UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH)

UKCEH is a not-for-profit, independent research centre with charitable status. We have over 50 years’ experience of monitoring and modelling environmental change and generating evidence-driven solutions to complex environmental challenges. With an annual budget of ca. £50m and over 500 staff, we work to understand the environment, how it sustains life, and the human impact on it so that together, people and nature can prosper.

Scientific curiosity, integrity and transparency are at the heart of how we work. Our research extends from molecular biology to global climate modelling, and we carry out fieldwork across the world, from the semi-arid West African Sahel to the rainforests of South East Asia. Operating from four UK locations, UKCEH employs 400 scientists with a focus on mitigating and building resilience to climate change, preventing and reducing pollution, and creating sustainable ecosystems. We provide the data and insights that governments, businesses and researchers need to create a productive, resilient and healthy environment.

Our values are Excellence, Integrity and Teamwork.
Our story

Who we are
We are the UK’s centre for excellence in environmental sciences across water, land and air.

Our ambition
We seek to understand our environment, how it sustains life, and the human impact on it – so that together, people and nature can prosper.

What we do
We generate the data and insights that researchers, businesses and governments need to solve complex environmental challenges.

How we do it
We believe that the best solutions are co-designed and co-delivered, so our strategic partnerships cross borders, sectors and disciplines.

Our ethos
Scientific curiosity, integrity and transparency are at the heart of how we work.

Our history
We have a long history of investigating, monitoring and modelling environmental change.

Our impact
Our science makes a difference – advancing our knowledge and understanding to benefit people and the planet.

For example:
• Our species monitoring and modelling informs UK, European and global policies on biodiversity, and helps to predict and prevent the spread of invasive species.
• Through our air pollution work, we assist policymakers and environmental agencies around the world to develop clean air strategies.
• Our water resources monitoring and modelling enables governments, businesses and communities around the world to plan for the future.
• Our research into hydro-climate risks improves forecasting of, and resilience to, extreme weather events, floods and droughts.
• Our soils and land use science helps prevent and reverse land degradation and informs international standards for greenhouse gas inventories.
• Our agricultural field studies help farmers optimise food production while protecting pollinators.
Background

Building on our growing success, we are now looking for an exceptional individual to lead the further development of the quality and impact of UKCEH science - and to ensure we further our position as one of the world’s leading research organisations. As Science Director you will be responsible for a unique combination of leading-edge facilities, infrastructure and internationally recognised science leaders. This is a challenging and rewarding role for an ambitious and visionary individual who will be central to the advancement of UKCEH and the impact of its science over this critical decade for the environment.
Role

This is an exciting opportunity to lead the research direction of UKCEH and oversee the delivery of our science portfolio. Our income for 2020 was £50m, of which 40% was the funding provided by NERC for our National Capability Programme. As Science Director you will be responsible for implementing UKCEH Strategy 2025: Research and Innovation and the development of our long-term research plans, as well as developing partnerships and strategic opportunities for income, capital and skills investment with the members of the Science Board.

Candidates will have an international reputation for leadership, innovation and excellence in the environmental sciences. A strong grasp of informatics and complex systems analysis would be an asset. We are looking for individuals with experience of defining, developing and implementing a research strategy. You should also bring a successful record of running large and complex research programmes, including a robust and assured approach to resource and budget planning and management. As a member of the Executive and Science Boards, your leadership repertoire must include high personal impact, exceptional communication and collaboration skills, a proven ability to build and maintain professional networks of influence across government, university, commercial and community partners. This includes a credible approach to working with funders and peers within and beyond the science community.

Diversity of perspectives, background and insight are invaluable in our work, and we would particularly like to hear from candidates whose professional and personal profiles will bring new understanding and ideas to UKCEH.
Specific responsibilities:

- Member of the UKCEH Executive Board, chaired by the UKCEH Executive Director
- Chair of the UKCEH Science Board and line management of its members, all of whom are senior scientists and specialists in their fields
- Report to the Executive Director and provide appropriate science representation at Executive Board
- Lead the implementation of the 2025 UKCEH Science Strategy, collaborating with the Science Board
- Provide focus on strategic changes and integration, ensuring cross-cutting science needs are addressed
- Provide direction and collaborative leadership to bring together the six Science Area plans into an overall coherent UKCEH science delivery and science business plan
- Oversee all national capability (NC) new commissioning, current activity and reporting, chairing NC Programme Boards and represent UKCEH on the National Capability Partners’ Forum (4x per annum)
- Identify and develop strategic opportunities for income, capital and skills investment with the Science Board, ensuring appropriate resources to realise Science Area plans and delivery
- Seek and promote diversification of external income sources
- Ensure appropriate and effective staff resources within and across the Science Areas and coordinate skills planning
- Lead annual review of (3-5 yr.) Science Area science and business plans for discussion and approval at Science and Executive Boards
- Chair UKCEH individual merit promotion panels
- Ensure effective communication and links at all levels and between all staff

Skills required:

- Internationally recognised for excellence and leadership in the environmental sciences
- A visionary scientist able to define, develop and communicate current and future research strategy
- Ability to deliver cutting-edge research and experience in leading large and complex research programmes
- Proven ability in resource and budget planning and management
- Demonstrable personal impact and a successful record of working in a multidisciplinary science organisation at a strategic level
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills including the ability to work collaboratively to engender innovative ideas and outputs and to successfully impart these to stakeholders/funders and the wider community
- Evidence of involvement and development of strong networks across government, university, commercial and community partners and funding agencies, nationally and internationally
- Ability to interface, influence and negotiate with stakeholders including senior members of the science community and leaders in government and business
- Able to demonstrate a commitment to promote and adhere to UKCEH values of excellence, integrity and teamwork
Terms and conditions

In this position as Science Director UKCEH you will be directly supported by professional scientific and infrastructure teams. As well as the ability to work at director level, it is anticipated that you will have your own expertise and research interests.

The headquarters of UKCEH is located in Wallingford, Oxfordshire which is the main place of work for the other Directors. The appointee will have to travel as required to undertake their duties. UKCEH operate a flexible working policy across all our four sites. Further information about UKCEH can be found at https://www.ceh.ac.uk.

An excellent remuneration package, reflecting the seniority of this role, will be available for the successful candidate.
How to Apply:

Candidates should apply for this role through our retained advisors Networked at -
https://www.networkedpeople.com/ukceh-science-director/

The deadline for receipt of applications is midnight on Monday 11th October 2021.

Please send applications to ukceh@networkedpeople.com. Applications must include a full CV and a letter of application setting out your interest in the role and details of how your knowledge, skills and experience match the essential criteria being sought (no more than two pages of A4).

Informal questions regarding the post should be directed to Hamish Laing at Networked via - hamish.laing@networkedpeople.com or +44 (0)7861 329463.