



Research Strategy

**2008 - 2011**

# Foreword

I am delighted to introduce Lantra's research strategy, which outlines how we will focus our research activities over the next three years. Research is central to the work of Lantra. As an employer-led organisation we need to have the ability to act as a voice of employers and a strong evidence base will enable us to do this with confidence.

High quality research is central to all Sector Skills Councils. The new remit for SSCs requires us to ensure that 'authoritative labour market information' for our sector is made available. All SSCs are required to demonstrate an extensive understanding of the current and future skill needs of businesses.

This research strategy will ensure that our research work informs and complements our business plan. We will work with other research bodies to address research gaps and avoid duplication. Our objective is a rigorous, authoritative and forward looking perspective on the skills requirements of the environmental and land-based sector.

To deliver the strategy Lantra will work with government departments, trade associations and other partners to fully utilise the wealth of 'top down' evidence and outline what this means for the sector. We will supplement this evidence with our own primary research, which will be focused on filling gaps in the evidence base.

Importantly our research will also encompass the collection of qualitative 'bottom up' evidence from employers, which will provide real market intelligence. Our links with employers through national, regional and industry specific groups, and the managers who support them are a valuable resource who provide a window to what is happening in the sector.

Peter Martin  
Chief Executive

## 1.0 Introduction

Lantra is the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based industries. We are an employer-led organisation licensed by governments across the UK, to determine, promote and ensure that there are appropriate levels of skills and business development support for businesses and individuals in our sector.

### 1.1 The sector

Environmental and land-based businesses enhance the quality of life for every man, woman and child in the United Kingdom. They improve well-being, supply quality-assured food, ensure the health and welfare of animals, provide leisure activities, enrich the rural and urban environment, and protect our natural heritage.

Our purpose at Lantra is to raise the skills and business development in the 180,000 businesses across the 17 industries (or sub-sectors) which make up the sector. Whilst these industries are diverse they share common characteristics and can be grouped into three main clusters as outlined below:

<b>Land management and production</b>	<b>Animal health and welfare</b>	<b>Environmental industries</b>
Agricultural crops Agricultural livestock Production horticulture Aquaculture	Animal care Animal technology Equine Farriery	Environmental conservation Game conservation Fisheries management Horticulture, landscape and sports turf industries
Trees and timber Fencing Floristry Land-based engineering	Veterinary nursing	

The activities our workforce engages in are as diverse as our industries. Close to 1 million people are in paid employment in the sector, and there are a further 500,000 who work as volunteers on a regular basis.

### 1.2 Defining research

For the purpose of this strategy, research is defined as a systematic way of finding answers to questions. It aids our understanding and increases our knowledge.

The research activities we will undertake include:

- Analysing the implications of existing research
- Commission new research to explore skills issues within the sector
- Collecting 'bottom up' qualitative information from employers, trade associations and other bodies
- Provide authoritative analysis to identify skills priorities.

### **1.3 Purpose of this strategy**

This document sets out the strategic direction for Lantra's research. It sets out our vision for research and the principles which will underpin our work. The strategy outlines how we will position our research activity to minimise duplication and maximise impact. Finally, it finishes by outlining how research will impact on the organisation as a whole via integration within the broader planning process to ensure there is evidence-based decision making.

The strategy has been used to develop a research plan, outlining the key project and activities we will undertake on an annual basis. This is available on our website <http://www.lantra.co.uk/stakeholders/research-documents/>

## 2.0 Our vision

Research lies at the centre of Lantra's work. Our vision is that:

'Lantra's research will provide and communicate robust evidence on the sector's skills needs and the extent to which skills contribute to economic, environmental and social sustainability; in order that our policies, products and services are effective.'

### 2.1 Principles underpinning our research

When undertaking both primary and secondary research we work to a well defined set of research principles, as set out below:

<b>Contributory</b>	We will not duplicate but will contribute to advancing wider knowledge about policy, practice or theory related to the sector.
<b>Credible</b>	We will conduct research using transparent methodologies and will offer well founded arguments about the significance of the evidence generated.
<b>Useful</b>	We will focus on the target audience, to ensure our research is relevant and useful, whether that be research for policy makers or labour market intelligence for young people and adults.
<b>Actionable</b>	We will not see research as an ends in itself but as a mechanism to inform decision making and assist positive change. The findings from our research will be actionable.

