

Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

15 May 2018

News

Royal Society of Biology blog

[Athena SWAN applications: Turning data into action](#)

The importance of data in preparing an Athena SWAN application was one of the key messages to the delegates at our Athena SWAN workshop, held in March.

[Top tips for an Athena SWAN application](#)

Following our workshop in March, we asked attendees for feedback on the challenge of applying for an Athena SWAN award, and what advice they could give to future applications. I've collected these into three 'top tips' for those considering an application.

Health and biomedicine

[Government announces £40 million for brain cancer research in honour of Tessa Jowell](#)

The funding is double the original amount and will be used to encourage new research and clinical practice to improve outcomes for people with brain tumours.

[Measles outbreaks across England](#)

Public Health England is advising the public to ensure they have had 2 doses of MMR vaccine after outbreaks of measles are confirmed across England.

[Tide turns on obesity strategy](#)

Food and drink

[Brexit: food prices and availability report published by Committee](#)

The EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee publishes its report on the potential impacts of Brexit on the price and availability of food for UK consumers.

[Industrial trans fats must be removed from food supply, WHO says](#)

UN health agency says trans fats in snack foods, baked foods and fried foods are responsible for 500,000 deaths each year.

Agriculture and fishery

[More than 44,000 responses to future farming consultation](#)

More than 44,000 responses have been received on the government's proposals for the future for food, farming and the environment once we leave the EU.

[New plant breeding techniques concern law interpretation, Commission says](#)

The future of new plant breeding techniques (NPBTs) at the EU level lies in the European Court of Justice's interpretation of existing law, Health Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis told EURACTIV.com, adding that the executive will act accordingly at the political level.

Environment and ecology

[Peers to rebel over 'toothless' post-Brexit green watchdog](#)

Former ministers condemn new body's lack of power for legal action against government.

[Campaigners attack plan for new watchdog to protect environment after Brexit](#)

Independent body will be backed by law requiring ministers to 'have regard to' core principles but green experts say targets should be included in legislation.

[Committee questions Minister on biosecurity and Brexit](#)

The EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee will be asking Lord Gardiner, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity, how the Government will maintain the UK's plant and animal biosecurity after Brexit.

[How to save the high seas](#)

As the United Nations prepares a historic treaty to protect the oceans, scientists highlight what's needed for success.

[Plant 'thugs' crowd roadside flowers](#)

Water and air

[London considering car-free days in bid to tackle air pollution](#)

City Hall sources say mayor is hoping to introduce separate car-free days in each borough this year, with 'more ambitious plans' for 2019.

Climate and energy

[UN puts brave face as climate talks get stuck](#)

['From coal to clean' – UK does not need to turn to gas, says WWF](#)

The UK has no need to build new large gas-fired power stations to replace the coal plants that the government has pledged to switch off by 2025, the World Wide Fund for Nature has argued. EURACTIV's media partner, The Guardian, reports.

[NGOs tell Commission to listen to science and differentiate biofuels](#)

A coalition of Czech and Slovak NGOs has called on the European Commission to draw a line in the Renewable Energy Directive revision (RED II) between more sustainable ethanol and the high greenhouse gas emitting tropical oils.

[Launch of 'Beyond the Ice: UK policy towards the Arctic'](#)

Minister for the Polar Regions, Sir Alan Duncan gave a speech to launch the new Arctic Policy Framework.

Waste

[UK launches new research and innovation hub to tackle scourge of plastic in our seas and oceans](#)

A new global hub will bring together scientific and technical expertise to share latest thinking on sustainable alternatives to plastic and stopping plastic entering oceans.

Government and parliament

[Minister questioned on Research integrity](#)

Science and Technology Committee had previously arranged for the Science Minister Sam Gyimah to give evidence in March, but he declined and sent Sir Mark Walport in his place as Chief Executive of UKRI. The Minister subsequently agreed to attend this session, alongside the new Government Chief Scientific Adviser.

[CaSE Member & HM Treasury Roundtable: R&D investment](#)

Unattributed summary of CaSE roundtable discussion held on Tuesday 17th April 2018, kindly hosted by Boeing UK Ltd at their London offices.

Exiting the EU

[BEIS questioned on EU Commission's 'no-deal' stakeholder advice](#)

The EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee has written to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, to seek the Government's view on the EU Commission's advice to energy stakeholders on preparing for a 'no deal' Brexit scenario.

Research funding and higher education policy

[Developing a UK-Ireland higher education and research partnership](#)

Speech by Science Minister Sam Gyimah at the British Irish Chamber of Commerce event on higher education and research.

[£40m to create a new interface between bioscience and medicine](#)

Scientists and clinicians will gain greater understanding of the impact of food on health thanks to a £40M research investment in the new Quadram Institute.

[UKRI will ensure everyone in society benefits from world-leading research and innovation](#)

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has set out its plans to strengthen the UK's world-leading knowledge economy and deliver impact across society.

[UKRI framework document](#)

This document sets out the broad framework within which UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will operate.

Business and industry

[Wales' first science park to 'SParc' innovation and business growth](#)

Wales' first dedicated science park has been officially opened today by the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones.

International news

[UK response to Ebola cases in the DRC](#)

The UK government is working with the government of DRC and World Health Organization (WHO) following the confirmation of two cases of the disease this week.

[Wellcome is making an initial fund of up to £2 million available to support a rapid response to the new Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo \(DRC\).](#)

The pledge comes after the DRC government announced the latest outbreak this week, following tests that confirmed two cases of Ebola in the Bikoro area, near the north-west border. It's the ninth Ebola outbreak in DRC.

[Trump White House axes Nasa research into greenhouse gas cuts](#)

[South Georgia declared free of bird-killing invasive rats](#)

A remote wildlife-rich island has been officially declared free of rats and mice after a £10 million eradication scheme to protect native birds.

People

[New Chair appointed to Animal and Plant Health Agency Board](#)

The Secretary of State has approved the appointment of a new Chair for the Animal and Plant Health Agency Board.

[Meet Dr Ian Campbell, our new Interim Executive Chair](#)

Opportunities

[Return-to-work placements for scientists and engineers at Dstl](#)

Do you want to restart your career in STEM? If you've taken time away from your career or if you are looking to transfer your skills to a new sector you could join the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl).

[UK Research and Innovation looks for experts on Equality, Diversity and inclusion](#)

UK Research and Innovation has equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of its vision and mission. As part of this commitment, UKRI is building on the work of its constituent parts with the Research Councils today publishing their fourth annual update of diversity data 2018 alongside launching a call for an External Advisory Group.

Deadline 14 June 2018.

[RSB Gopher Science Lab online training course for teachers now available](#)

An interactive online training course covering hands-on science activities is now available through the RSB myLearning portal. The training course is designed to give teachers clear guidance on how to carry out Gopher Science Lab activities so they can confidently lead or supervise the activities during a lab day or classroom session.

Consultations

[Tackling the plastic problem](#)

Closes 18 May 2018.

[Cost effectiveness methodology for vaccination programmes](#)

Closes 21 May 2018.

[Consultation on the UK Nutrient Profiling Model 2018 review](#)

Closes 15 June 2018.

[Public consultation on the open method of coordination for EU aquaculture](#)

Closes 20 July 2018.

[Public consultation on the Evaluation of the 7th Environment Action Programme](#)

Closes 26 July 2018.

[New environment law to deliver a Green Brexit](#)

Environmental Principles and Governance Bill announced as consultation launches on new body to hold government to account.

Closes 2 August 2018.

Events

[Chemical Biology Symposium](#)

21 May 2018, London

A Royal Society of Chemistry symposium covering all aspects of chemical biology. The programme will cover all aspects of chemical biology and highlight the wider scope and impact of the field. There will be plenty of time for networking to stimulate research collaboration, discussion and engagement within the chemical biology community, as well as with those in related disciplines.

[Fellows' lunch - London](#)

7 June 2018, London

A small informal lunch to provide Fellows of the Society with the opportunity to discuss current biological issues and the Society's overall direction.

[Warwick VoYS workshop](#)

15 June 2018, Warwick

The next Standing up for Science workshop is at the University of Warwick on Friday 15 June. Join us to find out how to make your voice heard in public debates about science and evidence.

[Parliamentary Links Day 2018](#)

26 June 2018, London

An annual event organised to strengthen the dialogue between the scientific community, MPs and Peers.

And finally...

[Cuckoo bee species 'hiding in plain sight'.](#)

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