NERC DATA POLICY

NERC has a policy on data in order to:

(a)   Ensure the continuing availability of environmental data of long-term value for research, teaching, and for wider exploitation for the public good, by individuals, government, business and other organisations;

(b)   Support the integrity, transparency and openness of the research it supports;

(c)   Help in the formal publication of data sets, as well as enabling the tracking of their usage through citation and data licences;

(d)   Meet relevant legislation and Government guidance on the management and distribution of environmental information.

NERC defines *Environmental Data* as individual items or records (both digital and analogue) usually obtained by measurement, observation or modelling of the natural world and the impact of humans upon it. This includes data generated through complex systems, such as information retrieval algorithms, data assimilation techniques and the application of models.

This policy covers Environmental Data acquired, assembled or created through research, survey and monitoring activities that are either fully or partially funded by NERC. It also applies to Environmental Data managed by NERC where NERC was not the original funder. This policy does not cover NERC's *Information Products* (see Note 1).

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it keeps pace with scientific requirements and data management best practice.

Key Principles

The environmental data produced by the activities funded by NERC are considered a public good and they will be made openly available for others to use. NERC is committed to supporting long-term environmental data management to enable continuing access to these data.

NERC will supply the environmental data it holds for free, apart from a few special cases as detailed in the policy.
NERC requires that all environmental data of long-term value generated through NERC-funded activities must be submitted to NERC for long-term management and dissemination.

Access to Data

It is NERC's Policy that:

1.   All the environmental data held by the NERC Environmental Data Centres will normally be made openly available to any person or any organisation who requests them;

2.   The only restrictions on access which we will apply are those supported by the exceptions on disclosure in the Environmental Information Regulations (2004). If it is proposed to restrict access to any data we will explain why;

3.   To protect the research process NERC will allow those who undertake NERC-funded work a period to work exclusively on, and publish the results of, the data they have collected. This period will normally be a maximum of two years from the end of data collection;

4.   All data held by the NERC Environmental Data Centres will be supplied for free except for large or complex requests where we may charge the cost of supply, or where third-party licence conditions either prevent such free supply, or require us to make specific charges;

5.   All environmental data made available by the NERC Environmental Data Centres will be accompanied by a data licence. Data originally provided to NERC by a third-party may have their own access and licence conditions which restrict how or when we can make data available to others, in which case our data licence conditions will reflect these;

6.   All those who use data provided by NERC are required to acknowledge the source of the data.

NERC's Environmental Data Centres

Successful long-term data management requires both specialist data curation skills and an understanding of the science behind the data. NERC achieves this by supporting environmental data centres and co- locating

these within its research and collaborative centres to take advantage of the scientific expertise they possess.

It is NERC's policy that:

7.   NERC will maintain Environmental Data Centres for the management and dissemination of environmental data of long-term value generated through NERC funding or deposited by third-parties;

8.   The data centres will act impartially towards all data producers, regardless of whether they are based within or outside of NERC. The environmental data within the data centres will be open to all on the same basis;

9.   Working with the environmental science community NERC will maintain criteria to identify environmental data of long-term value (a Data Value Checklist). These criteria will be used to inform all decisions that NERC makes on the acceptance and disposal of data by its data centres;

10.   Information on all data held within the data centres will be made available through the NERC Data Catalogue Service.

Data Collection

NERC expects everyone that it funds to manage the data they produce in an effective manner for the lifetime of their project, and for these data to be made available for others to use with as few restrictions as possible, and in a timely manner.

It is NERC's policy that:

11.   All applications for NERC funding must include an outline Data Management Plan, which must identify which of the data sets being produced are considered to be of long-term value, based on the criteria in NERC's Data Value Checklist. The funding application must also identify all resources needed to implement the Data Management Plan;

12.   The outline data management plan will be evaluated as part of the standard NERC grant assessment process. All successful applications will be required to produce a detailed data management plan in conjunction with the appropriate NERC Data Centre;

13.   All NERC-funded projects must work with the appropriate NERC Data Centre to implement the data management plan, ensuring that data of

long-term value are submitted to the data centre in an agreed format and accompanied by all necessary metadata;

14.   Data from NERC-funded activities are provided to the data centres on a non-exclusive basis without prejudice to any intellectual property rights. This is to enable NERC to manage and make openly available publicly funded research data. NERC expects that Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) assigned to data generated by NERC funding will be issued by a NERC Data Centre;

15.   Those funded by NERC who do not meet these requirements risk having award payments withheld or becoming ineligible for future funding from NERC.

Open access to data underpinning research publications

NERC considers that long-term, open access to the data that underpin research publications will help to ensure the integrity, transparency and robustness of the research record. Access to these data supports the fundamental scientific requirement of allowing others to confirm or challenge research results.

It is NERC's policy that:

16.   All research publications arising from NERC funding must include a statement on how the supporting data and any other relevant research materials can be accessed;

17.   For all research publications produced by NERC's own staff, the supporting data will be made available through the NERC Data Centres.

Note 1: In line with UK Government Policy NERC distinguishes between *Data* and *Information Products*. NERC defines *Environmental Data* as individual items or records (both digital and analogue) usually obtained by measurement, observation or modelling of the natural world and human impacts upon it, including all necessary calibration and quality control. This includes data generated through complex systems, such as information retrieval algorithms, data assimilation techniques and the application of models. Whereas, *Information Products* are created by adding a level of intellectual input that refines or adds value to data through interpretation and/or combination with other data.