



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol**
Cymru
**Natural
Resources**
Wales

Good Evidence

Our Evidence Management Strategy and
Delivery Plan 2014-2017

July 2014



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OUR VISION

Natural Resources Wales is an evidence based organisation. We seek to ensure that our strategy, decisions, operations and advice to Government and others are underpinned by sound and quality-assured evidence. We recognise that it is critically important to have a good understanding of our changing environment.

We will secure this vision by:

- Maintaining and developing the technical specialist skills of our staff;
- Securing our data and information;
- Having a proactive programme of evidence work developed in collaboration with others;
- Continuing to review and add to our evidence to ensure it is fit for the challenges facing us; and
- Communicating our evidence in an open and transparent way.

INTRODUCTION

Natural Resource Wales is an evidence based organisation because we have to be. Evidence is considered fundamental to our purpose to ensure that the environment and natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, sustainably enhanced and sustainably used, now and in the future. We need to make sure our decisions, operations and advice to Government and others are underpinned by high quality evidence. We recognise that it is critically important to have a good understanding of our changing environment and the pressures it faces.

We are a new organisation and one of our strengths is the integration of biological, physical, chemical and socio-economic skills and data, and using this evidence base to support the delivery of corporate outcomes. At the same time we will maintain the ability to benefit from the outputs of the evidence programmes of our legacy bodies, partner agencies and partners. We anticipate that we will continue to contribute at a European and international level, through working with partners, such as the European Commission and European Environment Agency. We want to develop a closer working relationship with the Welsh and UK Government on evidence issues and priorities, and to influence national and international research programmes. For policy priorities we are seeking co-ownership, co-design and co-funding of evidence together with Government. We are committed to the development of our required evidence base in partnership with a wide range of organisations and institutes, including the academic community and third sector.

All the staff in Natural Resources Wales need evidence to do their jobs and deliver corporate objectives. We are continually reviewing evidence needs, formulating the right questions and synthesising the evidence to deliver the required answers. This strategy has been developed in consultation with staff across the directorates and departments, and members of the Leadership team and our Board.

The aims of this document are to:

- Define our evidence remit;
- Explain why we need an evidence strategy;
- Set out our principles and objectives;
- Define target deliverables to evaluate implementation; and
- Describe our evidence governance.

What is Evidence?

For the purposes of this strategy we propose the adoption of the following definition: Evidence is fit-for-purpose information used to support decisions in developing, implementing and evaluating policy, operations and services.

“Evidence” can be used as a general term for expert opinion or advice, data, methodology, results from data analysis, and collations and interpretation of scientific¹ information. This is compatible with approaches adopted by government and partner agencies, such as the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Environment Agency.

This definition allows us to make a distinction from the following closely related concepts which can be considered part of our evidence – knowledge, information and data.

Knowledge is what is known by a person or persons; it involves interpreting information received, adding experience and context to clarify the insights the information contains.

Information is produced through processing, manipulating and organising data to answer questions.

Data is numbers, words or images that have yet to be organised or analysed to answer a specific question.

Where Does Our Evidence Come From?

Natural Resources Wales draws on evidence from a variety of sources and undertakes and commissions work for specific operational and advisory requirements. We also seek to share and collaborate on the evidence work delivered by other organisations.

Natural Resources Wales has inherited an extensive evidence base from its legacy bodies and benefits from links with the UK Government network.

- The first part of this evidence base focuses on the ecology and management of terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species, and the pressures they face in Wales and the social and economic benefits they offer.
- We also work in collaboration on common evidence needs with Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, and share relevant information, publications and reports.
- The forestry evidence base ranges from the aggregation of daily site visits, site diaries and measurements, to national surveys and research projects related to timber economics and habitat condition, as well as social research looking at work with communities and learning opportunities, and enterprise. We have an essential link with FC GB's Forest Research Agency which acts as Britain's principal organisation for forestry and tree related research. This research is broad spectrum and encompasses social, economic and environmental work.
- We hold large amounts of data and information related to our core activity areas including, flooding, compliance, enforcement, permitting, environmental crime, and pollution incidents. Many of these datasets are collected by operational staff taking samples, carrying out surveys and visiting sites to monitor compliance and provide

¹ “Scientific” encompasses five analytical subjects – science and engineering, economics, statistics, social science and operational research.

regulation. Also there are automated data collection methods such as telemetry gauges that monitor river flows and levels. Additionally, we receive self-monitoring data from some customers. Service level agreements for access to data shared with the Environment Agency have been secured on a transitional basis for a period of several years.

