

Dear SIRN community,

This issue provides an update on the changing landscape for UK research funding and arising opportunities.

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

Current news:

UK Research and Innovation will bring together the seven Research Councils, Innovate UK and a new organization, Research England with a budget of £6 billion. UKRI will be a fully-functioning organisation by 1 April 2018. Membership of three UK Research and Innovation Councils (ESRC, EPSRC and NERC) [has been announced](#) and work for a [research and innovation infrastructure roadmap](#) is underway (to be published in early 2019). If you are not already following [@UKRI_News](#) and the website <http://www.ukri.org>, make sure you do before 31st March 2018.

Government announces £90m for agri-tech projects. Investment to bring together AI, robotics and earth observation to improve supply chain resilience in the agri-food sector. Read more [here](#).

Research Councils UK sign up to Responsible Research Metrics Declaration seeking the most effective mechanisms to support research and to better understand its performance, progress and quality. Read more [here](#).

Government position on UK Participation in Horizon 2020 - The UK government has issued a document to clarify the UK's eligibility to participate in Horizon 2020 and encourages the UK research and innovation (R&I) community to continue applying for funding and participating in projects. Read more [here](#).

GCRF Interdisciplinary Research Hubs to Address Intractable Challenges Faced by Developing Countries - RCUK published [list of successful outlines](#) 'Sustainable Intensification and Ecosystem Services' is a [new section](#) on Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems (led by Les Firbank, University of Leeds)

NFU announced [new Leadership team](#) in January

Natural England Board [appointed new members](#) including SIRN leader Sue Hartley. Michael Winter (another SIRN leader) is also part of this board.

Events:

BBSRC, Defra, NERC and SIRN - Sustainable Intensification Workshop: Building on our research foundations

Despite the challenging weather, around 50 researchers attended the workshop on 28th Feb and 1st March. We are very grateful to their contribution to the discussions and more information will be disseminated to the wider community in the near future.

British Ecological Society Annual Meeting 2018

16th to 19th December 2018 - Birmingham International Conference Centre

Deadlines for thematic sessions and interactive oral sessions have been extended to 22nd March. Deadline submissions for workshops is 27th April. Read more [here](#).

Driving Engagement, Innovation and Impact in Plant Science event

27th March from 9:30 am to 7:30 pm – The University of Sheffield, UK

Free event organized by [KTN](#), [P3 Plant Production and Protection \(The University of Sheffield\)](#) and [UK Plant Science Federation \(UKPSF\)](#) the event will bring together plant scientists, growers and producers, food manufacturing companies, social researchers and innovators. Read more [here](#).

CECAN Seminar - Using Systems Mapping in Complex Evaluations

29th March 2018, 4.30 - 6.30pm - Registration from 4pm - London, UK

Seminar by Pete Barbrook-Johnson (RCUK Innovation Fellow and Research Fellow based at the University of Surrey). In this seminar, Pete will outline CECAN's use of systems mapping to support policy evaluation in complex settings. Pete will introduce the systems mapping approach, and the methodological developments being pioneered and tested in CECAN, using examples from work with DEFRA and BEIS. Bookings must be made by Monday 26th March 2018. Read more [here](#).

The 2018 City Food Policy Symposium – Connecting people with food policy

25th April 2018 | 9.30am - 5.00pm – City, University of London, UK

Aim of the event is to learn more about how gathering and translating evidence of lived experience of food-related problems can help make food policy more effective in delivering its goals. Read more [here](#).

Big Data in Agriculture

14th and 15th May 2018 - The Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh, UK

Symposium for plant, animal and biostatistics researchers to Edinburgh, Scotland on May the 14th & 15th, 2018, for a collaborative conference focusing on the use of large scale data resources for agricultural solutions. Themes include: Genetic Improvement in Animals and Plants, Evaluation and Prediction of Production Environments, Modelling the Dynamics of Agriculture, Emerging Technologies and On-Farm Solutions and Wider Perspectives. Early bird registration ends 14th April. Read more [here](#).

The future of long-term experiments in agricultural science

21st to 23rd May 2018 – Rothamsted Research, UK

Celebrating 175 years of Rothamsted's first long-term experiment, this international conference will celebrate the unique role of long-term experiments in agricultural science, review lessons learned from similar studies worldwide, identify new questions to ask and discuss new ways of doing such long-term research in the future.

Read more [here](#).

2nd TERENO International Conference

8th to 12th October 2018 - Berlin, Germany

The Terrestrial Environmental Observatories (TERENO) conference will address topics such as relevance of soils in terrestrial matter fluxes, improving water quality management, remote sensing and ecosystem services and Networking of long-term infrastructures for terrestrial research. Call for abstracts by 31st May. Read more [here](#).

1st International Conference on Urban Agriculture and City Sustainability

9th to 11th October, 2018 - New Forest, UK

The aim of the Conference is to review and discuss ways in which urban agriculture can contribute to achieving sustainable cities. Read more [here](#).

Consultation and influencing future strategy:

Defra [Health and Harmony: The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment in a Green Brexit](#) paper sets out a range of possible paths to farming future. If you wish to provide your thoughts on the forthcoming of agricultural policy in England, a [consultation](#) is now open and will close on Tuesday 8 May 2018. During this time, responses can be made online and you can discuss the consultation on twitter using **#FutureFarming**

Developing NERC's omics strategy - Community workshop

2nd May 2018 - Birmingham

NERC aims to develop its current and future strategy for environmental omics research. To achieve this, we are organising a one-day community workshop, with the support of a focused working group, to provide NERC with evidence and advice on the future direction of environmental omics and to provide recommendations on the capability of the community to deliver omics based research. If you wish to apply to attend this workshop, please complete the [online registration form](#). The closing date for registration is on 17 April 2018 16:00. Submission does not guarantee attendance. Read more [here](#).

Online courses/webinars:

Should We Put a Price on Ecosystems? (online course)

The University of Exeter with support from Valuing Nature has launched an online course to help everyone to discover the many ways that we benefit from the natural world through ecosystem services. The first course starts on the 19 March 2018 with further dates to be announced later in the year. Learn more and register [here](#).

Feeding a Hungry Planet: Agriculture, Nutrition and Sustainability (online course)

Developed by SDG academy, the course explores the challenges to ensuring a healthy and sustainable diet for our growing world population, as well as the central role of agriculture in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The course launches on 16 April 2018. Students can enroll anytime after that date and until 17 June 2018. After 17 June 2018, the course content will no longer be available. Learn more and register [here](#).

Research for Development Impact: Lessons Learned (webinar)

27th March 2018 12:00-13:00 UTC

How can research help address the global challenges of our times, and result in positive change in the lives of poor and marginalised communities? Join the Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation Programme (ESPA) for a webinar to learn from a decade of ESPA's experience in funding, carrying out, and assessing research for development impact. Register your place [here](#).

Networking for the landscape - The potential of collaborative governance in addressing institutional misfit in the provision of ecosystem services, in collaboration with cp3 project (webinar)

16th April 2018, 1pm to 3:30 pm CET

Organized by [BiodivERsA/ FACCE-JPI project cp3](#) and [EKLIPSE](#), this webinar aims to provide insights regarding the specific features through which the collaborative governance approaches could successfully address and mitigate issues of institutional misfit in landscape management. Additionally, it aims to introduce aspects of the importance of Science-Policy-Society interface regarding biodiversity and ecosystems services. Register your place [here](#).

Funding Opportunities:

CONNECTED – GCRF Vector-borne Disease Network at University of Bristol

First stage in pump-prime funding call now open. Funding will support a variety of small projects (up to £30,000), and possibly a small number of larger (up to £90,000) projects that can run for three to 12 months, irrespective of cost. Closing date: 08th April 2018. Read more [here](#).

BBSRC-NRF Newton-Utafiti fund call in enhancing ruminant livestock productivity

This call will focus on tackling challenges relevant to ruminant livestock production in Kenya. The call will support short term projects of up to 12 months in duration starting on 1 October 2018, awarded to a maximum of £100K (80% FEC) in the UK and up to £50K (KES 6,903,288.54) in Kenya. BBSRC and NRF are looking to support 3 to 4 projects to establish new, or build on existing collaborations and envisage a balanced partnership in terms of research effort. The funds for successful projects must be spent between October 2018 and September 2019. Closing date: 10th April 2018, 16:00. Read more [here](#).

