Application Pack for Non-Executive Directors

April 2020

Closing date for all applications: 6 July 2020
by 12:00pm – mid-day (GMT)

Interviews will take place: 1 and 2 October 2020

Date of first meeting: 25 November 2020
INTRODUCTION

NERC - the Natural Environment Research Council - is the driving force of investment in environmental science in the UK. NERC advances the frontier of environmental science by commissioning new research, infrastructure and training that delivers valuable scientific breakthroughs. We do this because understanding our changing planet is vital for our wellbeing and economic prosperity.

We invest public money in world-leading science, designed to help us sustain and benefit from our natural resources, predict and respond to natural hazards and understand environmental change. We work closely with policymakers and industry to make sure our knowledge can support sustainable economic growth and wellbeing in the UK and around the world.

NERC is part of UK Research & Innovation (https://www.ukri.org/), which works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. UKRI aims to maximise the contribution of each of its component parts, working individually and collectively. We work with our many partners to benefit everyone through knowledge, talent and ideas.

Operating across the whole of the UK with a combined budget of more than £7 billion, UKRI brings together the seven Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England.

We are an independent organisation principally funded through the Science Budget by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

For further information on NERC see: https://nerc.ukri.org/

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

NERC is looking to appoint two Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) to the NERC Management Board (NMB) with expertise as set out in the person specification section. As an NMB NED you will also be members of other NERC committees as required including the NERC Assurance Board.

These appointments are important for NERC. The role is a challenging one and needs strong, independent members with an appropriate range of skills and experience. The NEDs support the NERC Executive Chair in ensuring NERC achieves its objectives by bringing invaluable external insight and thinking alongside experience of the setting and management of the strategic delivery plan, decision making and the oversight of a committee or board.

As part of their role, NEDs should constructively challenge and help develop proposals on strategy. NEDs should scrutinise the performance of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance. They should satisfy themselves on the integrity of financial information and that financial controls and systems of risk management and assurance are robust and defensible. It is essential NERC is able to demonstrate sound risk and assurance management practices to safeguard UKRI.
NEDs should provide general guidance and a different perspective on matters of concern. The NERC Executive may seek their guidance on particular issues before they are raised at formal meetings. They should help to ensure that every decision made by all Directors must be in the best interests of the company.

NEDs are expected to:

- Commit to participate actively in NERC business, providing robust scrutiny and challenge and if necessary, raising concerns about the operation of NERC.
- Take on ad hoc assignments where appropriate such as chairing subgroups and task and finish groups.
- Support, advise and challenge the NERC Executive Chair and Directors
- Actively participate in the NERC’s evaluation and planning efforts.
- Provide other ad hoc advice and support to NERC in the development of performance policy and practice.
- Support and constructively challenge the executive members.
- Assess external and internal risk factors.
- Support the NERC Council and Executive Chair in the development of the NERC strategic delivery plan.
- Scrutinise the performance of management in delivering our strategic delivery plan and in meeting agreed objectives.
- Monitor the reporting of performance and be satisfied with the integrity of financial information and that financial controls and systems of risk management and assurance are robust and defensible.
- Be forward looking, with a willingness to embrace change and innovation;
- Regularly develop and refresh knowledge, skills and familiarity with the business
- Uphold high standards of integrity and probity and instil the appropriate culture, values and behaviours.
- Perform the duties faithfully, efficiently and diligently to a standard commensurate with the role and individual knowledge, skills and experience.
- Declare conflicts of interest and, subject to the Executive Chair’s judgement, withdraw from discussions where a potential conflict arises.

There is scope for any individual holding a NED role to contribute more beyond the strict confines of their remit. Within a NERC context, this may include, for instance,

- visiting NERC’s Research Centres and Swindon Office to better understand their work
- acting in an ambassadorial capacity (where appropriate) to positively raise NERC’s profile
- sharing their leadership skills and experiences with fellow members/leaders in NERC
- engaging with Council and other committee members as opportunities arise.
The Boards

The NERC Management Board has responsibility for advising, supporting and challenging the Executive Chair on NERC as a commissioner, planning and decision-making, and for the successful implementation of the NERC Delivery Plan.

The NERC Assurance Board provides assurance to the Executive Chair on operations, finances, risks and legal obligations and to provide a holistic view on assurance of all elements of NERC.

