

COUNCIL MEETING

Two hundred and ninetieth meeting of NERC Council
to be held at the Institute of Physics (IOP) in London
on Thursday 26th November 2009.

Natural Environment Research Council

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Two hundred and ninetieth meeting of NERC Council, to be held in the Phillips room, Institute of Physics, London on Thursday 26th November 2009 commencing at 09:00.

AGENDA

Introductory items			Strategic Objective
1	09:00	Chairman's welcome and introduction	
2	09:05	Financial forecast and context	NERC 09/61 (P) 18
3	09:15	Update from BIS representative	18
Item for decision			
4	09:20	2009 Theme Action Plans	NERC 09/62 (P) 5 - 11
	11:00	Break for refreshments	
	11:15	2009 Theme Action Plans continued	5 - 11
	12:25	Lunch	
5	13:00	National Capability Action Plan	NERC 09/63 (P) 13, 16
6	14:00	Business Performance Management: (i) Progress on delivery of NERC Strategy (Q2 report) (ii) Redevelopment of the Strategic Management Tool	NERC 09/64 (P) 18
	14:30	Break for refreshments	
7	14:45	Refreshing the Strategy	NERC 09/65 (P)
Standing items			
8	15:30	Executive Report	NERC 09/66 18
9	15:50	Report of the Council Audit Committee meeting	NERC 09/67 (P) 18
10	16:00	Science and Innovation Strategy Board report	NERC 09/68 (P) 18
11	16:15	Rolling programme of Business	NERC 09/69 18
12	16:25	Unconfirmed minutes from the 289 th meeting of Council (Closed and open sets)	NERC 09/70 (P) 18 NERC 09/71
13	16:30	Decisions and actions from the 289 th meeting of Council	NERC 09/72 (P) 18
14	16:35	Any other business	Oral 18
	16:45	Meeting close	

Papers for Information:

- i) Common NERC Acronyms
- ii) Membership of Council 2008/2009
- iii) Attendance at NERC Council 2008/2009
- iv) The Mission statement of the NERC
- v) Council Policy on Vested Interests

NERC COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE REPORT – NOVEMBER 2009 (COVER)

Purpose of this paper

1. This standing item provides information to Council on key business issues that are not addressed elsewhere in the papers under the following headings:
 - i. Strategy and Partnerships;
 - ii. Science Delivery;
 - iii. People, Skills and Communications;
 - iv. Finance and Operations;
 - v. Health and Safety
 - vi. Shared Services Centre Update
 - vii. BAS Mission Statement
 - viii. NERC Research Centres and NOCS;
 - ix. Chief Executive's key issues and activities

Author of paper

2. Information collated by Miss Samantha Way, NERC Council Secretary

Annexes and website links

3. Annex A – Financial report
Annex B - NERC Top Risks
Annex C – BAS Mission and Vision statements

Vested interests

4. None declared

Action

5. Council is invited to:
 - i. **NOTE** the report
 - ii. **DISCUSS** and **DECIDE UPON** the draft revised BAS Mission and Vision statements.

NERC COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE REPORT – NOVEMBER 2009

Items highlighted in grey should be treated as Management in Confidence

1. STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS

International

- a. In October, the International Group of Funding Agencies (IGFA) endorsed a proposal from NSF and NERC that IGFA adopts the new high-level, action-oriented 'Belmont Forum' as its governance body. This agreement will help ensure that the targeted global change research collaborations established by the Belmont Forum can be discussed by and inform the priorities of a broader community of international global change funders, helping to leverage their impact.

Knowledge Exchange

NERC Policy Placement scheme <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/publicsector/placements.asp>

- b. NERC's Policy Placement Scheme allows researchers to work closely with policy-makers within government and other public and third sector organisations. The placement is jointly (50:50) funded with the partner organisation for three to twelve months.

Three placements have been set up recently:

- Environment Agency, horizon scanning team - Dr Nic Bury, Kings College London - six months part-time from September 2009.
- Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) - Dr Dave Frame, University of Oxford – six months from September 2009.
- Defra / DECC - LWEC (Living with Environmental Change) - Dr John Holmes, University of Oxford – twelve months part-time from October 2009, overseeing science to policy processes in LWEC activities.

Policy secondments for NERC-funded PhD students: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/schemes/secondments.asp>

- c. NERC offers three-month secondments for PhD students in a policy-making environment. Secondments are available at the Westminster, Scottish and Welsh Parliamentary information offices (POST, SPICe and MRS) and the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP). Nine secondees will be supported over the coming year, including for the first time, a secondment to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee.

POSTnotes from last year's secondments are:

1. Biodiversity and Climate Change
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/postpn341.pdf>
2. Ocean Acidification
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/postpn343.pdf>
3. Deforestation
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/postpn344.pdf>

2. SCIENCE DELIVERY

- a. Up-to-date news of NERC science is published online at www.planetearth.nerc.ac.uk, and a schedule for announcing new research programme opportunities is available on the NERC website at www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/opportunities.asp

Delivering Theme Action Plans

- b. Of the sixteen Research Programme actions approved by Council in 2008, thirteen are underway (projects funded or in review), one has an open call, and two are finalising partnership funding and specifications.

Calls are now open for the two (LWEC) actions Council approved in July 2009:

- Environmental & Social Ecology of Human Infectious Diseases (£9.6M, of which £4M NERC); <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/esei/>;
- Environmental Exposures and Health (*AO to be published w/c 9Nov*) (£8-10M of which £3-4M NERC). Dept of Health (£1.1M for projects relevant to their needs), ESRC (£750k tbc) and Defra (£100k) have recently joined the NERC/MRC funding partnership.

Technology Proof of Concepts and Novel Laboratory Instrumentation (2008 TAPs)

- c. Ninety proposals submitted, thirty funded (£4.2M). A diverse range of projects are supported (e.g. development of an airborne low frequency ice sounder and a new ocean-bottom seismograph). Part of the call was specifically directed toward novel laboratory instrumentation and eight projects (£1.2M) are supported, including work for characterising aerosol particles and the development of a new method of luminescence dating. The AO for a second round will be published within the next few weeks.

Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) funding confirmed.

- d. The two-year process to design and build capacity for ESPA has been formally completed following DFID sign-off, and funds committed by DFID (£27M) and ESRC (£3.5M) to add to the £10M already committed by NERC. ESPA will be officially launched in November; the recruitment of a directorate to drive the intellectual leadership of ESPA is imminent, and the first call is due for publication in December.

New ESA satellite launched successfully

- e. The SMOS (Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity) mission — one of the Explorer missions, into which most of NERC's ESA investment goes — was launched on 2 November and its instruments deployed successfully. The UK has played a strong role in the initiation and intellectual development of the mission. The simultaneous measurement of soil moisture and ocean salinity will greatly improve our understanding of the dynamics of the water cycle and associated circulations, leading to more accurate weather and flood forecasts, improved climate simulations and better water management.

