



CEE Board Trustee

An opportunity to become involved in a global environmental initiative!

Background

If we are to achieve environmental sustainability, protect against climate change and conserve biodiversity then we have to ensure that conservation or environmental management actions (interventions) achieve their goals, do more good than harm and are cost-effective. The enthusiasm and effort put in by conservation volunteers along with the public money spent by environmental management and conservation professionals, are valuable resources which should not be wasted, yet many of the environmental interventions used are not based on sound scientific evidence that they are effective. We cannot therefore be certain that they offer 'value for money' in terms of what is achieved. In order to respond to this challenge, the people who undertake environmental management and conservation work need good, accessible information on which interventions work and which don't.

The problem is that many who work in environmental management and conservation find it very difficult to get reliable and understandable information on what works and what doesn't. This is true for professionals employed in government agencies let alone the general public who work as volunteers. Also, scientific research often doesn't address the practical issues which practitioners have to make decisions about; there is a communication gap between science and practice.

The situation is however, now changing, with the introduction of 'systematic reviews' of the effectiveness of environment management and conservation interventions. Systematic reviews are an objective, rigorous and transparent way of pulling together and summarising the scientific research evidence on the effectiveness of an intervention - every effort is made to search out published and unpublished good quality research information on a particular topic, this is then summarised into a report, including, where possible, the synthesis of data to produce a summary figure which estimates the amount of effect an intervention might be expected to have. Systematic reviews are fundamentally different to traditional literature reviews (which are predisposed to bias) in that they conform to a formal and transparent methodology. Systematic reviews are used in medicine, health and social care and education, to ensure that these public services are 'evidence-based' and use resources effectively. More recently, this methodology has been introduced to

environment management, and systematic reviews have been undertaken on important questions such as how best to conserve a rare species or the impact of wind farms on birds or how 'greening' of the urban environment can help protect human health against the impact of climate change (see www.environmentalevidence.org).

Systematic reviews therefore provide an accessible, reliable, objective summary of good quality information, relating to specific questions or concerns, to inform those working at policy, management or practitioner level (including the general public), helping them to make 'evidence-based' decisions and thus they help ensure that precious public resources are used in the most cost-effective way.

The Collaboration for Environmental Evidence

The Collaboration for Environmental Evidence (CEE) is a world leader in the promotion of evidence-based policy and practice in environmental management. The CEE was established in 2007 and is a registered charity within the UK¹ (see www.environmentalevidence.org for the CEE Constitution). It is a rapidly growing world-wide network of people who contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable environment management, through the conduct and use of systematic reviews.

Whilst other sectors such as the health services have been coordinating an evidence base and using systematic review methodology for a few decades, it is only relatively recently that this has started to happen in environmental management and it is CEE that has led the way. CEE has established the infrastructure needed to promote and facilitate the conduct of systematic reviews for environment management. In 2007 CEE developed an open-access electronic library of systematic reviews, which is the only source of peer-reviewed systematic reviews of evidence in the fields of conservation and environmental management. The Library can accessed via the CEE website (www.environmentalevidence.org).

The Collaboration has achieved international recognition for this work and CEE expertise has been employed by key governmental and intergovernmental organisations to meet their needs for evidence.

- The **mission** of CEE is to make biodiversity conservation and environmental management more effective so that we can better conserve the biodiversity of our planet, for the benefit of all people.
- The main **aim** is to enable people to have easy access to scientific research information about what works and what doesn't work, in conserving biodiversity and environmental quality.
- The **process** is that the CEE will facilitate communication between the environmental and conservation communities and the scientific community, to identify the most important topics and then will support, coordinate and quality assure, the production of systematic reviews of these topics.
- The main **output** of the CEE will be an open-access electronic library of systematic reviews with associated communications intended for a wide audience.
- The intended **beneficiaries** are the general public who will benefit from more effective environment management and conservation action because those working in the

¹ Charity Commission Registration Number 1157607

conservation sector (many are volunteers working with charitable organisations) will be able to easily access information to help them improve the effectiveness of their work.