Natural Resources Wales will continue to work in collaboration with Welsh Government, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and its delivery network of agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to ensure our evidence programmes are closely coordinated and complementary. We believe our approach is fully compatible with the direction and priorities identified by Defra and its network in their current strategy².

Our evidence is also drawn from an additional variety of sources, such as the scientific literature, and reports and data produced by universities, research institutes, commercial companies, voluntary groups, charities and individuals. We work in collaboration with a range of academic institutes and research organisations. Together we have developed strategic components of our evidence base, such as seabed maps, state of the environment reports and environmental models. We are also dependent on the knowledge and practical experience of our staff and partners. We also benefit from extensive collaborative programmes such as the Joint Defra research programmes in water quality and flood risk management.

It is important to acknowledge that our evidence base will require continuous up-dating as our understanding of environmental issues develops over time. We recognise that much evidence is already available and needs to be synthesised by us. Equally, long-term datasets are considered crucial, especially in the context of climate change, and they will require long-term support, often as part of UK or international networks. In addition the quantity and quality of the evidence is very variable across the requirements of our wide environmental remit. We face particular challenges around the application of *The Ecosystem Approach*, ecosystem services and natural capital, state of the environment reporting, plant and animal disease, and human health and well-being.

Natural Resources Wales is developing a proactive programme of evidence acquisition to address the full range of our operational and advisory priorities and needs. In general, we operate on the basis that we produce, buy or share our evidence.

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/318610/evidence-strategy-defra.pdf

WHY DO WE NEED AN EVIDENCE STRATEGY?

Natural Resources Wales needs to ensure that our strategy, decisions, operations and advice to Welsh Government and others are underpinned by sound and quality-assured evidence. We recognise that it is critically important to have a good understanding of our changing environment and future challenges, especially protecting ecosystems and their services and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

We need evidence to underpin a wide range of current and future statutory obligations. These drivers include:

- Statutory Environmental Reporting e.g. EC Habitats and Species Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive; Water Framework Directive;
- Wildlife and Countryside Act; and
- Waste and water resource legislation.

Natural Resources Wales also needs evidence is to underpin critical operations and environmental management decisions including:

- Flood risk management;
- Natural resource management;
- Pollution identification and control;
- Environmental impact assessment;
- Catchment management;
- Biodiversity and geodiversity conservation;
- Landscape conservation;
- Plant and animal disease;
- Invasive species control;
- Spatial Planning;
- Energy and food security; and
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Our advisory role is supported by evidence related to the use of the Welsh environment: including:

- Forestry;
- Water resources;
- Marine and freshwater fisheries;
- Agriculture; and
- Access and recreation.

Our Corporate Plan

Evidence is at the heart of the Natural Resources Wales Corporate Plan and underpins outcomes and indicators. In particular, it is a prominent component of our Good Knowledge outcome but it is also needed to support the delivery of outcomes on Good

Environment, Good People, Good for Business and Good Organisation. The relevant sections of our Corporate Plan have been incorporated into the development of the target deliverables below.