### 2.2 Availability of data in the sector

As a Sector Skills Council, Lantra is funded by government to collect, analyse and communicate up-to-date labour market information on our sector. In order to achieve this it is essential we make full use of secondary evidence including official statistics, national datasets and survey evidence.

Lantra have mapped and appraised the core data sets which can be used to develop UK-wide labour market information (LMI) for the sector. These cover information such as employment levels, future changes in employment, workforce and business characteristics. The data sets which are available offer variable coverage of the environmental and land-based sector. Some parts of the sector, such as animal care or environmental conservation, are not clearly represented within the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system which underpins most cross sector data collection (see annex 1).

We will focus primary research activity where there are limitations within existing data. As well as undertaking a 'top down' analysis of these sources we will ensure our research is also driven by 'bottom up' intelligence from employers themselves.

### **2.3 Levels of analysis**

Lantra recognise that robust quantitative and qualitative evidence for the sector requires analysis at a number of levels to ensure that findings are both relevant and meaningful on one hand, and have better prospects of effective implementation on the other.

#### **Industry specific**

The individual industries which make up the environmental and land-based sector have unique characteristics. These distinct characteristics often demand that our research is tailored. In addition, the employers and organisations working within these industries place greatest value on work which is tailored to addressing their needs.

#### **Nation specific**

Labour markets in the four countries within the UK reflect similar conditions but have distinctive characteristics. Given these issues, and the devolution of many aspects of government policy, it is likely that policy responses within the sector will vary amongst the countries.

#### **Regional specific**

Governments and their agencies are increasingly looking for an increased granularity of data. This may involve presenting data at a regional level or below. Given the issues outlined on data availability (2.2) this will be challenging, but a challenge we must be conscious of.

### 3.0 Research activities

There are a number of drivers of our research activity. On one hand we are an employer-led organisation and must strive to represent the views of employers. On the other hand our major funder and regulator as a SSC, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), has expectations on the scope and type of research we will undertake.

We divide our research activities into three categories:

Core activities	Project activities	Development activities
Research we are required to do as a SSC by the UKCES.	Research funding we secure from others, which complement our work.	Research gap filling, which is driven by Lantra or its industry/ national groups.

#### 3.1 Core activities

At the time of writing the research activities required from an SSC as part of the re-licensing criteria are:

**Provide labour market intelligence (LMI)** - produced to a common framework to allow consistency and comparability across sectors and nations.

**Skill needs assessment** - a robust assessment of the skills needs of employers and the place of skills in driving productivity and competitiveness. This will draw upon market intelligence and outline drivers for change.

**Assessment of current provision** – providing an outline of the quantity and quality of provision as SSCs are required to work with, and influence, providers and funders to ensure that qualifications, apprenticeships and the supply-side in general is demand led.

**Performance and evaluation framework** - development of a set of performance indicators and specific evaluations to show the results and impacts of the organisation.

### 3.2 Project activities

In the past, Lantra has successfully secured funding for research activities from outside its core funding. This research is driven by the needs of our customer. We have conducted specific projects for the English, Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh governments in the past.

