NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT TEAM

Guidance Notes for Completing S&F Annual Reports – April 2013 to March 2014

1. Introduction

In the current climate of public expenditure scrutiny, it is vital that documentation is produced to show where expenditure is made and achievements resulting from it. The substantial sums that NERC spends on Services and Facilities (S&F) are no exception, and continued support must be justified by demonstrating past achievements.

It is NERC policy that each S&F should provide an Annual Report in order to demonstrate clearly to Council, Science and Innovation Strategy Board (SISB), and Service Review Group (SRG) or any successor body the value of the S&F to their science. Production of this document is essential. It is in the best interest of the S&F, and it is an effective way of promoting S&F achievements. The four-page (up to six pages for multi-nodal facilities) summary documents are collated and distributed to various Boards and Directors within NERC and its Centres and published on the NERC website, while the complete document, including the annexes, provides more detailed background for the Steering Committees, Swindon Office (SO), and NERC Centres to aid in their management function.

The Annual Reports need to be standardised in format and content, highlighting key information in a way that can easily be cross-referenced between services, so that overviews and comparisons can be made quickly and effectively.

This document sets standards and provides guidelines so that necessary information can be collated at Swindon Office with the maximum efficiency and minimum effort by all concerned. These guidelines have been refined over time as a result of changing reader/user requirements and feedback from SRG and Heads of S&F.

2. Responsibility

The Facility Head is responsible for production of the Report. Exceptionally, someone other than the Facility Head may be the most appropriate person to draft it.

3. Reporting Route

The Report is submitted with the Steering Committee's approval. Discussion of the draft report (including Annexes) by the Steering Committee is an essential step in the generation of the definitive Annual Report. This ensures that:

(i) the first four/six pages of the report properly project the rationale for the Facility; and

(ii) the mandatory Annexes can be used by the Steering Committee as an advisory and management tool.

The Chair of the SC should no longer submit a covering letter. A formal update on the progress of each facility since the last annual report may be requested by SO at any point.

The Services and Facilities Management Team will co-ordinate the collection of the annual reports.

The final version of the annual report should be emailed as a word document to:

Mrs Rosemary Keene
Services and Facilities Management Team
NERC

sfmt@nerc.ac.uk

4. Distribution

Service and Facilities Management Team will distribute the report (or derivations) as described below:

* ***The full report including all annexes will be made available to the Facility Steering Committee, Swindon Office and Centre Facility Managers.***
* Service and Facilities Management Team will collate the four/six-page templates of all the *Annual Reports* (but not annexes) into a single composite document that will be distributed to Facility Heads, Steering Committee chairs and NERC Directors, any of whom may request specific annexes of interest.
* Service and Facilities Management Team will extract some of the material from the main report and mandatory annexes for other routine reporting purposes, such as returns of performance indicators. Reports on activities and science highlights may be used in the NERC Annual Report.
* ***Any or all of the above will be made available, on request, to the Services Review Group (SRG), any successor body or any other NERC review group, for consideration.***

Collation of material and the extraction/evaluation of information for various reporting purposes is greatly simplified through adherence by each Facility to the specified format.

5. Period Covered

The Report will cover the previous financial year (April-March). The exception is the section and mandatory annex relating to publications, which covers the previous calendar year.

6. Annual Timetable

The deadline for submission of the Annual Report to NERC is 31st August. The Facility Head should be able to meet this deadline without difficulty by forward planning of an annual timetable:

i) Before the start of the period of reporting, ensure that mechanisms are in place to collect the information that will ultimately be required.

ii) During the period, refine i) above in the light of any comments received on the Facility's last Annual Report.

iii) Plan to draft the Report as soon as the final information is available towards the end of the financial year.

iv) The Report should be submitted for comment/endorsement by the Facility's Steering Committee at a suitably scheduled meeting during the period May-June (under exceptional circumstances this may be done via email subject to approval from NERC).

This requires liaison with the Chairman and Secretary of the Steering Committee and Swindon Office.

v) Service and Facilities Management Team will collate reports during September/October. S&F Heads will receive the composite document by December.

