The next generation
Does the business case for onsite renewables stack up?
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A powerful voice

One of things that makes me most proud to be chief executive of IEMA is members’ ambition to get involved and have a voice. Whenever we ask for your feedback, you respond in droves and that attitude says so much about this profession. Passionate, committed, knowledgeable, engaged, broad minded and optimistic – those traits come through time and again, and that has become more apparent than ever in recent months while IEMA has been changing. In fact, the entire reason we changed at all was because members loudly told us that was needed when we asked in 2013.

Lots of you have taken the time to let us know how you feel about the recent changes to the membership structure, and the new website, brand and skills map. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and I would like to thank every one of you for keeping such a close eye on the developments and taking the time to let us know how they will benefit you.

There is much more for us to do, but now your membership has more relevance and value than it did previously. Seeing so many emails and tweets that confirm how you feel shows what a well-defined brief you gave to us. Many organisations struggle to deliver complex change programmes, and typically that’s due to unclear objectives. We did not have this issue, and that is thanks to you.

Further evidence of the quality of feedback offered by IEMA members comes from the recent polls we conducted in the UK ahead of last month’s EU referendum. You generated 4,000 survey responses in just a few weeks, which ensured IEMA had a series of powerful and influential messages to take to the media and stakeholders.

A journalist at a national daily newspaper recently remarked to one of my team that they have never seen poll responses of the quality and quantity that IEMA regularly provides. High praise from someone who is deluged with press releases every working day. Again, that’s because this profession seizes every opportunity to share knowledge and stand up for important issues.

I encourage you to continue to tell us how we are doing and take advantage of all the opportunities to get involved created for you by the new-look IEMA. Members have a proven reputation for giving invaluable feedback that we’ve come to depend on – keep it up!

Further evidence of the quality of feedback by IEMA members comes from polls we conducted ahead of the EU referendum.

Members generated 4,000 survey responses in just a few weeks.

Tim Balcon, CEO of IEMA
Review of nature laws stalls

The European Commission is refusing to be drawn on the reasons behind its failure to publish the results of a review of EU nature protection laws.

More than 500,000 people responded to a consultation held by the commission last year to determine the effectiveness of the birds and habitats directives. A draft report of the findings, published in November, revealed that 88% of respondents supported strengthening existing rules, rather than changing them. The final report, along with a working paper on the political response, was due to be published in time to be discussed at a ministerial conference at the end of June.

However, the conference was cancelled after the commission revealed that it would not be able to publish the document on time. In a statement, the Dutch presidency of the EU said that the document would have provided the basis for discussions and that without it, the conference would fail to add any substance to the debate. It added that the conference was likely to be rescheduled after discussions with the commission and the incoming Slovakian presidency.

The directives are widely supported by the European Parliament, with 86% of MEPs voting in favour of their full implementation and enforcement in order to ensure the success of the EU’s strategy to halt biodiversity loss by 2020.

Questioned by MEPs on the environment committee, commission first vice-president Frans Timmermans said: ‘Better regulation is not lowering standards. Our approach is not ideological, but pragmatic.’ Internal procedures were not yet concluded, and the commission would return to the issue in the autumn, he added.

Senior policy officer for biodiversity at the European Environmental Bureau Leonardo Mazza said that the commission had no time to waste to protect nature. ‘We need to draw on the reasons behind its failure and start a debate on how to fully implement the laws, he added.’

Energy policy risks climate targets

UK energy professionals are sceptical as to whether targets set at the Paris climate summit will be achieved.

Some 71% of those responding to the Energy Institute's annual survey of members did not think the COP21 agreement would be sufficient to hold the increase in global temperatures below 2°C. Many were also concerned that local policy was failing, with a majority (57%) believing the UK would fall significantly short of its goal of reducing emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Malcolm Brinded, vice-president of the institute, said: ‘This year’s survey reflects concern that the lack of policy continuity leads to under-investment in both UK energy technology and infrastructure. This is considered to be the largest barrier to innovation and the delivery of the low carbon energy system needed to meet future demand and emissions targets.’

As in previous polls, energy professionals continued to prioritise energy security (38% of respondents) above sustainability (34%) and affordability (28%), although all three elements were recognised as important.

Although those polled were generally positive about UK policy on new nuclear delivery and energy efficiency, they viewed the changes to policy on carbon capture and storage (CCS) and renewable electricity deployment negatively. ‘Renewable energy and capturing carbon – key to implementing the Paris climate agreement – are seen to have been particularly badly hit by policy changes over the last year,’ said the institute’s president, Jim Skea.

The survey findings came as ISO, the international standards organisation, announced plans to revise 50001, the energy management systems standard. Discussions on revising the standard began in Stockholm in June, with experts from almost 30 countries attending a meeting of the Swedish Standards Institute.
Brexit vote sparks fears over environment agenda

Environment bodies fear the UK’s vote to leave the EU could put at risk environmental protection and undermine progress on the green agenda.

The outcome of the referendum – leave won by 52% to 48% – is expected to result in a prolonged period of uncertainty as Brexit negotiations take place and the Conservative Party elects a new leader. Having been largely absent from the referendum campaign, environment organisations are now keen to ensure issues such as climate change and air quality are not overlooked during withdrawal talks or as the UK deals with the aftermath of the vote.

Craig Bennett, Friends of the Earth’s chief executive, said: ‘The environment must be at the heart of our negotiations with Europe. We cannot let the UK return to the days of “the dirty man of Europe”. Protections for our birds and wildlife, our beaches and rivers must not be sacrificed in the name of cutting away so-called EU red tape.’

Likewise, Greenpeace UK executive director John Sauven said: ‘Many of the laws that make our drinking and bathing water safe, our air cleaner, our fishing industry more sustainable and our climate safer now hang by a thread. Over the coming months we all need to demand that the government replaces European regulations protecting nature with new UK laws that are just as strong.’

David Nussbaum, chief executive at WWF UK, said: ‘Leaving the EU brings risks and uncertainties for our wildlife and wild places. As an immediate step we should retain the environmental protections that have delivered cleaner air and beaches, helped preserve habitats and cut carbon emissions – and build on them to reverse the environmental decline we are experiencing.’

Martin Baxter, senior policy advisor at IEMA, said adoption of the UK’s fifth carbon budget by the government would give a clear and positive signal of the government’s long-term environmental commitment (see p11). Nick Molho, executive director of the Aldersgate Group, and Nina Skorupska, chief executive at the Renewable Energy Association, echoed Baxter’s call.

Molho said: ‘Showing its commitment to the Climate Change Act by adopting the fifth carbon budget and a robust carbon plan to deliver it and making rapid progress on a 25-year plan to improve the state of the UK’s natural environment must now be essential priorities for the government.’

Skorupska added: ‘Energy policy must be a priority for the government now, with industry needing reassurance and ministerial clarity on priorities. The first in this list must be confirmation of the fifth carbon budget, which will hopefully give some confidence in the long-term direction of UK energy policy.’

Julie Hirigoyen, chief executive at the UK Green Building Council, said businesses should not rein back on commitments to address environment and sustainability issues as they deal with the economic uncertainty generated by the vote and the decision by prime minister David Cameron to stand down. ‘Both economic and political uncertainty will have some people asking whether the green agenda needs to be deprioritised while business goes into firefighting mode. This must and need not happen,’ she said.

Factors attract criticism

The removal of overseas electricity CO2 factors from the annual update to emission factors for greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting (p16) has been criticised by environment and sustainability professionals. Nick Blyth, policy lead at IEMA, said: ‘A number of members have confirmed that the removal of these factors will be an additional barrier to GHG accounting and disclosure. In a post-Paris world where organisations are increasingly reporting on their wider value chain and international emissions this feels like a backward step.’

The change will entail companies calculating emissions from overseas operations for mandatory GHG reporting, and disclosure to the CDP, finding an alternative source. Previous editions of conversion factors had used overseas data from the International Energy Agency (IEA). These cost between €550 and €2,750, depending on the number of users. Bekir Andrews, group sustainability manager at Balfour Beatty, said the cost may deter some and lead companies either using old conversion factors or not reporting their international emissions at all. A Decc spokesperson told the environmentalist: ‘The IEA has recently changed its terms and conditions and no longer allows Decc to make the overseas electricity factors available free. We must abide by the terms of use and are therefore not permitted to include them.’

Healthy ecosystems

Healthy and well-managed ecosystems offer a cost-effective buffer against natural and man-made hazards, according to speakers at the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi. Edmund Barrow, director at the International Union for Conservation of Nature, said investing in ecosystems not only reduced risk, but also brought benefits. Only a small fraction of the cost of a disaster was enough to generate resilience, he said, including investment in natural solutions to reduce risks. Studies showed that every dollar invested in disaster preparedness saved seven dollars in disaster aftermath.

‘An immediate test of the government’s commitment to environment and sustainability lies in the adoption of the UK’s fifth carbon budget.’

Martin Baxter, senior policy advisor at IEMA

‘We have no idea which laws will be retained since those who campaigned for Brexit did not have a united position. They failed to make clear during the campaign which environmental laws would be kept.’

James Thornton, chief executive, ClientEarth
**Business plans**

**Heineken** has unveiled what it claims is the world’s first zero-carbon brewery. The Goss brewery in Austria is powered entirely by renewable and reusable energy sources, including solar, hydropower, biogas and waste heat from a neighbouring sawmill. This combination of technologies reduces the site’s carbon emissions from approximately 3,000 tonnes a year to zero, and is helping the Dutch multinational brewer to achieve a 40% reduction in CO2 emissions from production by 2020.

An update on progress towards its Plan A targets has been published by **Marks & Spencer**. Highlights include: removing plastic microbeads from products to help protect marine life; using only certified sustainable palm oil in M&S products; and reducing energy and water use in stores and warehouses by 39% and 31% respectively. It also reveals that a further 22 Plan A commitments were achieved in 2015/16 and that almost three-quarters of M&S products have an eco or ethical quality. The retailer has also published its first human rights.

