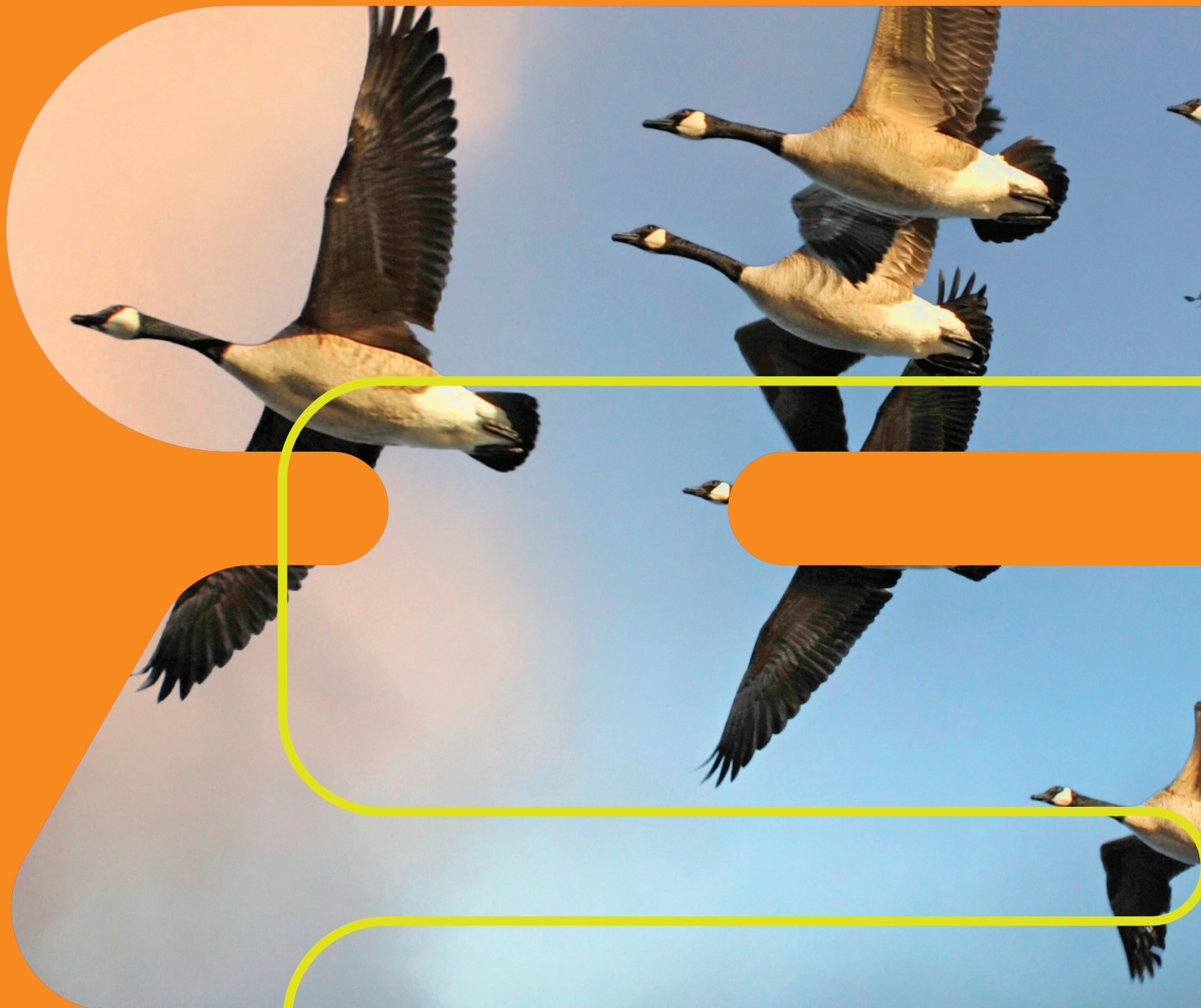


# IES Strategy 2024-27

Enabling interdisciplinary solutions  
through science and connections

November 2024



[the-ies.org](https://the-ies.org)

The Institution  
of Environmental  
Sciences

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# Acknowledgements

## **About the Institution of Environmental Sciences**

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (the IES) is at the forefront of uniting the environmental sciences around a shared goal: to work with speed, vision and expertise to solve the world's most pressing environmental challenges, together. As the global professional membership body for environmental scientists, we support a diverse network of professionals all over the world – and at every stage of their education and careers – to connect, develop, progress and inspire.

