

Responsible business

NERC's approach and commitment to corporate responsibility.

Our role

Both nationally and globally, we face serious challenges in resources, hazards, climate, food, energy and health. Understanding the changing planet is fundamental to our future economic prosperity and wellbeing.

NERC's vision is to place environmental science at the heart of responsible management of the planet. In pursuing the objects of our [royal charter](#), we invest public money in world-leading research, training and innovation.

Our research informs decision-making with independent knowledge and evidence, and helps society understand and find solutions to the challenges it faces.

To ensure the UK gets full economic and societal value from its investment in environmental science, we engage and work in partnership with other funders, business, government, and civil society.

Our commitment

As a publically funded body, we have a responsibility not just to our staff, grant holders and partners, but to society. By acting with the highest standards across all our operations, we build on our public mandate to deliver excellent science.

We recognise and comply with all relevant legislation, including minimising environmental impact and promoting equality and diversity. We aim to go beyond what is required, and to work and act according to these four commitments:

- 1) Living our values in the environment in which we work.
- 2) Transparent business practices, with partners that share our values.
- 3) Engaging and supporting our community, internally and locally.
- 4) Research with integrity, carried out by a diverse, representative and outstanding body of researchers.

What follows will outline each of these four areas in greater detail, and represents a commitment to record and share our corporate responsibility activities under each heading.

1) Environment - living our values in the environment in which we work

- a. We recognise that we have choices in the way we operate as a business. To reflect our mission, we will choose options that minimise our impact on the environment, particularly in the offices and spaces in which we work.
- b. Though the nature of scientific research may sometimes mean short-term environmental disruption, we will make responsible, far-sighted decisions as long-term custodians of our environment, and share our decision making processes to foster understanding.
- c. We are committed to continuous improvement in the way we operate through proactive monitoring, comprehensive reporting, and creating an internal culture that embraces these practices.

2) Transparency - transparent business practices, with partners that share our values.

- d. The independence of NERC science is integral to its value. We commit to protecting that independence through democratic systems of governance, and the use of experts on our council and advisory boards.
- e. NERC is a publically funded body. Our decision making will be fair and transparent, holding us accountable to the public we serve. We will prioritise clear and timely communication that articulates not only what we are doing, but the aims behind our actions.
- f. Through our transparent business practices, both directly and indirectly through our centres and business partners, we aim to foster public understanding and pride in the work NERC does.

3) Community and Workplace - engaging and supporting our community both internally and locally.

- g. Our people are key to our success; those who work for us create who we are. We will support them in being the best they can be through training and development opportunities, and creating a workplace in which they can prosper.
- h. NERC's responsibility does not end at the office – it extends to the community, both scientific and the public. Through our public engagement strategy, we will support initiatives that develop the skills base of environmental scientists, and increase public awareness of their work. We will support our staff in identifying local organisations with similar values where they can volunteer their time.
- i. Just as we ask our staff to keep developing, we will continue improving our policies and HR practices to create an equal, diverse, and informed workforce who are engaged with our mission to deliver scientific excellence and active in the local community.

4) Standards - research with integrity, carried out by a diverse, representative and outstanding body of researchers.

- j. NERC recognises and embraces its responsibility to promote ethical behaviour and promote good conduct in research. We will embed this in our funding mechanisms, and exemplify it in the way we interact with our research community.
- k. NERC abides by: 2009 [Code of Conduct and Policy on the Governance of Good Research Conduct](#), 2010 [Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research](#), 2012 [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), and the RCUK [policy on open access](#).
- l. We believe in the principle of responsible environmental management, and will act as its advocate with potential partners, grant or contract holders, and throughout our supply chain.
- m. Together with our sister research councils and the UK research community more broadly, we are committed to national leadership in this area, identifying, articulating and implementing best practice.