**Sports good firm Nike** has announced plans to expand its European logistics facility in Belgium. Key features are: using 100% renewable energy, including from six onsite wind turbines and enough solar panels to cover three football pitches; employing a daylight capture system and smart, automated LED lighting help to reduce electricity use; and delivering 99% of inbound containers by water, saving 14,000 lorry journeys a year.

**Bacardi** has reported that, in 2015, it improved water use efficiency by 3.2% and reduced greenhouse-gas (GHG) emission intensity by 3.7%. The spirits producer said it has now increased its water use efficiency by 45.4% and reduced GHG intensity by 32.3% globally compared with 2006.

**NASA** is to test an electric aeroplane. The one-seater plane, dubbed Maxwell, will boast 14 electric motors and the US space agency said it hoped the aircraft would help demonstrate technologies capable of cutting fuel use, emissions and noise pollution. In April, **Airbus** and **Siemens** announced plans for 200 engineers to work on electric aircraft technology.

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**More action on soils required**

The government must do more to protect soil health and **Defra** should reinstate funding for contaminated land remediation, a group of MPs has urged.

The environmental audit committee warned that a failure to prevent soil degradation could lead to increased flood risk, lower food security and greater carbon emissions. Committee chair Mary Creagh described soil as a Cinderella environmental issue. ‘It doesn’t receive as much attention as air pollution, water quality or climate change. But society relies on healthy soil for the food we eat, for flood prevention, and for storing carbon. The government says it wants our soil to be managed sustainably by 2030, but there is no evidence that it is putting in place the policies to make this happen,’ she said.

The committee criticised Defra’s decision to withdraw capital grant funding for local authorities to clean up land, noting that around 300,000 hectares of UK soil are thought to be contaminated with toxic elements, such as cadmium, arsenic and lead. They warned that untreated contamination could harm public health and water quality. Creagh said Defra had been complacent in withdrawing the grants, which had undermined the ability of councils to identify and clean up polluted brownfield sites not dealt with through the planning system. ‘Ministers must rethink their decision to phase out contamination clean up grants,’ she said.

The MPs also warned that rising levels of soil degradation risked increased UK CO2 emissions and, because soil is a massive carbon sink, speeding up climate change. The UK’s arable soils have seen a worrying decline in carbon levels since 1978, with widespread and ongoing decline in peat soil carbon, they said. The committee called for the introduction of a rolling national-scale monitoring scheme for soil health to ensure adequate information is gathered about the state of the nation’s soil.

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**MPs call for SDG league table**

International benchmarks should be developed to enable businesses to monitor and report their progress against the sustainable development goals (SDGs), a group of MPs has recommended.

The parliamentary International Development committee held an inquiry into the UK’s implementation of the global goals, which were agreed by governments in September. The MPs said that the government should lead on communicating the SDGs to the private sector, using the expertise in the business department (BIS) and UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) to support the Global Commission on Business and Sustainable Development. This was set up in January by Unilever chief executive Paul Polman and former UN deputy secretary general Mark Malloch-Brown.

The MPs called on BIS and UKTI to devise a business case for engagement with the SDGs, which should include benchmarks firms could use to report against.

The idea was suggested to the committee by Steve Waygood, chief responsible investment officer at Aviva Investors. He said performance league tables could be transformational in encouraging private sector involvement, as they would enable investors to compare and reward the relative performance of companies within a sector on a range of business-relevant sustainability issues, such as gender diversity, climate risk and human rights.

The MPs also criticised the government for its lack of action on implementing the SDGs domestically. The goals are not mentioned in recently published departmental plans, which demonstrates a ‘worrying lack of engagement’ across government, it said. Sue Riddlestone, chief executive of Bioregional, said government departments tended to see the SDGs as an international development issue, which was a missed opportunity.
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Duncan seeks balance in EU ETS reform

The MEP leading the reforms to the EU emissions trading system (ETS) has said his proposals strike the right balance between protecting jobs and the environment.

Speaking to the European Parliament’s environment committee, Ian Duncan (pictured), Conservative MEP and lead negotiator on reforming the ETS for phase IV (2021–30), said: ‘I want us to deliver a system that is ambitious, fair and keeps us within our carbon budget without penalising the best performers in each sector.’

Duncan has proposed a ‘triple lock’ of ambition to tackle climate change in line with the Paris agreement. This includes possibly increasing the annual emissions reduction rate (the so-called linear reduction factor (LRF)), after the first UN global stocktake in 2023. In its plans for phase IV, which were published in July 2015, the European Commission set the LRF at 2.2%.

Duncan told the committee: ‘I am not averse to a higher LRF, hence why I believe it should be reviewed in light of our Paris commitments, and I would be happy to accept an LRF of 2.4%.’ However, he warned that increasing the LRF was not a panacea and would not solve the root causes of oversupply and low ETS prices.

To deal with these issues, Duncan is proposing to allow the commission to put forward measures to improve the market for allowances by addressing the impact of overlapping policies. He noted that, by 2020, the energy efficiency and renewables directives alone would have suppressed the market by 700 million allowances. ‘The impact of increasing the LRF to 2.4% is to remove 242 million allowances over a ten-year period. The impact of tackling overlapping EU policies is to remove 700 million allowances immediately,’ he said.

The third element of the triple lock is to force member states to retire ETS allowances connected with the closure of national electricity capacity.

Other measures include placing an additional 150 million allowances in the innovation fund and raising the small emitters threshold to 50,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent. Duncan has also proposed a tiered system for the free allocation of allowances, with sectors and subsectors most at risk of carbon leakage, receiving the most.

Strategy void

Stronger policies on energy and material resources are needed to boost progress towards a circular economy, according to the European Environment Agency. In a report, the agency gives an overview of national approaches and policies on resource efficiency across the 39 European countries that are members of, or cooperate with the organisation. The report notes that, between 2000 and 2014, resource use across these countries declined both in absolute terms (by 12%) and per person (from 15.5 to 13.1 tonnes per person). However, the reductions were mainly due to the sharp decline in construction activity between 2007 and 2014 as a result of the financial crisis rather than policy intervention, the report states. The agency says only Austria, Finland and Germany have dedicated national strategies for material resource efficiency, with Scotland and Flanders in Belgium operating strategies at a regional level.

Sector grows

The demand for highly skilled specialists in the environmental sector is growing, with new infrastructure projects and a rise in housebuilding largely responsible, according to a study. Market intelligence experts Environment Analyst and recruitment firm Allen and York analysed around 1,700 responses to a survey of environment professionals and records for 1,200 UK positions available through the jobs consultancy. The majority of survey respondents working in environmental and sustainability consultancies (52%) said specialist staff numbers were rising, compared with 35% of those working in the corporate or industrial fields, and 7% of those working for government bodies. Pay trends were generally positive, with an average salary rise of 1.8% reported among those who had stayed in the same job over the past year, double the level of increase indicated the last time the poll was carried out in 2010.

UK GHGs fall

Greenhouse-gas emissions (GHGs) declined by 33% across the UK between 1990 and 2014, new data has revealed. Scotland led the way, achieving a 39.5% reduction in GHGs over the 25-year period, according to the data, which was published by government body the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI). Scotland performed even better when its participation in the EU emissions trading system (EU ETS) was taken into account, with a 45.8% reduction recorded against the 1990 baseline. This exceeds Scotland’s national target to reduce GHGs by 42% by 2020. The Scottish government said it would now set a more stretching target for 2020. GHG emissions across the rest of the UK between 1990 and 2014 decreased by 34.2% in England, 17.9% in Wales and 16.5% in Northern Ireland. These figures do not include reductions under the EU ETS.

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NEBOSH qualification results in IEMA membership

Graduates of two globally recognised environmental training courses are now eligible for IEMA’s professional membership grades.

After last month’s launch of IEMA’s new membership journey, individuals who have successfully completed the NEBOSH certificate or diploma courses in environmental management over the past three years can now become Associate or Practitioner members. This eligibility applies to existing members and those who want to take full advantage of this opportunity to gain IEMA membership, including the AIEMA or PIEMA suffixes.

The learning outcomes of the NEBOSH courses and the relevant IEMA professional standards are so closely aligned that the opportunity to join forces makes total sense, says IEMA’s head of professional standards Claire Kirk: ‘IEMA’s new membership structure has been specifically designed to equip members to face a number of changing demands that occur throughout their careers. NEBOSH’s excellent training courses really prepare professionals to tackle very practical challenges in their roles, so the combined power of our two organisations provides the best possible support to people who are transforming their organisations.’

The two organisations officially cemented their new relationship on 27 June at the latest NEBOSH graduation ceremony. As a mark of the mutual recognition, IEMA sponsored the award for best candidate for the environmental diploma. Speaking at the ceremony, Barry Wilkes, development manager at NEBOSH, described the relationship as an important milestone for the profession. ‘Both IEMA and NEBOSH are totally dedicated to developing professionals and enabling them to be able to do their very best work. By working together, this really means great things for people who have environmental responsibilities and want to make the most of their learning,’ he said.

AIEMA and PIEMA exams launch next month

Along with other changes, IEMA launched the new Practitioner membership grade last month. For existing Associate members, the change has resulted in an automatic upgrade.

Feedback from members, stakeholders and the media on the changes launched on 13 June has been very positive. Members who have become the first PIEMA members have said the grade better reflects the nature of their work, and their levels of knowledge and experience. Because of the value and relevancy of this new level of membership, demand to join or upgrade to Practitioner has been extremely strong. Similarly, the new Associate standard is now much more attractive to those at the start of their environment and sustainability career because it provides the right recognition and opportunities for the entry-level roles.

