	□	□	No	None	No
	Community Ownership in Scotland	200k-ha	□	□	□	□	□	Annually	□	None	No
	Public Lands	750k-ha	□	Public	Parcel	Part	No	No	DSA	None	No
	Crofting Commission Open Data	20.5k-crofts	□	Individuals	via Land Register	Yes	□	□	Open	None	Yes
	Vacant & Derelict Land	32-LA¶ 10k-ha	□	Private/Public	Parcel	No	□	Annual	Open	None	Yes
	Local Authority Owner	9/32-LA¶ 26k-ha	Part	LA	Title	No	No	As Needed	DSA or Sub	None	No
	Community Asset Transfer	□	95 public bodies	Site	Point locations	Part	□	Annual	DSA	None	No

Key to the Table: Complete or Functional (Green), Partial (Orange), Serious limitations for the uses being considered in the report (Red), Uncertainty on the appropriate grading (Grey), DSA—data sharing agreement (Light Green), LA—Local Authority (Light Blue).

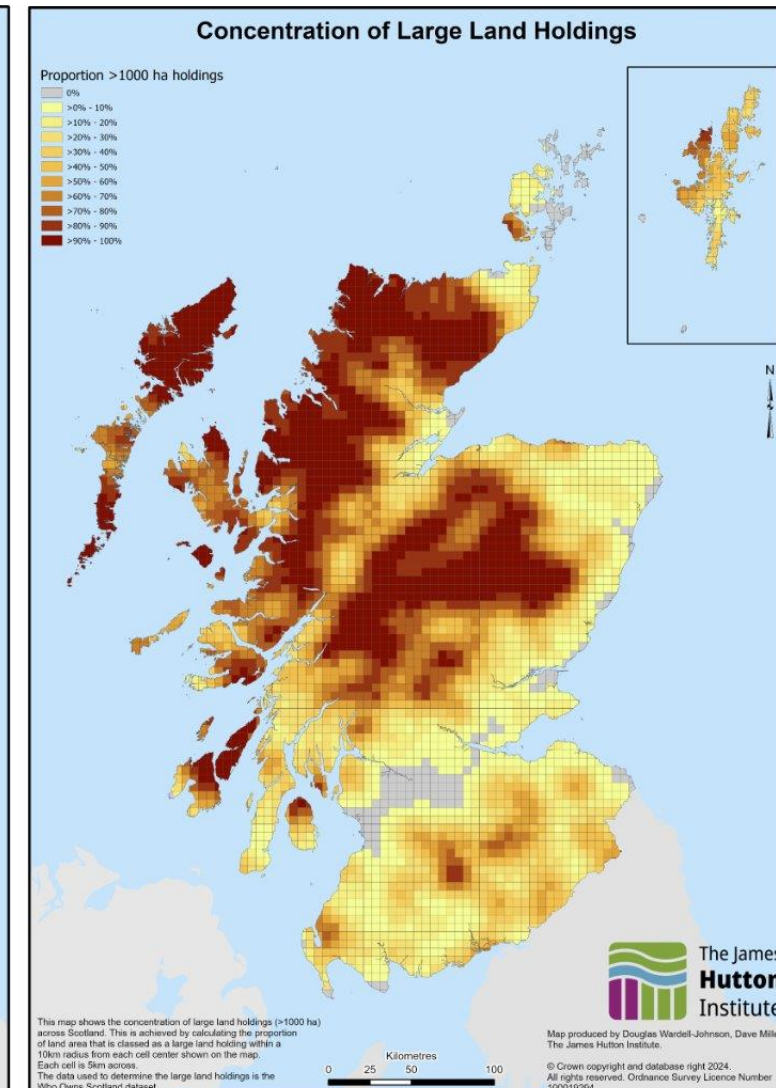
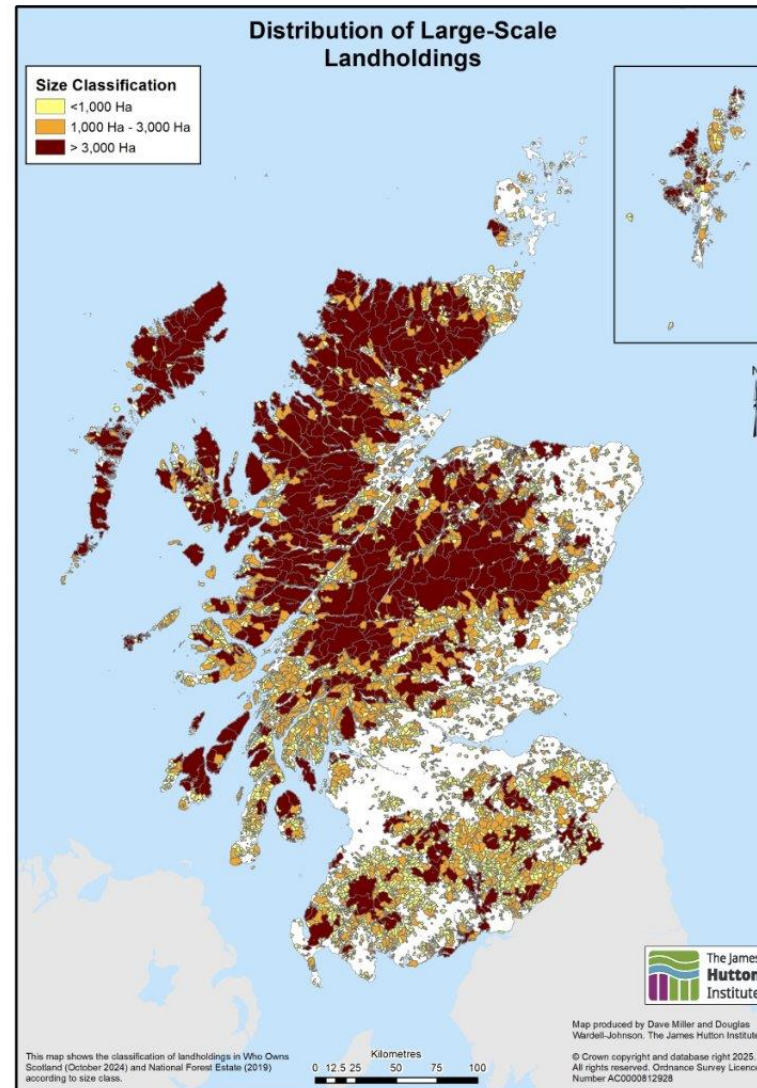
NNP—non-natural person; Sub—subscription (paid); *The public versus private forestry may be inferred by combining data from the two forestry datasets

