

ECONORTH LTD.

Quality

Policy

John Thompson

Next Review Date: 18.02.22



This policy applies to all EcoNorth staff / Internship / Subcontractors / Placements who work on behalf of the company and is reviewed annually to ensure its continuing suitability.

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Quality Policy

1. Introduction

EcoNorth is a professional consultancy that provides a complete ecological service for development, conservation and infrastructure projects across the UK and Ireland. Services include protected species surveys, licencing and mitigation, all ecological assessment, land management, Clerk of Works and GIS mapping.

In order to consistently deliver a high quality service, EcoNorth operates a quality management system, with the intention of achieving internationally recognised accreditation under ISO 9001:2015 by March 2022.

We strive for continual improvement in the quality of our services and systems, and achieve excellent customer satisfaction. Our team of Ecologists and Project Managers contributes to the development and implementation of quality improvement objectives, which are authorised and reviewed by the Senior Management Team and Board. Each client has a main point of contact within EcoNorth and can request access to all their project information.

The competence of our team of employees and associates is central to providing an excellent service and we carefully match expert resources to projects. Between us we have over 70 years of professional survey experience of UK and Irish species. We provide continual opportunities for development for all employees including professional memberships. All EcoNorth's operational ecology and arboriculture teams:

- Have a Bachelors degree or equivalent in a relevant ecological or environmental topic.
- Have, or are working towards, membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Association of Environmental Clerk of Works or the Arboricultural Association.

Our approach to quality assurance includes agreeing with the client the nature, amount and timing of the outputs to be delivered during the course of the project. All projects are managed, monitored and evaluated through a robust project management system and all reports undergo a rigorous two-stage review process undertaken by peers, with final report authorisation by senior members of the team. Relevant skill sets and experience are considered when selecting the peer review pathway so that all outputs are subject to an appropriate and rigorous level of technical challenge by the most relevant senior specialists. Furthermore, all project plans, quotations, risk assessments and method statements are subject to at least one level of peer review prior to submission or implementation. Weekly team meetings designed specifically to discuss projects and an internal training programme ensure that we continuously disseminate lessons learned and adopt best practice.

We commit ourselves to complying with best professional practice, client requirements and applicable compliance obligations in all that we do.

2. Definitions

"EcoNorth" or "we" or "us" or "our" means "EcoNorth Ltd".

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3. Suitably experienced and qualified staff

EcoNorth identifies and deploys in-house employees with the most appropriate level of experience and, where relevant, licences (in respect to protected species surveys). We always strive to continually upskill all team members by sharing experiences and ‘shadowing’ skilled team members where opportunities exist.

All employees maintain training / CPD records as a requirement of their ongoing membership of professional bodies, and are encouraged, through 121 meetings with Line Managers, to proactively select appropriate formal training opportunities which align with individual career aspirations and the needs of the business. All employees are allocated an annual training allowance to support formal training opportunities, with the opportunity for this to be extended where specific courses are available which would benefit the individual and the company. Mandatory health and safety training is allocated in addition to this allowance and opportunities for in-house training are also allocated over and above the formal training allowance.

The recording of training and relevant skills enables EcoNorth to maintain a skills matrix as a quick reference to identify the skills and capacity available to support a range of projects.

The continual development of staff with all the relevant experience ensures that works can be completed to the best standards, safely and on agreed timescales.

4. Application of up to date guidance and legislative changes

All work takes into account standard guidance for the delivery of ecological survey and assessment, as set out in guidance developed by a range of lead bodies including (but not being limited to) the following organisations:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
- The Arboricultural Association.
- The Association of Ecological and Environmental Clerk of Works.
- Natural England.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (now Nature Scot).
- Natural Resources Wales.
- The Environment Agency.
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (Republic of Ireland).
- Bat Conservation Trust.
- British Standards Institute.

Updates to changes in guidance and legislation, including relevant case law, are communicated throughout the team typically by Senior Managers. However, all employees are encouraged to share updates about changes or imminent changes to guidance or legislation. EcoNorth holds a library with all relevant guidance which all employees can access. Relevant changes are communicated through updated links to our own library, relevant web links or through verbal dissemination and discussion at regular team meetings.

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5. Materials and PPE

EcoNorth, in our role as Ecologists, supplies materials to a limited extent. Where this occurs, EcoNorth will apply the following standards where applicable.

- All PPE and other materials procured will include relevant Construction Products Regulations (CE Marking).
- All PPE and other materials procured will be in accordance with all relevant British and European standards, the exact requirement will be reviewed and stipulated on a case by case basis.
- All procurement will seek to be in accordance with EcoNorth's Ethical and Environmental Procurement Policy.

6. Subcontractor selection and control

EcoNorth takes a rigorous approach to the selection and control of suppliers.

All subcontractors are required to complete a registration and assessment process to be considered for selection.

In many cases, EcoNorth's subcontractors, following approval, work under the direct and permanent supervision of EcoNorth at all times and the delivery of services and operational procedures are completed in line with EcoNorth's requirements, as overseen by EcoNorth staff.

New and existing subcontractors are required to attend annual training events for specific survey types which are designed to establish consistency in the application of survey methods. Inexperienced surveyors are required to 'shadow' skilled staff to develop survey skills to EcoNorth's required standard.

All specialist subcontractors who are not operating under the direct control of EcoNorth are required to develop risk assessments and works method statements which are subject to EcoNorth's review and approval prior to works commencing. Some operations require specialist licences (for protected species surveys) or other qualifications. Where this is the case, EcoNorth requests and maintains copies of relevant documentation in advance of works being progressed. In circumstances where specialist suppliers provide their own equipment, EcoNorth requires that such equipment is tested or calibrated and certified in accordance with relevant regulations (eg LOLER regulations).

Specialist subcontractors are also required to provide evidence of their operational quality procedures in accordance with the requirement if subcontractor registration.

Where direct supervision of subcontractors is not possible, EcoNorth subjects subcontractors to site monitoring audits of work in the same manner as we do for in-house employees. Where necessary, corrective measures are fed back to subcontractors prior to works progressing further.

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7. Risk management

Operational risks are reviewed and required strategic mitigating actions are identified on a monthly basis by the Senior Management Team. Operational quality risks are also monitored through a programme of site monitoring audits undertaken across the year. The programme ensures that all employees and a representative range of projects are subject to audit.

8. Responsibilities

EcoNorth's Executive Director holds ultimate responsibility for the quality assurance and ensuring effective implementation of this policy. He is fully supported by the Quality Manager.

9. Policy review

EcoNorth's Quality Policy is reviewed annually, or earlier if there are changes to applicable legislation or the company. Any amendments that are made at these times will be shared with EcoNorth's team.



John Thompson
Executive Director
25.02.21