- f. *Atlantic overturning.*

NOCS Scientists have developed a new method to reconstruct variability in the overturning circulation of the Atlantic Ocean. A significant part of the variability in the strength of the circulation at latitudes from about 40 °N (corresponding to Portugal) to 65 °N (Iceland) can be determined from estimates of how much density the ocean surface waters gain as a result of heat loss and evaporation to the atmosphere. The work is funding by Oceans 2025 and RAPID.

3. PEOPLE, SKILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Communications

a. *Press releases/ briefings*

Research gives new meaning to 'green' cross code.
Acidic clouds nourish world's oceans.
Global demand for tropical crop could worsen air quality.
'Significant risk' of oil production peaking in ten years.
Climate change monitoring success celebrated.
Soil moisture and ocean salinity satellite ready for launch.

b. *Publications*

Autumn issue of Planet Earth published
Planet Earth Online (2 podcasts and around 16 news items with 4 features).

c. *Events*

Open Council October 2009

4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

a. [Management in confidence]

b. [Management in confidence]

c. NERC's professionalism in estates management and greening has recently been recognised in a number of fora:

- i) ECW Bangor - Having been a regional winner in the Sustainability category, ECW Bangor then received a Commendation (runner up) at the RICS Awards 2009 (World wide).
- ii) William Smith Building, BGS: Winner of a Commendation for 'Sustainability of Building Design' from East Midlands Regional Awards for Constructing Excellence; also, winner of the 'Best Use of Concrete' award at the 'Off-Site Construction magazine National Awards' for its use of a TermoDeck system.
- iii) Sea Water Cooling project at NOCS - This project has been short listed for the upcoming National Awards for Environmental Excellence (Edie Awards) in the Carbon Reduction category.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

a. An oral update will be provided at the meeting.

6. SHARED SERVICES CENTRE

This update provides information on changes since the last Council meeting.

Project Design, Implementation and Planning.

a. The first go-lives of Finance and Operational Procurement are now planned for October to December 2009, when EPSRC, ESRC and SSC Ltd will go-live with the remainder of the service. It

was originally planned that STFC would also go live with the full range of services during this period. While the STFC HR service has now gone live and the STFC Payroll service is on track to go-live later this month, the STFC go-live date for Finance and Operational Procurement has been moved back from December 2009 to April 2010, although this is subject to further consideration of the impacts of this on the NERC Finance and Operational Procurement Go-Live date.

- b. The NERC migration continues to be planned for early next year with HR and Payroll moving in January/February and Finance and Operational Procurement in April 2010. We continue to reiterate at all levels that NERC will migrate to the RCUK SSC only when we are confident that the necessary quality is available to ensure an acceptable impact on our business delivery.
- c. The NERC Project team with colleagues from SSC Ltd and the NERC Research Centres have held a number of 'Working with the SSC' sessions around NERC. These are a key first step on wider engagement within NERC, have been well received and have provided invaluable information on areas for us to focus future change and communications activities.

Grants

- d. Work on the Grants elements of the project is progressing well, design of the solution is now being finalised as we move into testing. It is expected that the first councils will migrate in the spring of 2010 and that NERC will follow in October 2010.

Budget

- e. [Management in confidence]
- f. [Management in confidence]
- g. The RCUK SSC Project Board is meeting on the 18th of November and a further oral update will be provided at the meeting on Council.

7. BAS MISSION STATEMENT

- a. At its November 2008 meeting (**paper NERC 08/77 refers**), Council discussed and agreed the draft Mission and Vision statements for all the wholly-owned Research Centres (except BAS) and the established Collaborative Centres (NOCS, NCAS and NCEO). It was agreed at that time that the BAS Mission and Vision statements could be developed on a longer timeframe in order to tie in with the emerging BAS strategy, *Polar Science for Planet Earth, which began on 1 April 2009*.
- b. The revised Mission and Vision statements for BAS are detailed at **Annex C**. NEB has discussed these as part of its wider discussions on the BAS strategy at its meeting in July 2009.
- c. Council will note the changed emphasis between the current BAS Mission and Vision statements which focus on the Antarctic region and those proposed for Council agreement which focus on the polar regions more broadly. Further consideration of the BAS Mission and Vision encompassing the whole cryosphere was not thought sensible at this stage given that BAS needs to prioritise the science that it is able to carry out.
- d. The BAS Review Group, chaired by BIS and incorporating senior representation from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has been sighted on the development of the revised Mission and Vision statements and is content with them.
- e. It is the view of the Office that the BAS Mission and Vision statements meet the requirements of the M&S report.

- f. Council is reminded that it agreed that in future all Research Centres will review their own Mission and Vision statements periodically and agree any changes with the Chief Executive.
- g. Council is asked to **DISCUSS** and **DECIDE UPON** the draft revised BAS Mission and Vision statements.

8. NERC RESEARCH CENTRES

BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY

- a. There are a number of scientific publications coming up that have relevance to the 'Countdown to Copenhagen'. These include:
- b. A media briefing will be held on 30 November to launch a review of the state of our understanding of Antarctic climate and its relation to the global climate system based on the latest available research. The review represents the combined efforts of oceanographers, meteorologists, geochemists, glaciologists and both terrestrial and marine biologists. Almost 100 scientists from 13 countries are listed as authors in the publication produced by the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. The findings will shape future areas of research and address the urgent questions that policy makers have (e.g. is Antarctic melting, how fast, how much and what may this do to sea level globally?; is biodiversity affected, how much?; and how fast are things changing?).
- c. A forthcoming paper in *Nature Geosciences* (publication date to be confirmed) led by Professor Corinne Le Quere (of BAS and University of East Anglia) will quantify emission reductions in Co2 during 2008 around 3% reduction.
- d. A paper by British Antarctic Survey scientists in the journal *Global Change Biology* describe how phytoplankton is flourishing in open water left exposed by the recent and rapid melting of ice shelves and glaciers around the Antarctic Peninsula coast. This new natural 'sink' is taking an estimated 3.5 million tonnes of carbon from the ocean and atmosphere each year. Whilst this is a relatively small amount in terms of overall carbon absorption this new finding has value for contributing to more accurate models for future predictions.
- e. In a new study of Antarctica's climate history scientists from the British Antarctic Survey, the Open University and University of Bristol, explain that in some brief warm periods between ice ages, temperatures were up to 6°C warmer than the present day. The findings, reported in the 19 November issue of the journal *Nature* could help scientists understand more about rapid climate changes.

CENTRE FOR ECOLOGY AND HYDROLOGY

- a. *COP15, Copenhagen*
Prior to COP15 Dr Chris Huntingford is working closely with the Hadley Centre, to provide advice to DECC, relating 2020 and 2050 emissions rates to the ability to stabilise climate at two degrees warming. This work encapsulates remaining earth system uncertainty and is aligned to policy prescriptive issues such as percentage rate of global decarbonisation. During COP15 CEH's nitrogen research will be profiled within the International Nitrogen Initiative (INI) side event. Dr Mark Sutton, who coordinates the European Centre for INI, and leads the EU NitroEurope Integrated Project, will attend. Dr Richard Harding from CEH will also attend COP15 in his capacity as leader of the £12M WATCH (WATER and global CHange) EU funded programme.

b. Transition & Integration update

The CEH Transition & Integration Programme, now in its final year, is running to schedule and on target for completion within budget. The final CEH site to close will be Oxford on 30 June 2010. Current focus is on various building and refurbishment schemes at Wallingford, prior to final transfer of staff and science facilities. Building work on the new integrated laboratory at Wallingford is proceeding well. New external science facilities at Wallingford (insectory, wormery, plunge beds, equipment storage, GroDome) will be completed by April 2010. CEH will host an event in autumn 2010 to communicate our new integrated science capabilities to stakeholders, research collaborators and general public, as well as marking the official opening of the new building.

c. Environment Centre Wales award

The Environment Centre Wales building in Bangor, home of CEH's staff in Wales was one of only three buildings worldwide to have received a Sustainability category commendation within the international final of the prestigious 2009 Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Awards.

NATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHY CENTRE, SOUTHAMPTON

a. Research Ships

The Autosub 6000 trials in *Discovery* were a significant success. The main objective was to prove deep diving capability and test anti collision and navigation algorithms. Indicative missions were conducted down to 5600m with the vehicle flying 10m above the sea bed; in demanding terrain around the Casablanca Seamount on slopes of up to 45deg; and finally a mission in which the vehicle was flown 3m above sea bed. The vehicle will now be deployed operationally in the spring of next year for a science cruise in the Cayman Trough.

b. Preparations for Copenhagen - Professor Ed Hill attended the Steering Committee meeting of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS).

GCOS constitutes, in aggregate, the climate observing component of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems ([GEOSS](#)). Its goal is to provide comprehensive information on the total climate system, involving a multidisciplinary range of physical, chemical and biological properties, and atmospheric, oceanic, hydrological, cryospheric and terrestrial processes required for:

- Monitoring the climate system,
- Detecting and attributing climate change,
- Assessing impacts of, and supporting adaptation to, climate variability and change,
- Application to national economic development,
- Research to improve understanding, modelling and prediction of the climate system.

PROUDMAN OCEANOGRAPHIC LABORATORY, LIVERPOOL

a. Mersey Tidal Power

The Mersey Estuary has one of the largest tidal ranges in the UK, making it one of the best locations for a tidal power generation scheme. POL and Liverpool University are sub-contractors to a consortium with the task of providing scientific advice based on the recently completed Joule Centre research project 'Tapping the Tidal Power Potential of the Eastern Irish Sea' (see <http://www.liv.ac.uk/engdept/tidalpower>).

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

- 16th October - Led an RCUK Meeting in Polaris House Swindon with the team in the HM Treasury responsible for BIS to brief them on the case for sustained investment in the research base.
- 19th October - Led an RCUK internal communications event in Swindon for 800 research council staff to launch the new RCUK Framework for the future - "Excellence with Impact".
- 22nd October - Met Lord Mandelson (First Secretary) in my role as incoming Chair of RCUK to brief him on how research investment is critical to produce a productive economy, healthy society and a sustainable world.
- 23rd October – Led the 6 monthly review of NERC activities with DGSR Adrian Smith.
- 2nd November - Took part in a joint NERC and Met Office Hadley Centre briefing on latest science evidence on Climate Change meeting for the FCO
- 19th November - Took part in UK Space Board discussion regarding the consultation on a UK Space Agency.
- 20th November- As RCUK Chair spoke at the Standing Conference for Professors of Physics at the Institute of Physics, London
- 23rd November - Attended the launch of the new BAS strategy - "Polar Science for Planet Earth" at BAS, Cambridge

NERC COUNCIL

ROLLING PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS (COVER)

Purpose of this paper

1. Council is asked to discuss possible items of business for the meeting of Council on 24/25th February 2010 which will include the Council retreat, consider whether any further items of business should be added to the Council Business Whiteboard.

Link to NERC strategic objectives

2. Strategic Objective 18 – Run an efficient, effective and flexible organisation to deliver NERC’s Strategy whilst demonstrating sound governance.

Responsible Director

3. Dr Steven Wilson – Director, Strategy and Partnerships

Author of paper

4. Miss Samantha Way – NERC Council Secretary

Annexes and website links

5. **Annex A** - Mapping of Council business against responsibilities
Annex B –2010 Council Business Whiteboard

Vested interests

6. N/A

Action

7. Council is asked to:
 - i) **DISCUSS** any additional items of business for the Council meeting on 24/25th February 2010.
 - ii) **DISCUSS** whether any further items of business should be added to the NERC Whiteboards.

NERC COUNCIL

ROLLING PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

Issue

1. Council is asked to discuss possible items of business for the meeting of Council on 24/25th February 2010 which will include the Council retreat, and consider whether any further items of business should be added to the Council Business Whiteboard.

Discussion

2. In addition to standing items, provisional agenda items for the February Council meeting are as set out below.

Refreshing the NERC strategy
Planning future NERC investment levels
10 Year Capital Strategy
Annual Report from Audit Committee on its activities

3. It is likely that a Council/SISB/NEB workshop will take place on the morning of 24th February, followed by a Council retreat in the afternoon and a full day of Council business on 25th. Theme Leaders have also been asked to hold the 24th February in their diaries. The exact details of timings and participants will be confirmed as early as possible in the New Year.

Implementation of actions delegated to

4. Miss Samantha Way, NERC Council Secretary

Communication plan

5. The outcome of this paper will be communicated to the NERC Business Coordination team and appropriate NERC staff.

Action

6. Council is asked to:
 - i) **DISCUSS** any additional items of business for the Council meeting on 24/25th February 2010.
 - ii) **DISCUSS** whether any further items of business should be added to the NERC Whiteboards.