Johnson Matthey AgriTech Partnership Project (JMAPP)

Johnson Matthey has joined forces with Cranfield University to unlock support for a cohort of entrepreneurs, start-ups and established companies to accelerate innovation and commercialisation. JMAPP is now seeking its first round of applicants. This is a highly unique University-Industry initiative in the agri-tech area and has unlocked investment from a new entrant to enable disruptive innovation so we are keen to support in line with the UK Industrial Strategy. Applications are invited for intensive innovation support projects

addressing critical technical and commercial barriers to product validation. Successful applicants will be awarded a package of support (worth an estimated £50k), available over three months, to be managed and delivered by Cranfield University. Closing date: 11th April 2018. Read more [here](#).

ERA-HDHL Call for Transnational Research Proposals: "Nutrition & the Epigenome"

BBSRC and MRC are pleased to announce support for UK participation in the JPI HDHL Joint Action on Nutrition and the Epigenome and encourage their research communities to apply for funding as part of transnational consortia.

Closing date: 12th April 2018, 16:00 CEST. Read more [here](#).

US Agency for International Development Seed systems support activity

The US Agency for International Development (USAID), under its Bureau for Food Security, invites applications for its seed systems support activity project. US and non-US organizations, universities and firms may apply. Applicants should have demonstrated expertise in seed systems and management capabilities with the range of needed seed-related support services, as well as innovative tools, approaches, information, and methods to develop and deploy those critical support services. The total budget is USD 20.8 million to fund one award over a period of five years. Cost sharing is encouraged.

Closing date: 23rd April 2018, 10:00 am ET. Read more [here](#).

BBSRC New Investigator Scheme (Funded through responsive mode)

Assists early-career researchers - newly employed university lecturers, lecturer level equivalent fellows whose awards were secured in open competition, and researchers in Research Council Institutes at the unified Research Council Band E or its equivalent - to secure their first major element of research funding.

Closing date: 24th April 2018, 16:00. Read more [here](#).

Bill & Mellinda Gates Foundation Grand Challenges Explorations

Key features of the GCE initiative are: a two-page application, rapid turnaround time, blinded and champion-based review process. Reviewers with a track record in identifying innovative ideas select the proposals they find most pioneering without need for consensus. Awards of \$100,000 USD are made in Phase I. Phase I awardees have one opportunity to apply for a follow-on Phase II award of up to \$1,000,000 USD. Few examples of the many possible examples to be considered include:

- Multidisciplinary approaches that leverage emerging research in data science, engineering, biology, chemistry, computer science, telecommunications and other relevant fields;
- Phone-based technologies;
- Novel sensor-based strategies affordable to low-income country users;
- Approaches that leverage “passive” big data sources (remote sensing, crowdsourced data, online content, social media, call center records, and other non-traditional data sources) and machine learning/artificial intelligence;
- Other applications not highlighted here.

Open call on Tools and Technologies for Broad-Scale Disease Surveillance of Crop Plants in Low-Income Countries (Round 21)

Closing date: 02nd May 2018, 11:30am PDT. Read more [here](#).

ESRC: Governance after Brexit programme-Smaller innovation grant (Value:£249,999)

This supports research which seeks to link Brexit and the UK’s changing relationship with the EU and our European neighbours with basic research questions about long term trends and tendencies across the UK. This includes issues around economic performance, across different places and sectors (agriculture and traditional industries, in cutting edge technology, and various service sectors), and industrial strategy.

Closing date: 3rd May 2018, 16:00. Read more [here](#).

BBSRC Discovery Fellowship

The Discovery Fellowship (DF) will provide support for researchers wishing to undertake independent research and gain leadership skills. The DF will support the transition of early stage researchers to fully independent research leaders. As such DFs represent part of our commitment to the supply of highly skilled professional scientists to the UK.

Closing date: 9th May 2018, 16:00. Read more [here](#).

BBSRC David Phillips Fellowships

The David Phillips Fellowship (DPF) will provide support for researchers wishing to establish their first independent research group. The DPF will invest in scientists who have shown high potential, can demonstrate that they are on an upward trajectory with clear evidence of strong scientific outputs and leadership qualities, and are aiming to establish their own fully independent programme of research. As such the DPF represents part of our commitment to the supply of highly skilled professional research leaders to the UK.

Closing date: 9th May 2018, 16:00. Read more [here](#).

ESRC: Governance after Brexit programme- Larger grants (Value: £750,000)

This supports research that addresses the implications of Brexit, considering implications spanning society, politics and the economy across the UK, and focuses on key aspects of future UK governance.

Closing date: 22nd May 2018, 16:00. Read more [here](#).