Both Associate and Practitioner memberships are achieved by successfully completing an online exam (the Practitioner assessment also requires an assessment of competence). Now that the membership standards have been published, applications are open and the first exams will be taken on 1 August.

If you are aiming to achieve AIEMA or PIEMA status via the exam, visit iema.net/membership-2016 to apply. After completing the online form, you can select your examination date and use the new IEMA Skills Map to support your preparation studies.

If you have any questions about applying for Associate or Practitioner membership, please contact professional.standards@iema.net.
Ahead of the EU referendum, IEMA members offered their views on the implications of EU membership for the environment and sustainability.

1. The overwhelming majority of members believed the UK had benefited from EU environment and climate policy and that membership of the EU had been positive for UK businesses. Some 82% said operating within the EU had provided a policy landscape that was more stable and therefore potentially more effective for both businesses and the environment over the medium to long term.

2. Most IEMA members (78%) believed the UK had been influential in the development of EU environment and climate policy (78%), while 82% believed that being part of a bloc of 28 countries had given the UK more international clout and the ability to exert greater global influence on environmental outcomes.

3. The vast majority (93%) believed that efforts to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity in the UK were best addressed within (80%) or aligned to (13%) EU policy frameworks.

4. Members were concerned about the way environmental issues could be addressed as part of infrastructure decision-making after the UK’s departure from the EU, with two-thirds fearing the way environmental issues are taken into account in the future could be reduced or removed altogether.

5. The majority of environment and sustainability professionals (81%) said they believed European laws and regulations had been important in providing them with a framework to deliver environmental protection and environmental improvements.

6. Leaving the EU will lower the level of legal protection for wildlife and habitats, according to 60% of IEMA members polled.

7. Of those involved in environmental impact assessment (EIA), 80% said the EIA Directive had enhanced the way environmental issues are factored into development consent decisions for major infrastructure projects.

8. Some 88% of members said an EU-wide policy approach was needed to address air pollution.

9. Two-thirds of members said they believe waste and recycling performance will worsen after the UK leaves the EU, and 71% of respondents said Brexit would reduce business collaboration towards a circular resource economy.

10. The referendum vote in favour of the UK leaving the EU raises significant questions for businesses, professionals and the wider public on environmental protection policy.

In the lead-up to the referendum, IEMA members were overwhelmingly of the view that being a member of the EU was good for business and good for the environment (see above). Many were concerned that environment and climate policy risked being watered down if the vote was to leave. Environment and sustainability professionals will now look to the future with a sense of uncertainty (p5).

It is therefore essential that the government gives a commitment that, in negotiating the terms of the UK’s exit from the EU, an equivalent or enhanced level of environmental protection and climate policy will be implemented here. In establishing the future direction, the government must develop progressive policies for the UK to transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and sustainable economy, which delivers significant social value over the long-term. It must seize the opportunity to accelerate the transformational change needed to meet long-term sustainability challenges and provide a much-needed boost to UK jobs and productivity.

An immediate test of the government’s commitment to environment and sustainability lies in the adoption of the UK’s fifth carbon budget. We urge the government to adopt the recommendation from the independent Committee on Climate Change for a 57% emissions reduction, giving a clear and positive signal of its long-term environmental commitment. IEMA is committed to providing leadership and support to ensure that environment and sustainability are placed at the heart of decision-making and that policies are in place to develop a sustainable economy for the future.

Martin Baxter is senior policy advisor at IEMA; @martinbaxter on Twitter.
EIA research

Post-screening engagement
Ian Humble, principal planner at Adams Hendry Consulting, discusses how the scoping process can be made more effective in a QMark paper. Too often, he says, a local authority planner will take the ‘safe option’ and include all potential issues in the scope of the environmental statement (ES). It is an approach borne out of fear of a legal challenge and public scrutiny, but it is not helpful and is a contributing factor in burgeoning ESs. This, he believes, leads to additional costs for developers, and scoping opinions that fail to objectively assess specific environmental risks. Streamlining the process for both parties requires effective engagement post-screening between the local authority and the developer, says Humble. The scoping process should include input from council consultees and stakeholders, which would create a more collaborative and focused approach to guide the content of the scoping report. According to the author, working closely with relevant stakeholders from the outset of the assessment process would have the added benefit of helping to reduce the likelihood of objections, and can play a significant role in facilitating a smoother route to consent.

[bit.ly/1sG4WNf]

Learning from academics
Catherine Queen, principal environmental planner at TEP, describes in a QMark paper how the consultancy used academic research to support the planning application for the grid connection for the proposed Hinkley Point C nuclear power station. The electricity connection is expected to be one of the first to use the T-pylon design, the winner of a 2011 competition run by architectural institute RIBA. The findings of research at the University of Exeter into pylon design and public acceptance was used by specialists at TEP in preparing evidence submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. Queen says the use of the research for the Hinkley project has highlighted the potential for more collaborative working between academic researchers and practitioners.

[bit.ly/1ZQngGB]

Consultants appointed for Manston Airport application

The company behind plans to reopen the Manston Airport in Kent has appointed consultancy Amec Foster Wheeler to conduct an EIA to support its application for a development consent order. RiverOak Investments, which wants to turn the site into a hub for airfreight and an aircraft recycling facility, said it intends to apply for a comprehensive DCO encompassing the compulsory purchase of the site. In May, Thanet District Council abandoned its search for an indemnity partner to launch a compulsory purchase order.

A DCO helps secure permission for developments categorised as nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP). RiverOak spokesperson George Yerrall said: ‘Manston has a strong case to be considered a NSIP as it offers much-needed runway capacity in the south east of England.’ The US-based firm said the EIA would cover a range of issues, including noise, air and water quality, transport impact and historic environment.

Meanwhile, Stone Hill Park, the company that owns the airport site, has submitted a planning application to the council for a mixed-use scheme, comprising a business park, up to 2,500 homes and sports and leisure facilities.

The airport closed in May 2014.

EIA practice update with IEMA’s Josh Fothergill

IEMA’s guide on ensuring that EIAs meet the requirement. Almost two-thirds (64%) said CEs should be full members of a relevant professional body and have sufficient experience in EIA.

IEMA Fellow Dr Ross Marshall and I presented on EU and UK EIA systems at the two-day international EIA systems event hosted by Hong Kong’s environmental protection directorate. We also took part in roundtable discussions with experts from Australia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Japan, the Netherlands and the US.

The IA network ESIA group held its first meeting on 4 July, kindly hosted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Members of the ESIA steering group discussed current challenges, future activities, opportunities for partnerships and the group’s goals. The group will present the IA network webinar on 25 August, which will include presentations on international perspectives on ESIA.

environmentalistonline.com (July 2016)
Minister backs EU-level microbead ban

The government has strengthened its view on use of microbeads in cosmetics and toiletries and now supports a ban rather than a voluntary phase-out, according to environment minister George Eustice.

Speaking at an evidence session held by the parliamentary environmental audit committee (EAC) as part of its inquiry into microbeads, Eustice said plans to introduce a ban in the US in July 2017 had “changed the nature of the debate”. He revealed that the government had been talking to other EU member states to gain support for a bloc-wide ban.

Working alone, the UK could implement a ban on manufacturing of products containing microbeads, but not the sale of imported products imported with microbeads, since trade is controlled at EU level, Eustace explained. The circular economy package would be the most appropriate mechanism through which to implement the ban, he added.

If the EU fails to implement a ban, Eustice said the UK government would consider a unilateral action, although he admitted that did not know how many personal care products manufactured in the UK contained microbeads.

Many large cosmetic companies have already volunteered to phase out microbeads from their products by 2020.

John Chave, director general of trade body Cosmetics Europe, said its larger corporate members might be able to phase them out earlier, but that many small and medium-sized businesses would find it difficult to reformulate their products so quickly.

However, preliminary results from a survey of the body’s members revealed they had already phased out around 75% of microbeads by volume. There was no incentive to manufacture the same product in different ways to different global markets so the cosmetics sector expects the phase out to be global, Chave said.

L’Oréal, P&C, Unilever, Reckitt Benckiser and Johnson & Johnson had initially refused to appear before the committee. However, L’Oréal, P&C and Unilever were due to give evidence as the environmentalist went to press.

There has been increasing public pressure over the issue of microbeads in toiletries, with a petition coordinated by NGOs attracting 300,000 signatures. Up to 4.1% of marine microplastic pollution comes from cosmetics, which equates to 2,400–8,600 tonnes of plastic entering seas each year. Other sources are industrial scrubbers and larger pieces of plastic broken down over time, according to research by the House of Commons.

Eustice said that the government was not against expanding the ban to other products, such as washing powder, but that a ban on use in cosmetics was a good starting point as it was relatively easy.

Putting pressure on firms using microbeads in products

Clear, clean waters teeming with wildlife in a healthy habitat. Sadly that is not the reality across vast tracts of the globe. Much of it is now heavily polluted with plastics as a direct result of human actions and our ever-increasing dependency on the material. Production of plastics increased in the UK by 38% between 2004 and 2014, which illustrates the point.

It is not just the visible plastic bags, bottles and fishing detritus that are polluting our oceans but the less obvious litter of tiny plastic particles, referred to as microbeads. These are less than 5 mm in size and present a significant danger to the fish that mistake them for food. One study revealed that in 2009 micro-plastics were found in 36.5% of fish caught by trawlers in the English Channel.

Microbeads are used in a wide range of cosmetics, household cleaning products and synthetic clothing. They present a hazard because, once used and swilled off, microbeads disappear down the drain and are so tiny they are not filtered out during the water cleaning processes, ultimately ending up in the seas. The statistics are stark. An average 150 ml container of cosmetic product might contain three million plastic particles resulting in around 100,000 particles being washed down the drain after just one shower.

