

### 3 Policy Statement

- 3.1 The UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology is an independent, not-for-profit research institute carrying out excellent environmental science with impact. We work to understand the environment, how it sustains life, and the human impact on it. We provide the data and insights that governments, businesses and researchers need to create a productive, resilient and healthy environment. Scientific curiosity, integrity and transparency are at the heart of how we work.
- 3.2 We seek to promote the preservation, conservation, protection and improvement of the environment through responsible management of our activities and through the scientific research we undertake. In support of this we implemented an environmental management system in 2010 which is externally certified to ISO 14001:2015. This provides a framework for complying with applicable compliance obligations and setting objectives to continually review and improve our environmental performance.
- 3.3 Our improvement objectives, outlined in Section 4, relate to our charitable objects and research aims, taking into account our significant environmental impacts, and support our core strategic commitments to address three major environmental and societal challenges:

#### **Mitigating and building resilience to climate and environmental change**

- 3.4 Over the last decade, the impact of climate change has become ever more evident with forest fires, heat waves, floods, and droughts devastating livelihoods and displacing communities.
- 3.5 We are committed to achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions associated with our operational activities. To begin this journey we will implement efficiency measures on our sites to remove unnecessary resource consumption. We will seek new ways to reduce our reliance on energy derived from fossil fuels and investigate alternatives to business travel to mitigate our emissions. We recognise some form of emissions offsetting will be required in order to continue providing excellent science to our clients.

#### **Creating and enhancing sustainable ecosystems**

- 3.6 Globally, biodiversity is under threat with species declining at the fastest rate ever recorded. Change in land use is fragmenting habitats, and the soils needed to sustain terrestrial life are in decline.
- 3.7 We will develop and implement best practice measures to enable biodiversity to thrive in sites we control. This will support our commitment to conserving biodiversity including supporting the protection and enhancement of ecosystem functions through our scientific research.

#### **Reducing and preventing pollution**

- 3.8 Society faces unprecedented challenges due to the pressure that a projected population of nine billion people by 2050 will place on our resources. Water is a resource on which all life depends, yet across the planet 30 per cent of people do not have access to reliable supplies of clean water. Air pollution is a major risk to human and environmental health, contributing to ecosystem damage, biodiversity loss, agricultural impacts and loss in human life. Healthy soils and peatlands store more carbon than the world's forests, mitigate climate change, recycle nutrients and waste, and clean our water. Yet, they are vulnerable to pollution, unsustainable exploitation and erosion.
- 3.9 We are committed to implementing best practice measures to prevent pollution and minimise environmental impacts from our research and operational activities. We will embed

sustainable procurement metrics within our purchasing processes that will consider whole-life costing & prioritising use of consumables with reduced environmental impacts.

#### 4 Strategic Environmental Objectives

- Reduce UKCEH reliance on fossil fuels and achieve 'Net Zero' greenhouse gas emissions for directly controlled activities by 2040
- Implement improvement measures across UKCEH sites to support biodiversity, enhance ecosystems services and prevent pollution
- Demonstrate efficient use of resources and seek to reduce direct environmental impacts associated with UKCEH activities
- Embed sustainability considerations within UKCEH decision making and procurement processes
- Establish a sustainability implementation & engagement plan for UKCEH

#### 5 Responsibilities

##### Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 Our environmental management system is regularly reviewed by our Executive reporting to the UKCEH Board of Trustee Directors to identify opportunities to continually improve the system in order to enhance our environmental performance. Progress against our objectives will be made publicly available within our Annual Report.
- 5.2 The Environmental Advisor is responsible for:
- ensuring this policy aligns with the requirements of ISO 14001:2015
  - producing quarterly objective progress reports for the Executive and UKCEH Board
  - collating information on progress for the UKCEH Annual Report
- 5.3 The Executive Board is responsible for ensuring this policy:
- aligns with UKCEH values
  - is implemented, monitored, and communicated within the organisation
  - is periodically reviewed to evaluate its continuing effectiveness
- 5.4 All UKCEH People are responsible for seeking ways to minimise any negative environmental impacts from their activities, in line with this Environmental Policy, as supported by UKCEH management.



**Mark Bailey, Executive Director UKCEH**  
September 2020

**End of Document**