7. How to Complete the Annual Report Template

Each Report will comprise

* ***A 4-page (up to 6 pages for multi-nodal facilities) Annual Report Summary template;***
* ***Mandatory annexes including the latest version of the S&F Mission Statement;***
* ***Optional annexes as required.***

(For Recognised facilities the 4-page Annual Report Summary template is sufficient and no annexes are required)

The reports should be submitted to Service and Facilities Management Team via email as a Microsoft Word document (not as a PDF)

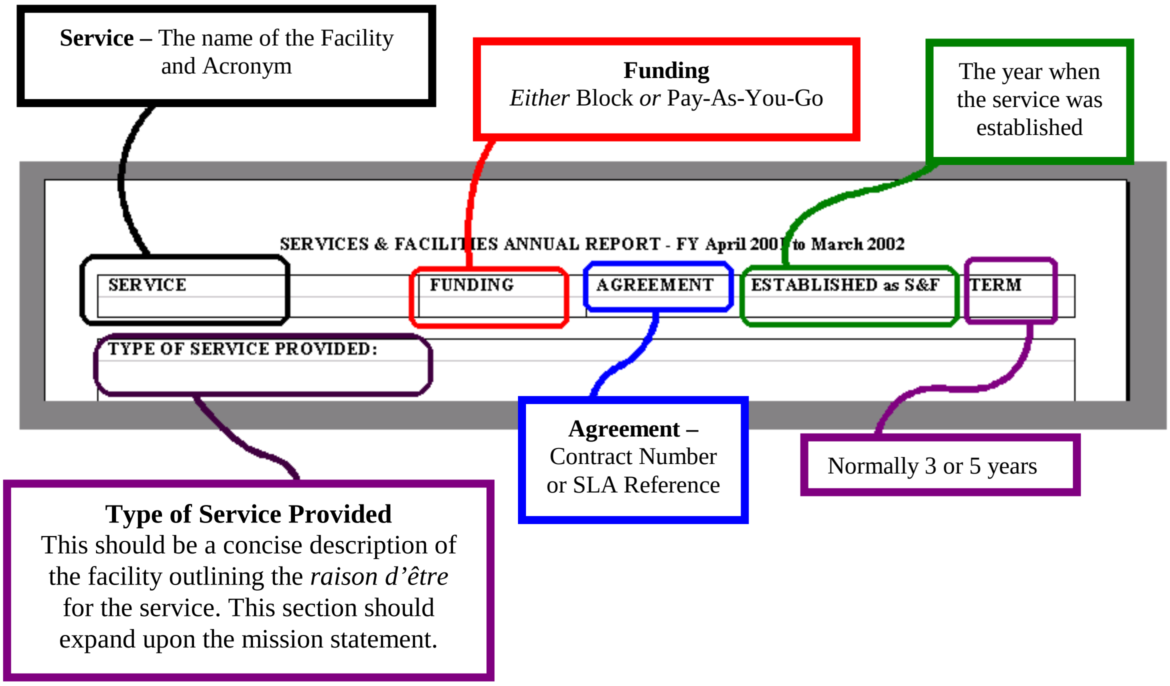
The 4-page annual report template is provided by Service and Facilities Management Team. It should contain a concise description of activities during the year, covering the volume and range of work carried out, and referring to significant achievements and progress. This 4-page template must fully capture the relevant information from the Annexes as they will not always be available to the reader once they are distributed. There should be no direct references to the Annexes within the document.