So what to do about this worrying problem? With one-fifth of microbeads used in the cosmetics industry I suggest this may be a good place to begin looking into a ban. Thanks to consumer pressure and campaigns by groups such as Greenpeace, the industry is already beginning to take note and look into different ingredients.

I strongly encourage people to question whether microbeads are in the products they use. The more pressure consumers can put on manufacturers to change the more likely they are to react. I am using Twitter to this effect. It is a useful vehicle for naming and shaming but also for praising those companies not using microbeads.

The environmental audit committee, of which I am a member, is conducting an inquiry into the effects of micro plastics (above). I’ve already spoken to Defra ministers about the possibility of introducing some kind of ban, perhaps just on cosmetics to start with, and I sense there is an appetite for this.

Rebecca Pow is Conservative MP for Taunton Deane

July 2016 | environmentalistonline.com
Glastonbury music festival fined for pollution incident

The organisers of the Glastonbury Festival have been fined £12,000 and ordered to pay costs of £19,000 after pleading guilty to polluting a river with sewage.

A Newton hearing at Bristol Magistrates’ Court was told that approximately 91,000 litres of untreated sewage escaped from a temporary storage tank on a farm at Pilton, near Shepton Mallet, on 29 June 2014. It polluted 4km of Whitelake River, killing more than 40 fish and effectively wiping out the local trout population.

Newton hearings involve a judge sitting alone and tend to take place when a defendant pleads guilty but the prosecution and defence disagree on the appropriate sentence. In this case, Glastonbury Festival Ltd had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to causing a water discharge activity not under or in accordance with an environmental permit, contrary to regulations 12(1)(b) and 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. The Newton hearing was to determine the gravity of the offence committed and whether the festival organisers were negligent by failing to take reasonable care and to put in place proper systems to avoid committing the offence.

The hearing was told that during the five-day festival, which is staged at Worthy Farm in Pilton, river quality is monitored by the Environment Agency using telemetry equipment positioned upstream and downstream of the site. Additional monitoring is carried out by the festival’s environmental team, which is expected to alert the agency if pollution is discovered within the site. During the 2014 event, onsite monitoring detected a spike in pollution at around 1am on 29 June. The festival organisers claimed a call was made to the agency’s dedicated telephone line to alert the out-of-hours officer to the problem. There was no record of such a call, however, and District judge Simon Cooper said on the balance of probability the call had not happened. The agency said the failure to inform it had resulted in a delay, which caused a serious deterioration in water quality. The organisers said testing had been hampered by thick mud, vegetation, darkness and festival-goers.

Cooper ruled that the insurer’s actions after the fish kill had not been negligent and were of low culpability. The judge said he was satisfied there was a pollution monitoring system in place, and noted that searching in the dark with a lot of facilities and people in the vicinity made it difficult to locate the cause of the problem. He praised festival staff for building an earth bund to contain the pollution.

In sentencing, the agency asked that an incident from the 2015 event involving overflow from a tank fed into by the festival’s ‘long drop’ toilets also be taken into consideration. The court was told the prosecution had cost the agency £34,236.

Agency secures first CBO

A Somerset builder has been given a five-year criminal behaviour order (CBO) and 150 hours of community service for illegal waste activities. It is the first CBO secured by the Environment Agency.

Bernard Molloy admitted at Taunton Crown Court to transporting, depositing and transferring waste illegally. The court was told that Molloy’s flatbed Ford Transit was regularly seen travelling to and from a field off Wall Ditch Lane, Merriott. When agency officers visited the site on 19 August 2014, they discovered piles of domestic and business waste. The site did not have a waste permit.

Molloy pleaded guilty to depositing controlled waste, including rubble, timber, electrical items and various mixed and commercial waste, in the field without an environmental permit between 1 June and 18 December 2014, contrary to regulations 12(1) and 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010. He was also convicted of illegally burning waste in a manner likely to cause pollution or harm to human health.

Under the terms of the CBO, Molloy is prohibited from collecting, carrying, transporting or depositing any waste in the course of his or any other business. He is also barred from the site. If the order is breached, Molloy risks a prison sentence of up to five years. In addition to the CBO and community service, Molloy had to pay £2,500 towards investigation costs.

Case law

Alternative to a project harming heritage assets

In Whitty v Secretary of State for Transport & Ors, the Court of Appeal examined the manner in which an inspector and secretaries of state rejected an alternative proposal in favour of a development that would cause substantial harm to designated heritage assets.

The development was for the construction of an elevated chord railway (Ordsall Chord) in Manchester, which would substantially harm several Grade I and Grade II heritage assets. An alternative route (Option 15), which would avoid damaging the listed buildings, was ruled out because it ran through Middlewood Locks, a large vacant site Salford City Council was seeking to develop as part of its plan to regenerate central Salford.

The inspector found the issue was not whether the benefits of Ordsall Chord outweighed harm to Middlewood Locks but whether Option 15 provided a reasonable alternative. The inspector applied the two-strand test in para 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework, noting: the Ordsall Chord would result in substantial harm to heritage assets, but would leave the primary assets intact; and Option 15 was not a reasonable means of achieving the public benefits and providing a reasonable alternative, primarily because of the serious consequences for the regeneration of central Salford.

The court agreed with the manner in which the inspector applied the test and found it was ‘undeniably open’ to him to bring the harm to the redevelopment of Middlewood Locks and the regeneration of central Salford into account when assessing the merits of Option 15.

Miranda Edwards

Lexis®PSL

environmentalistonline.com (July 2016)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In force</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>14 Apr 2016</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>The Water Supply (Water Quality) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 amend the 2010 Regulations, adding an analytical parameter (radon) for the monitoring of water supplies intended for human consumption. Sampling frequencies for tritium and indicative dose (ID) have been updated. bit.ly/1TqC6fC</td>
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<td>2 May 2016</td>
<td>Environment protection</td>
<td>The Environmental Better Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 enables the country’s department of environment (NIDoE) to develop regulations to protect and improve the environment. Parts 3–5 of the act amend the Clean Air (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The Environmental Better Regulation (2016 Act) (Commencement No. 1) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 brings into operation s7–14 of the act. These relate to the powers of the NIDoE. bit.ly/1TJzrTw; bit.ly/23MqMqF</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 May 2016</td>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>EU decisions 2016/587 and 2016/588 approve respectively the use of light emitting diodes (LED) and 12 Volt efficient alternators as an innovative technology for reducing CO2 emissions from passenger cars under Regulation 443/2009. bit.ly/1rJrnAt; bit.ly/1ZM7JyD</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 May 2016</td>
<td>Emissions</td>
<td>EU Regulation 2016/646 amends 692/2008, which implemented and amended 715/2007 on emissions from new light passenger and commercial vehicles (Euro 5 and Euro 6). 2016/646 establishes requirements for real driving emissions (RDE) testing. The regulation also supports the introduction of portable emissions measurement systems for use in RDE. bit.ly/1VVhufs</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 May 2016</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>The Energy Act 2016 establishes the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) and sets out its formal powers. Under the Act, the energy secretary’s regulatory powers and functions relating to offshore oil and gas recovery are transferred to the OGA. Consent has also been devolved for large onshore wind farms to local planning authorities. The act confirms that the Renewables Obligation is now closed to onshore wind and that grace periods are in effect. bit.ly/23NlazA</td>
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<td>31 May 2016</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>The Town and Country Planning (Operation Stack) Special Development (Amendment) Order 2016 extends for 18 months the planning permission granted by the 2015 Order. Permission ceases at the end of 31 December 2017, rather than the 1 June 2016. bit.ly/1TZ1T9C</td>
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<td>1 Jun 2016</td>
<td>Environment protection</td>
<td>The Pollution Prevention and Control (Fees) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2016 amend various legislation to include new powers to charge/increase fees for functions and activities carried out by the secretary of state. The legislation amended is: Pollution Prevention and Control (Fees) (Miscellaneous Amendments and Other Provisions) Regulations 2015; Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations 2001; Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipelines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999; and Fluorinated Greenhouse Gas Regulations 2015. bit.ly/1VQ7V0U</td>
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New guidance

