

# The EARTH Hub Brief

## Key Information:

- The EARTH (Environmental Action for Resilience, Transformation and Health) Hub
- Site to be offered in English
- The four key sections of the EARTH Hub are:
  1. Taking Action
  2. Understanding Impact
  3. Knowledge & Resources Library
  4. Policy, Funding & Job Opportunities

## Overview

This project is an ambitious, interactive website. Primarily, we want to incentivise environmental [Action](#) (Section 1), and empower individuals and organisations to measure their [Impact](#) (Section 2). EARTH Hub should be a place where anyone can:

- find opportunities for environmental action that are right for them
- collect and engage with these opportunities
- submit data on the actions they've taken
- view the collective and individual impact of volunteer action.

We are also aiming to provide approachable [science communication and handy resources](#) (Section 3) for educators, individuals and organisations, as well as [topical information and opportunities](#) (Section 4).

Finally, we would be interested in having a way to [receive donations](#) on this website, so we can do even more to support the environment (Section 4).

In the future, we may wish to create versions of the website in other languages. More distantly, we would be interested in displaying available grants, and potentially providing a grant application process.

Due to the scale of this project, we're open to following an Agile approach to deliver the highest priorities of our objectives, with potential to commission further work in the future.

There is some data migration involved in this project, the full scope is TBC but at minimum will involve migrating some user data (see breakdown of [Users](#)) from our existing platforms.

We would like performance analytics (eg. Google Analytics), so we are able to ensure that the Hub is being used and the features included are relevant.

## Key Functionality:

### Home Page

- Whilst most of the functionality of the EARTH Hub will be behind a login page, site visitors will be able to view some information about the Hub.
  - This will include a mission and vision for what the Hub will be and achieve, as well as outlining the future development/plans for the Hub.
  - The page would also need to showcase the Delivery Partners that are offering opportunities on the Hub, including contact information and links to their Action Cards (see below).
  - This page will also include an overview of the Key Metrics (eg. Number of trees planted, tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> savings made, number of hours of outdoor education, number of bags of litter lifted etc.) that the Hub is measuring to showcase the importance of the work of the Hub and highlight the importance of impact measurement.
  - This page will very clearly direct the site visitor to create a profile in order to get started.

### Section 1: Taking Action

Action Cards will form the basis of the Hub, with all activities offered on the Hub to be included as an Action Card. Our ambition is that every piece of work within the eNGO sector will be captured as an Action Card on the EARTH Hub.

An Action Card is an easily navigable guide to taking part in an environmental action or project with resources available to support the user to take action quickly and easily. Additionally, the Action Cards will enable users to report back on the actions they have taken and allow us to measure the impact of the environmental sector across Northern Ireland.

### Users

Users include individuals who want to find volunteer opportunities, organisations or schools who want to take part in actions that give them accreditation or certification (such as “Eco-School Green Flag”), Delivery Partners (eNGOs) that want to provide opportunities (Action Cards) for volunteering, and EARTH Hub administrators who can manage users and Action Cards.

## Example

**The Woodland Trust** is a Delivery Partner that creates an Action Card for ‘Tree planting volunteer days’. This card will track the number of trees planted; perhaps they don’t have to create a new metric for this, they can reuse a “number of trees” field created by another organisation that has an Action Card for ‘Reforestation workshops’.

Once this Action Card is approved, it can be found by any relevant user.

**Myriam** is an individual user interested in outdoor activities. She picks up this Action Card and finds all the information she needs to join a volunteer day. Then, she tracks her progress, by submitting the number of trees she planted (“Tell us how you got on”).

Myriam continues to go on volunteer days for more organisations. She often checks her [Impact](#) ([Section 2](#), below); she wants to know how many trees she has planted in total (e.g. she planted 15 trees for the Woodland Trust and 5 for Ulster Wildlife. Her Impact says that she has planted a total of 20 trees), and how much progress she has made. She can see her progress is relevant to [Sustainable Development Goal 15](#) (restoring terrestrial ecosystems).

