

## 1. Introduction

This statement sets out UKCEH (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology) actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business and its supply chains.

We recognise that we have a responsibility to take a robust approach to monitoring and preventing slavery and human trafficking within our organisation and with the suppliers that we choose to work with. Our organisation is absolutely committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities, and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

## 2. Organisational Structure and Supply Chains

The UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology is an independent, not-for-profit research institute carrying out excellent environmental science with impact. We seek to understand the environment, how it sustains life, and the human impact on it – so that, together, people and nature can prosper. We have a long history of investigating, monitoring and modelling environmental change. Our 650+ staff provide the data and insights that researchers, governments, and businesses need to create a productive, resilient, and healthy environment. This statement also incorporates the UKCEH Enterprise Arm who commercialises UKCEH intellectual property and delivers research contracts in support of UKCEH's ambition and charitable purpose.

Underpinning UKCEH's research and innovation are large research infrastructures and our capabilities in monitoring, measuring and observation, experimentation, data science and modelling.

Our charitable objects are:

- To carry out pure and applied scientific research in terrestrial and aquatic environments, including their interactions with the atmosphere.
- To advance education in the environment and environmental sciences, and sustainable development.
- To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public by promoting the preservation, conservation, protection and improvement of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources.
- To promote sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.

## 3. Risk Assessment and Management

We currently operate research in over 50 countries around the world: across Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Asia, and Australasia.

Any activity UKCEH consider to be at a higher risk of slavery or human trafficking projects are risk assessed, and these risks are reviewed at audit. Any high-risk project or programme will be reviewed quarterly by the Science Board and any high risks are reported to the Executive Board for mitigation and sign off.

Currently, the process for international project subcontractors' compliance to the Modern Slavery Act is to carry out due diligence on the research partners. If the partners or sub-contractors do not have the required Policies, we ask for the UKCEH versions to be adhered to.

Procurement risks are mitigated by a due diligence process and a supply chain risk assessment that is regularly reviewed as part of our strategic sourcing process.

We follow Government guidance on the pre-qualification of suppliers in a tender process. Tender questionnaires are based on the Standard Selection Questionnaire, aligned with the UK Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Part 1 and Part 2 of the Standard Selection Questionnaire list the exclusion grounds that apply to public procurements above thresholds, and the statutory guidance states that the selection questions in Part 3 should be adopted across all procurement procedures and embedded as needed into procurement processes.

#### 4. Policies in relation to Slavery and Human Trafficking

UKCEH operates a series of policies to mitigate the risk of modern slavery and outlines the steps taken to prevent slavery and human trafficking in its operations; these include the UKCEH Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, and Safeguarding Policy. These policies are regularly reviewed, are accessible to all UKCEH employees and are available on request:

- **Whistleblowing Policy** - we encourage all our workers, customers, and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities, or the supply chains of, our organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. Our whistleblowing procedure is designed to make it easy for workers to make disclosures, without fear of retaliation. Employees, customers, or other concerned parties can also refer to the UK National Helpline at [www.modernslaveryhelpline.org](http://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org) or call 0800 012 1700.
- **Safeguarding Policy** – this denotes measures to protect the health and well-being of children (under the age of 18) or vulnerable adults – allowing them to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.
- **Employee Code of Conduct** - our code makes clear to employees the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing our organisation. We strive to maintain the highest standards of employee conduct and ethical behaviour when operating abroad and managing our supply chain.
- **Supplier Pay Policy** – this requires that a valid Purchase Order is issued to any supplier prior to any work/service is undertaken. A PO can only be issued once a proposed supplier has met the requirements of due diligence checks.
- **Recruitment Policy** - we use only specified, approved, reputable employment agencies to source labour and always verify the practices of any new agency we are using before accepting workers from that agency.
  - Our recruitment processes are designed and managed to ensure that all prospective employees are legally entitled to work in the UK via our RICE process, which consists of verification made up of the following 4 parts. We obtain assurance on:
  - Right to work and Identity check – Nationality and Immigration Status (including an entitlement to undertake the work in question) Identity (electronic identity authentication - name, address, aliases, links accounts, etc.)
  - Criminal Records – Search for unspent convictions only (Basic Disclosure)
  - Employment history check – Confirmation of past 3 years employment (minimum) history /activity

Furthermore, UKCEH has a rigorous suite of policies and a confidential Employee Assistance Programme, all of which are designed to support and safeguard our employees.

## **5. Training on Modern Slavery and Trafficking**

UKCEH will:

- Ensure that Modern Slavery and Human trafficking e-Learning training is completed by key employees who are involved in the procurement of services and products into UKCEH; employees working overseas; employees involved in direct engagement with, and research funding to, universities and industry;
- Ensure that the UKCEH employees involved in procurement complete the CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply module and test.

## **6. Next Steps and Continuous Improvement:**

We have reviewed our key performance indicators (KPIs):

- Continue to monitor and report on the use of employee grievance mechanisms for any association with modern slavery;
- The Sustainable Procurement Strategy (which encompasses Modern Slavery) will be submitted for approval and anticipated implementation. This Strategy will inform how UKCEH will apply the statement, policies/strategy as well as obligations as directed via Government (Cabinet Office);
- An annual review of our key suppliers to audit adherence to due diligence requirements
- Ensure UKCEH monitor and evaluate effectiveness of controls designed to mitigate Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking risks;
- Respond to guidance and changes in any legislation on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and/or Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence; and
- Contribute to the UK government Modern slavery registry by adding UKCEH's Modern Slavery statement.

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes UKCEH's slavery and human trafficking statement covering 2023 & 2024.

Signed on Behalf of the UKCEH Executive Committee



Sam Bullen, Finance Director