1.   Aims and Introduction

CO2RE Hub commits to develop a strong and enduring culture of equality, diversity and inclusion and to promoting a positive culture, which celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and ensures fairness. [promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all our staff, students, partners and stakeholders are respected]. Our ambition is to instil these values across the Hub and its activities, as well as promoting them to our partner demonstrator projects, and the developing GGR industry.

The first draft of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan was developed within the first six months of the Hub, as required in the terms and conditions of the NERC funding. It has been discussed and agreed by the leadership team, with some input from other staff and professional guidance from the COO of the Smith School in the University of Oxford.

The Plan has been developed and informed by:
- The leadership of the Hub's EDI Lead, and Director, reflecting the importance we place on EDI issues
- The clear steer given by the funder's interview panel about the centrality of EDI considerations
- Consideration of the all-staff survey, which was one of the first activities undertaken by the newly formed Hub
- Engagement with colleagues at Universities of Edinburgh, Oxford (inc CREDS), and the Royal Society.

We expect the plan to be reviewed by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and we will consider any comments received.

We will continue refresh this plan throughout the programme, informed by the Hub EDI Working Group set up under the Plan from amongst Hub and Demonstrator staff. The EDI WG will meet twice p.a. to monitor and refresh our EDI approach. We interpret 'staff' broadly, seeking to include in our decision-making staff with responsibilities for administration, communications and knowledge exchange, as well as those identified as researchers.

Action 1a: By December 2021, agree a final version of this Plan and publish it on the Hub website.

In the following sections, we first set out our approach to our responsibilities for EDI. We then have specific sections on recruitment, bullying and harassment, communications, consultation/stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and reporting.

2. Responsibilities

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Hub is bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and must – in all its activities – have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The 'protected characteristics' (PCs) defined by the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The PSED is underpinned by additional, devolved, specific duties.

As a matter of policy, the Hub wishes to go beyond these legal minimums, in recognition of our responsibilities to our colleagues and stakeholders, and publics at large. We recognise that the research community is insufficiently diverse, and that this problem increases at more senior levels. We take seriously our responsibility to address existing inequalities within the research community. We aim to develop awareness of bias within the practices of Hub and, more broadly, to adopt measures to address this and to share good practice.

The delivery of the EDI Plan will be led by the EDI lead and the Hub Manager, who will report on its progress to the leadership team and, as necessary, to the Programme Steering Committee and Programme Board. As the Hub is a collaboration of **X** different universities, the delivery of the plan will be a shared responsibility of the leadership team. All staff in the Hub, as well as associated researchers and volunteers, are responsible for abiding by the content and spirit of this plan.

The EDI Working Group will advise the Hub leadership team on relevant issues, share good practice and take other agreed initiatives consistent with the aims of this plan. It will monitor the delivery of this plan, reporting on it annually beginning in 2021. Its membership will encompass the leadership team, Hub CIs and ECRs, and EDI leads from the Demonstrators. The WG will serve as a place for reflection and EDI policy development, the harmonisation of reporting across the Hub and demonstrators, and periodic course correction.

3. Recruitment

The composition of the Hub team reflects the existing inequalities in GGR research, despite having been selected in an open and transparent manner, and with a pro-active approach to the issue during the development of the bid team. Whilst not an issue that can be addressed quickly, we will actively address EDI concerns in our recruitment and career progression policies.

During the formation of the bid team, we sought to have a balance of PCs among the leadership team and CIs. We regard this as only a first step. In our first months of operation we have successfully recruited high calibre female staff into responsible positions in the Core team of the Centre, including the **Hub Manager and Stakeholder Manager**. We also considered diversity issues in making suggestions to UKRI regarding the appointment of the Programme Steering Committee, aiming for a 50:50 gender ratio.

We have aimed for equality and diversity in all recruitment. Our constituent institutions are the staff employers and while all have policies to promote this, we have sought to implement the highest standards – for example, inserting language to attract non-traditional applications into adverts and job descriptions, requiring interview

panel Chairs to have undertaking unconscious bias training or equivalent. All the CO2RE institutions support the gender equality Athena Swan Charter and are accredited under it to at least the Bronze Award.

Action 2a: Include a statement in all job descriptions and adverts that applications are encouraged from specific under-represented groups (e.g. women and relevant minority ethnic groups).
Action 2b: Ensure that all recruitment panels have at least one member who has undertaken equality and diversity training, including training in unconscious bias.
Action 2c: Ensure that appointment panels are diverse.
Action 2d: Monitor recruitment data, the diversity of CO2RE staff and the delivery of commitments related to adverts, training and panel composition and report the figures regularly to the leadership team.

4. Bullying and harassment

Bullying and harassment of staff, students, contractors and external stakeholders is unacceptable behaviour and will be treated very seriously. All of our institutions have clear procedures within which to make and handle complaints concerning bullying and harassment, and we will ensure these are followed. We will promote awareness of CO2RE's responsibilities in relation to bullying and harassment, including by promoting good practice.

Where both the complainant and subject of any complaint are in the same institution, we expect the issue to be addressed within the procedures of that institution.

Where the complainant and subject of the complaint are in different institutions, the complaint can be made within the procedures of either or both institutions. In these cases, where the complaint arises from CO2RE activities, CO2RE's management may need to advise the complainant of the appropriate process. Responsibility for advice and support will lie with the CO2RE Director and the named representatives in the relevant institutions. In their absence, or if they are involved, the Hub Manager will ensure appropriate support.

