



## **Stakeholder Survey Summary**

### **Methodology**

ComRes were commissioned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) to conduct a 2 part (quantitative and qualitative) stakeholder research project. For the quantitative section of the research, 1,109 stakeholders were approached by ComRes, of whom 250 completed the questionnaire representing a response rate of 23%. As part of the quantitative survey, stakeholders were asked to indicate whether they would be happy to participate in a follow up qualitative interview, 103 of 250 agreed to this. ComRes then went on to interview 26 stakeholders by telephone.

Please note that, as with all stakeholder research, this sample is comprised of respondents who opted in to participating in the research. Fieldwork was monitored throughout to ensure that the breakdown of the final sample broadly reflected the NERC's stakeholder database.

### **Familiarity and Reputation**

- More than 80% of stakeholders say that they would speak positively of NERC if asked.
- 98% of Academics are familiar with NERC, 87% of these are likely to speak positively about NERC.
- 88% of Government stakeholders are familiar with NERC, 88% of these are likely to speak positively about NERC.
- 72% of Business stakeholders are familiar with NERC, 90% of these are likely to speak positively about NERC.
- 90% of stakeholders are favourable towards NERC, 33% of these are "very favourable".
- Favourability levels are highest among government and business stakeholders.
- 75% of Academic stakeholders say they "know a great deal" about NERC. 50% of government stakeholders and 25% of business stakeholders say the same.
- Stakeholders often have a good understanding of NERC's work in a particular subject or topic area.
- Stakeholders are less likely to have a good understanding of NERC's strategic objectives or the breadth of its work.
- The majority of stakeholders say that they are familiar with the vision of NERC, 33% say they are "very familiar".
- 92 % of academic stakeholders are familiar with NERC's vision.
- 45% of government and 44% of business stakeholders are unfamiliar with NERC's vision.

## **Communication and Engagement**

- 40% of stakeholders come into contact with NERC at least weekly, 66% do so at least monthly.
- 20% of Academics report that they come into contact with NERC on a daily basis, compared to just 2% of business stakeholders.
- Business stakeholders have the least frequent contact with NERC 41 % come into contact with us every 3-6 months.
- 80% of stakeholders say that contact with NERC is helpful, 40% consider contact “very helpful”.
- Academic and government stakeholders are most likely to say that their contact with NERC has been “very helpful”, with business stakeholders less likely to do so.
- The majority of stakeholder engagement with NERC is indirect. This means that NERC’s reputation is primarily defined by those whom it funds.
- There is a broad range of expectations amongst stakeholders of what engagement with NERC should be like. For example, although stakeholders report high levels of engagement with NERC this is often with NERC funded academics rather than with NERC Head Office.

## **Performance**

- NERC is seen to perform well across the majority of the areas tested. Skills, training and research grants are particular strengths.
- There is a demand for more frequent engagement and collaborative working with NERC. Particularly updates outlining current NERC projects, as well as information on its strategic direction and goals.
- Public engagement and generating evidence of the social and economic impact of its research are clear areas for improvement.
- Stakeholders have difficulties finding or being directed to the relevant specialist in a particular area within NERC.
- 22% of Academics say that we are ineffective at achieving our vision.
- Stakeholders note that often information they receive from NERC contains acronyms, jargon and scientific language which cannot be easily translated for non-specialist audiences.

## **Next steps**

- NERC will take steps to keep its stakeholders better informed on both its current projects and its strategic direction and goals. The aim is to provide targeted, easy to understand communication to all of NERC’s stakeholders.
- NERC will take a strategic and proactive approach to improve its stakeholder management via the implementation of an external affairs statement and public engagement strategy.
- NERC will aim to make it clear to its stakeholders who are responsible for each area of its remit so that stakeholders can easily find relevant specialist in a particular area within NERC.
- We commit to repeating this stakeholder research on a regular basis to monitor our impact and assess NERC’s improvement in these areas.