| GHG and CRC conversion factors | Deco has published revised conversion factors for greenhouse gas reporting by UK based organisations of all sizes, and for international firms reporting on UK operations (bit.ly/1U5NeS – see also p5). Three sets are available: full – contains all of the available factors for the selected year, and is recommended for advanced users only; condensed – an abridged version for most (new) users, designed to reduce the volume of information they have to navigate to find the factors they want; and flat file – same information as the full set, but arranged for automated processes. The table of conversion factors for organisations participating in the carbon reduction commitment (CRC) energy efficiency scheme has also been updated (version 6 – bit.ly/1rla3RJ). Under the scheme, participants must measure the emissions from energy supplies for which they are responsible according to the relevant conversion factors. |
| Energy performance of buildings | Revised guidance for local weights and measures authorities about enforcing the rules on energy performance certificates and air conditioning inspections has been published (bit.ly/1VYB8WI). The new version reflects the requirements of the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2015, which came into effect on 9 October 2015. |
| Waste | An updated guide to determining whether a material is waste or not has been published and applies to England, Northern Ireland and Wales (bit.ly/1q8qSIf). It updates part two of the 2012 guide, focusing on identifying when waste rules apply and taking into account the recent changes to the waste duty of care code of practice (bit.ly/1RDzaFq). The full guide consists of three parts: the background and rationale for providing guidance on end of waste; practical information for businesses and other organisations; and detailed guidance on the legal definition of waste and its application. |
| Weather data | The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) has issued a revised version of its weather data, which is used by building designers to calculate heating and cooling requirements for buildings (bit.ly/2UCySO). The datasets provide climate information for building simulation software to demonstrate compliance to UK Building Regulations. Produced with the MET Office, the datasets are based on data from 14 sites around the UK that has been collected since the early 1980s. The updated version combines this historic data with the latest climate change projections to produce future weather files up to the 2080s. |
| Estimating flooding | The National River Flow Archive (NRFA) has released an update of the WINFAP-FEH data files for use in flood estimation. It includes a revised annual maxima (AMAX) and peaks over threshold (POT) time-series data at gauging stations across England, Wales and Northern Ireland up to September 2014 (bit.ly/1ZHJ22h). The NRFA’s peak flow data service provides flood data from 959 river flow gauging stations around the UK. The updated files include data from five new stations in the West Midlands, Wessex and north-west England regions. The database is calculated to provide net economic benefits of almost £5.4 million per year in terms of costs saved by environmental consultants and regulators. |
| Biomass | Deco has published a guide on applying for a place within the 400MW cap on new build dedicated biomass projects under the Renewables Obligation (RO) (bit.ly/1WzZ3xP). It updates the 2013 version. Projects applying to the 400MW cap must be aiming to commission under the RO by 31 March 2017. Projects that experience delays after obtaining an unconditional place within the cap may be eligible to apply for a ‘grace period’ that would allow them to apply for accreditation under the RO on or before 30 September 2018. |
| Site clearance | The communities and local government department has published guidelines on the safe removal of rubble, debris and other materials deposited due to an incident or event making an area unsafe or unusable (bit.ly/1YZyVdf). Examples in the UK of such incidents include the petrochemical fire at Buncefield in 2005, the bombings in Manchester and London in 1996 and 2007, the flooding in Boscastle, Cornwall in 2004, and the widespread flooding in 2007, 2013/14 and 2015/16. Objectives of a site clearance operation include: the decontamination of rubble and debris and returning the area to an agreed level of safety; and ensuring environmental impacts from site clearance are appropriately controlled. Site Clearance Capability: a guide for effective local planning, response and recovery supplements more in-depth guidance from Defra and the Environment Agency on decontamination issues and detecting, identifying, monitoring and managing hazardous materials. |
| Marine renewables | Deco has produced guidance to assist developers and holders of offshore renewable energy consents and licences to understand how these will be affected by the provisions applying to new marine Natura 2000 sites (bit.ly/1ZKlkqA). |
Does ‘never volunteer for anything’ apply to environmental statements?

Sheridan Tregre and Paul Grace on submitting environmental statements, even when the law does not require it

On the face of it, this means that where projects do not meet the sch 2 criteria or thresholds for screening, and are outside sensitive areas, there should generally be no reason to start thinking about whether they are likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of their nature, size, location or otherwise. The government’s Planning Practice Guidance confirms this.

Directions by the secretary of state

However, it is sometimes forgotten that the secretary of state has discretion to direct that any sch 2 development still needs an environmental statement, even if it is not in a sensitive area or does not meet the thresholds or criteria. It is open to a local planning authority or, indeed, an objector to request such a direction.

The courts confirmed in R (on the application of Save Britain’s Heritage) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, in 2013, that the EIA regulations require the secretary of state in such circumstances to effectively apply the same tests as for screening – that is, whether the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of their nature, size, location or otherwise, including relevant criteria from sch 3 of the regulations, grouped under the headings ‘characteristics of the development’, ‘location of the development’ and ‘characteristics of the potential impact’.

In other words, the secretary of state will look at the proposals in the round, at the wider location and cumulative impacts, as if the proposals had been taken forward to the screening stage.

What does a direction mean?

Although the secretary of state rarely makes such directions, the possibility that one could be made means that developers should always, at the outset at least, consider whether there might be concerted lobbying for a direction.

If made mid-way through an application, a direction would cause significant delay. Existing reports and assessments would have to be upgraded into a formal environmental statement. Ecologists might even have to wait until the next available window for particular surveys.

Also, consider the court decision in the case of Roskilly v Cornwall Council earlier this year. The judgment’s logic suggests (quite surprisingly) that if a third party submitted a last minute request for a direction and the local planning authority granted planning permission without awaiting the outcome, and the secretary of state then made a direction, permission could be quashed as an environmental statement would need to be considered. Pre-empting all of this with a voluntary environmental statement could save later cost, delay and uncertainty.

Particular circumstances when pre-emption might be an option is where a strict application of the EIA regulations does not require an environmental statement but the nature of the proposed development suggests it should.

A risk-based approach

The EIA regulations are all-or-nothing. Once a developer has opted in, by volunteering an environmental statement, they apply in the same way as if the environmental statement had been required by a screening opinion or direction. There are disadvantages: there are additional publicity requirements; a slightly longer determination deadline applies for the planning application (16 weeks); and use of permitted development rights becomes limited.

It would never be appropriate to submit unnecessary environmental statements as a matter of course, simply out of an abundance of caution. Even so, taking a risk-based approach, developers with appropriate environmental consultant and legal advice might well consider that it would be cheaper, quicker and more certain in a small number of borderline cases to submit a voluntary environmental statement, particularly where there is a proximity to sensitive locations or the proposals are likely to attract controversy.
Adjusting to the new reality

Cuts to subsidies have made some question the business case for onsite renewables. But are they speaking too soon? **Alex Marshall** reports
At the start of the year, the final nail seemed to have been hammered into the coffin of onsite renewables when the government slashed feed-in tariffs (FITs) yet again. The subsidy available for solar PV projects – the overwhelming renewable of choice for businesses and public sector bodies hoping to generate their own power – dropped some 60%, to just a few pence per kW/hr.

At the same time, the energy and climate change department (Decc) introduced a system of quarterly caps to limit the cost of the scheme. This would limit the number of PV installations 10–50 kW in size to 500 a quarter. If a business put PV on its roof, but missed the cap, it would be put in the queue for the next quarter. There was no guarantee subsidies would not change – or be stopped, altogether – in the meantime.

**Own two feet**
The message from government seemed clear: it is time for solar to stand on its own. The changes appeared to have had an immediate impact. ‘We have observed a distinct drop in demand for our solar modelling services,’ Chris Jennings, strategic development manager at Sustain, told the environmentalist in January after one of the energy consultancy’s largest clients had shelved all its solar plans.

The business case for other types of onsite electricity generation such as hydro and wind was scarcely better, while heating projects have been caught in a downward spiral. In March, Decc launched a consultation on ‘reforming and refocusing’ the renewable heat incentive (RHI). This revealed an intention to cut subsidies for small-scale biomass projects in order to force businesses to invest in larger, more efficient onsite schemes. The department also plans to halt subsidies to solar thermal, citing value for money. And it is proposing to add in generating renewables by the end of 2015, the consultation document stated, equivalent to just 277 a month. However, Decc failed to point out that its own modelling suggested some 60%, to just a few pence per kW/hr. Now that won’t happen. It’s more 8p, a penny or two below the retail price. But that still makes a massive difference if you use a lot.’

**Bouncing back**
The changes already made and the ongoing proposals have dented confidence in onsite renewables. But there is a question that is more important than the immediate shock: is the business case for investment now obsolete?

Onsite renewables seem to have been in perpetual crisis since the FITs and RHI regimes were introduced, with every policy alteration apparently threatening disaster for both industry and the UK’s renewables targets. Yet developers seem able to adjust and companies keep on investing. Has that happened again this time? The answer appears to be a tentative yes. In the first three months of the year, 254 solar projects between 10kW and 50 kW capacity were installed, totalling almost 8 MW peak capacity; in addition 58 above 50 kW were installed, totalling 16.8 MW and exceeding the 14.1 MW cap. That is less than half the number of installations as last year, but some businesses are clearly making things happen.

‘It’s not been a question of, “Does this work or not?”,’ says David Pickup, business analyst at the Solar Trade Association. ‘It’s been “How can you make it work?” That’s been the challenge for everyone.’ The revised solar FITs are intended to produce a 4.8% rate of return – not high enough for most investors, Pickup says. As a result, developers have had to find ways to improve this.

In some cases, this has involved job cuts, but many developers have changed their business model so they now target only those business customers with high daytime electricity use all year. Dec’s modelling assumes half the power generated is used onsite. If that proportion can be increased, the rate of return goes up, Pickup says.

Jordan Mawbey, marketing manager at solar provider EvoEnergy, agrees. ‘The FITs cuts hit the market hard, but the market’s had to evolve. Before, everyone would put as many panels on a roof as possible. The aim was to make money. Now they’re looking at saving money from electricity bills. That’s become the business case. It’s now a matter of educating customers to think about those savings.’

There have been other adjustments too, Mawbey says, especially by firms that offer to install panels on buildings free and then provide the property’s owner with discounted electricity. ‘Before the cuts, the asset manager normally offered to sell electricity to companies at half what they were paying – say, 5p per kW/hr. Now that won’t happen. It’s more 8p, a penny or two below the retail price. That still makes a massive difference if you use a lot.’

**Large corporations**
The organisations that do not seem to have lost their appetite for solar are the big corporates whose carbon and energy targets and high profile almost require them to continually increase onsite generation. Supermarket chain Aldi, for example, says it will install panels on 100 of its stores this year. After the FITs cuts, it reassessed project costs and decided to switch from monocrystalline panels to cheaper, if less efficient, polycrystalline ones, a spokesman says. But it did not decide to scrap any schemes.

Similarly, Thames Water’s energy manager, Angus Berry, says the cuts have not stopped the company installing solar or investing in other onsite projects. ‘The key for a business case is location and site demand – using the electricity on site does avoid grid costs and help matters.’ As testimony of this, Thames Water is installing a 1.5 MW solar array at its Littleton water pumping station in south-west London, all electricity from which will be used onsite.

Property company British Land, meanwhile, told the environmentalist it will soon announce it will be raising levels of onsite generation. A spokesperson says onsite generation had become a material issue in ensuring it was the landlord of choice.