CO2RE staff, including employees of other universities who have relevant information, will be advised to give evidence through the appropriate process. With this exception, all matters relating to such complaints will be treated as confidential.

Action 3a: Ensure that all CO2RE staff are made aware of the bullying and harassment procedures of their employing institution during induction, as well as being given information on the CO2RE procedure and key contacts, as outlined above.

5. Communications

We will ensure that equality and diversity issues are considered in the internal and external communications of the Centre, including the website. This will include ensuring that stock images used across our outputs represent the diversity of the UK population, and that images associated with specific research topics are appropriate and inclusive. We will ensure a diverse range of CO2RE staff and external stakeholders are involved as speakers and participants in events and as invited authors of publications such as blogs and newsletter highlights.

As part of our commitment to inclusion, we plan cross-institutional communications and team-building, with particular attention to promoting diversity and equality and to encouraging inclusion. The Centre's Communications and Engagement Plan will set out detailed plans in this area.

Action 4a: Foster and train a more diverse set of research communications; monitor the diversity of speakers at events, publication/report authors, website contributors and images in all communications and take corrective action if and where needed.

6. Consultation/Stakeholder Engagement

EDI considerations will be built into all Hub consultation and stakeholder engagement processes. In line with our general EDI policy, the Hub will actively aim to engage with non-traditional groups, and monitor our performance of the same. The results of our engagement will be reviewed annually. We will also ask the demonstrators to do the same, sharing our experiences and expertise. Given the land-based nature of many GGR, often tied to farming, there is a need to go beyond the 'usual suspects' in engagement. Although the ecosystem of such groups is nascent, we will reach out to groups such as Black Environmental Network (http://www.ben-network.org.uk/), Black Girls Hike (bghuk.com), Wild In the City (https://wildinthecity.org.uk/). With respect to larger and national CSO, many have expressed an interest in increasing their diversity and we will explore and encourage such efforts.

Action 5a: Actively seek to diversify our stakeholder engagement, monitor the diversity of all Hub stakeholder engagements – invitations, responses, attendees, submissions, oral interventions, ad hoc meetings – and take corrective action if and where needed.

7. Flexible Working

All of our institutions have procedures to promote flexible working. We will follow these institutional policies, allowing staff to work flexibly, including through part-time work and career breaks. We will make this explicit at the point of recruitment, including in job specifications and job adverts. We will seek to learn from best practice within the different institutions in the consortium, and amend our processes accordingly.
We will be responsive to the needs of parents and carers and seek to ensure a good home/work balance for all staff. We will promote the use of weekend working, email practices to support, meeting times etc to protect staff. We will also support the participation of staff with caring responsibilities, including through remote access to meetings. Line managers will be actively encouraged to promote such practices. All Hub institutions have systems in place to enable effective flexible working with acceptance that people work non-standard office hours with no expectation that others should respond to emails outside of their own 'office' hours.

Action 6a: Ensure that staff have the technology, training and support to access meetings remotely, and that meetings are timed with due regard to enabling participation.
Action 6b: Ensure induction procedures in each institution include information on flexible working.

8. Career progression & Researcher-Led activities

All our institutions support the "Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers", also signed by the Research Councils. We recognise that staff from under-represented groups are likely to be disproportionately on fixed term contracts. We will use the commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion within the Concordat and in this plan to seek improved job security and career progression opportunities for staff on fixed term contracts.
From our ongoing recruitment processes, we have identified differences between our institutions with respect to the policies on career progression and job security. Within the first year of the Centre, we will establish a working group to investigate this in more detail with a view to promoting best practices within our own institutions.
We will support career progression and project leadership on merit alone. The distinction between 'investigators' and 'researchers' in UKRI financial rules makes this problematic in practice. Many research staff on fixed term contracts are excluded from the opportunity to lead projects, with negative effects for equality.

We will investigate providing mentoring support, at the application and management stages of the projects, especially to researchers who self-identify as members of under-represented groups. We are confident that there will be a sufficient and diverse pool of willing mentors in the community of experienced researchers. We propose to open the Fund to researchers outside the Centre's own core research programme.

To improve the diversity of our activities and provide career development opportunities, we will consult staff on plans for the Centre to encourage and support, including financially, an early career researcher (ECR)/student-led programme of cross-institutional events. Participating institutions will be encouraged to associate doctoral students working on GGR topics with the Hub and involve these in these events. We are committed to the Future Leaders Network and ECR representation on the management team, and have earmarked Flexi Funds to support them.

Action 7a: Our leads on EDI and the Flexi Fund are pro-actively formulating an approach to our flexible funding which encourages and supports a diverse cohort of Early Career Researchers.

9. Monitoring and reporting

Option 1: seeking HR data from constituent institutions on recruitment statistics related to the protected characteristics of applicants, interviewees and appointees. Risk that small sample sizes involved would risk disclosure of data given in confidence and would render statistically significant conclusions very unlikely
Option 2: monitor data on Hub staffing, events and authors.
Option 3: monitor per #1, but report so as to avoid identification of individuals, and with an awareness of distortive effects of small numbers.
The EDI Working Group will report annually against the key issues set out in this plan. The report will be considered by the Leadership Team and Advisory Board, and it will form part of the Research Fish annual report to the Research Councils. We will consider any recommendations arising from these meetings and revise this plan accordingly.

Action 8a: Report annually on progress against these actions to the CO2RE Advisory Board and NERC, on timescales to be set by NERC.