

Dear SIRN community,

In this issue, we are highlighting outcomes from the Defra SIP Platform and ways forward for integration of SIP researchers into a wider SI community, funding and career opportunities.

With the year coming to a close, we want to thank you for your support and we send you our best wishes for 2018.

Adélia de Paula (on behalf of [SIRN Leadership Team](#))

Sustainable Intensification Conference – November 2017

The Sustainable Intensification Conference held at Rothamsted Research during the 28th to 30th November was organized by the Association of Applied Biologists, Defra Sustainable Intensification Platform and BBSRC-NERC Sustainable Intensification Research Network (SIRN). Around 120 participants were involved including key note presentations from Defra Chief Scientific Advisor Prof Ian Boyd, NFU Vice-President Guy Smith with after dinner speech from Professor Sir Charles Godfray.

A major aim for the event was to showcase [outputs of Defra-SIP project](#). All papers from the conference can be found in [Aspects of Applied Biology – Aspects 136: Sustainable Intensification](#).

SIRN coordinated 2 sessions and information on these discussions is now available on [SIRN website](#).

What is coming next? New opportunity for SI researchers.

We are planning in partnership with BBSRC, Defra and NERC a workshop for researchers with interests in or expertise relevant to the sustainable intensification (SI) of agriculture.

Date: 28 February and 1 March 2018

Venue: The Woodland Grange Hotel, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 6RN

The aims of the workshop are:

- To bring together the wider UK SI community with researchers involved in SIP to facilitate networking and the identification of opportunities for collaboration, building on the legacy of SIP.
- To stimulate the development of high quality research proposals related to SI that address relevant research challenges and explore new ways of approaching SI.
- To raise awareness of relevant Government and Research Council interests and potential funding opportunities.

The workshop is for research leaders currently working on or with interests relevant to SI. There is no cost to attend the workshop, overnight accommodation (on 28 February 2018) and meals will be provided free of charge. Attendees will be expected to cover their own travel costs. If you wish to attend, please follow instructions on how to apply for a place at [BBSRC's website](#). Deadline is **5 January 2018, 4pm**.

More on the SIP project

The final newsletter for the SIP project is [now available](#) and a series of [science, policy and practice briefing notes](#) have been produced. In case you missed the recent webinar on the “Introduction to the SIP Landscape Typology Tool”, or would like to watch again, a [recording of the event](#) is also available.

BREXIT

Update on SIRN’s role at ‘*BREXIT: the future for agriculture, ecology and food*’ discussions led by BES Agriculture Ecology Group:

We would like to thank colleagues that contributed to our last survey. The return was very low consequently SIRN decided it was not an adequate representation of the SI community views and regretfully, we declined to be part of the discussions. We will continue monitoring the conversations and keeping the community informed.

The Royal Society and The Wellcome Trust seek views to inform Brexit future partnership project

They are asking individuals and organisations from across the UK and EU for their recommendations about how future research and innovation partnerships should work in practice. If you would like to submit evidence to the consultation, deadline is 08 January 2018. Read more [here](#).

New Reports

The Role of Research in the UK Parliament

Led by UCL STEaPP and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, the ESRC-funded project assessed how research was defined and used in Parliament. Read the report [here](#), and a [blog](#) by David Rose (one of the authors).

From waste to resource productivity - Report of the Government Chief Scientific Adviser

Authors: Sir Mark Walport, Government Chief Scientific Adviser and Professor Ian Boyd, Chief Scientific Adviser at Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Editor: Mark Peplow

Read the report [here](#).

Assessing the costs of Environmental Land Management in the UK

A report from RSPB, the National Trust and the Wildlife Trusts.

Read the report [here](#).

Funding opportunities:

Valuing Nature Synthesis Reports

NERC eligible researchers are invited to apply for funding under a new Valuing Nature initiative for Natural Capital Synthesis Reports.

The purpose of this call is to fund researchers to produce short synthesis reports which:

- define the current state of knowledge to address specific policy or practice needs in the language and format that is accessible to users; and
- define key gaps in knowledge that should be addressed by further research.

Up to £40K is available, which is expected to support four to six synthesis reports. Activities must be complete by 31 March 2018.

The closing date for applications is **9 January 2018 (Midday)**

Full information is available on the [Valuing Nature website](#).

If you have any queries, please contact info@valuing-nature.net.

BBSRC/NERC Joint Call in Aquaculture: Collaborative Research and Innovation

A total of approximately £4.4 million is available for projects addressing key challenges in the aquaculture sector.

Two types of funding will be available:

- Funding for up to 3 large consortia grants, bringing together expertise from multiple disciplines to address challenges which cross the BBSRC/NERC remit. These grants will be funded for up to 3 years at a maximum of £1.2m.
- Funding for 7-10 smaller innovation grants addressing needs of the aquaculture industry. These grants will be funded for 12-24 months at a maximum of £200k.

Application deadline: **23 January 2018, 16:00**

Read more [here](#).