Council responsibilities:	NERC's Strategic Objectives **	2009					2010				
		February	May	July	October	November	February	April	July	September	December
<p>• To advise on new scientific opportunities, scientific direction and user needs, in line with NERC's charter.</p> <p>• To establish the Mission and Strategic Plan and approve the Delivery Plan (including the strategy, use of resources and key performance indicators and targets).</p> <p>• To ensure that Council's views are reflected in the pursuit of RCUK objectives and to be informed of their views of RCUKEG and the JSG</p>	<p><u>Research Priorities and Partnerships:</u></p> <p>i. Strategic Partnerships with key UK and international organisations supporting research delivery (Obj 1)</p> <p>ii. Promote collaborative research and vibrant community throughout the environmental science, engineering and technology base (Obj 2)</p>			UK Space Sector	Living With Environmental Change		Update on consultation re: UK Space Sector	Marine Sector		Living With Environmental Change	
	iii. Decide on funding priorities within NERC's Strategic science themes (Obj 5 -11)	Planning future NERC investment levels (also fits into RM funding and NC)		Environment, Pollution and Human Health Theme Actions		Transitional Phase-Theme Action Plans 2009	Planning future NERC investment levels (also fits into RM funding and NC)	Discipline-based process research			Steady State phase - Theme Action Plans 2010
	<p><u>Sustainability:</u></p> <p>i. Responsive funding: Support cutting edge & emerging areas of science through responsive mode research (Obj 12)</p>							Transitional Phase-Responsive Mode Action Plan			
	ii. Ensure that NERC's National Capability meets current priorities and that it is developed to meet future priorities. (Obj 13 & 16)	National Good		Review of NCEO status		Development phase - National Capability Action Plan					Transitional phase - National Capability Action Plan
		10 year Capital Strategy		Business Case for Keyworth Building - Phase 2			10 year Capital Strategy				10 year Capital Strategy
		Ship Operations Review		RRS Discovery replacement project			RRS Discovery replacement project				
			NERC Marine Science								
	iii. Recruit and develop skilled people to ensure a healthy environmental science base, deliver NERC's strategy and meet future science priorities. (Obj 14 & 17)				Public Engagement with Research			ERFF Skills review?			
					Progress update on People Action Plan				Progress update on People Action Plan		
	<p><u>Economic and Public Policy impact:</u></p> <p>i. Establish a culture of knowledge exchange between NERC and stakeholders and ensure knowledge generated from NERC-funded science, and data information holdings, are communicated and used. (Obj 3)</p>	Science in Society overview			Knowledge Exchange Update			Knowledge Exchange Delivery Plan			
			Science Information Strategy				Public Engagement with Research				
<p>• To maintain high standards of corporate governance, and through reports from the Executive and advisory boards :</p> <p>i) ensure that Council's decisions and actions are followed through effectively</p> <p>ii) monitor risk management and progress of high risk projects</p> <p>iii) ensure proper use of public funds and that NERC does not operate outside of the limits of its delegated authority</p> <p>iv) receive and reviewing regular financial information concerning the performance of NERC.</p> <p>v) comply with all relevant employment legislation, adopt management practices which use resources in the most economical, efficient manner and ensure that NERC staff have appropriate access to relevant advice and training opportunities.</p> <p>vi) ensure that Council and advisory boards are fit for purpose and that Council makes use of the independent audit committee.</p> <p>• To ensure that action is taken to inform the Secretary of State, DGS1 and DIUS of any changes impacting on the delivery of the Strategy and Delivery Plan, and any measures put in place to address these.</p>	<p><u>Efficiency and effectiveness:</u></p> <p>i. Run an efficient, effective and flexible organisation to deliver NERC's strategy whilst demonstrating sound governance. (Obj 18)</p> <p>ii. Build and maintain effective working relationships with DIUS (Obj 4)</p> <p>iii. Adapt the organisation for strategic risk management -seizing opportunities and mitigating threats (Obj 15 - future perspective).</p>	<p>Council receives the following reports as standing items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Report * • Update from DIUS representative • Rolling programme of business • Reports from Science and Innovation Strategy Group and Council Audit Committee • Financial forecast and context • Progress update on delivery of NERC's objectives • Minutes and Decisions and Actions 									
			Environmental Management Policy		BAS Mission Statement	SISB self-assessment exercise					
		Spending Review 2009									Spending Review 2011
		Process for review and refresh of NERC Strategy		Annual Health and Safety and Security reports		Refreshing the NERC Strategy	Annual Look at Future Council Business		Annual Health and Safety and Security reports		
		Annual Report of Council Audit Committee	Annual Delivery Report			Annual report of Council Audit Committee	Annual Delivery Report				Annual Look at Future Council Business
		Open Council discussion				Council Self Assessment Exercise	Council Self Assessment Exercise				
		Environmental Management Policy		Meeting of Council sub-group - Senior Staff Salaries Review Committee			Evaluation Programme 10/11	Meeting of Council sub-group - Senior Staff Salaries Review Committee			

Blue - Strategy Red- Action Plans Green - update Grey - Review Purple - Housekeeping

* The Executive Report includes, amongst other adhoc issues, updates on: Swindon Office based Directors' areas of responsibility; NERC's Risk Register; Halley VI, SSC and any other high risks projects; Health and Safety; Research Centre activity and key issues highlighted by Chief Executive.

** The groupings of Strategic Objectives in this document are based on the headings in the NERC/DIUS Scorecard 2008/09.

No.	Task	Main Statement	23-25 Feb	29-Apr	15-Jul	30-Sep	09-Dec
1	Advise on new scientific opportunities, scientific direction and user needs	MS	As Required				
2	Establish the Mission and Strategic Plan and approve the Delivery Plan	MS	As required				
3	Ensure that action is taken to inform Sec of State, DGSI and OSI of any changes impacting on the delivery of No. 2	MS	As necessary				
4	Satisfy itself of the proper use of public funds and that NERC operates within its limits of delegated authority	MS	As required				
5	Receive and review regular financial information concerning the performance of NERC	MS	√	√	√	√	√
6	Ensure Council's views are reflected in pursuit of RCUK objectives and to be informed of the views of RCUKEG and JSG	MS	As necessary				
7	Maintain high standards of corporate governance, including making use of the audit committee	MS	As necessary				
8	Approve minutes from previous meeting and receive update on progress of matters arising		√	√	√	√	√
9	Receive report from Chief Executive on agreed areas		√	√	√	√	√
10	Receive rolling programme of Council business		√	√	√	√	√
11	Receive report from Chairs of SISB and Audit Committee on previous meeting(s)		√	√	√	√	√
12	Update from DIUS representative		√	√	√	√	√
13	Strategic Management Tool update /quarterly reports		√		√	√	√
14	Spending Review 2009			√?	√?	√?	√?
15	Annual Report from Audit Committee on its activities		√				
16	Review and refresh of the NERC strategy		√				
17	Planning future NERC investment levels		√				
18	10 Year Capital Strategy		√				√
19	RRS Discovery - update in Executive report		√				
20	UK Space Sector - update in Executive report		√				
21	SISB Self assessment exercise - update in SISB report		√				
22	Responsive Mode Action Plan - update			√			
23	Knowledge Exchange Plan - update			√			
24	Public Engagement with Research			√			
25	Annual Delivery Report			√			
26	Marine Sector - update			√			
27	Consider Annual Forward Look of agenda and business for following year			√?			
28	ERFF Skills review			√?			
29	Council Self Assessment Exercise			√?			
30	Evaluation Programme 2009/10			√?			
31	Discipline-based process research			√?			
32	Action plan for people element of Strategy				√		
33	Living with Environmental change update					√	
34	Receive Annual Report on Health and Safety and Security in NERC					√	
35	Theme Action Plans 2009						√
36	National Capability Action Plan						√

NERC COUNCIL

CONFIRMED OPEN MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY NINTH MEETING OF NERC COUNCIL HELD AT THE FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH AGENCY (FERA), YORK ON 15TH OCTOBER 2009.

Issue

- 1: To confirm that the unconfirmed open minutes of the 289th meeting of NERC Council are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Discussion led by

- 2: Chairman

Annexes attached

3. Annex A – Questions and answers from the October 2009 Council Open Forum

Author of paper

4. Miss Samantha Way, Secretary to NERC Council.

Action

5. Council is invited to **CONFIRM** the open minutes of the 289th meeting.

NERC COUNCIL

CONFIRMED OPEN MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY NINTH MEETING OF NERC COUNCIL, HELD AT THE FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH AGENCY (FERA) IN YORK, 15TH OCTOBER 2009

Members Present:

Mr EA Wallis (Chairman), Professor AJ Thorpe (CE), Professor PJ Curran, Professor HC Davies, Professor AH Fitter, Professor LA Glover, Professor C Godfray (am only), Mr PF Hazell, Professor M Lockwood, Professor TR Meagher, Professor R Watson, Professor A Watson, Professor BM Wilson.

