



Green Growth, Skills and Prosperity

Priorities for the
next UK government



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This manifesto
outlines our
members' priorities.
We stand ready
to work with
government to deliver
regulatory and policy
improvements.

The Environmental Industries Commission (EIC) represents the companies, large and small, working in the environmental services and technologies sector to deliver a more sustainable society.

The United Kingdom, as a leading economy, has a significant role to play in shaping global efforts towards environmental sustainability. **At the heart of the UK's environmental progress lies the impact of the environmental services and technologies sector.**

This sector has not only become a driving force behind economic growth but also a catalyst for positive environmental change.

This growth is fuelled by the sector's ability to create employment opportunities and drive innovation. These jobs span a wide range of roles, from technical specialists and engineers to project managers and sustainability consultants.

Comprised of technical specialists, dedicated professionals, and cutting-edge innovations, this sector and EIC members have the knowledge and expertise to advise, guide, and facilitate the delivery of green growth within our economy.

Grounded in the principles of innovation, social value, excellence, and people, this manifesto outlines a comprehensive framework to drive positive change across environmental industries.

The challenges we face today, whether it be around waste management, water conservation, air quality, nature and biodiversity, contaminated land, or environmental laboratories, require a multifaceted approach that engages experts and stakeholders from across different sectors.

The environmental services and technology sector contributes:

£89 billion
turnover for the UK

349,000
UK jobs

£28 billion
value added over 6 years
(including pandemic years)

Contribution of
3.9% GDP

Source: BEIS, 2022





Priorities for the
next government





Implement stricter air quality targets to safeguard public health

- **Government should consider more stringent air pollution targets specifically PM2.5 emissions from road transport, including brake, tyre and road surface wear.** PM2.5 is a significant contributor to air pollution and its associated health risks. By prioritising the reduction of PM2.5 levels, we can make substantial progress in protecting the health and well-being of communities.
- **Commission a long-term study to identify conflicts and promote key synergies between air quality and net-zero policies.** Integration can optimise strategies that improve air quality while advancing climate mitigation goals. For example, adopting of electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions potentially increases particulate matter emissions (PM2.5). Electric vehicles tend to be heavier and produce non-exhaust traffic related emissions such as PM2.5 from road surface & brake/tyre wear.
- **Establish strong indoor air quality policies, robust building design, and maintenance practices,** particularly in social housing and work environments. This will require the implementation of regular statutory inspections to ensure compliance through monitoring and enhance the well-being of residents and workers.
- **Reverse cuts to the Active Travel Fund** to ensure cycling lanes and walking routes are made safer and more accessible, contributing to both emissions reductions for cleaner air and better public health.



Build resilience in water management and supply

- **Prioritise funding for resilience updates to existing infrastructure** in the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Investment Scheme.
- **Create regional funding parity** by amending funding policy to ensure investment across regions, accounting for community value, regional disparities, and social impact. This adjustment aligns with the levelling up agenda and distributes flood management funding more effectively.
- **Develop a Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan**, aimed at recognising the importance of skills and training to support the green agenda, as well as the need to address the skills shortage specifically in the environmental services sector.
- **Urge the UK Research and Innovation Department to commit to their £38M investment pledge** to support the Flood and Drought Research Infrastructure. Fostering innovation will enhance the UK's capacity to address hydrological extremes and promote efficiency and resilience.
- **Update and enhance the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) data sets and tools.** Generate and circulate all available data, linking climate adaptation and water management, to motivate synergies between sectors.



Prioritise biodiversity action and boost green infrastructure

- Drive biodiversity progress by expediting the publication of the of the BNG Metric 4.0 update and introduce regional trading credits to incentivise innovation. To drive innovation in the sector, the government should also encourage early engagement with regulators in biodiversity innovation projects to foster collaboration and improve understanding.
- Introduce a comprehensive Nature Recovery Network (NRN) across the UK, aligning with Lawton's Principles utilising Nature Based Solutions, and drawing on best practice from Natural England's NRN. The government should also establish community engagement and public outreach programmes to raise awareness and educate the public about the important of biodiversity, and empower local authorities with the tools, training, and resources, to enhance their ability to effectively protect and manage local biodiversity.
- Introduce dedicated biodiversity social value metrics to accurately measure the impact of nature-related initiatives, such as carbon offsetting. Government should provide further support through better data not just on the financial returns, but also on the social, environmental and health benefits of sustainable landuse.

