

ECONORTH LTD.

Quality

Policy

John Thompson

Next Review Date: 12.02.25



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 projects across the UK and Ireland. Services include botanical and protected species surveys, licencing and mitigation, all ecological assessment, land management, Clerk of Works and GIS mapping.

EcoNorth is committed to ensuring that our customers are completely satisfied with the services we provide and are keen to engage with us again in the future.

We are committed to complying with client requirements, best professional practice and applicable statutory and regulatory obligations in all that we do.

We operate a Quality Management System which is in accordance with the requirements of the internationally recognised ISO 9001:2015.

EcoNorth strives for continual improvement in the performance of our systems and processes in order to achieve excellence in service provision and customer satisfaction.

2. Definitions

“EcoNorth” or “we” or “us” or “our” means “EcoNorth Ltd”.

“Quality” is the standard of something measured against other things of a similar nature - good quality means fit for purpose and meets customers’ requirements.

“Quality management system” is a set of policies, processes and procedures used by an organisation to ensure it can successfully complete its tasks in order to achieve its objectives.

“Customer satisfaction” is a measurement that determines how happy customers are with a company's products, services and capabilities. Customer satisfaction information can help a company determine how to best improve or change its products and services.

“Quality assurance” is the part of quality management focused on providing confidence that an organisation’s quality requirements will be fulfilled, internally to management and externally to customers, government agencies, regulators, certification bodies and third parties.

3. Achieving excellence in service provision and customer satisfaction

EcoNorth is committed to delivering high quality services that meet our customers’ needs and expectations and facilitate opportunities to enhance customer satisfaction. This is achieved in a number of ways.

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3.1 Suitably experienced and qualified staff

The competence of our team of employees and associates is central to providing an excellent service and we carefully match expert resources to projects.

Our projects team has over 80 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 employees:

- 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 and/or Association of Environmental Clerk of Works

All EcoNorth's operational arboriculture employees:

- Have, or are working towards, a Higher National Certificate in a relevant arboriculture topic.
- Have membership of the Arboricultural Association.

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 project team members by sharing experiences and 'shadowing' skilled staff 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.

3.2 Quality Assurance

EcoNorth's approach to quality assurance includes agreeing with the customer the nature, amount and timing of the outputs to be delivered during the course of the project, in advance of any works commencing. If customers' requirements change, or are extended, after a project has commenced then the changes should be reviewed before EcoNorth commits to them.

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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.

3.3 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.

3.4 Subcontractor/supplier selection and control

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

All subcontractors are required to complete a registration and assessment process in order 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.

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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 of subcontractor assessment.

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.

EcoNorth undertakes robust due diligence checks of suppliers prior to engagement. Once they become trusted partners, they are added to our preferred supplier list which is periodically reviewed. Suppliers' performance is monitored and reviewed quarterly at Senior Management Meetings.

3.5 Focus on customer requirements

EcoNorth is focused on determining customer's needs and expectations in order to deliver the required services to the agreed timeline and budget, leading to high quality customer experiences and satisfaction. This in turn enables the team to build constructive relationships with our customers and become a trusted partner in their current and future projects. Customer satisfaction feedback is collected, reviewed and shared with the team. Corrective actions are implemented where necessary.

For further details, please refer to EcoNorth's Customer Service Policy.

4. Compliance with the latest guidelines and regulations

EcoNorth is committed to compliance with the latest guidelines and regulations applicable to the provision of our services and to our core, management and support systems and processes.

The delivery of ecological surveys and assessments takes into account standard guidance, as set out 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.

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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 maintains a Legislation Register (ref: QF.11) and 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.

5. ISO 9001:2015

EcoNorth's Quality Management System demonstrates conformity with the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015 standard, which gives customer's reassurance that quality standards will be met. It also provides a framework for setting EcoNorth's annual Inventory of KPIs and Objectives, Targets and Management Programme; these are developed and implemented by our team, and authorised and periodically reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

6. Continuous improvement

EcoNorth strives for the continuous improvement of our performance throughout our organisation. We run an Internal Audit Programme and hold an annual management review, to identify systems and processes which are working effectively as well as any non-conformities. We then develop and implement corrective actions, to prevent the reoccurrence of non-conformities, and any opportunities for improvement.

7. Risk management

Operational risks to quality are reviewed on a monthly basis by the Senior Management Team and required strategic mitigating actions are identified and implemented. Operational 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 quality assurance and ensuring the effective implementation of this policy across all of our operations. He is fully supported by the Quality Manager, Quality Officer, Quality Champion and a number of Responsible Persons. All team members are responsible for proactively implementing the policy on a day to day basis.

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 and other interested parties.

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