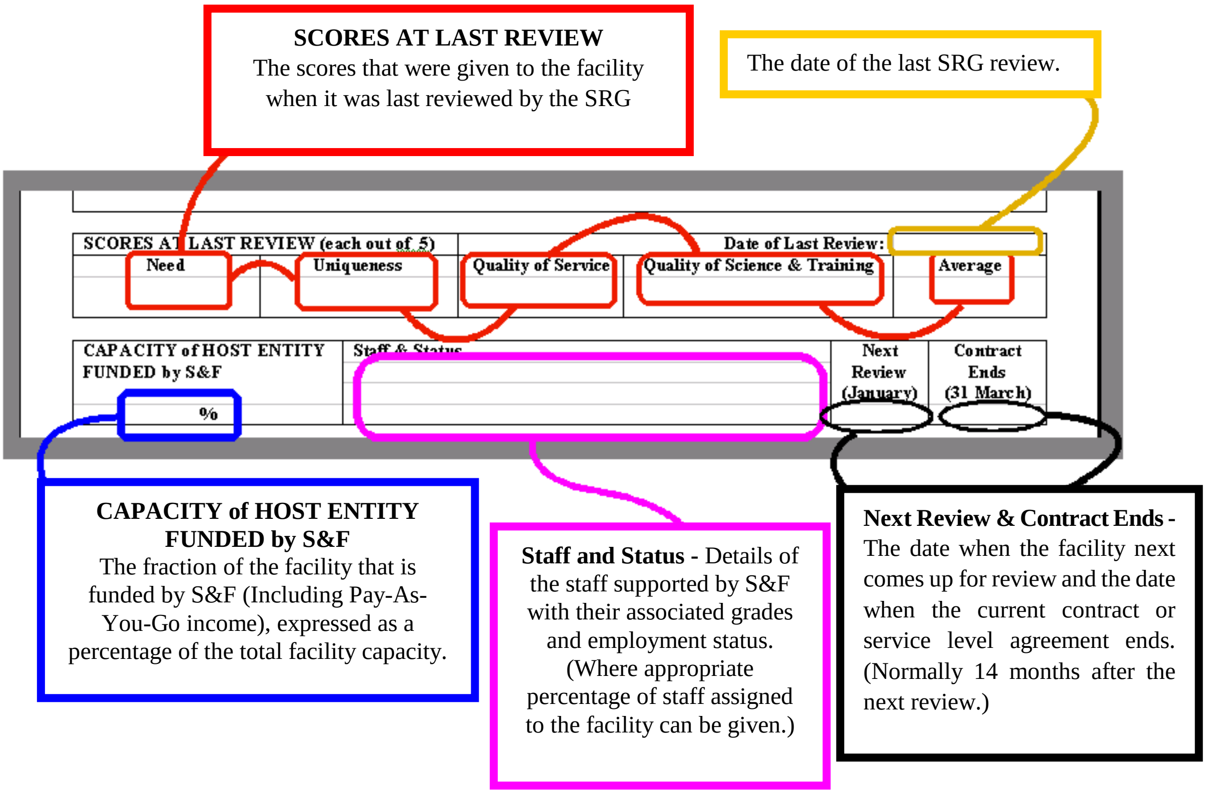
Multi-nodal facilities (i.e. LSMSF, NBAF, NIGL, NEODAAS, GEF and NRCF) are now able to submit up to six pages of the Annual Summary Report template. An additional mandatory annex detailing the metrics tables (page 2 of the template) for each node is required.