- **Invest in nature-based solutions as the default option for climate mitigation and adaptation projects.** Prioritise the integration of nature positive outcomes, including the development of green infrastructure, into development plans on both land and sea.
- **Enhance coordination mechanisms between Whitehall departments and agencies to mitigate uncertainties in market investments.** Government must also acknowledge and prioritise the signing and of nature and biodiversity action, placing it on an equal footing with net zero.



Support levelling up through brownfield first

- **Introduce a greenfield surcharge as part of the infrastructure levy.** The infrastructure levy has the potential to incentivise development on brownfield land by reflecting viability and encouraging innovation. The funds from this surcharge can be earmarked for infrastructure spending by the local authority, mitigating the higher development costs of brownfield sites.
- **Avoid the over-restrictive interpretation of the Definition of Waste Code of Practice (DoWCoP).** DoWCoP allows for the reuse of ‘clean’ excavated soil without being subject to waste legislation and restrictions. However, recent changes in the interpretation of waste legislation have limited the scope of the DoWCoP, leading to more materials being classified as waste and excluding certain brownfield and contaminated land sites.
- **Increase land remediation tax relief on sites with fewer than 25 units from 150% to 200%.** Economic viability is a complex issue involving many variables and attitudes to risk, and yet viability remains the primary reason sites fail to be developed.
- **Update the tax relief definition of “derelict land” to be land unused since 1 April 2011.** As it stands, a site would need to have been derelict for over 20 years to qualify for additional relief.
- **Greater resourcing of local authority planning, departments, including that of Contaminated Land, Officers,** is needed to achieve the government’s brownfield objectives. Improve training for Building Control Officers and require them to consider land remediation works in their on-site sign-off functions.





Drive collaboration and implementation of key policy frameworks to deliver a circular economy

- **Accelerate reforms to the National Waste Strategy policy framework**, to enable local decision-making and private sector investment in mandatory door-to-door organic food waste collections across the U.K., and to support the 'Consistency in Household and Business Recycling' agenda. Government must also expedite the implementation of existing waste management policies and expand the scope of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to include commercial and business waste, and to cover a wider range of materials, such as mattresses and batteries.
- **Introduce a circular economy framework** that encourages reducing resource consumption, promotes repair, reuse, and refill principles, as well as the use of recycled materials, ease of disassembly, and upcycling properties in products and packaging. A regulatory framework should also be developed for the use of Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS) technologies on UK landfill sites, to enhance food waste recycling capabilities and reduce potent methane emissions.

- **Support the crucial work of the environmental services sector in pursuing net zero, by introducing a carbon pricing mechanism** that encompasses the entire waste management system, such as carbon taxes or a cap-and-trade system to drive materials up the waste hierarchy. Adopt a strategic approach by setting realistic waste and recycling targets that provide stability and continuity. A long-term vision with achievable milestones will allow for effective planning and investment in waste management infrastructure.
- **Facilitate partnerships between businesses, local authorities, and recycling service providers** to ensure efficient waste collection, sorting, and recycling. Government should also consolidate various policy streams related to waste prevention, such as recycling reforms, packaging, e-waste, food waste, repair, reuse, refill, and provide clear and concise information on coordinated implementation.
- **Introduce mandatory food waste collections for all businesses across the UK**, and establish statutory regulations to achieve the government's target of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030.



Streamline regulations for environmental growth

- Encourage the sharing of information on the preparation, analysis, and reporting of PFAS methodologies in multiple media. This will also require greater, and earlier, dialogue between the sector, Government departments, and Environmental Regulators on targeting and non-targeting testing requirements from concept to start.
- Simplify inter-continental shipping of samples requiring chemical testing between Europe and the UK and reduce the paperwork exercise that currently exists. This has the potential to ensure laboratories are internationally productive and competitive.
- Address the practical interventions and developments in analytical procedures and methodologies by working with industry on guidance on asbestos in soil.
- Address the key attributes needed by laboratories in order to address the skills shortage, developing policy to encourage higher and further education to engage with the sector on the design of educational programmes to suit the needs of the laboratory industry.





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