# **Operation Earth: Phase Two of the national environmental science programme for families is announced**

6 March 2020

A popular national programme to engage school-aged children and their families with environmental science will return later this year.

More than 200,000 children and adults participated in Phase One of Operation Earth, a partnership project between NERC and the UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC). Through the two-year programme, ASDC trained and equipped 11 science centres and museums across the UK to run a host of hands-on activities, experiments, a family show on environmental science and to offer exciting opportunities for children and families to meet and talk with environmental research scientists.

Phase Two will engage new audiences who may never have participated in environmental science before, offering fun and informative activities focusing on climate change, earth observation, biodiversity and more. It aims to inspire young people and build interest and critical thinking around current environmental issues and research.

The new project will reach children and families through embedded local programmes and partnerships, community days, outreach and bursary programmes, and partnering with high-profile city-wide festivals across the UK.

ASDC will also train up to 30 environmental scientists to lead the activities using Operation Earth materials.

Phase Two has invited the 11 centres that previously delivered Operation Earth activities to apply to deliver this extended programme, that will run until March 2021. Public delivery of the programme at eight UK science centres will begin this summer.

**Dr Penny Fidler, the CEO of ASDC and Programme Director of Operation Earth, says:**

“We are delighted to be partnering with NERC for a second phase of Operation Earth. As a nation and global society we have some major challenges ahead, especially around climate and carbon. NERC’s world-leading science has been instrumental in highlighting the issues, including through the IPCC reports, making it clear we need to make faster progress.

“At this crucial moment in time we are pleased to be sharing the latest environmental science with children, families and communities across the UK so collectively we can look critically at the options and decide as a society what actions to take.”

**Alison Robinson, NERC’s Director or Corporate Affairs, adds:**

“This exciting national engagement programme will bring young people and environmental science together, opening up research and fostering debate about how can help to tackle environmental challenges, including climate change.

“We are thrilled to launch a new phase of Operation Earth with ASDC and science centres nationally, and hopefully inspire the next generation of scientists who will help find the environmental solutions we need.”

For more information visit the Operation Earth website: [www.operationearth.co.uk](http://www.operationearth.co.uk/)

**Ends**

## **Notes:**

1. **Phase one of Operation Earth** saw NERC, in partnership with ASDC, develop Operation Earth in collaboration with NERC researchers and three expert partners; the Natural History Museum, Dynamic Earth and the Eden Project.
2. **The UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres**(ASDC) is the vibrant national charity that brings together the UK’s leading science engagement organisations to play a strategic role in the nation’s engagement with science. Within our membership are over 60 of the nation’s largest publicly accessible science centres, discovery centres, science museums and scientific bodies. Together our vision is for a society where people of all backgrounds and in all parts of the UK are inspired and can get involved with the sciences, and climate and inclusion are at the core of many of our national STEM programmes.  
     
   Every year in the UK, 20 million people of all ages and backgrounds choose to get involved with science at one of the UK’s science and discovery centres or science museums or through their community programmes. This equates to 385,000 people every week who come to our member centres to explore and discuss science in an involving and personal way.  ASDC is an educational charity based in Bristol. [www.sciencecentres.org.uk](http://www.sciencecentres.org.uk/)
3. **NERC** is the UK's main agency for funding and managing research, training and knowledge exchange in the environmental sciences. Our work covers the full range of atmospheric, Earth, biological, terrestrial and aquatic science, from the deep oceans to the upper atmosphere and from the poles to the equator. We coordinate some of the world's most exciting research projects, tackling major issues such as climate change, environmental influences on human health, the genetic make-up of life on Earth, and much more. NERC is a non-departmental public body. We receive around £330 million of annual funding from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
4. The 60 UK Science Centres will be running a host of science and environmental hands-on activities to coincide with Science week. To find your closest science centre look here [**https://www.sciencecentres.org.uk/centres/**](https://www.sciencecentres.org.uk/centres/) and follow the links to their website for events and activities.

For more information contact:

**Sophie Docker**

**Senior Media and Communications Manager**

07512 485 076

[sophie.docker@ukri.org](mailto:sophie.docker@ukri.org)