Apologies: Mr R Douglas, Professor AN Halliday, Professor J Slingo,

Representative of the Secretary of State: Mr PJ Williams, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

NERC Directors: Mr NFD Bloomer (Finance and Operations), Dr P Newton (Science Delivery) Mrs JE Timberlake (People, Skills and Communication), Dr SHS Wilson (Strategy and Partnerships).

Other Attendees: Professor DJ Wingham, Chairman of Science and Innovation Strategy Board (SISB)
Mr D Osborn, NERC Lead for LWEC, for item 11 and open meeting.
Ms Judy Parker, Head of Communications, for item 12 and open meeting.
Dr S Jackman, Head of Knowledge Exchange, for item 14 and open meeting.
Professor Roya Sheikholeslami, observed all items as part of a mentoring scheme.

Secretary: Miss SJ Way

A number of additional attendees were present for the Open meeting.

10. Chairman's welcome – Open (Oral)

10.1 Chairman welcomed everybody to the Open meeting of NERC Council and explained that a closed session had been held in order to discuss items that are commercial in confidence or involve advice to ministers.

11. Update on Living With Environment Change (LWEC) (NERC 09/53)

11.1 Chairman welcomed Mr Dan Osborn, the NERC lead for LWEC, to the meeting. Dr Newton explained that the purpose of the item was to update on progress over the last year and discuss any suggestions that Council might have for further improvements.

11.2 Mr Osborn gave a presentation on the progress of LWEC, reminding Council of the key global challenges that LWEC aims to address and outlining the main partners involved. Council noted the wide-ranging benefits of the programme, including high impact work on Low Carbon Society; secure and sustainable food and water supplies and resilience of vulnerable communities to climate change. Mr Osborn briefly referred to the accreditation system and also explained that partners have been working together to co-design work packages.. Mr Osborn informed Council of the most recent activities and dynamics of LWEC before outlining the main areas of the programme where NERC will play a key role in the future.

11.3 A number of points were raised during discussion:

- i. Council discussed how LWEC is currently engaging with the range of cross-government activities on food security, emphasising that the climate and environment aspects should be considered alongside the issue of food production.
- ii. Council emphasised that LWEC addresses many global issues, such as Food Security, and asked about international collaboration. Mr Osborn explained that Professor Andrew Watkinson, Director of LWEC, will soon be approaching the National Science Foundation to discuss US collaboration. There are also LWEC partners on the UK Collaborative on Development Sciences and Mr Osborn highlighted examples of international opportunities that may arise e.g. the possibility of working in India on the Changing Water Cycle.
- iii. Mr Osborn clarified that, whilst partners can self-organise into groups within the LWEC structure, duplication of effort is minimised by reporting back to the Partners' Board on activities.
- iv. It was raised that it should be possible to accredit Responsive Mode activity to LWEC and Mr Osborn confirmed that the detail and mechanisms relating to this are being considered.
- v. Council emphasised that accreditation to LWEC must lead to active engagement. Accredited projects and programmes must be fully engaged and able to show how they have approached their activities differently to contribute effectively to LWEC. Mr Osborn confirmed that this is the purpose of accreditation. It would be useful to know how many new partnerships have been established through LWEC as this would be one indicator of impact.

11.4 Chairman reiterated that the leverage and cohesive approach that LWEC provides will be of significant benefit to NERC science. He thanked Mr Osborn for his presentation and input to the discussion.

12. NERC Strategy for Public Engagement with Research (NERC 09/54)

12.1 Chairman welcomed Ms Judy Parker, NERC Head of Communications, to the meeting and Mrs Timberlake introduced the item, inviting Council to discuss the recently refreshed strategy for Public Engagement with Research, previously known as Science in Society.

- 12.2 Ms Parker outlined the four main aims of the strategy which relate to: working with the public to foster debate and identify attitudes to environmental issues; engaging young people with environmental research; encouraging and enabling NERC-funded scientists to engage with the public; increasing public awareness of NERC-funded research and impacts.
- 12.3 A view was expressed that NERC should provide more support for scientists who wish to communicate their science but lack the infrastructure or skills to do so. Professor Thorpe commented that the Beacons for Public Engagement initiative is a support mechanism but that Universities should take some responsibility for providing appropriate infrastructure. In terms of skills, Ms Parker advised that NERC runs 'Communicating Science to the Public' courses but attendance is usually through self-selection.
- 12.4 Council pointed out that young people who do not intend to pursue a career in science should also be engaged, introducing scientific literature as early as possible, to improve future public dialogue and awareness. An example of successful engagement with young people was highlighted – a 360° Dome film called 'We are Astronomers' at Edinburgh's 'Our Dynamic Earth' visitor attraction. This was set up in conjunction with the National Space Centre and led to production of an associated teacher's pack. It was suggested that the Research Councils could do something similar with a subject like Natural Hazards, perhaps in collaboration with National Geographic.
- 12.5 Council suggested that there should be more emphasis on engaging influential learned societies. It was pointed out that external consultants can also be very useful in driving forward public engagement activity over a specified timeframe, particularly in liaising with journalists and identifying links to topical issues.
- 12.6 Council was asked for an indication of how much resource should be invested in public engagement activities. Council was supportive of increasing spend in this area but asked for a costed proposal, including options so that Council can discuss how this activity should be prioritised. Mrs Timberlake will report back to Council in April and provide further information about the possibility of societal issues panels.

Action: Mrs Timberlake

- 12.7 Chairman thanked Ms Parker for her input.

13. Executive report - Open (NERC 09/55)

- 13.1 Dr Wilson informed Council that a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed enabling Brazilian and UK Researchers to apply for funding through a single application and peer review process. Dr Wilson will check that the Research Council for the State of Sao Paulo, which has signed the agreement, is Brazil's main funding entity for research.

Action: Dr Wilson

- 13.2 Council noted that calls are now open for the two Environment, Pollution and Human Health actions agreed by Council in July 2009. Council previously asked about the possibility of collaborating more widely on these actions and Dr Newton provided a

progress update on the growing interest from stakeholders including the Department of Health, DEFRA, the Environment Agency and the Met Office.

- 13.3 Dr Newton highlighted findings from two recent studies by NERC-funded researchers which show rapid increase in the thinning of the Greenland and Antarctic ice-sheets and provide an important step towards more accurate predictions for future sea level rise.
- 13.4 Council was reminded that research proposals requiring access to BAS antarctic infrastructure - previously funded through the Antarctic Funding Initiative - will be considered through the Responsive Mode standard grant scheme in future.
- 13.5 In terms of communications and public engagement, Council was informed of a collaboration between NERC and Blue Peter, involving a new part of the NERC website hosting satellite images over the next twelve months, accompanied by science stories. Blue Peter would be encouraging young people to take an interest in these images through their programmes during the year. It was also highlighted that Planet Earth Online has received 160,000 hits, approximately one every two minutes, in the last year which is impressive for an environmental sciences website. In relation to a proposed DVD aimed at 15/16 year olds, the Executive noted that any references to qualifications and career routes should take account of the Scottish education system.
- 13.6 Professor Thorpe provided feedback from the launch of the 'Geo-engineering the Climate' report. Council commented that any research associated with geo-engineering should be considered in relation to LWEC and the international perspective, engaging with the US in particular.
- 13.7 Council noted that Professor Thorpe officially took over from Professor Ian Diamond as the Chair of RCUK on 01 October 2009. RCUK is currently developing a set of narratives that articulate the impact of the Research Councils and the economic and societal developments that have resulted from long term investments in research.