Perhaps the company that best shows the ongoing business case for onsite renewables is Kingfisher, the

*July 2016* | environmentalistonline.com
retail giant behind B&Q and Screwfix. ‘It was a lot easier last year,’ says Jeremy Parsons, the firm’s head of energy and renewables. ‘You could put PV on every site in the country. With the cuts, I didn’t think we’d be investing in the first six months of this year at all – I thought it would take that long for the market to respond, find efficiencies or accept lower margins. But it took only a couple of months.’

Kingfisher has 12 projects lined up with grid and planning consent that will receive 2.7p per kW/hr of electricity generated thanks to being pre-accredited for FITs. Parsons describes the payback as ‘better than nothing’. The business case for those schemes has improved since the cuts by putting them into one rolling programme to save on labour costs and by changing suppliers of both the panels and inverters, which has reduced equipment costs by one-third. However, those reductions are still too little for some projects. ‘I’m struggling to make things work for small systems in places like Warrington where there isn’t as much sun,’ Parsons says, but he is optimistic even those may be worth revisiting by the end of the year.

The advantage Kingfisher and other large corporates have, of course, is boards that want to see to be responsible and are willing to back that desire with finance – in Kingfisher’s case last December it announced a £50m fund for onsite renewables. Parsons admits that for some companies corporate social responsibility goals may be a sufficient business case in themselves, but he insists that Kingfisher has taken this line only once so far. ‘I think [that might happen] where we have stores with strong eco-credentials,’ he says. ‘Our flagship store in Antibes in the south of France is made from locally sourced timber and is very energy efficient and we put panels on there, which didn’t meet our hurdle rate [the minimum rate a company expects to earn when investing in a project]. It just seemed the right thing to do to also install solar panels.’

Capital allowances

Despite Kingfisher’s continued investment, Parsons says some policy changes would help to improve the business case for schemes. His main wish is that the government allows solar PV to be eligible for enhanced capital allowances (ECAs) so investments can be written off against tax. Eligibility was removed in 2012 to avoid double subsidising projects. (Some technologies, including solar thermal, can still claim ECAs because they are deemed to be energy-saving.)

ECAs would be far more helpful than FITs, Parsons says, and would ‘help businesses that would invest only if they could get a three-to-five-year payback’. It would also make a lot more sense to finance departments as renewables become just another capital investment.

However, it is unclear whether this call is realistic. Economic modelling for the Renewable Energy Association found an ECA would be equivalent to paying a feed-in tariff of 1.3p per kW/hr over 20 years. Although that is below current subsidy rates, the government is unlikely to want to commit to it when it wants to remove all support.

Parsons also wants the European Commission to remove the minimum import price imposed on solar panels of €0.56 (44p) per watt peak capacity. This was introduced in 2013 to stop China dumping panels and damaging German manufacturers, but many argue it is now keeping prices artificially high. Amber Rudd, the energy secretary, wrote to the commission in December asking it to remove the price at the earliest opportunity, claiming the change would ‘hasten the day when solar PV is able to operate without subsidy across the EU’. The commission has launched a review, but it is unlikely to conclude before March 2017. It has also extended the minimum price to a raft of Malaysian and Taiwanese companies it believes are fronts for Chinese firms.

Renewables trade bodies are leading a call for electricity generated by onsite technologies to be exempt from the climate change levy. At the same time Decc is being urged to provide more support for electricity storage systems, something that could be used with solar PV to avoid paying for electricity at peak times. However, Parsons says most storage technologies are still too expensive to invest in.

Outside the big corporates, projects are harder to fund, but some are up and running. Chris Wood-Gee, team leader for sustainable development at Dumfries and Galloway Council, says it is still a matter of doing the sums and seeing whether projects can ‘can wash their faces’. Last December, the council rushed to put 290 kW of peak capacity solar on four schools and a storage building before the cuts came into force, yet it still intends to tender for a new framework contract so it can do more. The biggest issue for the council now is not the reduction in subsidy, but in grid access, Wood-Gee says.

Low heat

Although there does seem to be a good business case for some electricity generating renewables, it is more difficult to ascertain whether the same applies for renewable heat projects. These schemes have always been more complicated. Biomass boilers, for example, require space to store the biomass and a guaranteed supply of fuel. Policy uncertainty has compounded that difficulty, but a bigger issue is the gas price.

‘It’s very attractive for companies to upgrade their gas boilers – the price of fuel is so low,’ says Jennings. ‘Our clients won’t look at biomass boilers or heat pumps.’ One problem for heat pumps in particular is the spark gap – the difference between the price of electricity and

### Commercial scale projects claiming FITs*

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24,410</td>
<td>1,652.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*likely using electricity onsite

Source: Ofgem
Policy changes may deter some from investing for a few months, but others will always see a business case in lowering their fuel bill.

the price of gas needed to generate the same amount of power. The ratio is now so great (3:1) that people do not consider heat pumps, which work by converting electricity to heat, even with the RHI, Jennings says.

These points are echoed by Richard Warren, senior energy and environment policy adviser at EEF, the manufacturers’ association. ‘At the moment, the business case just doesn’t stack up due to the gas price. A few years ago, off-grid projects were viable, especially when our members were factoring in assumptions about a higher carbon price. But that’s not the case now.’

However, there does seem to be one type of renewable heat project that has the potential to flourish – those fed by waste, in which businesses can invest to save on waste disposal as well as energy costs. Macclesfield-based recycling firm Tidy Planet is installing two of its Dragon food waste-to-energy systems at Heathrow and Gatwick airports for logistics business DHL.

At Heathrow, the plant will take five tonnes of food waste a day from flights operated by British Airways, dry it and then burn it to generate 3,500 MW/hr of heat a year. Some of this will be used to dry the incoming waste fuel – a practice Decc intends to make ineligible for RHI subsidies – but the rest will heat DHL’s dishwashing system. At Gatwick, the plant will be double the size and will largely process food waste from the airport terminal.

‘It would certainly reduce the business case [for our systems] if we didn’t get a subsidy for the heat,’ says Simon Webb, Tidy Planet’s managing director. ‘But in most cases it wouldn’t extend the payback period beyond the point where people would stop investing. At the moment, it is a no-brainer due to the waste savings.’

Webb’s company is small – its airport projects are its 10th and 11th systems – but it is finding potential markets daily. One is a chicken processor that requires a system to process feather-contaminated waste. Another is a casino operator, which already sorts its food waste when searching bins to make sure no one is smuggling out gambling chips but cannot send it for anaerobic digestion of composting because it is normally kept in packaging. Webb has sympathy for biomass developers that are being hit by subsidy cuts and the low gas price, but points out that Tidy Planet uses waste, which is more resilient to such vagaries.

**Lower bills**

The fact companies like DHL, Kingfisher and Aldi are going ahead with onsite renewables could be easily dismissed. These are only a handful of schemes, not a revolution. But their examples do seem to illustrate a truism – that no matter what Decc has done to onsite renewables policies over the past six years, businesses seem to adjust and innovate to ensure projects work. Policy changes may deter some from investing for a few months, especially those in the cash-strapped public sector, but others will always see a business case in lowering their fuel bill. That seems to be the case with this round of subsidy cuts, but with future ones too.

‘In my darker moments after the recent cuts, I thought we’d only now be able to do [solar] projects in places like Penzance and St Austell,’ says Parsons. ‘But things are never quite that binary and the market has found efficiencies – and quickly.’
More than 40% of people worldwide are affected by water scarcity, a figure that is projected to increase as global temperatures rise, according to the UN Development Programme. At the same time population increases will force people into more densely packed communities, many of them exposed to the risks of disease due to the lack of adequate sanitation. The strain water shortages is expected to place on local ecosystems and biodiversity will be immense. Add to this the prospect of water wars, as communities and countries fight over the dwindling supplies, and the need for UN’s sixth sustainable development goal (SDG) appears ever urgent.

Its aim is to ‘ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all’. Targets cover safe, affordable drinking water and access to sanitation and hygiene, improving water quality and its efficient use, and reducing the number of people suffering from the effects of water scarcity. Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems and reducing pollution are also covered. In short, the sixth SDG is about quality and quantity; about human health and thriving ecosystems.

Pharmaceutical giant GSK’s work on water addresses many of these issues. Its PHASE approach has promoted hygiene and improved sanitation in developing countries since 1998. Early work concentrated on diarrhoea-related disease associated with poor hygiene. Recent programmes in Ecuador and Ethiopia have focused on oral health. GSK has piloted ways to reduce water use in its supply chain too, rehabilitating water bodies in rural Indian communities that supply wheat, barley and milk for Horlicks.

Matt Wilson, GSK’s head of global environmental sustainability, says: ‘Our involvement in water and sanitation activities stretches back a long way. As a business, we are also working hard to cut water waste across our operations and we’ve achieved a 25% reduction in water usage since 2010. We are now focusing on the bigger challenge – aiming to reduce our water impact across our value chain by 20% by 2020. This includes use of water in raw materials, logistics and how patients and consumers use our products.’

Clothes business Levi Strauss has not only been innovating to reduce water use in making a pair of its jeans, it has run workshops for competitors to share its Water<Less know-how. Water used to grow cotton, effluent standards and advice to consumers to wash jeans less often also form part of a comprehensive approach by the San Francisco-based company.

You might expect water companies to take a keen interest in this goal – they have responsibilities to supply this basic life-support need, yet they do not control how others use these resources. Working collaboratively is essential for successfully managing and protecting catchments. Wessex Water and Severn Trent Water both operate catchment partnerships, working with farmers, landowners and stakeholders to protect drinking water quality, as part of Defra’s response to meeting Water Framework Directive targets.

Drinks company Diageo has been taking a strategic approach to water stewardship. Its water blueprint recognises that a whole-watershed approach is needed, and that this requires action in the community as well as at its site. This includes replenishing water-stressed areas so that there is no net-take of water in the final products, and helping suppliers protect resources. the environmentalist reported in March how another drinks company, Bacardi, had reduced water consumption at its plants.