Additional duties include:
- Attendance at NERC Directors’ Update quarterly meetings.
- Attendance at NERC Council and annual Council retreat as requested.
- Ad hoc task and finish groups.

Further details of the responsibilities for NMB and NAB are provided in the Terms of Reference section.

The boards’ actions are subject to laws, regulations and the governance framework established by NERC / UKRI.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Applications are sought from individuals who possess a range of expertise and experience in research and innovation across higher education, industry and commerce, policy and/or civil society reflecting different characteristics and professional backgrounds.

Our ideal candidates will have energy, enthusiasm and time to commit to our business coupled with excellent people and communication skills and the ability to support and challenge the debate and influence fellow members.

Essential Skills

Specifically, we are seeking candidates that have one or more of the following specialisms:

- Finance and audit
- Risk and assurance
- Health and Safety
- Sustainability
- Business performance management
- Major projects

In addition, we require candidates to demonstrate the following:
- Current and relevant Non-Executive Director experience
- A commitment to NERC’s mission, role and priorities.
• A clear understanding of the contribution of the research sector to society and the economy
• Domain expertise and an ability to advise on new opportunities within the remit of the NERC.
• Evidence of providing advice at a strategic level with an ability to exercise judgment across a broad spectrum of policy and research issues.
• An ability to tackle and reach conclusions on complex policy issues.

**Desirable Skills**

• Knowledge of and strong personal interest in some areas of NERC’s remit.
• Knowledge of the decision-making process for publicly funded research and the associated strategic issues.
• Experience of public engagement with research.

**APPOINTMENTS**

Members will be appointed by the Natural Environment Research Council, on the recommendation of a selection panel.

NERC - UKRI is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all. Applications from women, those with a disability and members of minority ethnic groups, who are currently under-represented at senior levels in the research and innovation community, are therefore especially encouraged.

NERC is proud to be a user of the disability confident scheme. We guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for any of our vacancies.

Members will be appointed for a period of three years with a variable reappointment term of two or three years on mutual agreement and subject to an annual performance review.

**MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

**Availability**

Members will be expected to participate in all formal NMB meetings (approximately 6 meetings per year), four NERC Director Update meetings (quarterly), two NERC Assurance Board meetings per year and other meetings by mutual agreement.

For meetings to be quorate there must be at least half the Board members in attendance in person (plus one) or via teleconference.

**Location**

Meeting will be held in various UK locations.
HONORARIUM

An annual honorarium payment of £9,000 will be paid to Board members, where eligible. This is premised on an expected 20 days contribution per year (meetings and preparatory time).

HOW TO APPLY AND HOW NEDs WILL BE SELECTED

To apply, candidates should submit a brief CV and covering letter (limited to two sides) to Laura Carney by 12:00pm (mid-day GMT) on 6 July 2020. The covering letter is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate how they meet the person specification. Candidates are also requested to complete the additional forms and submit these with their application. If you have any questions about the recruitment process or would like to speak to an existing NED, please also contact Laura Carney.

Once the deadline has passed, all applications (covering letter and CV) will be acknowledged and then passed to the selection panel (see below) to review the applications against the person specification. The panel will agree which applicants will be selected for interview. Further particulars will be provided to candidates selected for interview.

At the final appointment stages, where applicants are equally qualified on merit, the selection panel will seek to achieve a balanced membership in terms of, for example, diversity, expertise and experience.

The selection panel for the appointments will comprise:

- The NERC Executive Chair, Professor Sir Duncan Wingham (panel chair)
- A member of NERC Council
- Member independent from NERC.

Indicative timescale for selection and appointments is in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role advertised</td>
<td>w/b 20 April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for applications</td>
<td>6 July 2020 by 12:00pm (mid-day GMT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortlisting decisions</td>
<td>August/September 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>1 and 2 October 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointments confirmed</td>
<td>October 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First NMB meeting</td>
<td>25 November 2020</td>
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Data Protection Policy

Before starting your application and providing your personal details, please read our Privacy Notice which contains full details of how your information is processed once you have made an application.
### Applicant Details

The following pages will not be shown to the panel.

#### Preferred Contact Details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Initial(S)</th>
<th>Title</th>
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**Address for Correspondence**

**Contact Telephone Number(s)**
- Day -
- Evening -
- Mobile -

**Email Address**

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#### Data Protection Consent

The Data Protection Act requires that those providing monitoring information must give their consent to it being used, even though the individuals are not identified. Please tick and sign the boxes below to show that you give your consent for information you provide to be used, anonymised, for publication of monitoring data.