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# Foreword

*“In truth, a huge mass of data and insight is available, indeed far more than ever before. It is collected by scientists and specialist agencies and regularly updated, but it tends to be either hidden in technical reports or presented with jargon, acronyms and seemingly disconnected statistics that make little sense to many of us.*

*I believe we all need to see and understand this information. That includes young people still at school, executives running companies and even experts in particular fields who sometimes don't have time to see summaries of findings from their counterparts working in other fields”*

**HRH King Charles** (2021) In Juniper, T.  
*The science of our changing planet.*

Our 2024 Strategic Plan comes at a time when our membership community faces unprecedented challenges. Headline indicators of our planet's environmental health and prospects make depressing reading. World population is growing, placing extreme pressure on finite natural resources. With over half of people living in rapidly expanding urban areas demands placed on ecosystem services have now reached extreme and unsustainable levels.

Exploitation of these services is driving levels of atmospheric warming that are affecting the balance of key earth systems central to supporting the global population. Headlines

are filled with reports of melting ice caps, sea level rise, extreme weather, desertification, flooding, forest fires, dying coral reefs, air pollution, loss of pollinating insects and plummeting biodiversity. Models predict that if key indicators of global health aren't controlled quickly, our global well-being will be seriously undermined.

These issues have catapulted environmental science into the spotlight and led to unprecedented demands to address negative environmental impacts driven by processes sometimes not yet fully understood. There is intense demand for effective solutions which must protect economic wellbeing and be implemented within timescales dictated by the speed of global warming and biodiversity loss.

The response of the research community has been spectacular. For example, an almost tenfold increase in the number of earth observation satellites launched annually since 2014 means we are collecting more data than we can process. The publication of scientific papers has increased at a staggering rate. Almost 14,000 papers have already been published on biodiversity decline alone in 2024 – compared to 6,000 in 2020. For our members, keeping abreast of these complex developments alongside a rapidly evolving policy scene is more challenging than ever before.

All of this highlights the growing importance of our IES mission. Our 2024-2027 strategy will strengthen our efforts to foster a

scientific community equipped with the knowledge, training, and qualifications needed to address these challenges. These efforts will remain at the centre of our charitable objects alongside promoting education of the public on key environmental issues.

We will continue to implement our mission by pursuing five strategic themes designed to support our members' work, delivering the transformational changes needed to address the climate crisis, and associated problems of pollution and over-exploitation of ecosystem services.

At the core of our strategy is the continued development of our eight IES Communities (**Strategic Theme 1**). These provide an interdisciplinary forum in key focus areas for understanding and addressing the main scientific issues of the day. Via our journal, webinars and training activities, they will be expanded and strengthened to provide a forum where our members can stay on top of the latest developments, techniques, policy and debate.

Via our Environmental Policy and Implementation Community (EPIC) we will continue to harness the scientific expertise of our membership to inform and shape UK environmental policy through our contacts with government and other stakeholders (**Strategic Theme 2**). This will give our members a strong voice in determining our environmental future and ensure their expertise makes a direct contribution to addressing the environmental problems we currently face.

At the heart of our Communities are our members, and supporting them is central to our mission. We will redouble our efforts to ensure they have access to the information, tools, skills and competencies needed to

address the unprecedented challenges our profession currently faces (**Strategic Theme 3**). This will in part be achieved by a major redevelopment of our website, which will also help us deliver enhanced career development opportunities, facilitate expansion of our competency frameworks, and promote registration for qualifications (CEnv, CSci, REnvP and RSciTech).

Our Communities benefit from a wide spectrum of participants of different ages, nationalities, backgrounds, career profiles and experience. This creates a rich and stimulating environment for promoting understanding and progress. By embracing this diversity, the IES demonstrates that it doesn't just support the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (**Strategic Theme 4**) – but recognises that they bring significant advantages to our organisation and its work.

As public concern about the impacts of the climate crisis on our day-to-day lives grows, it is increasingly clear that people want better understanding of the causes and answers to the problems. The rapid growth in environmental voluntary work and citizen science confirms this and we recognise our responsibility to provide leadership in this area. **Strategic Theme 5** of our strategy addresses how the IES can continue to provide this support based on sound, underpinning scientific principles.

By pursuing this strategy, maintaining our science-based focus and following our underpinning principles of operational excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration and focus on solutions, we are confident that the IES will continue to thrive as one of the UK's leading environmental organisations.

