

Steps to Net-Zero: How We are Tackling the Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis

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We, as an Institute, have declared a climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, acknowledging that these two issues are inextricably linked, and have determined that urgent action is needed at all levels. But a declaration means nothing without action. That is why we have launched Action 2030: a project which will see us reach net-zero emissions by 2030 and lead the way for the profession in tackling these joint crises.

A key action has been to set up the member-led Action 2030 group to devise ways in which CIEEM can achieve net-zero by 2030, and to provide advice to members on how to address the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis through their professional work.

Environment policy

Our Environment Policy is at the heart of what we are doing to tackle these crises. The key principles behind it are to **reduce** the use of energy and resources, **reuse** materials wherever possible, **recycle** all that can be effectively, **avoid** materials and products where there is doubt concerning environmental impacts, and **encourage** members and suppliers to adopt similar practices.

Energy supply

Our electricity and gas at our office in Winchester is supplied by Engie. They

provide 100% renewable electricity, which is certified by UK Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs). Our 'green gas' is sourced from biogas from anaerobic digestion or landfill gas and is documented by Renewable Gas Guarantee of Origin (RGGO) certificates, externally verified through the Green Gas Certification Scheme. All electricity and gas supplied is fully traceable.

Due to the way in which gas and electricity is supplied in the UK, this 'green energy' is not actually what we are using in the office. The green energy feeds into a 'grid average'. However, the current UK Government advice is that purchasing gas and electricity from renewable sources means we can report zero carbon emissions from gas and electricity and a small emissions factor associated with providing electricity via the National Grid.

We continue to record our energy use, as reducing consumption of energy is important.

Procurement

When purchasing goods or services, we endeavour to use suppliers and contractors with a demonstrable commitment to environmental good practice. For example, we procure goods from suppliers who use minimal and biodegradable/recyclable plastic packaging and use external printers who use environmentally friendly practices. For events, we also request fair trade, organic food and drinks that are largely plant-based and locally produced as far as is possible.

Finances

We have chosen ethical banks for all of our accounts: Unity Trust, Triodos Bank, and Ecology Building Society. These banks fund and invest in socially responsible

organisations that aim to bring about positive societal change.

Our pension provider, TPT Retirement Solutions, offers an ethical option for the Secretariat which avoids investments in coal mining and oil sands, as well as other social issues. TPT also reports on the carbon footprint of funds annually. The Action 2030 group asked that we write to TPT requesting further information on how they are working towards the legal requirement of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and how they are considering investments to halt global biodiversity loss.

Offsetting

Our primary aim is to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions as much as possible, but due to the nature of our work, there will be some emissions that we cannot remove.

For four years, we have calculated the cost of offsetting our carbon dioxide emissions for Secretariat travel and travel by members of our Governing Board and formal committees, along with the electricity and gas usage at the office in Winchester, using the calculator provided by CarbonFootprint.com. More recently, we have begun providing conference delegates with the opportunity to add their travel to our offsetting fund.

CarbonFootprint.com provides the opportunity to offset the cost by funding an 'offsetting project' which are largely international and social in nature. These projects are extremely important, but we have decided to support sound environmental projects in Great Britain and the island of Ireland by making an equivalent donation to offset our carbon emissions, prioritising projects that provide long-term carbon sequestration.

We have donated to a Plantlife project in England, an ancient woodland restoration project on the island of Ireland and a tree planting project in Scotland. This year will be a project in Wales. Projects are chosen in discussion with our outposted Country Policy Officers.

Action 2030 challenges

The Action 2030 group has been pushing us to go further. Their advice covers five key areas: helping us to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2030; leading change in the professions of ecology and environmental management; providing advice to members; promoting the use of nature-based solutions; and building relationships with others.

Reaching net-zero by 2030

Figure 1 shows our net-zero carbon monitoring. CIEEM follows the standard reporting methodology of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions of carbon dioxide which respectively relate to direct emissions from gas boilers or vehicles, indirect emissions from electricity purchased, and emissions produced through procurement and business travel. We hope to produce a webinar and a blog on the reporting of emissions of carbon in the coming months.

The Action 2030 group is encouraging sustainable travel, home working, video- and tele-conferencing wherever possible. Action is already being taken on their suggestion to green the office in Winchester by creating wildflower window boxes and filling the office with plants.

