



British
Geological
Survey

2022 TO 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Environmental Sustainability report







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Waste management

BGS continues to reduce its impact on the environment by reducing waste generation.

BGS's Keyworth site now has a new, integrated waste contract with Novati, enabling us to better segregate waste by working closely with the contractor to identify areas that can be improved. We can closely monitor waste data through the contractor portal, which provides evidence that 100 per cent of our waste is being diverted from landfill.

We continue to reduce waste generation at source through cultural and behavioural engagement with staff and visitors:

- there are now waste segregation bins in the 70 individual laboratories, including mixed recycling, general waste, soft plastics and disposable gloves
 - » 48 kg of soft plastic was recycled through 2022
- there is a new multi-bin recycling station in the Keyworth staff restaurant, allowing us to capture food waste so it can be anaerobically digested for energy recovery and to make fertiliser
- 91 tonnes of waste was recycled in 2022 and transformed into a new substance or product
- 40 tonnes of waste was recovered and transformed into resources such as energy



LEAF gold certification

BGS achieved the gold Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) accreditation, becoming the first organisation in UKRI to do so.

LEAF is a tool designed to improve sustainability across laboratories. This includes initiatives designed to reduce plastic and water use, energy consumption and waste generation. To progress from the silver to the gold accreditation, we had to implement, apply and evidence savings from sustainability actions taken. For example, we now encourage staff to employ greener practices around solvent use, such as:

- choosing greener alternatives
- cleaning and recycling used solvents for other purposes
- ensuring that the storage of solvents is monitored to avoid wastage



Building upgrades

BGS has improved the thermal efficiency of the Keyworth infrastructure by replacing 165 inefficient windows in some of the oldest buildings with more efficient, toughened, double-glazed windows.

Biodiversity gains at Keyworth

We continue to develop biodiversity initiatives at the Keyworth site. Through UKRI's biodiversity fund, we have:

- installed veggie and herb boxes for staff to 'grow their own'
- expanded the orchard
- planted pollinating plants
- installed beehives

We have the capability to monitor biodiversity through a variety of techniques, including wildlife cameras, internal specialist surveys (for example, for moths and insects) and external specialist ecology surveys. We have also formed a lunchtime litter-picking group to reduce the impact of waste inadvertently scattered around site.

As in previous years, we have a summer (March to October) no-mow area over 80 per cent of the site, with 'no-mow for bees' signs erected.

The bee orchids also continue to flourish.



Bee Friendly

This area is supporting wild flowers to feed our bees and insects



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Environmental sustainability staff survey

We collected staff opinions and gauged awareness of environmental sustainability at BGS via our annual survey, to assess the effectiveness of current work and to guide future initiatives. Around 45 per cent of BGS staff replied to the survey.

Over 92 per cent of staff are interested in becoming more sustainable: 95 per cent see the issue of climate change as important and 86 per cent agree that environmental sustainability is a priority area for BGS.

The most important issues for staff are:

- reducing energy consumption
- reducing waste sent to landfill
- increasing low-carbon working

Staff take personal action to improve environmental sustainability, including:

- turning lights off when not in use
- reducing energy consumption in their work spaces
- using re-usable coffee cups and food containers
- recycling waste
- printing double-sided or avoid printing altogether





Efficient ways of working

We continue to look for ways to improve our waste management practices to make our sites more efficient. We are reducing the waste we generate, re-using materials and recycling where possible. This year, over 600 computer monitors have been recycled to make way for more efficient models, which has reduced energy consumption by 30 per cent.

We continue to recycle surplus wooden pallets and geological materials to improve biodiversity at the Keyworth site. Withdrawn BGS memoirs, books and maps were offered to staff to be re-used or upcycled — classic geological maps make fantastic wall art! Collection boxes for used pens have been placed around site and 4 kg of old pens have been sent to be dismantled and recycled into new ones.

More sustainable procurement

The efficiency of new analytical systems regarding energy and consumables is a key consideration for our laboratories in the tendering process. We are utilising the sustainable procurement strategy (initiated in 2021 to 2022) to incorporate environmental considerations into the specification and evaluation of high-value tenders. We request information from suppliers about the nature and recyclability of the packaging in which goods will be delivered and we provide the opportunity for suppliers to go above and beyond baseline requirements to offer us added value and increased sustainability on purchasing.



Hybrid working

BGS has published a new hybrid working framework to support a range of flexible working arrangements for staff. Now that more staff are working both in the office and at home, considering the sustainability of all business environments is important to evaluate and improve the overall sustainability of BGS. We have published a blog to outline the various ways in which BGS is enabling sustainability throughout its facilities and working practices, as well as tips and guidance on being sustainable when working from home.

We hosted an MSc student from the University of Plymouth for a three-week placement to assist with LEAF planning and to research the sustainability of hybrid working.

Business carbon activities

We are preparing to go live with the carbon accounting scheme for business travel. Initially focused on travel by plane, the aim is to set an overall organisational target that will reduce year on year. This overall target will be allocated between different parts of the organisation and the usage will be monitored and made public via a dashboard. There will be a revised authorisation form for business travel that will assess the carbon emissions for each trip and to calculate the carbon dioxide equivalent for each flight.

BGS has liaised with NERC head office over their own initiatives and reported on developments within BGS to ensure that the BGS scheme is harmonised with both NERC and UKRI approaches.



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