**Bernard Devereux, IES Chair**

# Introduction

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) is at the forefront of uniting the interdisciplinary field of environmental science around a shared mission: to work with speed, vision and expertise to solve the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

To achieve this, we've been working since 1972 to ensure that environmental scientists are connected, skilled and knowledgeable. As the global professional membership body for environmental scientists, we support a diverse network of professionals all over the world – and at every stage of their education and careers – to connect, develop, progress and inspire.

Alongside this, we're a charity working to raise the profile of our members' increasingly crucial work. Today, there is an environmental dimension to every debate, and our thousands of members are embedded in every field; at the forefront of delivering global, evidence-based solutions to the challenges facing our environment and society.

Our strong ties with academia, government and the professions mean we're in a unique position to influence transformative change. Working as one, we know we can help each other solve environmental challenges and co-create a sustainable society for people and nature.

## What is environmental science?

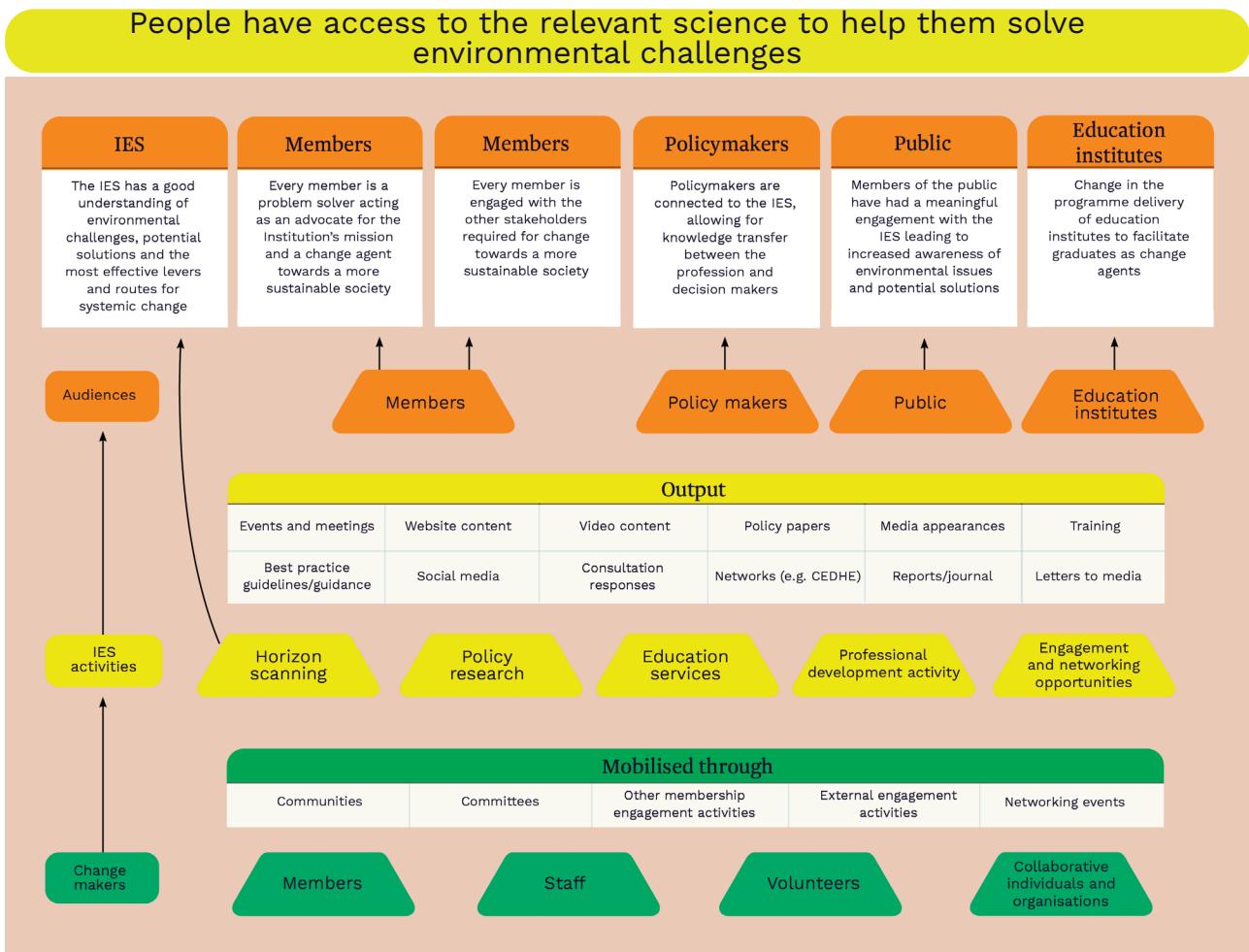
Environmental science is an integrative scientific field, unifying the physical, chemical, biological, engineering and social sciences in the study of the environment and in finding sustainable solutions to environmental challenges.