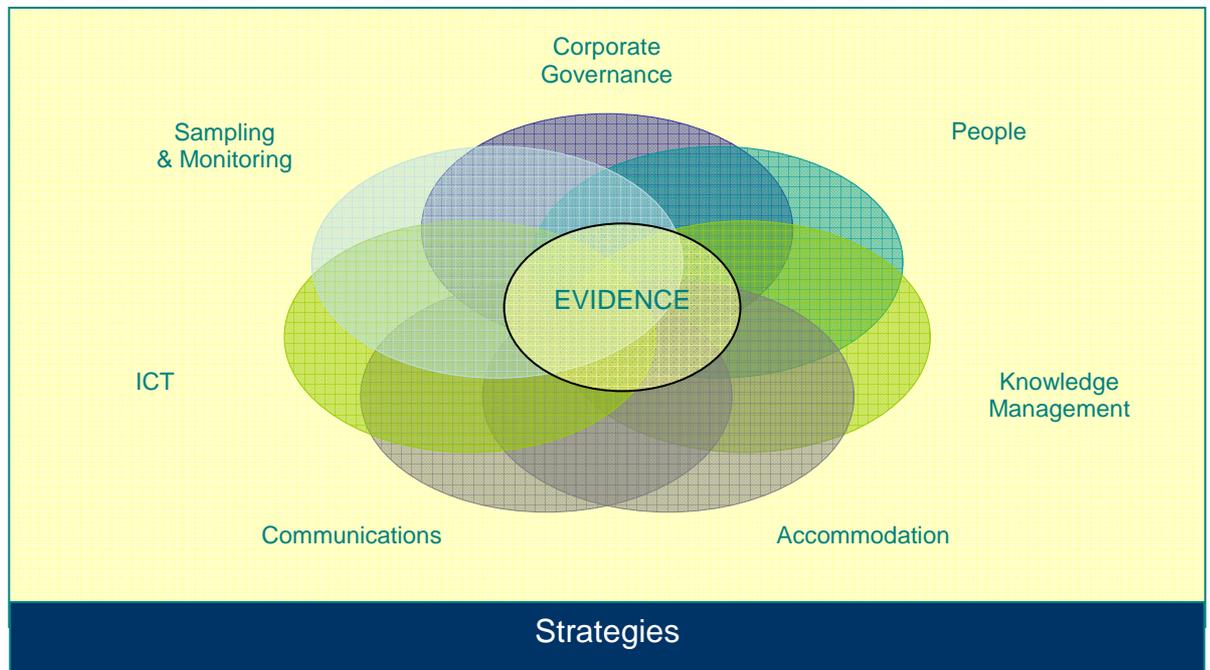
Our Business Plan

Our business plan reflects the priorities, outcomes and indicators in our corporate plan. In this context we make the following evidence related commitments:

- Work with Welsh Government and others to map "trusted" sources of evidence to understand what is available, where there are gaps and how we can collaborate on filling the gaps;
- Understand the constraints of our evidence base and build our capability to supplement this with our expertise and experience;
- Review our monitoring strategy to inform and support our operational remit;
- Review and evaluate our long term environmental monitoring information to demonstrate the effectiveness of our interventions;
- Support the development of citizen science in Wales to support our own evidence base and that of others;
- Support the availability of evidence through the development of the Wales Information Hub, working with Welsh Government to secure its launch;
- Develop our modelling and forecasting capability to support decision making and work with others to develop our capability to use futures techniques such as horizon scanning and scenario planning;
- Develop our social and economic capability and evidence base to inform decision making through our natural resources management and ecosystem approaches;
- Grow and sustain our intellectual capital so that we can develop, maintain and promote evidence in decision making;
- Develop an approach to bring us together with academic institutions and the Wales Environmental Research Hub to identify gaps in our shared evidence base;
- Plan, manage, monitor, review, report, and consider innovative approaches for implementation of European Union and UK Legislation including, but not limited to delivery of the Water Framework Directive, the revised Bathing Waters Directive, the Habitats Directive, Birds Directives, Natura 2000, and waste, water resource and water quality legislation; and
- Understand the impact of climate change on Wales.

Links to Other Strategies

Evidence is a wide ranging activity with links with many of our other Natural Resources Wales strategies and plans. In particular delivery of our Evidence Strategy is strongly interdependent on the delivery of our Knowledge Management, Sampling and Monitoring, Information and Communications Technology, and People strategies.



Below is a summary of the main activities where there is overlap or a dependency between the Evidence Strategy and other key strategies.

Knowledge Management Strategy

- Defines our approach to knowledge management; and
- Outlines our knowledge management objectives and priorities.

Sampling and Monitoring Strategy

- Defines our knowledge, data and information requirements to meet our monitoring needs and reporting priorities.

Communications Strategy

- Provides internal and external online collaboration tools, policies and guidance;
- Facilitates data and information publishing and download services through the web site; and
- Underpins the communication of a wide range of our work, including evidence.

Information and Communication Technology Strategy

- Delivers IT infrastructure, systems and tools that help manage our digital data and information assets;
- Adopts the principle of digital first; and

- Enables collaborative working both between offices and with external partners (video, voice, text and collaborative editing tools).

People Strategy

- Develops the knowledge people plan (skills and capacity);
- Builds a knowledge management culture through Natural Resources Wales core values and assessment in the annual staff survey; and
- Supports staff to develop professional qualifications and to be members of their profession.

Corporate Governance Strategy

- Secures Information Governance, and Natural Resources Wales policy on access to information; and
- Implements an internal governance structure that will support implementation of the Knowledge Management and Evidence Strategies.

Accommodation Strategy

- Creates office environments that encourage collaborative working;
- Provides specialist requirements, such as laboratories; and
- Delivers storage facilities for technical equipment, physical data and information assets.

The Ecosystem Approach

Evidence is an important element of *The Ecosystem Approach*. The Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD)³ outlines 12 guiding core principles in applying the approach. One of these directly relates to evidence and states that ‘the ecosystem approach should consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific and indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices’. It specifies that information from all sources is critical to arriving at effective ecosystem management strategies. It supports the improvement of our knowledge of ecosystem functions and the impact of human use on them. It also specifies that all relevant information for an area should be shared with all stakeholders. Other CBD principles are also relevant such as considering effects (actual or potential) of ‘activities on adjacent and other ecosystems’, managing ecosystems ‘within the limits of their functioning’ and involving all relevant sectors of scientific disciplines.

In Wales, the ‘Sustaining a Living Wales’ Green Paper consultation in 2012 set out Welsh Government’s intention to adopt the “*Ecosystem Approach*”, as defined by the CBD⁴. In response an Ecosystem Approach Framework⁵ document was written by the Living Wales Programme as guidance for Natural Resources Wales staff. The Framework document outlines 4 sections in considering the ecosystem approach, with one of these being ‘evidence and resources’. The section emphasises the importance of evidence in applying

³ CBD (2004) Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, The Ecosystem Approach, (CBD Guidelines) Montreal.

⁴ Welsh Government (2012). Sustaining a Living Wales: A Green Paper on a new approach to natural resource management in Wales. WG Consultation No. WG13943.

⁵ Using the Ecosystem Approach – A Framework for Natural Resources Wales ' Signed off version is version 1, 16/10/2013.

the approach and includes sub-sections on evidence on ecosystems and provision of services, data and mapping, people and value.

The Welsh Government Environment Bill White Paper

Evidence features as an important element throughout the Environment Bill White Paper⁶. One of the proposals under the natural resources management section (NRM3) is a 'requirement for Natural Resources Wales to develop and implement an area-based approach for the sustainable management of natural resources and to ensure *evidence* from this process feeds into appropriate delivery plans'.

The White Paper states how the process of integrated natural resource management will help to provide a *consistent and clear evidence base* on our natural resources and that we will have the evidence to inform and underpin decisions and the right opportunities. The role of Natural Resources Wales in providing evidence on climate change and resilience is specifically mentioned. It also cites that Natural Resources Wales will need to present evidence and information in a clear and concise format that will enable the full range of impacts and opportunities to be considered.

In addition under NRM5 (requirements for other bodies) it is stated that the proposals in the paper will enable Natural Resources Wales to gather additional evidence to help it more fully consider the economic and social benefits of natural resources and the health and resilience of underpinning ecosystems.

⁶ Welsh Government (2013). Towards the Sustainable Management of Wales' Natural Resources: Consultation on proposals for an Environment Bill. Welsh Government Consultation No. WG19631

HOW DO WE GENERATE AND USE EVIDENCE?

Evidence is needed to inform our management of the Welsh environment and to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future. All parts of Wales, on land and in the sea, have been touched by human activity at a local, regional or international level. For example, the actions of farmers or fishermen can have a local direct impact on biodiversity; we have an industrial legacy of abandoned mines which is influencing water quality at a regional scale; while atmospheric nitrogen and ozone issues are being addressed at an international level.