- [ ] I provide my consent: Yes / No [please tick as appropriate]

Signature of applicant:

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Please advise where you heard about this vacancy
Potential or Actual Conflicts of Interest

Please give details of any business or other interests or any personal connections which, if you are appointed, could present a conflict of interest holding this role. These could include financial interests or share ownership, membership of societies, activities, associations or employment of a partner or friend in the particular field in which the public body operates.

Any potential or actual conflicts of interest detailed here will not prevent you going forward to interview but may, if appropriate, be explored with you during your interview to establish how you would address the issue(s) should you be successful in your application. If you have no interests that might be actual or perceived conflicts of interest, please write “none”.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Policy
The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council is committed to promoting diversity and equal opportunities. Our intention is to reflect not only the letter but also the spirit of diversity and equal opportunities legislation and we oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Our aim is to have a diverse and well-motivated workforce where all colleagues are treated fairly. The same principles apply to Council membership.

Monitoring
You are asked to provide the information below because the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council will monitor equality information for people who apply for roles and people who are appointed in roles (through additional monitoring) to ensure that policies and practices are fair and do not discriminate. The information will be treated as strictly confidential and used, in an anonymous way, for statistical purposes only.

Please complete all sections of this form.

Ethnicity: What is your ethnic origin?

Asian / Asian British
- □ Indian
- □ Pakistani
- □ Bangladeshi
- □ Chinese
- □ Any other Asian Background (write in):

Mixed / multiple ethnic groups
- □ White and Black Caribbean
- □ White and Black African
- □ White and Asian
- □ Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background (write in):

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
- □ African
- □ Caribbean
- □ Any other Black/African/Caribbean background (write in):

White
- □ British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish
- □ Irish
- □ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- □ Any other White background (write in):

Other Ethnic Background
- □ Arab
- □ Any other ethnic group (write in):

Gender
I am:
- □ Male
- □ Female
- □ Prefer not to say

Is your gender identity the same gender you were assigned at birth?
- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ Prefer not to say
Age
What is your date of birth?
Date/month/year  ☐ Prefer not to say

Religion or belief
What is your religion?
☐ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
☐ Buddhist
☐ Hindu
☐ Jewish
☐ Muslim
☐ Spiritual

☐ No religion
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Any other religion or belief (write in)

Sexual orientation
What is your sexual orientation?
☐ Asexual
☐ Bi/bisexual
☐ Gay man
☐ Gay woman / lesbian
☐ Heterosexual / straight
☐ Queer
☐ Other
☐ Prefer not to say

Disability
Do you have an impairment, health condition or learning difference?
☐ Yes*  ☐ Unsure
☐ No  ☐ Prefer not to say

Please note the Equality Act considers a person disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment or disability that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

*If you wish to discuss any reasonable adjustment(s) you may require, please respond to the relevant contact.

This form has been based on the latest guidance and recommendations provided by the Equality Challenge Unit (http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/using-data-and-evidence/monitoring-questions/).

Thank you for completing this form
Check List

Please tick items below to make sure you have included/completed the following documents when sending:

1. A covering letter (2 sides max)  
2. A CV (3 sides max)  
3. Preferred contact details  
4. Data Protection Consent  
5. Potential or Actual Conflicts of Interest  
6. Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Please send all completed applications, stating clearly which appointment(s) you wish to apply for, to:

By email: SwindonGDSAdmin@nerc.ac.uk  
Attention of Laura Carney

By post:
Attention of: Laura Carney
Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon, SN2 1EU

Due to the circumstances we would prefer electronic applications, but if this is not possible please send your application in the post to the address above.
The Seven Principles of Public Life

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.

Consistent with the Commissioner’s Code of Practice, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates for public appointment will need to uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life. These will be tested as part of the selection process and the selection Panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointments can meet these standards; which are:

**Selflessness**
Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

**Integrity**
Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity**
Carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability**
Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness**
Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty**
Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership**
Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
Terms of Reference for the NERC Management Board

Purpose
The NMB, within the strategic direction and guidance of Council has responsibility for advising, supporting and challenging the Executive Chair on NERC as a commissioner planning and decision-making, and for the successful implementation of the delivery plan and Head Office Plan.