The Action 2030 group agreed that simply providing plant-based foods at conferences and events to reduce our carbon footprint is not enough. The food must be locally sourced to reduce import emissions, and those that have a significant impact on global biodiversity must be avoided, for example, palm oil production is responsible for considerable deforestation in tropical regions.

Leading the change

The Action 2030 group has presented a range of ideas (Figure 2) for how we could lead changes in professional requirements in ecology and environmental management. These are recommendations by the Action 2030 group and are being considered by CIEEM in terms of the practicalities. Any

Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3
Direct emissions: arising directly from equipment owned or controlled by the organisation, such as in boilers or cars and vans. These are on-site emissions and those from vehicles normally based at the site.	Indirect emissions: from purchased energy or hired vehicles. This is typically from electricity used, supplied via the National Grid.	Other indirect emissions: the embodied CO ₂ within goods and services in the supply chain, emissions due to staff commuting, waste management and various other upstream/downstream categories.
None (see 'Energy Supply' above)	None (see 'Energy Supply' above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Grid Emissions Factor • Delegate Travel • Staff and Committee travel to meetings • <i>In Practice</i> production • Catering for events • Staff commuting • Waste management • Energy usage of venues • Use of couriers • Water usage

Figure 1: Our scope for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.



Figure 2. Recommendations from the Action 2030 working group on how CIEEM could lead changes in professional requirements for ecology and environmental management.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements would relate solely to a member's professional work.

The Action 2030 group has also been considering the use of more sustainable materials in field work such as ecological surveys and mitigation.

What can you do?

Please keep an eye on our weekly eNewsletter, blogs and webinar series for advice for members on addressing the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis through your professional work. We will also be including at least one article on the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis in each edition of *In Practice*.

We urge you all to carry forward the advice of the Action 2030 group, assessing the impact of your organisation, and encouraging suppliers and pension

providers to make changes. As we stated in our declaration on the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, action is needed from every government, every business, every organisation and every individual.

Notes

Our full Environment Policy can be viewed at: <https://cieem.net/resource/cieem-environmental-policy/>.

Our declaration *Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis: Declaration and Call to Action* can be viewed at: <https://cieem.net/resource/climate-emergency-and-biodiversity-crisis-declaration/>

The associated briefing note *Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis: The Facts and Figures* can be viewed at: <https://cieem.net/resource/climate-emergency-and-biodiversity-crisis-briefing/>

About the Authors

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Policy Activities Update

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In recent months, our focus has been on supporting our members through the Covid-19 outbreak and social distancing measures. We have set up and regularly update a dedicated webpage for our advice to members in light of the pandemic (cieem.net/i-am/covid-19/). We have also published *Advice on COVID-19 and Undertaking Site-Based Ecological Work* and contacted the Chancellor of the Exchequer to argue for wider support mechanisms. We have also published *Guidance on Ecological Survey and Assessment in the UK During the Covid-19 Outbreak (Version 1) (7 May 2020)*.

In March, the Action 2030 Working Group's Chair, John Box, met with our Governing Board to present the recommendations so far for getting CIEEM as an organisation to net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, leading change in the profession and providing advice to members on how they can address the climate emergency and

biodiversity crisis through their professional work. An update on this work so far can be found on page 66.

Our Strategic Policy Panel met in March to continue their strategic planning of our policy activities. The group discussed localised carbon offsetting mechanisms and how this could fit into wider environmental net gain; our policy priorities of land management, marine environment and the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis; the importance of the profession and engagement activities for the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15.

UK and England

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Nature was successfully relaunched with an event in Parliament. Barry Gardiner MP was re-elected to Chair the group, whilst Officers include Steve Double MP (Conservative), Caroline Lucas MP (Green), Kerry McCarthy MP (Labour) and

Baroness Barbara Young (Labour). The event was joined with an event on nature and mental health. We have also opened the opportunity to become an Associate Member of the group. More details are available at: www.cieem.net/i-am/influencing-policy/appg-for-nature/

At the time of writing, progress on the Agriculture and Environment Bills has stalled due to Parliamentary closures. Before scrutiny of the Bills paused, we published a statement on the Environment Bill in advance of its second reading and published a response to the Agriculture Bill calling for the Bill to fully support land managers to deliver public benefits, protect biodiversity and ensure a just transition on our journey to net-zero.

Sally Hayns (CIEEM CEO) has continued our engagement on the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain in England's planning system by attending a workshop run by the