Defra - Darwin Initiative Scoping Awards

Scoping Awards are small grants intended to help organisations who are new to the Darwin Initiative to develop a robust application. Funding up to £10,000 is available.

The awards do this by:

- connecting organisations new to Darwin with partners who have experience of managing successful Darwin Projects; and/or
- supporting work to build new partnerships between applicant organisations.

A successful Scoping Award should lead to a Main Darwin Initiative project application.

Applications must be submitted through the Flexi-Grant portal by 2359 GMT on **Friday 2 February 2018**.

Read more [here](#).

NERC Highlight topics – fourth round

NERC invites proposals for the fourth round of highlight topics, a route for funding strategic research. Highlight topics focus strategic research on defined subject areas, and will be delivered through independent projects. NERC has allocated £24 million to this call.

There are 10 highlight topics in this call, including:

- What is the 4PM? New understanding of soil organic carbon persistence to meet C offset targets
- Policy-relevant climate science to quantify and manage the risk of climate hazards

- The impact of light pollution on biological processes
- Understanding urban soil properties, functions, and below-ground inter-connections in delivery of ecosystem services
- Objective verification of national carbon budgets for assessing climate change mitigation measures

Proposals must be submitted via the research councils' Je-S system by **16:00 on 14 March 2018**.

Read more [here](#).

ESRC Centres Competition 2018 – Call open

ESRC are investing up to £30 million over five years through this competition. It is anticipated they will fund four centres. The competition is for proposals ranging from £2 million to £8 million 100% full economic cost (fEC) with a term of five years. They will meet 80% of the full economic costs on proposals submitted (ie ESRC funding total of £24 million at 80% fEC).

Outline proposals must be submitted to the Je-S system: by the call deadline **16:00 on 15 March 2018**.

Read more [here](#).

Horizon 2020 Calls for Proposals on Sustainable Food Security

The Sustainable Food Security call is Horizon 2020's main contribution to research and innovation in relation to Food and Nutrition Security in Europe and beyond. Its commitment to sustainability implies that particular attention is given to the interfaces between the economic, environmental and social . Several calls with deadlines in **Jan and Feb 2018**.

Read more [here](#).

ESRC - Pre-call announcement: Climate Change Priority

ESRC will be investing £5 million (80% fEC) over five years in a Climate Change Research Centre. The Centre is expected to start in April 2019, and should work collaboratively with the newly commissioned Climate Change Network Plus. All proposals to this call must be led by a researcher at an eligible UK research organisation and will need to be submitted through the research councils' Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S).

Please note, that this competition is separate to the ESRC Centres Call, for which the call specification was published in November 2017.

Deadline for submitting outline proposals - **May 2018**

Read more [here](#).

Events:

BES Grant Writing Retreat

When: 16 - 18 January 2018

Where: Abbey Home Organic Farm, Cirencester, UK

Read more [here](#).

IFSTAL Symposium 2018: Food systems in changing trade landscapes

When: 27 January 2018

Where: Cass Business School, City, University of London, 106 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8TZ

Read more [here](#).

NERC Introduction to Metabolomics for the Environmental Scientist

This course is free, including travel and accommodation, for PhD students and selected post-doctoral researchers funded by NERC.

When: 30-31 January 2018

Where: University of Birmingham

Read more [here](#).

AAB Rethinking British Agricultural Systems Linking Agri-Science to Post-Brexit UK Agricultural Policy

When: 30 January 2018

Where: Society of Chemical Industry, 14/15 Belgrave Square, Belgrave, London SW1X 8PS

Read more [here](#).

NERC - Environmental Genomics and Metabolomics course 2018

This five-day course is free, including travel and accommodation, for PhD students and selected post-doctoral researchers funded by NERC.

When: 4-9 March 2018

Where: University of Birmingham

Read more [here](#).

AAB Ecosystem and Habitat Management: Research, Policy and Practice

When: 27-28 March 2018

Where: The Riverside Centre, University of Worcester Severn Campus, Hylton Road Worcester WR2 5JN

Read more [here](#).

1st International Conference on Urban Agriculture and City Sustainability

When: 9 - 11 October, 2018

Where: New Forest, UK

Read more [here](#).

Are you looking for a career change in 2018? Or have you got a vacancy in your group?

We created a job page on our website and we can help you advertising your posts on our website or by social media. Please send information to info@sirn.org.uk

Current opportunities are: GCRF [Portfolio Leaders \(Challenge Leaders\)](#) and post-doc positions on Sustainable Land Use, Modelling, Robotics. See more positions [here](#).

Would you like to join our network today?

We encourage you to join the network by completing the [online form](#). If you haven't registered yet, please do as this will help us build an expertise database that will be used for future reference. Registration with SIRN is free and will only take few minutes.

To receive future news follow us on [@SIRN Tweets](#) or subscribe to our newsletter [here](#).



Copyright ©SIRN 2017 - All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

info@sirn.org.uk

SIRN Rothamsted Research

Harpenden, Hertfordshire

UK - AL5 2JQ