Making a start

These tools can help organisations start to address their water footprints:

- The Carbon Trust has developed a standard for water (bit.ly/1Oab0aq).
- CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project) has a water programme (cdp.net/water).
- UN Global Compact CEO Water Mandate offers a water stewardship toolbox (ceowatermandate.org).
- WASH4Work helps organisations act on water, sanitation and hygiene (wateractionhub.org/wash4work).
The 14th SDG is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. There are targets on pollution (including land-based sources), ecosystems and overfishing, ocean acidification, and conservation zones as well as perverse subsidies that encourage damaging fishing practices. Support will be given to small-scale, artisanal fishers and less developed, small island states, while improvements will be made to international scientific knowledge and governance.

Fish
Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification is widely recognised: the fish tick logo has been on products in UK supermarkets since 2001 and many companies now have certified products.

French retailer Carrefour has committed to sustainable fisheries management and the MSC approach. In its stores in France, 50 own-brand products are MSC-certified. It has stopped selling at least ten threatened species, including eels and skate. It is also supporting an artisanal fishery, which holds more than 60% of the sole quota in the Eastern Channel and North Sea. Catering businesses have also embraced MSC certification. Brakes Group provides catering supplies to pubs, restaurants, hotels, schools and care homes and carries a number of lines from MSC-certified fisheries.

But it is not only the fish supply chain that can take action to support SDG 14; there is a role for other businesses in conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources.

Shipping
The shipping sector has big impacts on the marine environment, including pollution, and not just during use. Maersk Group has been wrestling with how to scrap its ships responsibly but only a tiny number of yards worldwide can meet its demands. The Danish company has been working with yards in Alang, India, to upgrade scrapping facilities as well as with other ship owners in order to improve how the sector deals with unwanted vessels. This all-encompassing approach is also apparent in Maersk’s support for the Sustainable Shipping Initiative (SSI). The SSI priorities include establishing responsible governance of the oceans and promoting the use of marine spatial plans. These seek a more rational use of the seas to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment and bring about beneficial social and economic outcomes.

Farming
Land-based sectors have a big impact on oceans too. Agriculture is a main source of land-based nutrient pollution in the Baltic Sea, for example. In response, HELCOM (Helsinki Commission – the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission) has established working groups on marine spatial planning, fishing and agriculture. Meanwhile, WWF’s Baltic Ecoregion Programme is working with other NGOs, government bodies and businesses to promote a sustainable Blue Economy for the Baltic. It runs the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year award, rewarding farming businesses that reduce nutrient run-off. Juris Sprukulis won the Latvian heat in 2015 for reducing pollution through careful recycling of manure as fertiliser.

Finance
Standard Chartered bank recognises that its biggest impact is through the businesses it finances. It adopted the Equator Principles in 2003. Ship breaking and fisheries are among its 14 position statements on key sustainability risk issues. Through these policies, the bank aims to discourage poor practice and support the good.

Making a start
- Marine Stewardship Council (msc.org).
- Aquaculture Stewardship Council (asc-aqua.org).
- Marine Conservation Society’s Good Fish Guide includes a ‘fish to avoid’ list (goodfishguide.org).
- Sustainable Shipping Initiative (ssi2040.org).
- Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (saiplatform.org).
- Equator Principles (equator-principles.com).
Objective 12 aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Targets include overarchingly commitments to sustainable consumption and production, with specific priorities including food waste, chemicals, tourism and fossil fuel subsidies. Company reporting is also seen as critical. Every business can do something to help meet SDG 12. Dealing with food waste, improving the sustainability of tourism, making better use of materials are three examples.

Food waste
Between growing and eating, about one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted. Food waste is number 12.3 of the 17 SDGs and a coalition of businesses, under the banner Champions 12.3, has been established to support it.

Tesco has introduced a Perfectly Imperfect range of fresh fruit and vegetables to make better use of edible crops. Mark Little, head of food waste reduction, has identified 11 other ways that the company is working to reduce waste. These include donating surplus produce to food banks, changing the specifications for fresh items, and encouraging innovation through a competition run in partnership with waste body Wrap and government agency Innovate UK. The 2016 winner was the Use-By-Mate app, designed by Wales-based THAW, which Tesco is trialling. The app provides recipe ideas and reminders to help consumers reduce waste.

Meanwhile, Swadlincote in Derbyshire is receiving £1m from Sainsbury’s over 12 months to invest in ways to cut food waste. The aim is to cut it by 50% and save each household £350 a year. Paul Crewe, head of sustainability at Sainsbury’s, says: ‘Food waste is an issue affecting us all, so remember to look at the whole chain to see where it can be avoided. Last year Sainsbury’s launched Waste Less, Save more, a £10m investment to help customers save money by reducing the amount of food they throw away. We’ve done this alongside reducing waste in our own operations, and are continually growing the number of local charities we work with to redistribute surplus food.’

Tourism
Target 12.b focuses on understanding, monitoring and maximising the positive benefits to local communities from tourism. Holiday business TUI Group worked with sustainability charity Travel Foundation and PwC to look at the impact of tourism in Cyprus using the consultancy’s Total Impact Measurement and Management approach. The study found surprisingly small negative environmental and social impacts. Direct positive economic impacts included wages for people employed directly in hotels and tax receipts for the government. It also found that seasonal work and placements gave young people work experience, providing skills and employability over and above what can be learned in formal education. This finding led TUI to invest in hotel schools and work placement schemes in Morocco, Turkey, Greece, Dominican Republic and Tunisia.

Tourists’ discretionary spending had a slightly greater economic impact than the procurement choices made by hotels. TUI is following up insights from the study with pilot projects in Cyprus to encourage customers to book excursions with local providers and to increase the proportion of food that hotels source from producers on the island.

Jane Ashton, TUI Group’s director of sustainable development, has advice for companies in the tourism and travel sector. ‘The first place to look are the hotel and destination sustainability certification programmes recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, for example Travelife,’ she says. ‘This will help you and your suppliers understand impacts, so you and they can manage and improve the most significant ones.’

Materials
Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) is aiming for zero waste across its operations by 2020, and in 2015–16 saved around 50,000 tonnes of aluminium or 500,000 tonnes CO2 equivalent emissions. The automotive company wants 75% of the aluminium in new vehicles to be from recycled and closed-loop sources by 2020. The REALCAR (recycled aluminium car) is its showpiece. This will use a new grade of high-strength, recycled aluminium the company has developed with support from Innovate UK and supplier Novelis.

Ian Ellison, sustainability manager at JLR, says: ‘We wanted to use aluminium because it is light and makes the car fuel-efficient. But making new aluminium is very energy-intensive, so would we also get the lower CO2 results we wanted? That tension meant we had to use innovation to close the loop. It required collaboration, and that can be hard. So identify your most critical material – the non-trivial problem that you need to solve. You’ll end up innovating technically and organisationally.’

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environmentalistonline.com (July 2016)
The revised international standard for environmental management systems (EMS) does not mandate that users of ISO 14001: 2015 address all elements of sustainability, but its focus is clearly on environmental sustainability as opposed to the ‘old mantra’ of preventing pollution. So how far should organisations stretch themselves to control and influence broader issues of environmental sustainability?

A broader remit
14001: 2015 provides guidance on how to address broader sustainability. It does this by directing users to ensure policies include specific commitments to relevant environmental issues, taking account of the organisation’s context. It explains that the context, including the consideration of the needs and expectations of interested parties, should determine the scope of the EMS. It introduces another link, to the lifecycle of products and services and how far the scope of the EMS should go in considering cradle-to-grave issues. This clearly relates to broader sustainability outside the organisational boundary (see diagram, p26).

The revised standard explains that the organisation’s context comprises the ‘external and internal issues that are relevant to its purpose and that affect its ability to
achieve the intended outcomes of its environmental
management system. This correlates with the
standard’s definition of ‘environment’, which includes
people and the inter-relationships between them and
other elements of an organisation’s surroundings, so
bringing into play both physical and cultural aspects,
influenced by the organisation’s context and location.

It finds environmental regulation is poor; environmental
infrastructure is weak (perhaps there is a lack of
capacity for waste treatment and recycling); workforce
skills are low; and it faces an increasing threat from
water scarcity. If it truly aims to achieve high levels of
environmental performance, it must develop strategies
to address each of these.

Failure to address the major issues will have an
impact on the purpose of the organisation to deliver
sustainably sourced food products to its customers.

Consequently, the scope of the EMS needs to
address or support the management of each issue
effectively. This will require processes to identify risks
and opportunities at operational level, community
engagement, supply chain management and other
elements of operational control.

By developing an understanding of its context,
and in particular the relationship between its goals
and the environment, the organisation can position
itself to deliver.

More than compliance
In our example, the food company has high
aspirations for sustainability performance, but this
will not always be the case. By applying the process
for understanding its context, an organisation may determine that complying with legislation is the key driver for its business. If the process has been applied correctly, this may well be an appropriate outcome in a particular market at a given time. Should market conditions change or the organisation adopts a different strategy, it may evolve a more environmentally sustainable approach later.

ISO 14001: 2015 provides an extensive toolset that can be brought into play to promote a new approach to environmental sustainability. This includes:

- the process for addressing risks and opportunities, which still centres on an organisation’s environmental aspects but addresses issues such as the alignment of environmental sustainability initiatives with broader business goals;
- ensuring staff have the relevant competences to address broader environmental sustainability initiatives, which could extend to design, procurement and marketing functions;
- developing better communications processes – internally for staff and externally for value chain partners and other stakeholders – ensuring that any information disclosed is supported by evidence;
- extending control and influence (taking a lifecycle perspective) to procurement and delivery of goods and services;
- integrating strategy, systems and processes to deliver holistic and effective management;
- monitoring and measuring performance, including through key performance indicators for improvement objectives;
- genuine evaluation of conformance to compliance obligations, which can include commitments to stakeholders to address environmental sustainability; and
- management reviews to consider the need for better integration of environmental sustainability into mainstream business processes and to advise the business on implications for strategic objectives.