Review of Land Ownership - Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1** – Scottish Government to commission a **cross-government data integration exercise** to collate and integrate all relevant land ownership data, to be held in a **trusted research environment**, for **without payment use** by researchers, analysts, policy teams and stakeholders. This exercise would also assess how far **existing datasets** can meet the **need for land ownership or tenure data** and to define a **route map** for filling in any **missing data gaps**.
- **Recommendation 2** – Scottish Government to commit to **collect and update land agricultural land tenure data**, preferably **annually**, at **land parcel level**, and using a **tenure typology** as granular as that used up to 2021 in the June Agricultural Census.

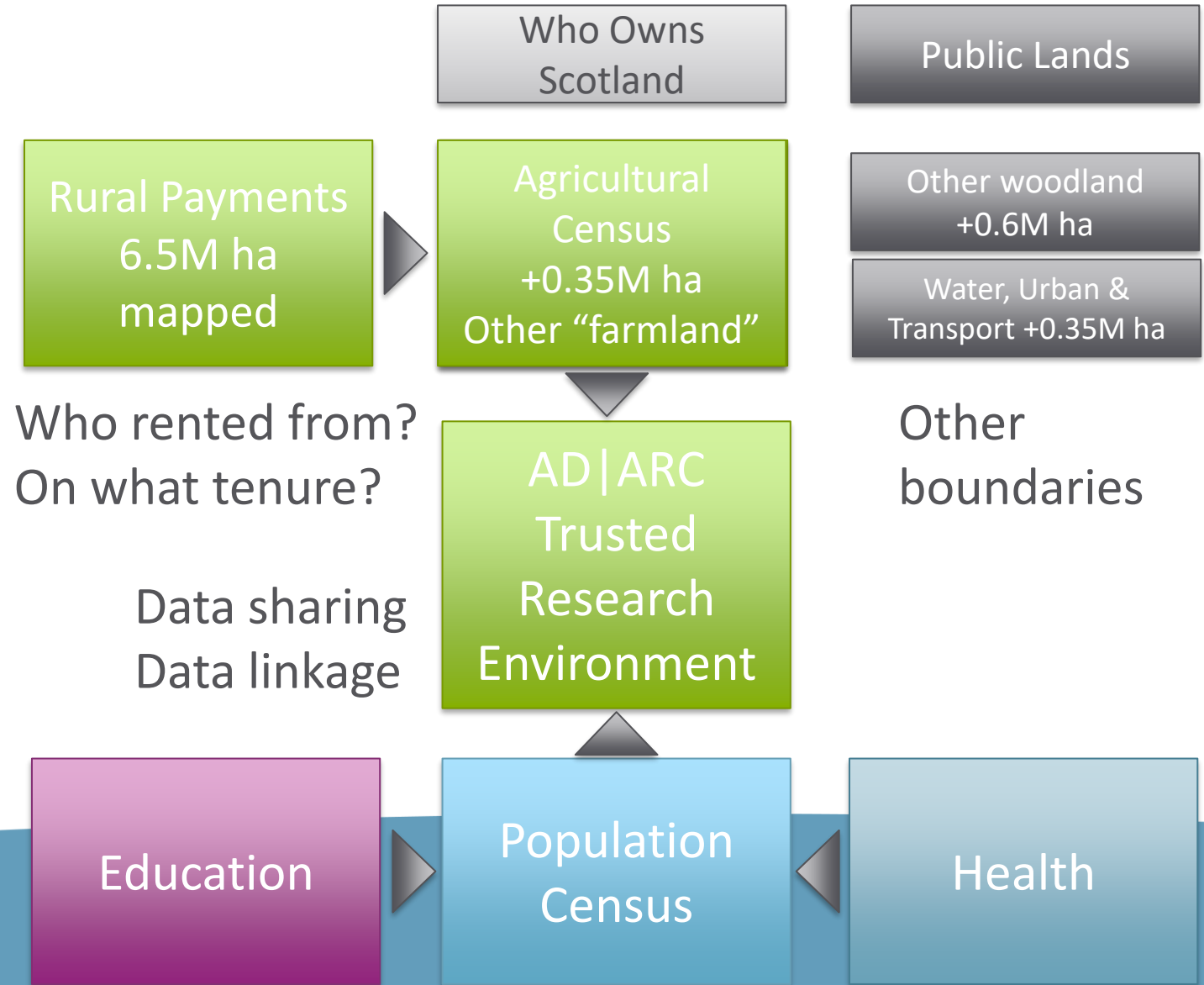
Support to policy – kinds of questions

- Context – Land Reform Bill in 2024-25, now an Act.
- Size - >1,000 ha
 - Owner - identity
 - Grouping of entities
 - Spatial Contiguity of parcels
- Concentration
- “Special” cases
 - Islands
- Based on *Who Owns Scotland*
- Implementation – by who and with what data?



An architecture of data for land reform and land use

- Better share and integrate existing data – in line with SG Data Linkage Framework principles
- Use to develop and deliver policies
- Consider where new data may need to be collected to better connect actions and outcomes
- Open “read” access for stakeholders of ownership



Acknowledgements

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Scotland's Land Reform Futures project website

<https://land-reform-futures.hutton.ac.uk/>

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Review of land ownership data in Scotland

Deliverable D1.1 for Scotland's Land Reform Futures project (JHI-E3-1)

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