

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE SKILLS REVIEW PROJECT

PROJECT TITLE	Identification of the postgraduate skills needs which are training priorities in the environmental sciences sector
OBJECTIVES	<p>1) To identify the postgraduate skills needs which are training priorities, over the short, medium and long term, for challenges facing the three main parts of the environmental sciences sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the environmental sciences research base; (b) public sector bodies with a significant remit to address environmental issues; and (c) major relevant industrial/commercial organisations. <p>2) To develop a robust process for undertaking the review so the work can be repeated/refreshed/extended.</p>
DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE	<p>Initial work showed that there are no clear or universally accepted definitions for the environmental sciences sector. Therefore, for the purposes of this review, the project board is using the following definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environmental sciences sector is <i>those parts of the UK Economic, Political and Social Systems that significantly rely on, or generate knowledge concerned with, investigating the state and condition of the Earth.</i> <p>The Review is focussing on three parts of the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environmental sciences research base comprising the organisations which generate knowledge concerned with investigating the state and condition of the Earth, • The public sector bodies charged with responsibility for various aspects of the environment eg policy makers and regulators, and • The major relevant industrial/commercial organisations where the principal activity is the significant provision or use of environmental resources/ services/ products/ expertise.
DELIVERABLES	<p>Key deliverables are reports to NERC’s Science and Innovations Strategy Board (SISB), and Council; and to the ERFF Main Board – Spring 2010. The reports will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the relevant current UK postgraduate training and training strategies for the three main parts of the environmental sciences sector organisations; • Identification of priority postgraduate skills requirements over the short, medium and long term; • Training priorities: through a gap/over-supply analysis for the priority postgraduate skills; • Explanation of the methodologies used.
PROJECT BOARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janice Timberlake, NERC – Director People, Skills & Communication - CHAIR • Paul Curran , (NERC Council) and VC University of Bournemouth • Jeremy Neathey, ESRC – Director, Training and Resources • Jonathan Bates, NERC – Head of People and Skills • Mary Barkham, Head of ERFF • Avril Allman, NERC Process Manager, Training Awards Team • Peter Singleton, (Head of ERFF Horizon Scanning Group), Emerging Issues Unit Manager, Scottish Environment Protection Agency • Martin Whitworth, Head of Science Resource, Environment Agency, • Bob Allison, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) University of Sussex • Simon Jackman, NERC Head of Knowledge Exchange
REVIEWER GROUP	A reviewer group is being established to both contribute to the review and to comment on and verify the project board’s findings prior to the development of recommendations. This will comprise around 50 representatives from across the environmental sciences sector.
SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and test a process for undertaking the review; • Review of relevant existing training strategies and postgraduate training provision in the UK including formal and informal training e.g. short-courses, masters, PhDs, in-house and CPD; • Identifying the priority postgraduate skills (in the short, medium and long term) facing the three main parts of the environmental sciences sector; and • Identifying current and predicted short-medium-long term gaps/critical shortages of the priority skills identified.
FURTHER INFORMATION	For further information, please contact Jo Tudor, Project Manager at jot@nerc.ac.uk or Amy Foxton at afox@nerc.ac.uk