

Public engagement implementation plan (2020-21)

Responsibility, relevance and impact

As the UK's largest funder of independent environmental science, we have a responsibility to share the science we fund with society. Beyond communication, we want to engage and involve people with current environmental science which has relevance to all of our daily lives, and maximise the impact of the research we fund. By listening to, engaging and involving the public, we aim to fund the best environmental science relevant to society, to enable informed, evidence-based decisions to be made by all.

Strategy

The [NERC Public Engagement with Research and Innovation Strategy](#) supports the [UKRI Public Engagement Vision](#), and is guided by five objectives:

- 1. To build the capacity of our researchers to engage
- 2. To promote engaged research
- 3. To convene public debate about contemporary issues in environmental science
- 4. To inspire public audiences with environmental science
- 5. To listen to the public through public dialogue to inform NERC

Key activities

Activities will deliver for multiple objectives, and in-line with the approach and commitment outlined in the strategy. NERC's annual public engagement programme budget is £0.5m. Whilst we will strive to deliver please note these activities are subject to change.

- ■ **Engaging Environments:** continued delivery of this innovative project where researchers will collaborate with diverse communities on issues in environmental science. The [£1.3 million award](#) is NERC's largest single investment in public engagement over three years, with match funding from other NERC programmes.
- ■ **Capacity building activity:** We will fund and support activities to encourage and build capacity of NERC researchers to plan and deliver excellent public engagement for impact.
- ■ **Operation Earth:** The second phase of [Operation Earth](#) brings a series of hands-on activities, experiments, public shows and meet-the-expert sessions for children and families to diverse audiences. The project will run at UK science centres and is led by the Association for Science & Discovery Centres.
- ■ **Hay Festival Trans.MISSION:** The third pairing in this [global project sees the final group of environmental researchers collaborate with award-winning storytellers](#) to communicate cutting-edge science to new audiences, in partnership with Hay Festival.
- ■ **NERC Wales Showcase:** Showcase events have been postponed to 2021 due the coronavirus epidemic. We will work with researchers to [run public engagement activities as part of our Wales showcase](#) at Techniquet Science Centre. In addition, we will run a [call for Environmental Science Collaborative Research Projects](#) in partnership with Cardiff University for NERC researchers working in, on or with Wales.
- **Healthy environment public dialogue:** This two-phase project will listen to what diverse groups of people, as stakeholders in research, think about healthy environment research, and is co-funded by NERC and UKRI public engagement. Phase 1 is being led by dialogue specialists Ipsos Mori. Phase 2 will deliver innovative dialogue activities and events.
- ■ **Coronavirus public engagement grant:** [five independently led projects](#) to understand, address and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the environment and society.

Delivering for our approach and public engagement commitment: We will publish evaluations of our [strategy embedding engagement grants](#), [digital environment public dialogue](#), and our an assessment report considering the extent to which we are meeting our strategic plans.