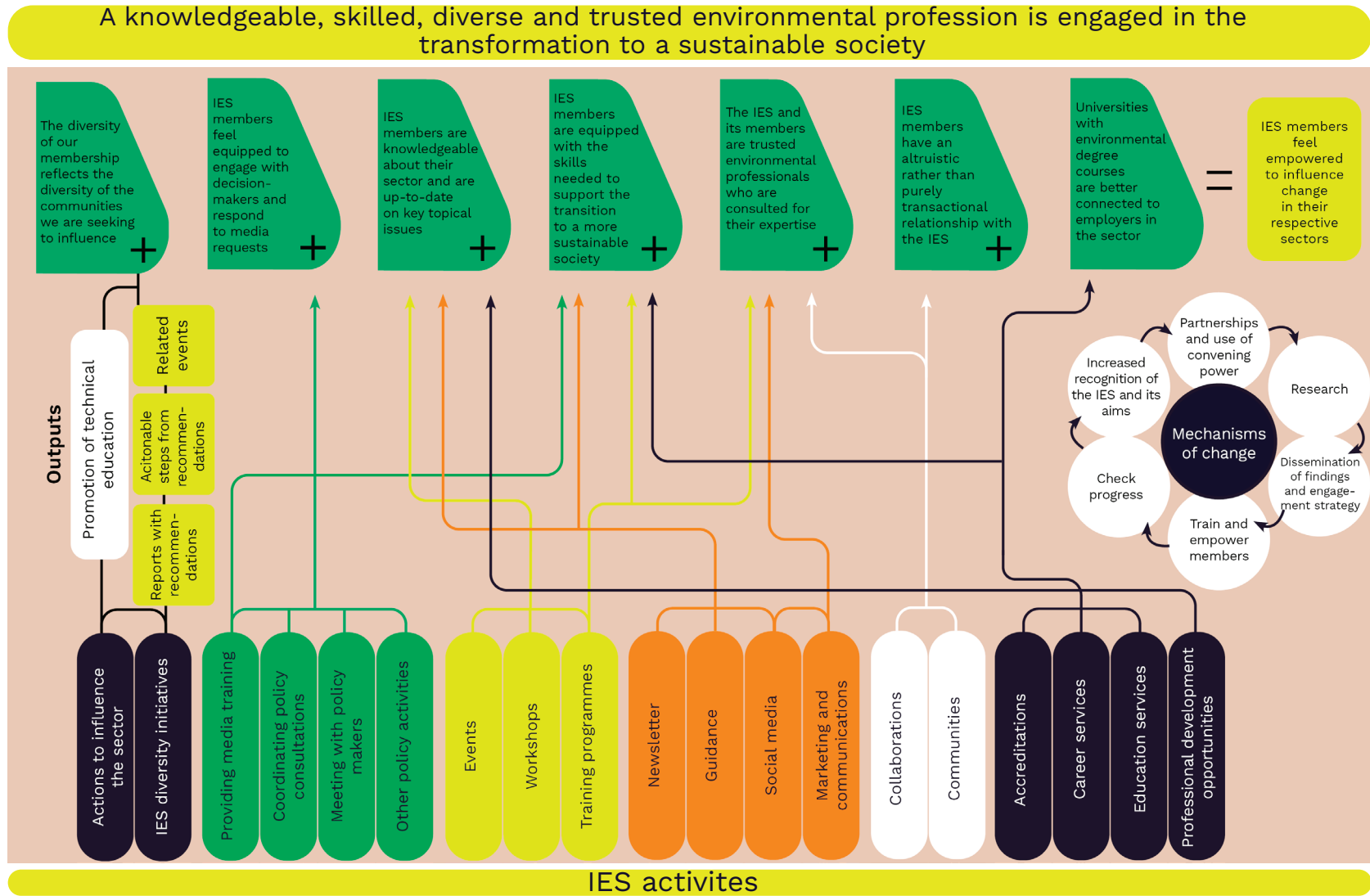
# Purpose

Our purposes are shown below along with their associated Theory of Change models. These reflect the dual nature of the work of the IES – the internal focus on supporting our members, and the external focus on supporting transformative change in the environment sector and society at large.