14. Impact and Knowledge Exchange update (NERC 09/56)

- 14.1 Chairman welcomed Dr Simon Jackman, Head of Knowledge Exchange (KE), to the meeting. Dr Wilson introduced the item, explaining that the paper related to the current KE plan, that the presentation would focus on development of the next delivery plan and that Council would be asked to discuss the issue of business engagement.
- 14.2 In his presentation to Council, Dr Jackman outlined opportunities to demonstrate impact in 'the Green Economy', enhance impact through partnerships and embed impact in strategies. He highlighted the various business sectors that NERC might engage with and advised that the KE team has looked into which of these has the most potential for economic growth. Council noted that a revised Impact and Knowledge Exchange Plan would be developed by Spring 2010.
- 14.3 Council was asked whether it supported an increase in NERC's level of business engagement and, whilst some felt it was difficult to put the current and proposed

levels of engagement in context, it was accepted that this is an area of activity in which NERC could and should improve. In particular, Council suggested the use of databases to act as a broker between the science community and businesses seeking solutions, whilst others recognised the importance of direct contact. It was suggested that facilitated workshops for researchers and key business stakeholders could be productive.

14.4 During discussion, Council:

- i. asked whether the links between NERC and the tourism sector had been considered. Dr Jackman advised Council that ESRC has a programme relating to tourism and that NERC could seek to engage with them.
- ii. raised concerns about the basis of a number of the economic growth figures.
- iii. asked how the international context is being taken into consideration. Dr Jackman confirmed that the delivery plan would not be solely UK focused or developed in isolation.
- iv. recognised the challenges in evaluating the success of new KE initiatives and noted that, to some extent, success would be judged on how many business have been actively engaged and how much of an impact NERC has made on those businesses.

14.5 Chairman confirmed that Council supported the current and proposed direction of KE activity and thanked Dr Jackman for his presentation and input to the discussion.

15. Open Forum (Oral)

15.1 Chairman invited Ms Judy Parker, NERC Head of Communications, to facilitate the Open forum and Ms Parker explained the purpose of the session before inviting questions and comments from attendees. Details of the questions raised and answers provided by Council are provided in Annex A to the minutes.

15.2 Chairman thanked Ms Parker and attendees of the Open meeting for their contribution to the Open Forum.

16. Progress on implementing the people element of the NERC Strategy (NERC 09/57)

16.1 To set the context for the paper, Mrs Timberlake explained that, in developing the NERC Strategy, several people related issues had been identified and pulled into a separate action plan. The purpose of the paper is to provide an update on progress made since the plan was signed off by Council approximately one year ago.

16.2 Mrs Timberlake briefly highlighted some of the work being carried out to address the key challenges and a number of points were raised during discussion:

- i. Council noted that, in revising the NERC training strategy, training priorities will be considered as well as the method of allocating studentships, taking into account lessons learned by other organisations.

- ii. When asked whether HEIs would be consulted regarding the revised training strategy and potential changes to student allocations, Mrs Timberlake said that SISB would be asked for guidance on this as it may not be suitable to consult interested parties about how levels of funding are apportioned.
- iii. It was highlighted that there are no specific actions relating to women in science and Council was informed that this had not emerged from the NERC Strategy as one of the highest priority areas to address.
- iv. Mrs Timberlake clarified that the Leadership Programme has been targeted at NERC's most senior managers as there had previously been little investment at this level and they needed to be leading by example.

16.3 Chairman thanked Mrs Timberlake for the progress update on the action plan.

17. NERC Health and Safety (H&S) Advisor's annual report 2008 (NERC 09/58)

17.1 Council noted that the H&S Advisor's report had been through a number of committees, including the NERC Executive Board, Council Audit Committee and Trade Unions, and was reminded that there is now a Head of H&S, Security and Risk with an overview of the three areas.

17.2 Mr Bloomer informed Council that Health and Safety policy development, training and auditing are all being continuously developed, with policies being reviewed every 3 years on a rolling basis. For example, a more effective method of recording near misses is currently being developed. Council noted that the number of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) incidents in 2008 were lower than the Key Performance Indicator within the Strategic Management Tool (SMT).

17.3 Council approved the NERC H&S Advisor's annual report 2008.

18. NERC Security Advisor's annual report 2008 (NERC 09/59)

18.1 Mr Bloomer summarised that there have been no security issues in the last year and that every NERC site had achieved substantial assurance. The security effort will now be somewhat refocused away from estate management to other security issues, such as piracy.

18.2 Council approved the NERC Security Advisor's annual report 2008.

19. Rolling programme of business (NERC 09/60)

19.1 Miss Way highlighted the proposed locations for the 2010 Council meetings, including a possible site visit and an Open meeting at Welsh Assembly, Cardiff.

Several views were raised regarding the Open meeting but Council was reminded of its decision in May 2009 to continue with an annual Open meeting, held at a stakeholder site, and to address public engagement separately through stakeholder events.

19.2 Council was reminded that a NERC stakeholder event will be held in London on the evening of 25th November 2009, prior to the Council meeting on 26th November.

20. Any other business (Oral)

20.1 There were no other items of business raised for discussion.

NERC COUNCIL

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM OCTOBER 2009 COUNCIL OPEN FORUM

1. Professor Bob Holdsworth, one of NERC's Knowledge Exchange Fellows, asked Council for its views on how business engagement can be effectively carried out. Council's main suggestion was that instead of engaging with businesses by telling them what NERC does and what solutions it can offer, NERC should firstly ask about the problems the business is trying to solve, encouraging them to find different angles by analysing the problem and challenging assumptions. Council also suggested that business stakeholders should be encouraged to attend NERC stakeholder events as these are a good opportunity to network and promote NERC.
2. Dr Katie Arnold from the University of Glasgow and Professor David Prior from the University of Liverpool both raised the issue of Knowledge Exchange (KE) Impact plans. Professor Prior commented that researchers are often unsure about what to include in the plan and that more support mechanisms and expertise should be made available to them. He also expressed a view that other academics involved in the Peer Review process may not be the best placed individuals to comment on the plans. Dr Newton explained that the affiliate members of the Peer Review College lead the review of the impact plans as they are better placed to provide feedback but recognised that the plans are also seen by the moderating panel.
3. Professor Holdsworth added that the plans have a negative impact on academics' attitude towards knowledge exchange and he considered that a small procedural change, separating judgement of the scientific proposal from the KE impact plans, would be a major improvement. Dr Newton noted that the mechanism for handling KE impact plans needs to be communicated more effectively and that the extent to which moderating panels get involved should also be considered.
4. Dr Olivier Missa asked how much priority NERC would place on supporting countries outside of the EU who are lacking the infrastructure or critical mass to conduct their own research. The response was that NERC would not prioritise this research on the basis of the country's need but on the importance of the science issues in question. However, it was recognised that when carrying out research in developing countries, NERC could establish local partnerships, help to build capacity where possible and engage with the DFID development agency. Professor Glover is a member of the UK Collaborative on Development Science and highlighted the importance of maximising the impact of priority UK research in developing countries.