The emphasis on a more holistic approach, internally through integration and externally across the lifecycle, can encourage the development of processes to control or influence other areas of sustainability, including human rights and labour conditions.

Going further
The recent roundtable on ISO 14001 and sustainability, reported in the April issue of the environmentalist, included several statements from participants that the 2004 version of ISO 14001 had assisted them in promoting environmental sustainability in organisations. They also voiced concerns about the previous standard’s weaknesses in this respect.

The new edition of ISO 14001 should reinforce existing good practice and address areas of concern by encouraging a focus on strategy, integration with business processes, leadership accountability and involvement, cross-functional participation, and lifecycle thinking.

The consensus among the roundtable participants was that the revised standard would help reinvigorate environmental management systems and promote better environmental sustainability performance. If their enthusiasm is reflected throughout the profession, the revised standard will be a success.

Nigel Leehane, MIEMA, is joining SLR as technical director in the environmental management, permitting and compliance discipline. Thanks to Martin Baxter, senior policy advisor at IEMA, for his contributions to this article.
The end result

Garry Cornell outlines an approach to auditing that focuses on the outcome

The case against the environmental industry is that it has spent the past 30 years failing to arrest global climate change, tackle resource depletion and prevent ecosystem destruction. Moreover, ISO 14001 certification has squandered billions of pounds’ worth of investment and resources on a global scale, resulting in nothing but a mass of documents.

The case against 14001 auditors, both internal and external, is that by relying on documented procedures, registers and records to provide evidence, they have failed to harness the critical purpose of the international standard for environmental management systems. A UKAS auditor once said: ‘The purpose of audits is to check documentation and that procedures are being followed.’ No, they are about far more.

Now the profession has a new standard, 14001: 2015. You can almost feel the frustration with the previous version in the demands set out in the update: leadership and commitment; no more asking for documented procedures; understand externalities to the business. It could not be any clearer if the standard was renamed: ‘For God’s sake, do something for the environment.’

However, if we continue to audit the revised standard in the same way as in the past, we will continue to fail to deliver change.

Outcome-based auditing

Outcome-based auditing is simple and has big advantages over traditional auditing processes. My proposal is that using this method for 14001 audits could help auditors and auditees to deliver far better results from the outcome. There are four stages to outcome-based auditing (see panel, p29).

1. Define expected outcomes

The auditor and auditee define and agree expected outcomes. In 14001, these are:

- protect the environment;
- meet compliance obligations; and
- continuous improvement.

All the remaining requirements of the standard are the mechanisms by which these outcomes are achieved. Practitioners will recognise them as the commitments made in an organisation’s environmental policy. This is why they are in the policy, which is signed off by senior management and made publicly available. They represent a pledge by the organisation to achieve environmental goals and that stakeholders – including shareholders, neighbours, customers, suppliers and employees – can expect results. The role of the auditor is not to assess whether mechanisms are in place to realise these objectives, but to provide assurance that the outcomes are being achieved.

2. Suboptimal outcomes

Next is to test whether the expected outcomes are being achieved. There are many ways to do this:

- Start by looking at reality before you dig into paperwork. This makes the audit more time-efficient and prevents the auditor being ‘brainwashed’ by the auditee into believing everything is working like the paperwork says it should. It is a matter of applying some basic psychology to the process. Find out what happens in practice and look at the documents later if it helps you to understand what you are seeing.

- Start on the outside and work your way in. In most cases, better results occur when management is focused on environmental issues. Management attention tends to be drawn to the core business. By implication, less attention falls further away from the core and to the area where more environmental issues will be found (see panel, p30).
When looking for suboptimal outcomes, remember the expected ones. Look for examples of poor environmental controls, unnecessary or badly managed impacts and standards of compliance.

Always try to understand what is happening and why. Use each suboptimal outcome as a discussion point. Who, why, when, where?

Do not accept the challenge that the situation you are seeing is acceptable, if you believe it isn’t.

The audit needs your professional judgment. You must apply your knowledge and experience. This is why you are conducting the audit. If you do not feel comfortable in that position, you ought to think about developing your technical understanding first.

Do not rush. Remember that the devil is in the detail. Go too fast and you will miss that detail; what is happening in reality. I would advise that this should take up at least 50% of the auditing time, if not 75%, if it is done properly.

Share everything. Aim to ensure the auditee is fully aware of any of the issues you have identified. There should be no surprises.

Take photographs. They make outcomes more interesting, and it is easier to share and discuss what you have found.

Do not accept a quick fix. Even if problems are fixed quickly, they remain valid because they were present before the audit started. Remember that suboptimal outcomes are evidence that leads to a conclusion, not the end itself.

3. Causal analysis
This stage focuses on gathering and analysing the root causes for the issues you have found. Techniques such as ‘5 Why’, ‘Fault Tree Analysis’ and ‘Fishbone’, which are ways to explore the cause-and-effect relationships underlying a particular problem, could be used for this, but there are other approaches:

- Capture each suboptimal outcome on a Post-it note or a Powerpoint slide. Group them together with similar causes or similar locations, situations or behaviours for further assessment.
- Another approach is to use 14001, allocating each suboptimal outcome to a clause, so you can evaluate the elements that did not work well.
- Develop a process flow of how the standard should have been implemented. For example: commitment; communications; capability; competency; checking; and corrective action. Where in the process was there failure?

My tips for this stage would be:

- Include in the process the management team, or at least the auditee, to share what you have found and why it is an issue. It allows discussion about where issues lie and, in some cases, what needs to change.
- Remember that you are trying to discover why something has happened; not just within the requirements of 14001 but in the wider management approach.
- Look for inconsistencies between different management disciplines, especially between environmental management and the way other issues are managed. Why the difference? Is management using other techniques that are working better?
- All managers and organisations prioritise. Sometimes it is not always clear how decisions are made or what the priorities are.
- It is hard for most management teams to acknowledge lack of commitment or attention to a subject as a reason for problems. However, if this is sitting behind the issues and causing the problem, it is the responsibility of the auditor to bring it into the open.
It is often easy to focus on behaviour or culture as an answer to systemic issues. However, these are both the result of active decisions and actions. Ideally, the audit needs to identify what these are.

4. Non-conformance and improvements
Once you understand why the expected environmental outcomes are not being achieved, it is a simple matter to link the causes to the clauses in 14001. This is the stage when the advantages of outcome-based auditing become easier to see, particularly when assessing compliance with clauses of the standard that do not require documented procedures. Leadership and commitment, for example, is not a clause that is assessed on the available evidence, rather it is based on the evidence that it is the root cause why environmental outcomes are not being achieved.

Many different questions
Outcome-based auditing is a simple approach but asks many questions of the organisation being assessed. It tests principally whether environmental outcomes are being delivered and where there are gaps. It then asks what caused them and why? With this evidence, it assesses the conformance against the requirements of 14001.

Ask yourself: How much more valuable would an audit be if it provided a test of environmental performance in practice and then gave an indication of where there were weaknesses in management systems? Would we not then start to make a significant impact on organisations’ environmental performance? Would we then not see the revised 14001 standard make a palpable difference in our world?

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There are about 2,000 construction products with an environmental declaration (EPD) available in Europe. To put this into perspective, merchant Travis Perkins carries around 100,000 building products. A long road to travel, then, but one that more manufacturers are taking.

The UK’s research establishment for the built environment, BRE, has developed a comprehensive EPD scheme aligned with European standard EN 15804: 2012 for construction products (see panel, p33).

‘EPD has become increasingly significant as a means of communicating environmental impact data about construction products in the supply chain,’ says Dr Shamir Ghumra, associate director and head of responsible sourcing, at BRE’s Centre for Sustainable Products. ‘Declarations verified to European standards by third parties give contractors and clients more confidence when specifying and procuring products. ’

‘We still need to create a wider market acceptance and demand for EPD data. Only by getting more product groups with EPD and a significant rise in the volume of EPD available in the market will we see the shift in decision-making.’

Critical mass
As ever, establishing and communicating the drivers are critical to uptake. Major construction firms are key to this, given their position at the top of the supply chain.

Bechtel’s Mike de Silva, sustainability manager on the Crossrail project, says the advent of EPD is an important step towards understanding significant environmental impacts and allowing construction firms to make more informed choices when selecting products and materials.

‘With the focus on carbon in recent years, it is important not to forget that the manufacture of products used in the construction industry can also have other significant impacts,’ he says. ‘The increasing availability of EPD support material- and product-related credits in building and infrastructure assessment methodologies, such as BREEAM and CEEQUAL, and their increasing availability will help to secure these credits on Crossrail.’

De Silva also says EPD is an increasingly important tool in supporting the environmental criteria for lifecycle assessments (LCA) within standards such as BES 6001, the framework standard for responsible sourcing of construction products. ‘EPD is important in
improving the visibility of environmental impacts in product manufacture and, in so doing, it helps to drive environmental improvement,’ he says. However, he warns that further harmonisation of methodology is required and says the development of EPD should not place undue costs on smaller manufacturers.

The cost of producing an EPD is a factor in how broadly and quickly the sector will adopt and use product declarations. Already, the cost of carbon has established itself as the primary currency in the debate. Nigel McKay, managing director of Responsible Supply Chain and former procurement operations director at HS2, says: ‘In the past the value of EPD has never been recognised as an important element by clients.’

He adds that discussions with clients about LCA have usually centred on the total cost of ownership – a financial estimate to determine the direct and indirect costs of a product. ