



DRAFT Version Work In Progress

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POLICY ON CHARGING

1. Policy Statement:

rECORD, within the terms of its Service Level Agreements with sponsoring bodies and in its dealings with organisational and commercial bodies, will apply charges for the supply and formatting of data, information or advice, and also for the management of said data. No charges will be made for the data itself.

The charges levied will be commensurate with the running costs of **rECORD** and will be applied in order to recover costs applicable to the time spent compiling and supplying requested information, to cover any necessary expenses applicable to the supply of the information, and to recover a portion of the costs of the management of both the data holdings and of the centre, based upon an hourly rate calculated against annual costs.

Charges will generally only be levied from persons or organisations whose use of **rECORD** has not been agreed to be financed by its sponsoring authorities, or where the type, or extent, of an enquiry lies outside the scope of its Service Level Agreements.

The Charging Policy of **rECORD** will be determined by its Management Board in the light of relevant legislation on the freedom of access to information, and in the light of the Access principles of the National Biodiversity Network, and will be reviewed regularly, at least every three years.

rECORD reserves the right to recoup a proportion of the costs of acquiring and managing its data holdings from its users, within the scope of maintaining charges at a reasonable level, and in the spirit of the Environmental Information Regulations and the NBN Access Principles.

2. Background to the Policy:

2.1 **rECORD**'s policy with regard to the charge for the provision of data is based around the central tenet that biological data should not have any monetary value attached.

2.2 Any charging policy applied needs to be clear and made available to both potential and actual users, to ensure transparency of contractual agreements.

2.3 **rECORD**'s charging policy needs to relate not only to national legislation, the NBN's principles, standards and procedures, but also to the requirements and legitimate needs of its governing body and to the establishment of **rECORD**'s longevity and ability to operate effectively.

2.4 **rECORD** needs to respect, as far as is practicable, the rights and wishes of its data suppliers in formulating a charging policy, especially in relation to any limitations such a policy may make upon the usage of the acquired data by the public, naturalists or other potential users, or where **rECORD** may be perceived as exploiting data which has been freely provided by others.

2.5 Information to non-commercial, bona fide inquirers is normally supplied free. In these instances charges are only made, and these are kept to a minimum, when significant amounts of staff time are required.

2.6 Sponsors, who support **rECORD** with monies up front, will be supplied with information from enquiries at half the standard rate up to a total amount equal to their committed and paid up support. Data provision beyond the value of the support monies provided to **rECORD** will be charged at three-quarters the standard rate up to the value of twice the sponsorship monies beyond which full and standard charges will be made.

3. Links to other rECOrd Policies:

Data Needs (All areas):

These policies provide the frame work within which **rECOrd** identifies its users overall needs and which feed in to the process of defining the levels of service.

Confidentiality:

This policy details the means by which data supplied to **rECOrd** is analysed for specific species which are treated as sensitive and/or confidential in nature. Some data may not be made available and removing this from reports may induce charges.

Controlling Access:

This policy details **rECOrd**'s mechanisms for controlling access to its data holdings.

Core Products and Services:

This policy defines the extent and nature of extra services that **rECOrd** may provide within and beyond the remit of agreed SLAs.

Data Exchange:

Details of potential agreement scenarios with respect to amount of data enquiries offset by data inputs to the system.

Data Ownership and Copyright:

rECOrd will need to make clear its policy with respect to upholding the copyright and intellectual rights inherent within data and any manner in which this may impinge on the way charges are made.

Data Supply:

The extent to which **rECOrd** is used and ultimately supported will be affected by the way in which, and to whom, it levies charges for the supply of information and information products.

Financial Control:

The control and management of all monies accruing to **rECOrd** from the supply of data and information products must be transparent and open to scrutiny.

Priorities for Data Gathering:

This policy will detail how the major data gathering aspects will be addressed through naturalists, societies and consultancies. The way in which charges are levied will directly affect these relationships.

Outreach:

Will detail **rECOrd**'s approach to involving the public in recording, etc. The manner in which charges are developed will directly affect this relationship.

Services Offered to Data Providers:

Certain potential services offered to data providers as an incentive for their data donations may be affected by the charging policy implementation.

Working with Data Providers:

Policy relating to Working with Data Providers must take account of the development of charging procedures and policy elements.

4. Activities Supporting this Policy:

4.1 **rECOrd**'s Charging Policy will be further detailed within its SLA's with sponsors and other organisations, and in internal management memoranda, as well as being set out within the "*Access Terms and Conditions*" document.

4.2 **rECOrd** will produce its "*Access Terms and Conditions*" in an accessible format for distribution to its customers and users. These terms and conditions will be made freely available to enquirers or other interested parties. It will also supply them through other media, including the **rECOrd** web-site and via the National Biodiversity Network (NBN).

4.3 In setting its charges **rECOrd** will use its core available work hours and overall budget as a basis for establishing its costs, including the costs of managing its operation. Charges will be reviewed on a regular basis, at least every three years and preferably annually, to reflect changes in the cost of providing **rECOrd**'s services.

4.4 **rECOrd** will set up processes for handling monies received from charging, including the provision of receipts, and will ensure that accounting procedures and annual audits of such monies are carried out, taking account of its sponsoring authorities/organisations requirements.

4.5 Uncharged access to data should be provided to individual members of the public, voluntary recorders, individual non-commercial educational users and to individual landowners enquiring about information regarding their own land-holdings.

4.6 Charges to organisations and commercial concerns should be service related and should aim to maintain **rECOrd** as a sustainable unit.

4.7 Consideration should be given, dependent upon **rECOrd** being and maintaining financial viability, to assigning a proportion of the charges levied to commercial users and organisations to a special fund to be made available to specialist recording groups.