Scope
The NMB scope covers the following areas:
- directing the development and implementation of Council’s strategies, policies and decisions
- overall corporate management
- effective financial management
- capital decisions and spend
- centre allocations (within an NC commissioning framework)
- resource decisions not taken elsewhere, e.g. by the Science Committee.
- developing and maintaining corporate information systems
- ensuring that NERC is managed according to the required standards of accountability, regularity and propriety, achieving high standards of efficiency, effectiveness, economy and health and safety, see further details on health and safety below
- NERC as a commissioner of research issues
- Cross UKRI issues
- cross-centre issues with relevance to more than one centre.

Membership and ways of working
The NMB is comprised of the following:
- The NMB will be chaired by the NERC Executive Chair
- Membership of NMB will comprise of:
  - NERC Executive Chair
  - NERC Chief Operations Officer (COO)
  - Director, Research and Skills
  - Director, Strategic Partnerships
  - Director, Corporate Affairs
  - Director, Major Programmes
  - Three NERC non-executive directors

The NMB operates in the following ways:
- NMB meetings will be held on a bi-monthly basis (not including August).
- Individual centre directors will be invited as necessary.
- A minimum of four members of the NMB will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate.
- Conflicts of interest will be declared, according to NERC practice, although the nature of NMB business is unlikely to require members to leave the room.
- NMB will formally report to the NERC Executive Chair and will provide regular reports to NERC Council as necessary.
- NMB may ask any other officials of the organisations to attend to assist it with its discussions on any particular matter.
- The National Capability Partners Forum (NCPF) will provide reports to NMB as required.
- The NMB will be subject to performance reviews and an effectiveness review on a regular basis.
- The NMB will be supported by a Secretariat.

Health and Safety
NERC will have to consider how well NERC and centres as a whole are managing health and safety with the topic as a standing item on their agenda and will also receive the NERC Health and Safety Annual Report.

Transparency
In line with NERC’s approach to corporate responsibility, the agenda and a summary of the meeting will be published on the NERC website.
Terms of Reference for the NERC Assurance Board

Purpose
The purpose of the NERC Assurance Board (NAB) is to provide assurance and challenge to the Executive Chair that NERC:

- is not exposed to unacceptable or unknown risk
- is operating in line with its legal obligations
- is operating in line with obligations which flow from Managing Public Money
- is operating within its delegated powers
- is financially stable - able to meet its obligations over time, within the resources available, or likely to be available
- has in place proper processes of allocation and evaluation for all funding streams
- has a satisfactory internal control framework
- is able to provide meet any other assurance requirements of either the Executive Chair or UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) / Business Energy & Industrial Strategy.

It will also provide UKRI and the UKRI Audit, Risk, Assurance & Performance Committee (ARAPC) with assurance that NERC has robust assurance processes and procedures that they can rely on, whilst not replicating the responsibilities of ARAPC.

Scope
Given the purpose, the scope covers the entire remit of NERC activities.

The board will receive feedback from and place reliance on the workings of a Centre Assurance Board in respect of each research centre, enabling its primary focus to be on head office.

Its detailed scope will include review and challenge of:

- the Transformation Programme
- NERC stewardship returns to UKRI
- head office centre activity & resource plans (Programme Resource, OpEx and Capital)
- NERC’s top risk register and risk management arrangements
- NERC’s annual statement of research integrity
- quarterly health & safety reporting to UKRI
- UKRI internal audit reports specifically relating to NERC
- UKRI funding assurance reports in relation to NERC research centres
- NERC’s capital project delivery assurance returns to UKRI
- NERC’s staff survey and people action plan.

Membership and ways of working
- The NAB will be chaired by the NERC Council Senior Independent Member (SIM)
- Membership will comprise of the Chair and NERC’s Non-Executive Directors
- The NERC Executive Chair and the NERC corporate directors will attend. Additional NERC officers will be invited to attend as required.
- NAB meetings will be held bi-annually either before or after a NERC Management Board meeting, and will take place after the Centre Assurance Boards, but prior to the mid-term and annual stewardship return.
- A minimum of two members will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate.
- Conflicts of interest will be declared, according to NERC practice, although the nature of NAB business is unlikely to require members to leave the room.
- NAB will report via the NERC Executive Chair to NERC Council.
- NAB will be subject to an effectiveness review on a regular basis.
- NAB will be supported by a secretariat.
- The NAB Chair will be responsible for agreeing the agendas and minutes of the meeting.