There will be also be an option for a user (like Myriam) to create an individual Action Card, however, this will not be included in the wider metrics but some key stakeholders should be able to obtain the information for these ‘Other’ Action Cards, so they are able to see what individuals are reportedly doing. For example, they should be able to see that Myriam has said that she has planted three trees in her garden or collected X bags of litter from her local park.

## Detail:

- The **Action Cards will be used to display and collect the data that will be central to the Hub**, allowing us to measure the [Impact](#) of the activities happening within the environmental sector (e.g. number of trees planted across all Actions).
- The Action Cards will span a range of themes/topics (eg. education, biodiversity, waste, energy etc.).
- Users should be able to view all of the Action Cards applicable to them (e.g. schools see school-specific Action Cards) and use drop down menus to filter via different themes (eg. waste and/ or energy), Sustainable Development Goals (eg. SDG 12), duration, sponsor, council area, educational level (eg. Key Stage 3) etc., so that we are able to analyse the data collected across a number of different contexts.
- Each Action Card will have points associated with it, which will then be used to apply for digital and physical awards. The points/weightings will be decided later on in the project and will likely depend on the core data set collected through the Action Card.

- The Action Cards should include the logo of the organisation running the activity, as well as the logo of the sponsor/funder of the Action Card.
- The core requirements of the Action Cards are outlined below. Delivery Partners would need the functionality to upload their information into an Action Card template before it is approved by the EARTH Hub Coordinator and made live on the site.
- The four core areas of the Action Cards are likely to be:
  - **About** – provides an overview of the Action Card and why the user should take part
  - **Context/ Curriculum Links**– provides information on how the Action Card is relevant within the context of the environmental sector/policy/strategies and/ or (if applicable) within the school’s curriculum
  - **Sustainable Development Goals** – shows which SDGs/targets the Action Card meets
  - **Case Studies** – provides examples of the Action Card in action. (This may initially start off as “If you have a case study you’d be willing to share here, please get in touch on...”)
- The three supporting areas are as follows:
  - **Action Guide** – provides a “Before you begin” guide, ie. things to consider before you start; a “Materials/equipment list,” ie. What you would need to gather for the activity, as well as risk assessments if relevant; ‘Top Tips’ section; and “Let’s Get Started” section
  - **Resources** – provides a list of downloadable support resources, whether materials for schools/lesson plans, way to find out more information/extended reading etc.
  - **Tell us how you got on...** – this is the area where users fill out the information to allow them to complete the card and be awarded the associated points
- The Hub should use understood Learning Management System (eg. Coursera/LinkedIn Learning) methodology to enrol in Action Cards which are added to their card library. Users should then be able to:
  - Add new Action Cards
  - View active Action Cards/progress towards awards
  - View completed Action Cards/awards
  - Update active Action Cards
  - Archive Action Cards to be revisited in the future
  - Request Action Card cancellation (i.e. for a Delivery Partner that created an action card event)
  - Remove Action Cards from their library
  - View the impact of their Action Cards

- Action Cards will be submitted for review to the EARTH Hub team, before being made available on the Hub. KNIB has resources to support other Delivery Partners create Action Cards to achieve consistent content, formatting and overall approach, for display on EARTH Hub.
- The Delivery Partners should be able to easily export the data gathered across their Action Cards, so that they can quickly understand their impact. Delivery Partners will be able to include whatever questions/data collection they want on their Action Cards but there will be some data that will be more relevant for some key stakeholders that will be collected centrally.

See a list of potential Action Cards in [Appendix 1](#).

### **Eco-Schools Action Cards (a requirement for EARTH Hub Launch):**

The Eco-Schools programme is run by the Foundation for Environmental Education, a non-governmental, non-profit organisation based in Denmark, and is managed in Northern Ireland by environmental charity, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. It was developed in 1994 as a response to an identified need to involve young people in finding solutions to environmental and sustainable development challenges at a local level. Eco-Schools operates in 59,000 schools across 74 countries.

Every school in Northern Ireland is registered as an Eco-School and the programme is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, local councils and a number of generous sponsors who support the programme's selection of topics, which schools can choose to follow based on their location, interests or the wishes of their pupils.