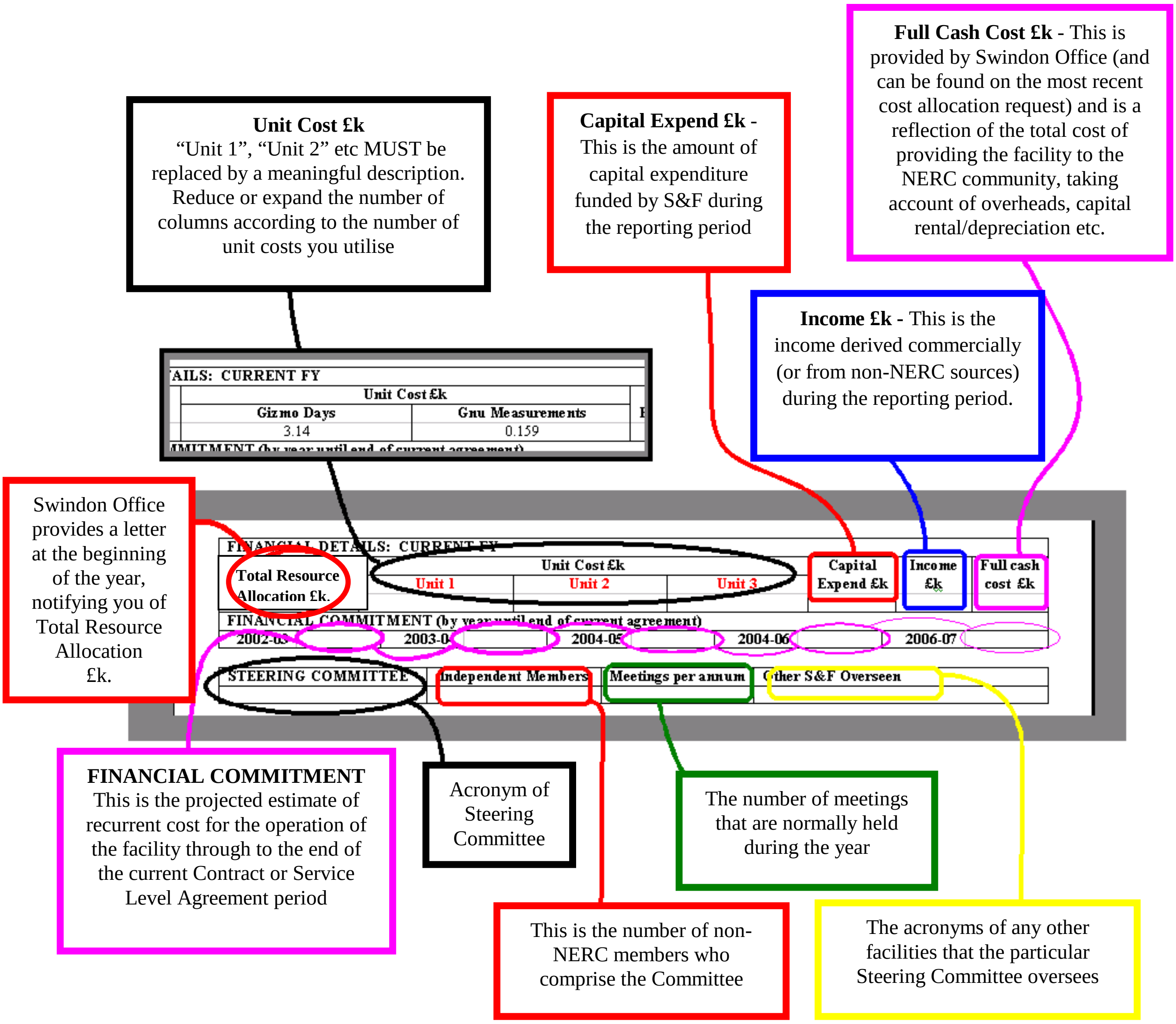
The font size for the bulk of the text must not be smaller than 10pt. Do not change the margins of the template.

7.1 The First Page of the Annual Report Template

The layout of the first two pages of the template must not be changed except for the "Unit Costs" boxes. You may change the relative size of the first two text boxes, describing the Type of Service Provided and the Annual Targets and Progress Towards Them. The latter box should be used to describe how the facility has performed against targets set for the year, giving explanations for performance. Point 7 in Appendix 1 will inform this description.