## 1. To unite science and people to resolve environmental challenges.



## 2. To create and sustain a knowledgeable, skilled, diverse, and trusted environmental profession engaged in the transformation to a sustainable society.





# Our principles

## 1 We start with science

Everything we do is grounded in robust science and informed by our members. We promote an evidence-based approach to education, decision-making and policy.

## 2 We connect different perspectives

We connect our diverse network of members, supporters and collaborators who are at the forefront of evidence-based progress. We bring in wide ranging expertise to promote our role as the go-to organisation for inclusive and interdisciplinary environmental science.

## 3 We inspire a way forwards

As leaders in our field, we provide an inspirational vision for environmental sciences. We champion our profession, openly share learnings and provide the strategic direction to implement them. All while helping to guide our members through the science and legislation that impacts their work.

## 4 We get things done

With a can-do attitude, we take the initiative and move at speed to respond to the urgency of environmental challenges, adapting as they arise.

# Strategic themes

## 1 Communities & Connections

The complex interlinked environmental issues facing our society, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, underline the need for an environmental science profession that is connected, collaborative and challenge focused.

To unlock solutions with co-benefits across society and the natural world, the IES convenes and supports member-led communities of practice that span specialisms and sectors. These communities are underpinned by principles of systems thinking, sustainability and environmental justice, and they champion solutions-led science and practice. Where specialist communities already exist, we will forge greater links between them to support interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and identify key cross-cutting areas where greater collaboration is needed.

The IES will expand its role as a knowledge broker - providing opportunities for our members, key stakeholders, and wider society to engage with accessible environmental knowledge - through our packed events calendar, extensive training offering and open-access publications. Impact strategies will be

developed for relevant outputs to ensure that they support meaningful engagement with key audiences.

The IES will foster a collaborative ethos both internally and externally, developing effective partnerships with strategically aligned organisations. In particular, the IES will seek to develop partnerships to enable interdisciplinary knowledge exchange, with a focus on solutions-led science.

### 2024-27 Goals to support the Communities & Connections theme

**Goal 1:** Forge greater links between communities by convening interdisciplinary working groups, holding the Dialogue between Disciplines conference, publishing joint guidance, and hosting fora on key topics that sit at the interface of different communities.

**Goal 2:** Conduct a gap analysis of existing partnerships and establish new partnerships between Communities and key stakeholders who support interdisciplinary approaches to environmental science, such as social science organisations, that recognise the areas of expertise that fall outside of the IES remit.

## 2 Evidence-informed policy

Pressing environmental challenges have raised the profile of environmental policy significantly, creating an increasingly crowded space for engagement with decisionmakers. To continue representing the voice of science, scientists and the natural world, the IES prioritises engagement designed for impact, built on strong relationships with government, arms-length bodies, and those involved with delivering policy.

We take an integrated and solutions-led approach to policy change: from influence to implementation. Our approach is informed by systems thinking, with the goal of achieving transformative change towards a sustainable society. We will champion the voice of science and scientists in policy through relationships, insights, and recommendations that support the delivery of positive environmental outcomes.

As a professional body rooted in the scientific community, the IES unifies communities of scientists, policymakers, and academics, representing a uniquely interdisciplinary and evidence-informed perspective. IES members are at the heart of how our policy programme is designed and delivered. They inform our horizon scanning, contribute to our thought-leading policy positions and reports, and actively engage as agents of change with the support of our policy training and briefings.

### 2024-27 Goals to support the Evidence Informed Policy theme

**Goal 1:** Build strong relationships with stakeholders across a changing Governmental and Parliamentary landscape, making the IES a preferred and trusted source for science-based evidence on environmental challenges.

**Goal 2:** Modernise our regulatory monitoring services for members, including through an updated Essential Environment bulletin and longer-form content on the implications of regulatory change.

**Goal 3:** Expand training on policy skills for environmental scientists across specialisms, incorporating case studies to facilitate direct engagement between science, the public and policy.

**Goal 4:** Construct lasting links between policy design and delivery through our recently established Environmental Policy Implementation Community (EPIC), linking our national and international policy influence with robust delivery and evaluation.

### 3 Training, skills & competency

To accelerate the transition to a sustainable society and thriving environment, our members need to be knowledgeable about their sector, up to date on key topical issues and equipped with the necessary skills.

