

Modern Slavery Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement



Introduction

This statement applies to the James Hutton Group incorporating The James Hutton Institute, BioSS and James Hutton Limited (referred to in this statement as ‘the Organisation’). The information included in the statement refers to the financial year 2020/21.

The Group is governed by a Board of Directors with James Hutton Ltd having its own Board, whose Chair is a member of the Group Board. The main Board is supported by three established sub-committees, Audit and Finance, Advisory Committee for Science, Nominations, Remuneration and Governance with the Board and sub-committees meeting at least four times each year.

We are a well-respected and globally recognised research organisation delivering fundamental and applied science to drive the sustainable use of land and natural resources. We are an internationally networked organisation that operates from several sites in Scotland. As a group we employ more than 500 Science and Professional Services staff from over 25 countries (including the UK), making us one of the largest research organisations in the UK and the first of its type in Europe.

Group scientists regularly undertake research and collaborative project working as well as delivering conference presentations in countries outside the UK, often supported by international funding, but our core activity takes place in the UK.

Our scientific activities are subject to regular review (internally and externally) and overseen by our Research Ethics Committee.

The terms and conditions of our employees are negotiated and agreed with our recognised trade union, Prospect.

Definitions

The Organisation considers that modern slavery encompasses:

- human trafficking
- forced work, through mental or physical threat
- being owned or controlled by an employer through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse
- being dehumanised, treated as a commodity or being bought or sold as property
- being physically constrained or to have restriction placed on freedom of movement.

Commitment

The Organisation acknowledges its responsibilities in relation to tackling modern slavery and commits to complying with the provisions in the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Our research is supported by many professional and technical activities; our procurement and human resources teams are key in supporting our zero-tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking. The Organisation understands that this requires an ongoing review of both its internal practices in relation to its labour force and, additionally, its supply chains.

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Supply chains

The Group has an annual expenditure of approximately £10 million across Goods, Services and Works. The main supply chains of the Organisation include:

- Scientific Equipment and Consumables
- IT Hardware and Software
- Vehicles and Plant
- Catering and Cleaning
- Waste Disposal Services
- Energy and Fuel
- Water and Sewerage
- Financial and Legal Services
- Buildings and Equipment Maintenance Services
- Consultancy Services
- Publications

Potential exposure

The Organisation considers its main exposure to the risk of slavery and human trafficking to exist in its procurement supply chain and, to a limited extent, through the employment of staff and use of agency-provided workers.

The Organisation considers its exposure to slavery/human trafficking among employees/workers to be low as all our people are based in the UK, they are highly skilled, and we undertake most recruitment activity ourselves. However, on an annual basis, a small number of employees are engaged via an agency for fixed term farm work. It is acknowledged that this process carries a higher risk.

Our level of use of workers engaged and paid through a third party is extremely low and, when undertaken, a procurement process is used to identify an appropriate organisation.

Risks of modern slavery, however, are higher within our indirect and extended supply chains generated by the global economy.

Action

The Organisation has not, to its knowledge, conducted any business with another organisation which has been found to have involved itself with modern slavery. In accordance with section 54(4) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Organisation has taken the following steps to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place.

We minimise the risk by focussing our attention on ensuring the majority of our procurement activity is under contract. Either through Scottish Government National Framework Agreements arranged centrally by the Scottish Procurement Unit; by participation in Collaborative Contracts arranged on our behalf by APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges) of which the James Hutton Institute is an Associate Member; or directly arranged contracts by the group or with our collaborative partner SRUC.

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Regulated procurement activity above the threshold, and when deemed appropriate below this threshold, requires tenderers (and any sub-contractor or supply partner on which they rely) to complete an ESPD (European Single Procurement Document). The ESPD requires the tenderer to disclose details of its trading activity, and legal and environmental compliance. This includes disclosure of whether the tenderer or any member of their organisation with decision making powers has been convicted in the last five years or any offence under part 1 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015, or any provision referred to in the Schedule for that Act.

Directly arranged contracts include, as minimum, the use of local employment and living wage clauses along with the threat of termination of the contract on the grounds of human trafficking. These can go a long way to eliminating modern slavery. In addition, the Scottish Procurement Unit and APUC both provide advice and guidance on all procurement matters including Modern Slavery. We regularly review our procurement procedures to ensure that our primary suppliers are compliant with the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We include termination powers in directly awarded contracts, to be used if the supplier is, or is suspected, to be involved in modern slavery. We review the processes used by the employment agency used for short term farm staff recruitment.

Appropriate documentation and processes are in place for all employees (including those sourced via agency) including a personal contract of employment and bank account details.

Hutton's Director of Finance & Company Secretary is our designated Slavery Compliance Officer, to whom all concerns regarding modern slavery can be addressed, and who will then undertake relevant action with regard to the Organisation's obligations.

Future activity which will be undertaken to ensure that the risk of slavery/human trafficking is minimised in the Organisation is:

- Continued review of the existing Procurement Policy to ensure appropriate detail on the risks and the activities being undertaken to minimise this occurring in our procurement activity.
- An online training module for all employees
- The ongoing use of due diligence processes in relation to ensuring slavery and/or human trafficking does not take place in our Organisation or primary supply chain.
- Continued review of the control of suppliers.

Policies

The Organisation has the following policies which further define its stance on modern slavery:

- Sustainable Procurement Policy

This statement is made in pursuance of Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2010 and will be reviewed each financial year.

Ian Gambles, Chair
Professor Colin Campbell, Chief Executive

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