Unit Cost £k
"Unit 1", "Unit 2" etc MUST be replaced by a meaningful description. Reduce or expand the number of columns according to the number of unit costs you utilise
Capital Expend £k - This is the amount of capital expenditure funded by S&F during the reporting period
Full Cash Cost £k - This is provided by Swindon Office (and can be found on the most recent cost allocation request) and is a reflection of the total cost of providing the facility to the NERC community, taking account of overheads, capital rental/depreciation etc.
Income £k - This is the income derived commercially (or from non-NERC sources) during the reporting period.
AILS: CURRENT FY
Unit Cost £k
Gizmo Days
Gnu Measurements
3.14
0.159
Swindon Office provides a letter at the beginning of the year, notifying you of Total Resource Allocation £k.
FINANCIAL DETAILS: CURRENT FY
Total Resource Allocation £k.
Unit Cost £k
Unit 1
Unit 2
Unit 3
Capital Expend £k
Income £k
Full cash cost £k
FINANCIAL COMMITMENT (by year until end of current agreement)
2002-03
2003-04
2004-05
2004-06
2006-07
STEERING COMMITTEE
Independent Members
Meetings per annum
Other S&F Overseen
FINANCIAL COMMITMENT
This is the projected estimate of recurrent cost for the operation of the facility through to the end of the current Contract or Service Level Agreement period
Acronym of Steering Committee
The number of meetings that are normally held during the year
This is the number of non-NERC members who comprise the Committee
The acronyms of any other facilities that the particular Steering Committee oversees

7.2 The Second Page of the Annual Report Template (metrics page)

Most of the sections on the second page of the template are broken into two parts: data for the current financial year; and data for the average over the previous three years. For facilities where three years data is not available then state the years the data does cover. These numbers should be given to two decimal places.

Multi-nodal facilities should complete the second page for the facility as a whole. The metrics for each node should be included in an annex.

If your facility does not have these data, a floating text box may need to be placed over the relevant table providing the reasons and/or alternative data.

Data on this page should be presented as a whole number or part of a whole number. **DO NOT present ANY of the data as percentages.**

PROJECT APPLICATIONS: DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES

- The 2011/12 annual report was updated to reflect the change in Research Council's grading system, from the old alpha scale to a ten-point system. Since there is no read-across between the two scales, the Applications: Distribution of grades (per annum average previous 3 years) boxes have been removed. This will continue in subsequent years, until all the data can be presented using the same scale (This will be in FY2014/15).
- These tables give a breakdown of the **number of projects graded by the committee** in the current FY by their category and 10-point scoring grade.
- For facilities not able to record this information, it will be acceptable to place a floating text box on top of the table with a statement to this effect.
- NERC Grant Projects refers to both Responsive Mode and Research Programmes.

APPLICATIONS: DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES (current FY — 2013/14)

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	R*	Pilot
NERC Grant projects*													
Other academic													
Students													
TOTAL													

PROJECTS COMPLETED (current FY – 2013/14)

	10 (α5)	9	8 (α4)	7	6 (α3)	5 (α2)	4	3 (α1)	2	1 (β)	0 (Reject)	Pilot
NERC Grant projects*												
Other Academic												
Students												

PROJECTS COMPLETED

- It is hoped that completed projects over the past year will have all been graded under the 10 point scale. However, in case not, the alpha scale is combined within this section for metric purposes.
- This table shows the distribution of **projects that were completed during the year** (as

opposed to applications that were graded by the steering committee during the year).

PROJECT FUNDING AND USER TYPE

The data presented here should be the **projects that have been worked on** during the year/previous three years. Projects worked on in more than one year should be counted in all the years they have been worked on.

Project Funding Type (current FY – 2013/14) (select one category for each project)										
Grand Total	Infrastructure					PAYG				
	Supplement to NERC Grant *	PhD Students		NERC Centre	Other	NERC Grant*	PhD Students		NERC Centre	Other
		NERC	Other				NERC	Other		

Project Funding Type (per annum average previous 3 financial years - 2010/2011, 2011/2012 & 2012/2013)										
Grand Total	Infrastructure					PAYG				
	Supplement to NERC Grant *	PhD Students		NERC Centre	Other	NERC Grant*	PhD Student		NERC Centre	Other
		NERC	Other				NERC	Other		