Equally the state of the Welsh environment has direct and indirect impacts on citizens' health, behaviour and well-being, and the economy and development potential. Natural Resources Wales recognises that inter-disciplinary studies spanning the environmental and socio-economic gradient are increasingly important. We recognise that tough decisions will need to be made to secure the environmental and economic resilience of Wales in a changing world.

Natural Resources Wales uses its evidence in a wide range of situations including:

- Informing and supporting all our decisions, advice and actions;
- Working closely with Welsh Government, the UK Government and other devolved administrations to support policy development and ensure it is informed by a reliable evidence base;
- Supporting day-to-day decisions and advice on specific cases or at individual sites where we combine our expert knowledge and judgement with the best available evidence;
- Advice provided by the network to customers, the public or stakeholders which has drawn on evidence.

Evidence Activities

Natural Resources Wales is involved in a range of evidence activities including, in no particular order of priority:

- Research and development, including work commissioned on a systematic basis in order to increase our environmental understanding and the use of this understanding to devise new applications;
- Monitoring and surveillance, including gathering of data as part of a regular regime and/or to test a particular hypothesis and to report on the state of the environment;
- Secondary analysis and synthesis, including analysis of pre-existing data, modelling or synthesis of existing research reports or data;
- Evaluation of operations, evidence programmes or policies to see if they have delivered the aims of the programme or policy; and
- Using innovation and adopt new methods and equipments, including the use of geo-positioning and automatic environmental monitoring stations.

This work is inclusive of the full range of the sciences including economics, social research, operational research, statistics, natural sciences, geology, engineering and geography.

EVIDENCE PRINCIPLES

In order to deliver our required programme of evidence while working in collaboration with Government and others, we have adopted the following seven principles:

1. We have an evidence programme to underpin the full spectrum of Natural Resources Wales operations, including commenting on the state of our natural resources and providing advice to Government.
2. Our evidence programme is periodically reviewed to ensure it is responsive to the changing environmental, social, economic, operational and policy drivers, and scientific developments.
3. We will have the evidence needed to underpin advice to Welsh Government, including potential areas of policy development.
4. Our evidence is quality assured using a proportional risk based approach.
5. We will develop our in-house capacity to analyse and interpret data and wider evidence in the context of changing operational and policy needs.
6. We communicate our evidence in an open and transparent way and make the underlying data easily accessible.
7. We present our evidence at the appropriate scales and in specific contexts appropriate to the audiences.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our strategic objectives describe our longer term ambition and are likely to extend beyond the lifetime of this strategy.

1. We will further develop our independent capacity to report on the state of our natural resources and the pressures they face (including statutory environmental monitoring).
2. We will have the evidence to provide the context for Natural Resources Wales' decision making and operations.
3. We will have the evidence needed to underpin advice to Welsh Government, including potential areas of policy development.
4. We will provide the evidence required to support implementation of The Ecosystem Approach, Natural Resource Management and Ecosystem Services Assessments.
5. We will increase our in-house capacity to analyse and interpret data and wider evidence in the context of changing operational and policy needs.
6. We will work on securing the evidence needed to halt biodiversity loss (including achieve the CBD and EU targets) and for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
7. We will expand and develop evidence partnership opportunities and seek to influence the research agendas of others.
8. Through succession planning we will secure and develop the Natural Resources Wales knowledge base in terms of staff skills.

DELIVERING THE OBJECTIVES

1. We will further develop our independent capacity to report on the state of our natural resources and the pressures they face (including statutory environmental monitoring).

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
1.1	Agree definition of natural resources with Welsh Government and associated monitoring responsibilities.	KSP	01/01/2015
1.2	Implement a review of our monitoring strategy and programme of work. [Corporate Plan]	KSP	01/12/2015
1.3	Develop our modeling and forecasting capability, and working with others to increase our use of futures techniques, such as horizon scanning and scenario planning. [Corporate Plan]	KSP; Ops N/S	01/04/2017
1.4	Restructure the component departments of the Knowledge, Strategy and Planning and develop ways of working to support evidence base development and reporting.	KSP	01/04/2015
1.5	Establish required wider evidence governance groups and processes.	KSP	01/04/2015
1.6	In association with Welsh Government, scope and produce the first report on the state of our natural resources, including a suite of key indicators.	KSP	01/09/2015
1.7	Agree appropriate standards for our evidence and methods for ensuring that we attain them.	KSP	01/12/2015