NERC COUNCIL

DECISIONS, ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 289TH NERC COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2009 (COVER)

Purpose of this paper

1. The meeting of NERC Council on 15 October 2009 resulted in a number of decisions and actions. This paper reports on progress made on the decisions and actions recorded in the minutes that are not addressed elsewhere on the agenda.
2. To provide Council with an opportunity to discuss any matters arising from the meeting from the decisions and actions.
3. To highlight outstanding and recently completed actions from meetings prior to October 2009.

Author of paper

2. Miss Samantha Way – NERC Council Secretary

Annexes and website links

3. N/A

Vested interests

4. None declared

Action

5. Council is invited to:
 - i) **NOTE** the progress of the decisions and actions from the 289th meeting and any matters arising.
 - ii) **NOTE** outstanding and recently completed actions from meetings prior to October 2009
 - iii) **DISCUSS** any matters arising from the 289th meeting.

Decisions and Actions arising from 289th Council meeting on 15th October 2009

Type	Agenda Item	Min Ref	Decision/Action Description	Owner	Target Date	Progress Update
A	Executive Report - Closed (NERC 09/50 P)	6.7	Confirm to Council that Marine Scotland is part of the Marine Sciences Coordination Committee.	Director Strategy and Partnerships		Completed: marinescotland, the Scottish Government and SEPA are all partners in the Marine Science Co-ordination Committee, See http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/science/mscc.htm for more info
A	Decisions and actions and matters arising from the 288th meeting of Council (NERC 09/52 P)	8.2	Provide an update on the outcomes of the Tim Berners-Lee review regarding charging for data.	Paul Williams		Progressing: Mr Williams will provide an update at the Nov 09 Council meeting.
A	NERC Strategy for Public Engagement with Research (NERC 09/54)	12.6	Report back to Council with a costed proposal regarding Public Engagement with Research, including options so that Council can discuss how this activity should be prioritised.	Director People Skills and Communication	Apr-10	Progressing: Work is underway to develop the plan
A	Executive Report - Open (NERC 09/55)	13.1	Check whether the Research Council for the State of Sao Paulo is Brazil's main funding entity for research.	Director Strategy and Partnerships		Completed: The reason for the agreement with Sao Paulo state are: - it covers two thirds of Brazilian science output - FAPESP (http://www.fapesp.br/english/) widely regarded as most important player - has a robust peer review system, and a clear set of priorities For env. science the case is even stronger: - INPE (http://www.inpe.br/ingles/index.php) based in Sao Paolo - and works closely with FAPESP - Strengths in climate change, micrometeorology and amazonia.

COMMON NERC ACRONYMS

AEDC	Antarctic Environmental Data Centre	ERFF	Environment Research Funders Forum
AFI	Antarctic Funding Initiative (Research Programme)	ES	Ecosystem Sustainability
AHRC	Arts & Humanities Research Council	ESF	European Science Foundation
APPRAISE	Aerosol Properties, Processes and Influences on the Earth's climate (Research Programme)	ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure
BADC	British Atmospheric Data Centre	ESPA	Ecosystem Services and Poverty Alleviation (Research Programme)
BAS	British Antarctic Survey (NERC)*	ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
BBSRC	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council	ESA	European Space Agency
BERR	Department for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform	EuroHORCs	European Union Research Organisations Heads of Research Councils
BGS	British Geological Survey (NERC)*	EYF	End of Year Flexibility
BNSC	British National Space Centre	FAB	Funding Allocation and Budgeting Project
BODC	British Oceanographic Data Centre	FOG	Finance and Operations Group
BPM	Business Performance Management	FP	Framework Programme
BPMF	Business Performance Management Framework	FREE	Flood Risk from Extreme Events (Research Programme)
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method.	GCSA	Government Chief Scientific Adviser
CASE	Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering	GERB	Geostationary Earth Radiation Budget Experiment (Research Programme)
CEOI	Centre for Earth Observation Instrumentation**	GMES	Global Monitoring for Environment and Security
CEH	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (NERC)*	HEC	High End Computing
CEE	Centre for Environmental Evidence	HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
CPB	Centre for Population Biology**	HEFCW	Welsh Higher Education Funding Council
CSA	Chief Scientific Adviser	HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review	HIRDLS	High Resolution Dynamics Limb Sounder (Research Programme)
CWC	Changing Water Cycle	HPC	High Performance Computing
D4RP	'Discovery for Replacement' project	IODP	Integrated Ocean Drilling Program
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government	IMP	Individual Merit Promotion
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	IPY	International Polar Year
DfID	Department for International Development	ISG	Information Strategy Group
DfT	Department for Transport	ITAG	Information Technology Advisory Group
DGSR	Director General Science and Research (formerly DGSI)	ITT	Invitation to Tender
DBIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (formerly OSI and then DIUS)	Je-S	Joint electronic-Submission
DMAG	Data Management Advisory Group	JSG	DIUS/RCUK Joint Strategy Group
EA	Environment Agency	LWEC	Living With Environmental Change
EIC	Environmental Information Centre	MBA	Marine Biological Association
EC	European Commission	MRC	Medical Research Council
EHFI	Ecology and Hydrology Funding Initiative	NC	National Capability
EHH	Environment and Human Health	NCAG	National Capability Advisory Group
ENI	Environmental Nanoscience Initiative (Research Programme)	NCAS	National Centre for Atmospheric Science*
EO	Earth Observation	NCEO	National Centre for Earth Observation**
EOF	UK Environmental Observation Framework	NDGC	National Geosciences Data Centre
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	NE	Natural England
EPSRC	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	NEB	NERC Executive Board
ER	Environmental Radioactivity	NEODC	NERC Earth Observation Data Centre
ERC	European Research Council	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

