
Science Policy News

United Kingdom: The 1987/88 Annual Report of the Natural Environment Research Council

The NERC is one of the five Research Councils of the Government of the United Kingdom, the other four being the Agricultural, Medical, Science and Social Research Councils. The NERC has the responsibility to encourage, plan and execute research in those sciences, physical and biological, that relate to man's natural environment and its resources. The NERC carries out these responsibilities through its executive headquarters, its component and grant-aided research institutes, and by research grants and post-graduate awards for complementary studies in universities and other institutes of higher education.

Financial account for 1987/88:

Receipts: Parliamentary grant-in-aid, £73.3 million; Commissioned research receipts, £28.4 million; Miscellaneous receipts, £4.4 million; Capital receipts £0.3 million. Payments: Earth sciences, £29.2 million; Marine sciences, £18.3 million; Terrestrial and freshwater sciences, £19.7 million; Antarctic research, £14.4 million; Scientific services, £15.4 million; Other expenditure, £9.4 million. Gross total, £106.4 million.

The 1989 Corporate Plan:

This plan sets out what the NERC will do over the five-year period 1990/91 to 1994/95. Emphasis has been placed in the plan on identifying the new initiatives that will be taken. The international dimension of environment research is growing in importance and the NERC will continue its policy of developing and expanding overseas links and activities. Major activities such as the Ocean Drilling Program can only succeed by concerted action between nations and the NERC will take a full part in it. The Framework Program of the European Commission and the European Science Foundation provide opportunities for British scientists to develop closer links with their European colleagues and to join in multi-national projects. The research supported by the NERC is largely interdisciplinary, and cooperation be-

tween scientists and across institutes, universities, polytechnics and industry is essential if progress is to be maintained. The programs set out in the 1989 Corporate Plan reflect this interdisciplinary approach and are described under the following headings:

Understanding the natural environment; The global perspective; Conservation and protection of the environment; Surveying and mapping; Data and information; Providing the technology base; Higher education affairs.

Key programs that will form focal points of activity over the next five years include:

Climate, climate changes, and the influences and interactions of the land, sea and atmospheric components of the climate system; Shelf seas, coastal waters, and estuaries; Ocean circulation, through participation in international experiments such as the World Ocean Circulation Experiment; Environmental microbiology; Population biology; Agriculture and the environment; Water quality and ground water modeling; Arctic research; Deep geology; Marine geology and geophysics in particular at the mid-ocean ridges.

These programs cross scientific boundaries and need to be tackled by communities of scientists in the manner already exploited by the NERC.

Support for the universities and polytechnics and the provision of personnel trained in the environmental sciences remain key objectives for the NERC. The next decade will see a sustained interest in the natural environment, changes in the climate, and the availability of the Earth's renewable and non-renewable resources. The research carried out by the NERC is central to all these themes.

For further information:

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France: The 1987 Annual Report of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

The CNRS is France's largest public agency for the support of basic research. With an annual budget close to 9 billion French Francs (FF), equal to US\$ 1.65 billion, it supports about 17000 research scientists and engineers and about 8500 technical and administrative staff in over

300 laboratories. It has 1000 contracts with universities and other higher-education institutions.

The overall budget of 8900 million FF covers salaries and wages of 6600 million FF, scientific funding of 1900 million FF and administrative and general costs of 400 mil-