- Action Cards will replace the current application process for Eco-Schools, (and potentially over time, Eco-Campus, Eco-Community, Eco-Department and Eco-Hospitals). There will be Action Cards that should be only made available to these groups, and users in these groups must apply for an account that can see these Action Cards (to be approved by an EARTH Hub administrator).
- For example, the seven Action Cards for the Eco-Schools application process would include:
  - Step 1: Forming an Eco-Committee
  - Step 2: Carrying out an Environmental Review
  - Step 3: Creating an Action Plan/Environmental Resiliency plan
  - Step 4: Curriculum Links/policy written or amended –core policy for all staff to read and sign
  - Step 5: Informing and Involving
  - Step 6: Monitoring and Evaluation
  - Step 7: Eco-Code/Mission statement/CSR values or objectives

## Section 2: Understanding Impact

This section will provide a deeper dive into the impact measurement side of the Hub, through **visualising metrics**. At present, the impact of the environmental sector in NI is not being measured as a whole. Through the EARTH Hub, we want to be able to gather data, so that we are able to demonstrate the impact of the sector. We hope this data will be used to inform future strategies and policies, as well as strengthening funding applications for the sector.

There are a number of different audiences for this data, for example Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Councils, Delivery Partners and individual users. It is important that we consider Index of Multiple Deprivation linkage by postcode so that we can see all of the EARTH Hub delivered work against need across NI.

We would like to consider integrating a carbon calculator, eg. WWF Carbon Calculator/ GIKI, so that users can measure carbon offset of their actions and against their own carbon footprint.

### Publicly available metrics

This information will be based on the data gathered across all Action Cards completed on the site. To be effective, this section must be user friendly, through the use of easily understood charts, graphs and infographics. This section will include an overview of the metrics being gathered, why these are being measured and perhaps how these link/contribute to the wider [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and/or NI/UK policies and plans etc. A range of filters will be required for this primary tier of data, specifically an opportunity to view/interrogate the impact data by Council area, by sponsor and by theme. Organisations should be able to export the data collected across their Action Cards.

### Individual metrics

This section will be where individuals can see their individual impact through key facts and figures, based on the Action Cards they have completed and the data they have submitted through the Action Cards. The user should be able to see their metrics against baseline metrics from other users within their user group. This section will be focused around gamification, allowing users to see leaderboards/“You’re in the top 10%!” etc., to further incentivise engagement with the Hub.

## Section 3: Knowledge & Resources Library

This section will allow all users to access educational content and information, much like an online resource library.

- Users will be able to filter by theme of content (eg. biodiversity, plastic pollution etc.), United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG), provider of content (ie. Delivery Partner), target age/school stage/ education level (eg. 11 – 14 years/16+ or ‘For teachers’ or Key Stage 2).
  - This information can be duplicated of the resources shared on the Action Cards (ie. Have a toggle on the Action Card “Include in the main resource library”). If the information is viewed in the main library, the user will be directed/encouraged to view the resource as part of the relevant Action Card.
  - There will also be the option for organisations to simply upload resources to the library that aren’t attached to an Action Card.
  - Delivery Partners should be able to upload content to the Resource Library but this would need to be approved by the EARTH Hub team before the content was accessible by Users.
  
- This section could include an ‘Understanding the Climate Science,’ which would breakdown the complex climate science language and terminology used, as well as providing simplified versions of complex scientific resources, as a way to make the Hub more accessible to all.
  - This could include simple definitions for terms such as weather, climate, climate change, global warming etc. Additionally, breaking down more complex and often misunderstood terms such as ‘net zero,’ ‘carbon neutral’ and ‘carbon negative.’
  - This could include short summaries of scientific reports, such as the IPCC reports.
  - This could perhaps be done in partnership with a local university/MSc course to develop the material for the Hub.
  
- This section will include an area specifically available for ‘educators’ to provide information, guidance and support to educators, who wish to incorporate education for sustainable development into their teaching practice.
  - It will include teacher training and educational material, a library of teaching resources and ready-made lesson plans, guidance on outdoor learning and how to integrate that into the school curriculum etc.
  - It will be suitable and include information for educators of all levels, from early years to third level education.
  - These will be able to be filtered by theme/topic/level/type of resource etc.
  - This section will include information for both formal and informal educators. It would be good to have lesson plans included for eg. Scout Groups or Youth Clubs etc.
  - As above, many of these teacher resources will be part of Action Cards, so encouraging educators to commit to the Action Card will be key.