* NERC Research Centre ** NERC Collaborative Centre

Updated 06/07/2009

NIC	NERC Investment Committee	TAP	Theme Action Plan
NMF	National Marine Facilities	ToR	Terms of Reference
NMF-SS	National Marine Facilities – Sea Systems	TSB	Technology Strategy Board
NOCS	National Oceanography Centre, Southampton	TSEC	Towards a Sustainable Energy Economy (Research Programme)
OGC	Office of Government Commerce	UAI	Urban Atmospheric Infrastructure
OPMs	Output and Performance Measures	UKCDS	UK Collaborative on Development Sciences
OSG	Operations Strategy Group (RCUK)	UKERC	UK Energy Research Centre
PAG	Personnel Advisory Group	UKIODP	UK Integrated Ocean Drilling Program
PCSG	Personnel Corporate Strategy Group	UKPOPNET	UK Population Biology Network (Research Programme)
PGP	Post-Genomics and Proteomics (Research Programme)	UKRO	UK Research Office (Brussels)
PML	Plymouth Marine Laboratory**	UKSOLAS	Surface-Ocean/Lower-Atmosphere Study (Research Programme)
POL	Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory*	UKSB	UK Space Board
PQQ	Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (Procurement)	VO	Virtual Observatory
PSG	Pay Strategy Group	WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
PSN	People and Skills Network		
QR	Quality related (in context of HEI funding)		
QUEST	Quantifying and Understanding the Earth System (Research Programme)		
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise		
RAPID-WATCH	Rapid- Will the Atlantic Thermohaline Circulation Halt (Research Programme)		
RCIAS	Research Councils' Internal Audit Service		
RCUK	Research Councils UK		
RELU	Rural Economy and Land Use (Research Programme)		
RM	Responsive Mode		
RMAP	Responsive Mode Action Plan		
ROD	Research Outputs Database		
RP	Research Programme		
SAHFOS	Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science		
SAMS	Scottish Association for Marine Science**		
SEBCC	Science and Engineering Base Co-ordinating Committee		
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency		
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council		
SISB	NERC Science and Innovation Strategy Board		
SMRU	Sea Mammal Research Unit**		
SMT	Strategic Management Tool		
SOFI	Strategic Ocean Funding Initiative		
SoR	Statement of Requirements		
SPA	Sector Portfolio Analysis		
SRG	Services Review Group		
SSC	Shared Service Centre		
STAR	System for Targets and Risks		
STFC	Science and Technology Facilities Council (formerly PPARC and CCLRC)		

A full list of NERC Research Programmes can be found on the NERC website at: www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/

* NERC Research Centre ** NERC Collaborative Centre

Updated 06/07/2009

MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL 2009 (as at 01 August 2009)

Mr Edmund Wallis	Chairman
Professor Alan Thorpe	Chief Executive and Deputy Chairman
Professor Paul Curran	Vice-Chancellor University of Bournemouth
Professor Huw Davies	Institute for Atmospheric and Climate Science, ETH Zurich
Mr Rowan Douglas	Managing Director, Willis Analytics for Willis Re
Professor Alastair Fitter	Department of Biology, University of York
Professor Anne Glover	Chief Scientific Advisor for Scotland, School of Medical Sciences, University of Aberdeen
Professor Charles Godfray	Professor of Zoology, University of Oxford
Professor Alex Halliday	Head Mathematical Physical & Life Science Division, University of Oxford
Mr Peter Hazell	Chairman of the Argent Group. Chairman of the Audit Committee for: BRIT Insurance PLC, Smith & Williamson and UK Coal PLC. Member of the Competition Commission.
Professor Michael Lockwood	University of Reading
Professor Thomas Meagher	Chair of Plant Biology, University of St Andrews
Professor Julia Slingo	Met Office
Professor Andrew Watson	Professor at the School of Environmental Sciences, of East Anglia University
Professor Robert Watson	Chief Scientific Advisor, DEFRA
Professor Marjorie Wilson	School of Earth & Environment, Leeds University
Secretary to Council	
Miss Samantha Way	01793 442570, e-mail sway@nerc.ac.uk

The Mission of the Natural Environment Research Council is:

The Natural Environment Research Council delivers independent research, survey, training and knowledge transfer in the environmental sciences, to advance knowledge of planet earth as a complex, interacting system. Our work covers the full range of atmospheric, earth, biological, terrestrial and aquatic sciences, from the deep oceans to the upper atmosphere, and from the poles to the equator. Our mission is to gather and apply knowledge, create understanding and predict the behaviour of the natural environment and its resources, and communicate all aspects of our work.

In fulfilling its mission, NERC will:

- support high quality research and technology and maintain long-term capability to understand and predict the environment, natural resources and their response to change;
- foster the health and vitality of the UK environmental science skills base through education, training and career development;
- collect, manage and supply environmental data and provide information to meet the needs of users;
- provide objective, independent expert scientific advice and information to underpin national and international policy and sustainable growth;
- provide specialist scientific facilities and services to meet the needs of UK environmental sciences;
- work in partnership with users and other science suppliers and promote effective knowledge transfer;
- encourage public understanding of environmental issues and the role of science;
- ensure openness, accountability and value for money in the delivery of the NERC mission.

NERC POLICY ON VESTED INTERESTS FOR MEMBERS OF NERC BOARDS AND COMMITTEES¹

1. INTRODUCTION

NERC uses the expertise, knowledge and advice of the international academic and research community, government agencies, industry and elsewhere. Their involvement is an essential contribution to the Council's decision-making processes, many of which lead to the allocation of public funds.

2. WHY IS A VESTED INTERESTS POLICY NEEDED?

NERC needs to set out clearly how it expects its committee and board members to act in considering the allocation of funds and in the wider decision-making and advisory contexts.

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

3. HOW DOES NERC DEFINE 'VESTED INTEREST'?

Vested interest is defined as the committee or board member being associated or involved in any way with:

- an *institution*, *department* or *individual* that has submitted a funding proposal or would otherwise benefit from a decision;
- and/or has been involved in the *development*, or *implementation* of proposals seeking Council funds or in the *evaluation* of research investments.

4. HOW DOES NERC APPLY ITS VESTED INTEREST POLICY?

- a. The chair of a meeting will be briefed on vested interests using the *Register of Declarations of Interests* (see section 5), and will draw attention to these before the meeting starts.
- b. NERC will remove all papers relating to a vested interest from the respective member's meeting papers.
- c. *At the start of each meeting the chair should remind the committee/board that they should declare if any item on the agenda is likely to give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest.*
- d. *The chair should consider if the interest is such as to require the member to leave the room when that matter comes up for discussion, or to remain in the room, but without expressing any opinion on the issue.*
- e. If there is doubt as to whether the member should be asked to leave, the chair may discuss this with the rest of the committee. The member may be asked to leave the room while the committee decides.
- f. If the absence of a member who has declared an interest will compromise the committee's expertise, they may be invited to speak on 'matters of fact'.
- g. If the committee member concerned is the chair, then another member should chair that item.
- h. If in doubt, the chair and committee should assume that the actual or potential conflict of interest may call into question the objectivity and impartiality of the committee's consideration of that issue.
- i. *All vested interests declared, and actions taken, should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, ensuring a proper audit trail.*

¹ For the purposes of this statement, Boards and Committees is the generic term used for any group convened by, or acting on behalf of, Council or the Chief Executive.

5. NERC'S REGISTER OF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a. On taking up their appointments, all Committee members **must** declare any private, professional or commercial interests that could conflict with NERC's interests. These interests may be *direct* or *indirect*, *monetary* or *non-monetary*, which the public might reasonably think could influence the Committee members' judgment.
- b. NERC will record the declarations of interest centrally and update them every year.
- c. Members should, provide updated information as changes occur.
- d. NERC will put the register on its website so the public can inspect it, and the website detail will be published in the NERC Council's annual report.