

The Institution of Environmental Sciences

Response to the draft consultation document

VIEWPOINTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

May 1997.

1. Introduction:

Successful policies and environmental programmes can only be developed if based on accurate and comprehensive information. There is therefore a self-evident need to identify the changes which are taking place and the different influences on the environment both natural and man-made.

The range of information that could usefully be utilized is enormous and probably beyond the range of a single organization. It is also very diverse in character.

2. General Comment:

Based on the specific items on which views were requested by the Agency our particular response is as follows:-

- the Institution agrees with the need for a more integrated national framework for monitoring and measuring environmental situations. The Environment Agency is well placed to act as a co-ordinating body which can bring together the various contributions from both public and private research organizations, help to avoid duplications of effort and identify and promote attention to any neglected areas.
- a balance of different viewpoints is desirable, both in addressing monitoring priorities and in developing programmes to deal with particular problems. Many of the issues are emotive and a range of views from central and local government, institutions, business and research bodies will be beneficial;
- monitoring programmes will be in existence at a whole range of different levels from national to purely local; these should be identified in the context of an overall structure to aid co-ordination and achieve a balance in the degree of detail required.
- where gaps are identified in the monitoring framework, particular organizations with interests in that area should be approached and invited or encouraged to instigate the necessary action. In some cases it may be possible to divert resources from less important or duplicating investigations.
- wide collaboration in such an ambitious programme is essential and a Collaborative Forum is seen as an excellent medium for this. The Institution has a contribution to make to the Collaborative Forum both in helping to create the programme and in identifying contacts within its organization who could assist in one or other of the data gathering or monitoring exercises. Our contacts with Environmental Departments within the universities could be useful in this area.