

Welcome to the latest edition of the knowledge exchange newsletter.

News

Official Launch of Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) programme

The LWEC interdisciplinary research and policy partnership is being officially launched on **18 June** at the QEII Conference Centre, London. The speakers include the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP; Professor Robert Watson, Chief Scientific Adviser, Defra; Ian Pearson, Science Minister; Lord Selborne, Chair of LWEC, and Professor Alan Thorpe, Chief Executive, NERC. NERC is a partner in LWEC, along with 5 other research councils, and 10 government departments, agencies and devolved administrations. The event is now fully subscribed.

For more information on LWEC see: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/lwec/>

Forthcoming events

RAPID end-of-programme event

On **26 June**, NERC is holding an event at the Royal Society to mark the conclusion of the RAPID Climate Change programme. The event will provide policy-makers, regulators, industry, conservation bodies and the wider public with an opportunity to learn about the RAPID programme, its results and its future. For further details, and to register, see

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/rapid/events/080626/>

Business Plan Competition final

The Awards Ceremony for the Cross Research Council Business Plan Competition will be held at Chelsea Football Ground on 20 October. There are some places available. For further information contact Lynne Porter, lyn@nerc.ac.uk For details on the scheme see:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/fundingkt/bpc/default.htm>

Funding opportunities

Policy secondment scheme for PhD students

Applications are invited for the 2008-09 secondment scheme for NERC-funded PhD students to spend three months working in a policy-making environment. For further details see:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/schemes/secondments.asp>

New policy placement scheme

NERC has announced a new Policy Placement Scheme that allows researchers and staff in environmental science research to work closely with policy-makers in government and other UK policymaking organisations. The scheme covers two options: Fellowship Placements and Work Shadow Placements. Fellowship placements will be advertised as they arise; the first opportunity is on energy research in the Environment Agency, - deadline for applications 30 June. There is no deadline for Work Shadow Placement applications. For details see:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/publicsector/placements.asp>

Science into policy

NERC's marine centres contribute to assessment report

"Scotland's Seas: Towards Understanding their State" was published in April (see www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/04/03093608/0) in preparation for a Scottish Marine Bill. Ian Boyd (Director, Sea Mammals Research Unit, SMRU) was on the editing team, and the report includes inputs from Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS), SMRU, Marine Biological Association (MBA) and National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS). Comprehensive - and comprehensible - marine assessments now provide a crucial link between marine science and policy at the national, UK and European scale; several others are in progress, all with strong involvement from NERC centres. A workshop to promote linkages between the different communities involved will be held at MBA Plymouth, 10-11 June (contact Nova Mieszkowska, nova@mba.ac.uk).

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to chair Partnership for European Environmental Research

On 1st April 2008, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) took over the chairmanship of the Partnership for European Environmental Research (PEER) for a two year period. With seven partners across Europe, including the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, a total staff number of 4700 and an overall annual budget of £230M, the PEER partnership represents the most powerful European network in the environmental sciences. Key priorities of the CEH chairmanship will be the implementation of two innovative projects on climate policy coherence

and national adaptation strategies which will be jointly financed by the partners. The results of these projects will be communicated to international policy forums including the Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Contact: Barnaby Smith, bpgs@ceh.ac.uk or see http://www.ceh.ac.uk/news/news_archive/2008_news_item_08.html

Extending the UK's territorial waters

Geologists and geophysicists at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS) have delivered independent scientific evidence to the United Nations that could have a major impact on the UK's territorial sovereignty. NOCS staff led the UK technical team in preparing and presenting submissions to the UN which could secure UK sovereignty over continental shelf areas beyond 200 nautical miles. For further information on NOCS see: <http://www.noc.soton.ac.uk/> (Contact: Dr Lindsay Parson, imp@soc.soton.ac.uk).

Centre of Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) contributes to UK Greenhouse gas emissions inventory

Defra released the 2007 Greenhouse gas emissions provisional figures for the UK on 27th March 2008 (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/index.htm>). These are produced for Defra by AEA Energy and Environment, who compile the list from a variety of sources including NERC research - land use, land use change and forestry estimates are provided by CEH. Contact Amanda Thomson amath@ceh.ac.uk.

Commercialisation

MTEM Spin-out company sells for \$275 million

In June 2007, Norwegian oil giant Petroleum Geo-Services (PGS) bought Scotland's largest academic spin-out company for \$275 million. The spin-out, founded in 2004, uses a new method to prospect for oil and gas deep beneath the ground. NERC-funded PhD student David Wright and his supervisors Anton Ziolkowski and Bruce Hobbs invented the new system at the University of Edinburgh. MTEM Limited (Multichannel Transient ElectroMagnetics) uses an electromagnetic system to detect variations in electrical resistance deep beneath the surface, which reduces the need to drill expensive and unproductive wells. Contact: S Loader, SCL@nerc.ac.uk <http://www.research-innovation.ed.ac.uk/records/news/20070625MTEM.asp>

Other applications of NERC science

BGS updates hazard datasets

BGS has completed updates to 7 national datasets that are used by planners, insurers, developers and home owners to identify potential geohazards that could cause damage to the environment and to property. These include hazards from landslides, soluble rocks, shrink-swell clays, compressible and collapsible deposits, running sands and groundwater flooding. <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/products>. A new radon hazard dataset for England and Wales has been produced in cooperation with the Health Protection Agency, to assist home owners in identifying if protective measures are required and what to do <http://www.ukradon.org/>. These hazard data have been incorporated into reports to assist in the understanding of the scientific data: <http://shop.bgs.ac.uk/georeports/> .

Biodiversity horizon scanning

A new NERC-funded study has listed the 25 most relevant issues that will affect biodiversity in the UK up to the year 2050. The issues were identified by 452 representatives from a wide range of organisations involved in environmental policy. The study drew on opinions from the participants on 195 potential future benefits and threats to biodiversity, scoring issues for probability, degree of hazard and novelty of threat. These findings require careful consideration from policy makers across Europe. *Future novel threats and opportunities facing UK biodiversity identified by horizon scanning* (Sutherland, W., Bailey, M.J., Bainbridge, I.P. et al, *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 45, 821-833) is available to download from <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/toc/jpe/0/0>. Contact: w.sutherland@zoo.cam.ac.uk

Deep Sea Research in support of Ocean Governance

The EU Integrated Project HERMES (Hotspot Ecosystem Research on the Margins of European Seas, <http://www.eu-hermes.net/>) recently hosted a Science Policy panel meeting where international scientists, policy-makers and stakeholders discussed recent policy-relevant advances in deep-sea research, deep-sea governance in the European and international sphere, and challenges related to the sustainable management of human activities impacting on the deep sea. Prof P Weaver (ppew@noc.soton.ac.uk) from NOCS is the project coordinator for HERMES and can be contacted for further information. See also: <http://www.noc.soton.ac.uk/gg/>)

The next update will be in July. For general information about NERC's knowledge exchange activities, go to <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/>. If you would like to give us feedback on the newsletter, please send to Sylwina Szalkowska at ssz@nerc.ac.uk.