Ecological Continuity Trust

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

**Introduction**

The Ecological Continuity Trust (hereafter ECT) was formed in 2008, as a direct response to the loss of long-term experiments (LTEs) throughout the UK. We support long-term experiments and long-term monitoring by providing much needed funds through our grants scheme and emergency repair funds. Our vision is to develop a strategic network of long-term ecological experiments and monitoring sites. This includes safeguarding existing high quality experiments and data, whilst also ensuring new facilities are planned for the long-term.

The ECT is committed to ensuring that, as a charity and employer, it addresses inequality and exclusion, advocates best practice and acts as a role model.  The ECT looks to embed the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all aspects of its activity, specifically participating in the active process of identifying and eliminating inequalities, lack of diversity and exclusion by changing systems, organisational structures, policies and practices and attitudes where necessary. This Policy sets out how the ECT will deliver this commitment and realise its mission and vision.

**Equality Act 2010**

The **Equality Act** (2010) brought together multiple legislation associated with equality and discrimination and its general purpose is to:

* Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct.
* Advance equality of opportunity by removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of particular groups that are different from the needs of others, encouraging participation in public life, and fostering good relations.

At the same time the legislation was also extended to protect people based on nine particular characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnic origin, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

 **Socio-Economic Origin/Status**is not classed as a protected characteristic, but many organisations, including the ECT, include it in their thinking and in their action.

Another important issue is **intersectionality**(also known as multiple discrimination)where an individual belongs to more than one of the protected groups and, as a result of this, is affected disproportionately.

Our understanding and action in this area is supported by the following definitions:

**Equality** recognises that every individual should have equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It recognises that certain groups of people with particular characteristics have, in the past and today, experienced discrimination.

**Diversity** is ‘*any characteristic which can differentiate groups and individuals from one another*.’ This includes the protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010 but also includes others, such as socioeconomic background and status. It also includes and values diversity of perspectives and life experience, for example.

**Inclusion** recognises that people need to feel connected and engaged.  Inclusion can be defined as a state of being and feeling valued, respected and supported.  Practising inclusion is necessary for diversity initiatives to work.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the Scientific Community and Wider Society**

The ECT acknowledges that equality, diversity and inclusion is an on-going issue within the whole scientific community and wider society. As such, the ECT recognises that it needs to address this issue appropriately for the ECT community and all those interested in LTEs. Our statement and the actions planned to achieve this, described in our EDI Action Plan, are embedded within this context to ensure everyone within the LTE community is treated fairly and equally and included in all ECT activities.

**Policy Statement**

The ECT is committed to promoting diversity, preventing discrimination and creating an inclusive environment in which staff, trustees and volunteers can fulfil their potential and maximise their contribution to the aims and objectives of the charity. Everyone will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnic origin, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Our aim is that those of us involved directly with the ECT and those we interact with should be fully representative of society. It is everyone’s responsibility to work within this Policy and the over-arching legislation.

The **Board of Trustees** has an overarching responsibility for ensuring the ECT complies with legislation and meets the commitments of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and supports our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Board will regularly (i) assess how well the Executive and Board represent Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, (ii) assess whether the grants made available to long-term experiments and monitoring sites are available without prejudice regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, (iii) ensure that our communications and promotion go to the whole community without prejudice regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, (iv) consider the likely and/or actual impact of current or proposed policies, processes or actions on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and (v) ensure all members of the ECT community have equal access to showcase their research to the rest of the ECT community.

**ECT staff** have a responsibility for ensuring that the operations of the ECT meet the requirements of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy within the context of their role. This includes i) ensuring that internal and external communications are conducted without prejudice and are inclusive ii) acting fairly towards the ECT community and others when representing the ECT at events iii) challenging their own unconscious biases when interacting with the ECT community and others, and (iv) promoting and highlighting minorities within the ECT community.

**Policy Review**

This Policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is reason to believe that the content of the policy is not delivering the aspiration for equality diversity and inclusion.