## Section 4: Policy, Funding and Job Opportunities

- Much of the content outlined below is currently available on the Northern Ireland Environment Link website (joint partner for the EARTH Hub project). The successful bidder will need to consider the best strategy to showcase this information within the EARTH Hub platform. We would eventually like to migrate this information onto the EARTH Hub. In the interim, the minimum requirement is to help users access that information.
- This section will include up-to-date information on topics related to the policy landscape and other information within the environment and sustainability sector that affects Northern Ireland.
  - This will include information on policy consultations and important local environmental issues.
  - These could be easily accessed at the front of the webpage and could take the form/style of a recent articles/news bulletin/updates page/spotlight/stories feature.
- This section could also include a list of information on open grants/funding/sponsorship opportunities from various sources (eNGOs, governments, businesses etc.) across NI.
  - The key piece of information for each opportunity that will be clearly visible to the user will be the closing date for applications.
  - The user will be able to filter by organisation delivering the funding, who is eligible to apply for the funding, earliest to latest closing date, size of funding etc.
- This section could include a list which outlines all of the current job and placement opportunities being offered by Delivery Partners in Northern Ireland. The user will be able to filter by location, salary, type of opportunity, closing date etc.

### Digital Fundraising Platform

Given the level of anticipated traffic to Hub, we would like to have the functionality to fundraise on the Hub. In summary, this section of the Hub should prominently display:

- Donate Button (with provision for one off and regular donations) This would include a brief summary of what £5; £10; £20 donate would enable the charity to deliver. This will be as succinct as possible and will include the 'why' and the 'what' the donation will support.
- The minimal number of steps for donor efficiency is of paramount importance here – ie. a quick donate function, which requires the minimal amount of info to be gathered from donors. An important consideration here is to match with donor preferences ie. Google Pay; Apple Pay; PayPal; Revolut



## Potential Future Updates/Additions to the Hub (Wish List)

- Site to be offered in multiple languages
- As part of the Policy, Funding and Jobs section, we would like to integrate with an existing grant platform, so that EARTH Hub can be the 'go-to' place for environmental education and action opportunities within NI.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: A list of potential Action Cards

- Action Renewables –Climate Campaigning
- Adopt a Spot
- Big Spring Clean
- Carbon Literacy
- Coastal Schools
- Create a Webinar/Case study for others
- CTR Cash for Clobber
- Danske Bank Productive Outdoor Learning Garden Project
- Eco-Schools Action Cards (as outlined in Section 1 above – a requirement for launch)
- Habitat for Humanity – Our Waste Our World Programme
- Housing Executive Energy Competition
- Liz Farnon – Biodiversity workshops
- Lough Neagh Discovery Centre – Educational visits
- Marble Arch Caves: Educational workshops
- NI water: Schools workshops, Assemblies, water bus, visit their centre & Resources.
- Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service: workshop on laws, environmental laws and the buildings eco-friendly policy
- Opal: Citizen Science for Everyone – Water Quality and Biodiversity Survey
- Radius Housing Productive Biodiversity Garden Project
- RSPB: The Big Schools’ Birdwatch
- RSPB: Wild Challenge
- Soil Association – Food for Life Get Togethers
- Sustrans: Active Schools Travel Programme
- Tackling Fast Fashion
- Tackling Plastics NI
- The Weatherbies: school visits
- Translink Travel Challenge Card
- Trócaire Game Changers
- Trócaire The Right Focus
- Ulster Wildlife: Outreach programmes, wildlife and awareness programmes
- Wear Green Be Green
- Wee Critters: curriculum-based workshops to teaching children the value or wildlife conservation
- Wheelie Big Challenge
- Woodland trust: tree planting workshops and curriculum based resources
- Wrigley Litter Less Challenge
- Young Reporters for the Environment