ESRC Climate Change Centre call

ESRC We will be investing up to £5 million (80% full economic cost) over five years, in one Climate Change Centre. The centre is expected to start in April 2019, and should work collaboratively with the newly commissioned Climate Change Network Plus.

Closing date for outline proposals: 15th May 2018, 16:00 with Town Hall and networking meeting on 19th April. Read more [here](#).

ESRC Climate change network plus

ESRC will be investing £3 million (80% FEC) over five years in one climate change network plus grant.

Closing date: 5th June 2018, 16:00 with Town Hall and networking event on 19th April. Read more [here](#).

Earthwatch Institute

Collaborative ecological research programme - Earthwatch Institute invites applications for its collaborative ecological research programme. This aims to support scientists for projects that will collaboratively address global change impacts on ecosystems. Projects that contribute to large, open source datasets, and provide a physical facility where researchers as well as students and citizen scientist volunteers can be based out of and housed will be prioritized. Proposals for projects that will improve the livelihoods of human communities and will help develop scientists in emerging nations are encouraged. Read more [here](#).

Restoration ecology programme - This aims to support scientists to recover a natural range of variation, bringing a system back to its historic trajectory.

For both calls: Eligible principal investigators must have a PhD and affiliation with a university, government agency or NGO. Projects are funded for three years and are on average worth between \$US20,000 and \$US80,000 with approximately half of the total budget covering volunteer expenses while on the project.

Closing date: 11th June 2018 8:59pm PDT (Pre proposal). Read more [here](#).

Pre-announcement: NERC Global Partnerships Seedcorn Fund 2018

NERC is launching a new annual scheme, the Global Partnerships Seedcorn Fund, to support UK environmental science researchers to establish new collaborations with international partners. This scheme replaces NERC's International Opportunities Fund (IOF). A single level of grant up to £100,000 (100% full economic cost) over two years, with a total annual budget of £1 million. Read more [here](#).

Several Horizon 2020 calls:

Single-stage calls opening on 16 Oct 2018

[CE-SFS-24-2019: Innovative and citizen-driven food system approaches in cities](#)

[LC-SFS-17-2019: Alternative proteins for food and feed](#)

[LC-SFS-20-2019: European Joint Programme on agricultural soil management](#)

[SFS-08-2018-2019: Improving animal welfare](#)

[SFS-31-2019: ERANETs in agri-food](#)

Closing date: 23 January 2019 17:00:00 (Brussels time)

Two-stage calls opening on 16 Oct 2018

[LC-SFS-19-2018-2019: Climate-smart and resilient farming](#)

[LC-SFS-34-2019: Food Systems Africa](#)

[SFS-01-2018-2019-2020: Biodiversity in action: across farmland and the value chain](#)

[SFS-05-2018-2019-2020: New and emerging risks to plant health](#)

[SFS-23-2019: Integrated water management in small agricultural catchments](#)

[SFS-28-2018-2019-2020: Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities](#)

[SFS-35-2019-2020: Sustainable Intensification in Africa](#)

[SFS-37-2019: Integrated approaches to food safety controls across the food chain](#)

Closing dates: 23 January 2019 17:00:00 (1st stage); 04 September 2019 17:00:00 (2nd stage)
- (Brussels time)

Are you working with or interested in partnering with African Countries?

After our participation at the BBSRC-Led [workshop](#) on the sustainable intensification of agricultural systems in sub-Saharan Africa a year ago, we have received several requests from African colleagues to facilitate interactions with the UK Community. Here is some additional information:

- SIRN created a [partners' page](#) on our website where researchers are able to add information on their research interests to help in the identification of partners
- In view of the future EU call on [Sustainable Intensification in Africa](#), we also received a request from colleagues in Nairobi to explore ways to establish links for capacity development for national researchers and programmes.
- SIRN would like to help a PhD student from Zimbabwe to identify ways to carry out a project in the UK. We are looking for funding options.

If you think you can help and/or are interested in any of the requests above, we would like to hear from you.

Highlighted publication:

Weltin, M., et al. **Conceptualising field of action for sustainable intensification - A systematic literature review and application to regional case studies**. Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment 257 (2018) 68-80. doi.org/10.1016/j.agee.2018.01.023

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 helps us build an expertise database. Registration with SIRN is free and will only take a few minutes. To receive future news follow us on [@SIRN Tweets](#) or subscribe to our news.



Copyright ©SIRN 2017 - All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is: info@sirn.org.uk - SIRN Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, UK - AL5 2JQ