- **Project Funding Type** - either Infrastructure (NERC block funded); and/or PAYG (Pay-As-You-Go) – very few facilities will fill both sections. Select one category per project. It is the funding stream that supports the project which is important here, not the residence of the PI. If the project is a NERC Responsive Mode or Research Programme grant then it should be counted in the 'Supplement to NERC grant' box - irrespective of the residence of the PI - they could be in a NERC Centre or an HEI. If the project is supported by NERC National Capability funding, then it should be counted in the 'NERC Centre' box. It is not expected that many projects will fall into this category anymore. NC funding is primarily through the 6 NERC Centres - however, there may be instances where NC funded projects are undertaken by our NC Delivery Partners (SAMS, PML etc.), but this does not mean that every project undertaken by a PI at one of the 6 Centres or NC Delivery partners is put into this box.
  If you are unsure of the classification of a NERC grant, you can check it in the NERC Grants on the Web database, which lists all of NERCs current and previous research programmes. If you type in the grant number, at the bottom of the return it will say under 'Scheme' whether it is Directed (Research Programme), (and it also lists which programme the award was made under) or the scheme will say e.g. Standard grant – i.e. responsive mode.

http://gotw.nerc.ac.uk/goti.asp?c=1
http://gotw.nerc.ac.uk/thematic.asp

Direct Access projects should be recorded under the 'Other' category.

- **User Type –**

User type (current FY – 2013/14) (include each person named on application form)				
Academic	NERC Centre	NERC Fellows	PhD Students	Commercial

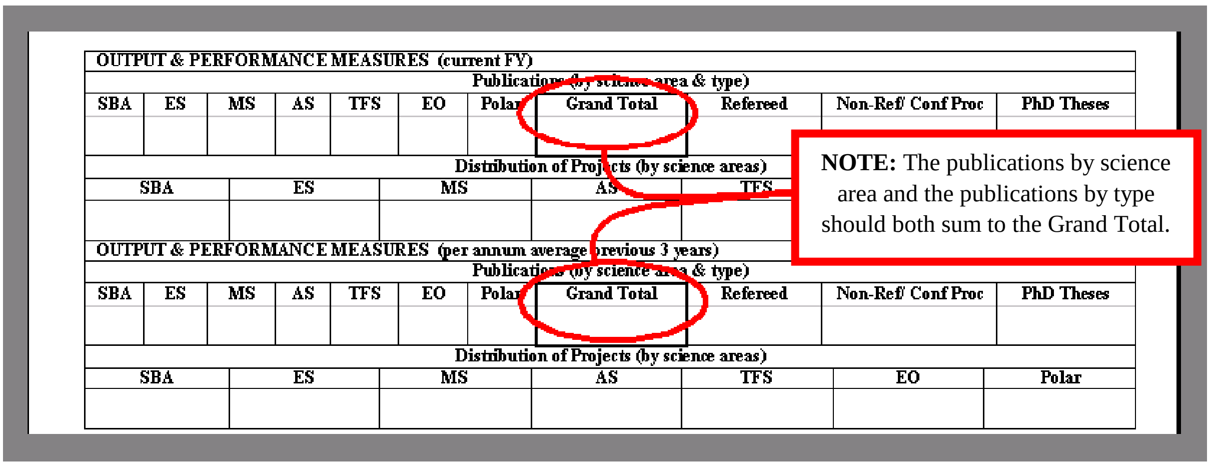
User type (per annum average previous 3 financial years - 2010/2011, 2011/2012 & 2012/2013)				
Academic	NERC Centre	NERC Fellows	PhD Students	Commercial

- number of users broken down by institute or funding mode. To avoid double counting, NERC Fellows and PhD students are not to be included in the Academic user column of this table. Include each person named on the application form. This is where the residence of the PI does matter. The 'NERC Centre' heading should purely be taken as the 6 NERC Research Centre, and not the ex-collaborative centres. **NERC Centres are**: NOC (National Oceanographic Centre – both Southampton and Liverpool, which was previously POL); BAS (British Antarctic Survey); BGS (British Geological Survey); CEH (Centre for Ecology and Hydrology); NCAS (National Centre for Atmospheric Science); NCEO (National Centre for Earth Observation).

- Note: We do not expect the sum of the user type to equal the sum of the project funding type.