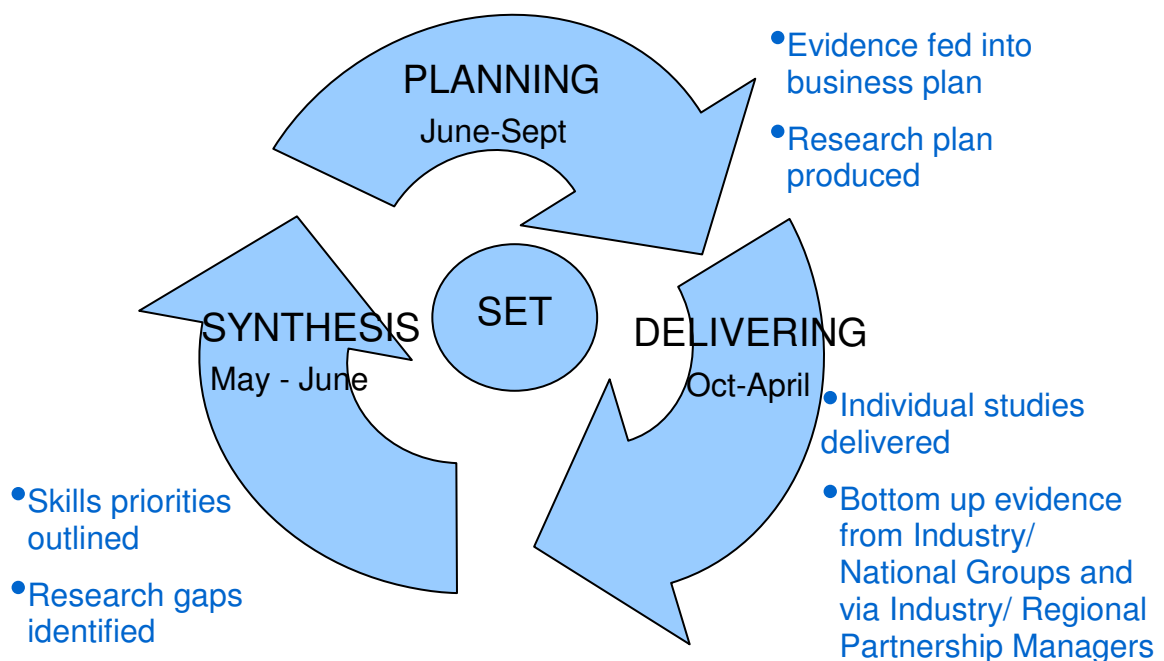
### 3.3 Developmental activities

These studies involve conducting primary research to fill gaps in our industry knowledge. We will prioritise issues from employers based on the availability of existing evidence and aim to undertake a **triennial review** of our industries. This is to say we aim to conduct primary research to cover each of the 17 industries at least once every three years.

In addition we will undertake research activities to develop Lantra as an organisation. For instance we plan to undertake a staff survey every two years and also use research on how Lantra is viewed by our stakeholders and employers.

### 4.0 Research and wider business planning

As well as being informed by the business plan, research will also feed back and shape our business strategy. In order to achieve this we work to an annual research cycle which governs the focus of our work.



The research cycle will allow us to identify and prioritise projects on an annual basis within a published research plan. This will be developed in June of each year and will be formally published in September, in line with the organisations wider planning activities.

We will also synthesise the evidence we have on an annual basis. This will allow the organisation to identify evidence-based sector skills priorities. These priorities will shape our high level planning in June, and the detailed national and departmental planning which is agreed by September.

### **Research Advisory Group**

Our work will be overseen by two forums. Lantra's Senior Executive Team (SET) will sign off our annual plan and formally receive the results of our annual synthesis of evidence.

At a strategic level we will establish a Research Advisory Group to act as a critical friend, helping us to develop our annual research plan and check that our analysis is credible. This group comprises employers and research experts.

For industry specific studies we will set up project steering groups which will oversee the research and help to develop appropriate recommendations.

## **5.0 Resources**

There is a dedicated research team within Lantra and we will focus on building capacity to undertake research work in-house where this is possible. The team also manages a discrete research budget to commission research.

Lantra will continue to develop a research culture across the organisation, such that members of staff across the organisation feed into research activities. Lantra's Industry Partnership Managers and Regional Partnership Managers have a significant role in supporting research activity across the organisation and ensuring there is a flow of information from employers. Their focus is on capture 'bottom up' intelligence. Sometimes anecdotal in nature, this evidence will help to inform and guide the direction of our research activities and market intelligence.

To reduce costs and maximise value, we will work with others where possible. This will include other Sector Skills Councils, who we will engage with via the Intelligence Network.

### **Quality processes**

The research studies we conduct will be to a consistently high standard. To maintain quality all members of staff work to our ISO 9001 quality procedures. These procedures cover research related activities such as developing research briefs, designing research tools, managing the project, developing reports and dissemination. We will use a series of key performance indicators to monitor performance on an ongoing basis.

## **6.0 Communicating research findings**

Our research may be of interest to a variety of audiences so we will work with partners to agree appropriate dissemination plans for each study.

**Employers** - We will present research findings back to industry by using publications such as Connect, Lantra's industry newsletter and the industry pages of our website. Research will also underpin media activities promoting the sector.

**Stakeholders** - We will develop the research section of the site to ensure stakeholders can access the information they require from us.