We will develop competency frameworks that outline the skills, knowledge and attributes needed by environmental scientists, setting out the technical, digital, enabling, interdisciplinary and systems thinking skills required for different environmental specialisms. These will support clear pathways of development, producing opportunities for members to progress their careers through tailored CPD and training, either created in-house, or accredited, or signposted for external delivery.

We will provide recognition of competency through the provision of registers such as CEnv, CSci, REnvP and RSciTech, ensuring that the IES remains the best place to achieve these designations. We will also seek to open additional routes into the sector through technical education in recognition of the evolving nature of the environmental science workforce.

#### 2024-27 Goals to support the Training, Skills & Competency theme

**Goal 1:** Develop competency frameworks for Air Quality and Land Condition, with reflection on core skills for all environmental professionals. These will be used as templates for the future development of competency frameworks in other specialisms.

**Goal 2:** Develop bespoke training, or endorse or signpost existing training, to support progression through the new competency frameworks to equip our members with the technical, digital, enabling, interdisciplinary, and systems thinking skills to adapt to changes in society, science, and working practices.

**Goal 3:** Achieve a licence from the Science Council to award the Registered Scientist designation. Map the Chartered Scientist and Chartered Environmentalist designations to enable a reduced applications for those holding one of the qualifications to apply for the other, and achieve recognition for this mapping from the relevant Registration Authorities.

**Goal 4:** Increase our offering for those coming through technical education routes.

## 4 Creating & sustaining a diverse profession

One of the central aims over our last strategic period (2021-24) was to support increased equity, diversity and inclusion in the sector, with the goal of our membership demographics reflecting the diversity of the communities we seek to influence.

The IES has made significant strides in this area, leading the way on reporting on our diversity statistics and we are pleased to have reduced the diversity gap in our membership over the past few years. Our focus now is ensuring that diverse communities are represented in our governance and improving the professional experiences of minoritised communities within the environmental professions. We will continue to be a leader in the field by inspiring and enabling a diverse environmental profession by supporting systemic change.

### 2024-27 Goals to support the Creating & Sustaining a Diverse Profession theme

**Goal 1:** Implement all the actions from our 2023-6 ED&I plan and evaluate the success of actions to inform future plans.

**Goal 2:** Launch a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Community to steer our work on improving ED&I in the sector, providing a forum for sharing learning and best practice across the sector, and to shape future initiatives.

## 5 Uniting science & people

One of the IES purposes is to unite science and people to solve environmental challenges. Achieving this involves working with stakeholders beyond our membership. We will seek appropriate grant funding to facilitate projects that connect stakeholders and ensure that environmental science evidence is available to the public, partners, policymakers, and educators.

In recognition of the scale of environmental challenges we face and the need for unprecedented collaboration, coordination and cooperation across nations, it is vital that we connect with environmental scientists globally. We will therefore seek to explore the potential to expand our global membership, supporting learning and knowledge sharing across borders.

### 2024-27 Goals to support the Uniting Science & People theme

**Goal 1:** Develop a comprehensive public engagement strategy and resourcing.

**Goal 2:** Implement a strategic approach to the Institution's international work, with a focus on areas with high growth or strategic potential.

**Goal 3:** Build closer links with professional bodies, charities, forums and researchers to maximise impact and support interdisciplinarity aspirations.

# The pillars that support the strategy

## 1 Operational excellence

- Moving with an urgency comparable to the environmental challenges we face
- Ensuring we maintain outstanding governance and staff
- Increasing the impact of our network of expert volunteers
- A commitment to digital to cater for the needs of members, learners and others at different stages of their careers around the world ('anytime, anywhere')
- Innovative marketing of membership and maximising the impact of our outputs
- Embedding accessibility and inclusivity across our operations

## 2 Solutions focus

- Horizon scanning emerging science and social issues
- Synthesising best available evidence and highlighting divergences
- Convening debate
- Championing practical solutions
- Giving people the tools to realise and deal with transformative change
- Influencing key people and organisations
- Facilitating collaboration



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### **3 Interdisciplinary focus**

- Identifying and confronting cross-cutting challenges
- Providing opportunities for expert communities to connect and collaborate
- Accessing expertise that lies beyond our membership
- Placing collaboration at the heart of our activities

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### **4 Leading by example**

- Providing a shared vision and pathways for achieving a positive future
- Measuring our impact and adapting practices to ensure the sustainability of our own operations and supporting others in their sustainability goals
- Building trust through a robust, scientific approach
- Using our resources and influence to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the sector

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