OUTPUT & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Publications data is by calendar year (the rest of the metrics are by financial year)
- The Distribution of Projects data presented in this section relates to the **projects you have worked on during the year**. **Projects spanning over more than one year will therefore be counted in each year.** Data for this section is akin to the cost allocation data. Each project should be split proportionally in each science area (i.e. a project that contains elements of AS, Polar and EO should be split, for example, 0.6 AS; 0.3 Polar and 0.1 EO, so total = 1).
- For this exercise, the science areas EO, Polar and SBA are NOT sub categories of AS, ES, MS and TFS (both for Publications and Distribution of Projects data).
- Do not include in house research in the Distribution of Projects data.
- Exceptionally a facility may publish work or undertake a project outside the NERC science areas and NERC strategic Priorities (e.g. several publications from NFSD relate to medical research or safety issues which are essential to underpinning NERC scientific diving). In these cases an explanation stating how many publications/projects and why it does not fit into the NERC science areas should be provided in red text alongside the relevant heading (e.g. Publications (by science area & type) (calendar year).



OUTPUT & PERFORMANCE MEASURES (current FY)										
Publications (by science area & type)										
SBA	ES	MS	AS	TFS	EO	Polar	Grand Total	Refereed	Non-Ref/ Conf Proc	PhD Theses
Distribution of Projects (by science areas)										
SBA	ES	MS	AS	TFS						

OUTPUT & PERFORMANCE MEASURES (per annum average previous 3 years)										
Publications (by science area & type)										
SBA	ES	MS	AS	TFS	EO	Polar	Grand Total	Refereed	Non-Ref/ Conf Proc	PhD Theses
Distribution of Projects (by science areas)										
SBA	ES	MS	AS	TFS	EO	Polar				

Distribution of Projects by NERC Strategic Priority:

- The data presented here should be the **projects that have been worked on** during the year. Projects worked on in more than one year should be counted in all the years they have been worked on.

- The data requested here is for the current financial year only (we do not ask for the per annum average of the previous three years)
- Each project should be split proportionally across the relevant NERC Strategic Priorities by entering a total of 1 split across applicable strategic priorities. (i.e. a project containing elements of Biodiversity and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources should be split, for example, 0.75 Biodiversity and 0.25 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources).
- The total number of projects split by Strategic Priority should equal the total number of projects (current FY) split by science area.
- As in the previous section, exceptionally a facility may undertake a project outside the NERC science areas and NERC strategic Priorities. In these cases an explanation stating how many projects and why it does not fit into the NERC science areas should be provided in red text alongside the heading.

Additional Information on completing Page 2 (metrics page)

Please check the values in the following boxes are the same:

- 2012/13 Project Funding Type Grand total = Grand Total of 2012/13 OPM Distribution of Projects by science area = Grand Total of Distribution of Projects by NERC strategic priority
- Previous three years Project Funding Type Grand total = Grand Total of previous three years OPM Distribution of Projects by science area
- Project Funding Type Infrastructure PhD Students (NERC + other) + PAYG PhD students (NERC + other) = User type PhD Students (both for the 2012/13 and the previous three years values)

7.3 Pages 3 & 4 (and 5 & 6 for multi-nodal facilities) of the Annual Report Template

The layout of the third and fourth pages of the template is more flexible in that the first three boxes must be used, but the length of the boxes is flexible. Multi-nodal facilities are now able to extend this section of the report by 2 pages. Illustrations and colour print are encouraged.

The fourth box is optional but may be used to provide the reader with additional non-mandatory OPMs and any other information that will be useful to the readership, bearing in mind that the Annexes will not be available to all readers.

OVERVIEW & ACTIVITIES IN FINANCIAL YEAR

General overview of the Facility, outlining key activities/achievements (including reference to internal R&D, capital upgrades etc) in order to emphasise the significance of the work and the contribution being made in the relevant science field (as an extension, each S&F should endeavour, on a regular basis, to publish articles covering such highlights in Planet Earth and Planet Earth online).

SCIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

This box should contain examples of key high-quality projects undertaken by, or supported by, the Facility. In response to previous SRG comments, and the increasing need for NERC to demonstrate to BIS the value of our research, please use your science highlights to draw out the economic and societal impacts and benefits where possible. The highlights can include brief details of contributions and collaborative input by staff (staff input at the proposal stage can dramatically enhance the scope and orientation of a project). The value added to research projects through the contribution of experience and skill of S&F staff, in contrast to simple provision of analyses or services, should be documented. This would include contributions to Research Programmes and collaborative ventures with international counterparts and with industry. List, where possible, the four most impactful refereed publications arising from facility activity **published** in the FY of the report. You may include two or three short illustrated abstracts of high-impact work that might attract the interest of the NERC Annual Report and Planet Earth editors.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

This box should provide the reader with a strategic overview, outlining anticipated activities, expansion and equipment procurement etc.

NON-MANDATORY FACILITY-SPECIFIC OPMs *(Optional)*

This box may contain any information that the S&F head wants to bring to the attention of the wider readership of the collated annual reports.

7.4 Annexes to the Annual Report

In addition to the main report, several annexes will be mandatory for all services (Appendix 1). In some cases additional mandatory information may be expected; in others items may not be applicable.

Facility Heads may include further information that they consider relevant to their particular service, according to the list of Optional Annexes (Appendix 2).

Recognised Facilities are not required to provide any annexes.

APPENDIX 1: Mandatory Annexes to the Main Report:

Mandatory annexes will give details of the quality and quantity of work carried out, and a financial summary for the year. These Annexes provide the background details in support of the tabulated summaries in the main report.

1. ***Mission Statement***
2. ***Steering Committee membership and ToR***; details should include departmental affiliations and expertise.
3. ***Equipment Inventory***
4. ***Future Developments*** - details of planned upgrades/expansion and activities, equipment procurement etc.
5. ***Summary of Performance Information*** currently used to monitor the service, and details of any additional indicators to be introduced in the forthcoming year. Output and Performance Indicators should include details of the following:
   - ***a.*** Numbers of applications received during the year with title (abbreviated as necessary), applicant name and affiliation, funding source, peer review grade;
   - ***b.*** numbers of applications supported expressed as a % of 10 point-graded science (with reasons for not supporting the remainder);
   - ***c.*** supported 10 point-grade projects related to Environment and Natural Resource Issues (ENRIs) and to Science Areas.
6. ***Publication details for the calendar year*** - list of publications and PhD theses derived from Service support, including those generated by staff.
7. ***Targets & Milestones*** - details of issues such as;
   - ***a.*** instrument utilisation;
   - ***b.*** allocation of capacity and effort;
   - ***c.*** throughput;
   - ***d.*** response times and data delivery to customers;
   - ***e.*** user satisfaction (summaries of annual or post-loan survey responses, formal complaints records and actions);
   - ***f.*** scheduled maintenance, calibrations, planned contingency, down time due to external factors etc.;
   - ***g.*** summary of internal R&D output.
8. ***Finance*** - *annual* actual spend v budget, annual gross and net revenue, annual Full Cash Cost (FCC) and unit FCC costs where relevant, planned capital expenditure.
9. ***Service Management*** - Staff numbers, grades, attributable person-years per annum, development and training, staff inspections, market testing, scheduled Science Management Audits and implementation of recommendations, safety and security information.
10. ***OPMs not covered elsewhere***
11. ***Multi-nodal facilities*** should also submit the metrics page (page 2) of the Annual Report Template for each node of the facility as an additional annex.

APPENDIX 2: Optional Annexes

1. Details of science projects supported/R&D output, including Research Programmes, collaborative ventures with industry or international counterparts (where not otherwise covered)
2. Cumulative service bibliography
3. Breakdown of user categories
4. Loan profile over several years
5. Details of equipment performance/failure/repair
6. Publicity activities
7. Staff visits, conferences attended, representation on other relevant committees
8. Loan reports and customer letters, details of responses to user surveys
9. Quality assurance mechanisms (to be identified individually by Facility Heads where appropriate)