**Individuals/ Careers Advisors** – We will ensure LMI is incorporated within the information Lantra disseminates to young people, adults and careers advisors. This will include using the [www.afuturein.com](http://www.afuturein.com) website.

## **7.0 Evaluation**

We will undertake evaluative research on key Lantra initiatives in order to determine their impact and added value. This will involve the research team supporting managers to commission or undertake appropriate research.

We also need to evaluate our research work to maximise its value and impact. This will be done at the individual project level, by including a customer evaluation within every research project. We will also evaluate the impact of research programme as a whole, with the outcomes used to shape our next three year strategy.

### Annex 1 – The environmental and land-based sector and SIC

Industry	Scope	SIC 2000	SIC 2007
Agricultural crops	Crop production	01.1	01.1
	Support activities	01.41	01.61 01.63 01.64
	Mixed farming (part)	01.3	01.5
Agricultural livestock	Livestock inc:	01.2	01.4
	Beef		
	Sheep		
	Pigs		
	Poultry		
	Dairy		
	Other livestock		
	Support activities	01.41	01.62
	Mixed farming (part)	01.3	01.5
Animal care	Pet shops	52.48/9	47.76*
	Pet breeders		01.49*
	Grooming	93.05/9*	96.09*
	Training		
	Boarding		
	Animal welfare charities	85.20	75.00
	Zoos and wildlife parks	92.53*	91.04*
	Public services		
Animal technology	Animals used in science		
Aquaculture	Production of fin-fish	05.02	03.2
	Production of shellfish	05.02	03.2
Environmental conservation	Maintenance of rivers, coasts and waterways		
	Rural and urban	92.53	91.04*
	Conservation of landscapes		
	Community recycling		
Equine activities	Riding schools	92.62/9	85.51
	Livery yards		
	Competition yards		
	Working horses		
	Breeders	01.22	01.43
	Clubs and hunts	92.62/9	
	Racing yards	92.62/9	93.19/1 93.19/9

	Trekking yards Retail	52.48/9	
Farriery	Shoeing of horses Other horse care	28.52	01.62/9*
Fencing	Fencing contractors Fencing erectors Multi-skilled operators	01.41* 45.34*	01.61* 43.29*
Fisheries management	Fisheries research [government funded] Private research Angling clubs		
Floristry	Floristry design Creation Retailing Delivery Buying	52.48/9*	47.76*
Game and wildlife conservation	Uplands Lowlands Wetlands Deer management	01.5	01.7
Land-based engineering	Manufacture of tractors	29.31	28.30/1
	Manufacture of other agricultural machinery/ Groundcare forestry	29.32	28.30/2
	Wholesale of agricultural equipment	51.88	46.61
	Renting of agricultural equipment	71.31	77.31
Landscaping	Hard landscaping	01.41*	81.3
	Soft landscaping		
	Sports turf	92.61/9	93.11
	Golf greenkeeping		
	Private, heritage and botanic gardens Commercial grounds Public parks and green spaces	01.41	91.04*
Production horticulture	Fruit	01.13	01.2
	Plants	01.21	01.3

	Flowers and bulbs Nursery stock Garden centres Vegetables mushrooms Tree production	01.12  02.01	47.76* 01.13  01.29
Trees and timber	Forestry	02	02.10 02.20 02.30 02.40

## Lantra

Lantra is the Sector Skills Council supporting skills, training and workforce development for businesses in the environmental and land-based sector. We are committed to helping everyone access the training, qualifications, skills and knowledge they need for business success and to develop their career.

We are an independent, UK-wide organisation that is owned and managed by our industries, which are grouped around land management and production, animal health and welfare and environmental industries.

We lead the way in understanding our industries' future skills and business needs. We work together with trade organisations, unions, training providers, governments and many more to maximise investment in skills.

[www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)  
[connect@lantra.co.uk](mailto:connect@lantra.co.uk)  
024 7669 6996

**LANTRA** Environmental and land-based skills

Telephone: 024 7669 6996 Facsimile: 024 7669 6732 Email: [connect@lantra.co.uk](mailto:connect@lantra.co.uk)  
© Lantra 2008 Registered no: 2823181 Charity no: 1022991  
Registered office: Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry CV8 2LG



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