2. We will have the evidence to provide the context for Natural Resources Wales' decision making and operations.

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
2.1	Provide the evidence base to secure the strategic long-term management and restoration of our designated sites. [Corporate Plan]	KSP	01/04/2017
2.2	Continue to provide the evidence base to inform our understanding of ecological connectivity and coherence [Corporate Plan]	KSP	01/04/2017
2.3	Secure required evidence agreements with Environment Agency England, Defra, Forest Research and others.	KSP	01/04/2017
2.4	Initiate consultation with Operations on long-term evidence needs and more immediate responsive requirements.	KSP; Ops N/S	01/01/2015
2.5	Initiate an evaluation of the social and economic impacts of NRW operations and interventions.	KSP; Ops N/S	01/04/2017
2.6	Promote the adoption of the NRW Evidence Report Series across the organization.	KSP	01/04/2015
2.7	Create archival collections of NRW internal and externally commissioned reports, consultations and other corporate publications.	KSP	01/04/2015
2.8	Continue to provide a focus for conservation science working in collaboration with our partner agencies at a UK level.	KSP	Continuous
2.9	Communicate evidence developments internally and externally in association with NRW Communications.	KSP; Comms	Continuous

3. We will have the evidence needed to underpin advice to Welsh Government, including potential areas of policy development.

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
3.1	Work with Welsh Government and others to identify sources of evidence, understanding where there are gaps and, where we can collaborate to fill these gaps, sharing information and expertise and supporting others to fill them. [Corporate Plan]	KSP	01/04/2017
3.2	Support the development and implementation of the Welsh Government Marine Transition Programme and Marine Fisheries Strategic Action Plan, including joint evidence working group. [Corporate Plan].	KSP	01/04/2017
3.3	Provide advice to Welsh Government on future evidence needs and emerging policy areas and where our evidence indicates required changes to regulation or policy.	KSP	Continuous

4. We will provide the evidence required to support implementation of The Ecosystem Approach, Natural Resource Management and Ecosystem Services Assessments.

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
4.1	Develop our social and economic capability and evidence base, to provide information for our natural resources management and ecosystem approaches, and to help understand and overcome barriers to using the environment faced by the different sectors of society and local communities. [Corporate Plan]	KSP	01/04/2017
4.2	Support the evidence base requirements for the natural resource planning trial areas and make recommendations for future evidence requirements.	KSP	01/04/2017
4.3	Continue to follow and influence the development of the UK and international ecosystem services agenda, including the natural capital concept.	KSP	Continuous

5. We will increase our in-house capacity to analyse and interpret data and wider evidence in the context of changing operational and policy needs.

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
5.1	Develop our ability to better explain and communicate complex issues to a wide range of stakeholders by using a wide range of communication tools and formats, including guidance. [Corporate Plan]	KSP; Comms	01/04/2017
5.2	Carry out a specialist staff capacity/skills analysis and appraise options to fill the gaps.	KSP; ODPM	01/09/2015
5.3	Work with ODPM to develop relevant development opportunities and training.	KSP; ODPM	Continuous
5.4	Investigate opportunities for new collaborations and co-production with stakeholders.	KSP	Continuous

6. We will work on securing the evidence needed to halt biodiversity loss and for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
6.1	Provide the evidence base to secure the strategic long-term management and restoration of our designated sites. [Corporate Plan]	KSP; Ops N/S; NS	01/04/2017
6.2	Continue to provide the evidence base to inform our understanding of ecological connectivity. [Corporate Plan]	KSP	01/04/2017
6.3	Continue to develop our strategic biodiversity evidence base (e.g. habitat mapping).	KSP	Continuous
6.4	Provide the evidence to inform our efforts to meet Convention on Biological Diversity/Aichi targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.	KSP	2020
6.5	Contribute to the delivery of The Climate Change Strategy for Wales through the provision of evidence and expertise.	KSP	01/04/2017
6.6	Contribute to the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment and implement the required actions in NRW.	KSP	01/04/2017
6.7	Continue to engage with UK climate change research initiatives, including risk assessment, modeling and scenario development.	KSP	Continuous