Our Constitution sets out how the CEE will operate within Charity Law. The CEE operates as a 'not-for-profit' organisation and has a Board of Trustees who are responsible for proper governance of the CEE, probity, adherence to regulations for 'not for profit' organisations and charity law.

Involvement with CEE can be through being a member of a Review Team, Methods Group or Thematic Group (see www.environmentalevidence.org for more details). Currently CEE activity is co-ordinated by the UK CEE Centre hosted by the Centre for Evidence-Based Conservation (CEBC), Bangor University, UK. CEE Centres have also been established in France, Canada, Chile, Sweden, South Africa, and the United States. The UK CEE Centre is responsible for maintenance of the CEE website, quality assurance of the electronic library of systematic reviews, the editorial function of CEE's peer-reviewed journal, 'Environmental Evidence' and general administration.

Role Description and Person Specification

CEE is seeking new Trustees [of the charity] to bring their experience and expertise, to join the existing Board in their efforts to expand and consolidate the funding base for CEE and to support its further development as a global network. We are specifically seeking Trustees with expertise in:

- Fund-raising/ resource investigation
- Finance (accounting)
- Law (Charity Law and Contracting)

Knowledge and experience of environment management is not essential, but an interest in conservation of biodiversity is desirable and commitment to the aims and objectives of CEE is required. Trustees need not be UK based and should be aged over 18 years.

Along with existing Trustees, new Trustees will strive to:

- Be committed to the purpose, objectives and values of the organisation
- Be constructive about other trustees' opinions in discussions and in response to staff members' contributions at meetings
- Be able to act reasonably and responsibly when undertaking such duties and performing tasks
- Be able to maintain confidentiality on sensitive and confidential information
- Be supportive of the values (and ethics) of the organisation
- Understand the importance and purpose of meetings, and be committed to preparing for them adequately and attending them regularly
- Be able to analyse information and, when necessary, challenge constructively
- Be able to make collective decisions and stand by them
- Be able to respect boundaries between executive and governance functions
- Be able to provide strategic advice to the executive staff

Statutory duties of a trustee:

- To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document

- To ensure the organisation uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects: the organisation must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds
- If the organisation employs staff, to appoint the chief executive officer and monitor his/her performance

Other duties

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve:

- Leadership of the organisation
- General advocacy of CEE mission
- Scrutinising board papers
- Leading discussions
- Focusing on key issues
- Providing guidance on new initiatives

Expected time commitment and input

The Board of Trustees meets once a year, for the Annual General Meeting, usually held in May, in the UK. Other meetings may be arranged as and when required, but are not expected to amount to more than three meetings a year, including the AGM. Telephone, Skype, Zoom, or video conference facilities may be utilised for meetings if appropriate.

In-between meetings, Trustees are expected to engage in email, telephone, or video conference communication as required and to read reports and other papers, contribute to drafting documents, preparation of accounts and other reports as required for effective governance and compliance with Charity Law. It is anticipated that these activities will require a time commitment of up to 12 days per year, however this varies from year to year. Given the global nature of the Board most of the interaction will be virtual, however there is an opportunity to attend in-person CEE conferences that are typically held every two years. Trustees who hold 'officer' roles such as Chair, Secretary or Treasurer may need to spend more time than this on CEE duties.

An Induction Programme would be arranged for new Trustees, which would involve reading of key documents, meeting other Trustees face-to-face, by telephone, or video conference as appropriate.

The length of term of office of each Trustee is three years. Trustees who have reached the end of their first term of office are eligible for re-election by the Board for a maximum number of two further terms of office.

Current Board of Trustees

Kathryn Monk, Chair
Henrik Smith
Ruth Stewart
Steven Cooke
Neal Haddaway
Ruth Garside

Enquiries about the position may be sent, in confidence, to Andrew Pullin (CEE Chief Executive Officer) via admin@environmentalevidence.org.

Supporting bibliography

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