7. We will expand and develop evidence partnership opportunities and seek to influence the research agendas of others.

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
7.1	Participate in the Defra One Evidence Programme with Welsh Government.	KSP	01/04/2017
7.2	Highlight the benefits of carrying out research in association with NRW.	KSP	01/04/2015
7.3	Work with Welsh Government to identify roles and responsibilities in terms of working with Defra and the academic community.	KSP	Continuous
7.4	Work with Welsh Government to identify opportunities where we can add value to projects or partnerships.	KSP	Continuous
7.5	Work closely with academic community, the third sector and others to deliver priority evidence.	KSP	Continuous
7.6	Pursue a key role in relevant Wales, UK and international research networks.	KSP	Continuous

8. Through succession planning we will secure and develop the Natural Resources Wales knowledge base in terms of staff skills.

Ref. No.	Description of Target Deliverable	Lead Directorate	Milestone
8.1	Produce individual personal development plans, with specific technical training objectives.	KSP; ODPM	Every year as part of staff appraisal process
8.2	Promote our internal expertise across NRW.	KSP	Continuous
8.3	Assist in the development of career paths/succession for key specialist roles.	KSP; ODPM	01/04/2017
8.4	Explore joint training events with Welsh Government across a range of scientific evidence related topics.	KSP; ODPM	01/04/2017
8.5	Explore the use of secondment opportunities across a range of organizations to facilitate cross working and sharing best practice.	KSP; ODPM	01/04/2017

GOVERNANCE

A number of key evidence roles have been identified in Natural Resources Wales:

- Accounting Officer – Chief Executive;
- Executive Director, Knowledge, Strategy and Planning;
- Head of Evidence, Knowledge and Advice;
- Others staff: Managers, Principal Advisers, Technical Specialists and Advisers;
- Executive Directors for Operations;
- Executive Director for National Services;
- Executive Director for Organisational Development and People Management;
- Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services and Head of Procurement;
- Chief Information Officer;
- Head of Information and Communications Technology;
- Other internal evidence related governance groups; and
- Natural Resources Wales Board Knowledge Sub-group.

This Evidence Strategy was developed within the Evidence, Knowledge and Advice Department on behalf of the Knowledge, Strategy and Planning Directorate and in consultation with the wider organisation. The Head of Evidence, Knowledge and Advice, Managers, Principal Advisers, and a core group of technical specialists and advisers are responsible for the development of the evidence base, quality assurance, provision of technical advice to internal and external users, oversee sampling and monitoring strategies, carry out data analysis and modelling, commission research and produce reports and publications, and other evidence products. In addition The Head of Evidence, Knowledge and Advice acts as our representative on the Statutory Nature Conservation Agency Chief Scientist Group and leads Natural Resources Wales input to the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Strategic Network Evidence Group. The departments within Knowledge, Strategy and Planning have specialists and advisers in a wide range of disciplines, including environmental, economic and social sciences. The Chief Information Officer is responsible for our Information Technology and information processing systems, and defines our ICT strategy and oversees development. The Head of Information Technology secures our required information technology and infrastructure.

Our Executive Directors of Operations and their operational teams are responsible for the sampling involved in the statutory monitoring of our freshwater environments, which feeds into our overall evidence base and the management of our land and water holdings, including nature reserves. National Services include the operation of Llanelli Laboratory and staff working on the evidence base required to support flood and operational risk management. The development of technical personal development programmes and associated training is advanced by the Directorate of Organisational Development and People Management. All commissioned evidence carried out under contract or through grant-in aid is subject to corporate financial procedures. Some joint Welsh Government

and Natural Resources Wales boards (e.g. Marine Board) and a number of internal Natural Resources Wales working groups (e.g. Ecosystem Networks) also influence the development of the evidence base. As part of future evidence business plan development we will convene a working group under the Leadership of the Head of Evidence, Knowledge and advice to develop a single integrated work programme for evidence in Natural Resources Wales, including target deliverables, milestones and measures of success.

The Natural Resources Wales Knowledge Board Sub-Group provides overview and scrutiny of our evidence functions and products. In addition Natural Resources Wales intends setting up a Register of Experts which can provide on call advice across the full range of our remit.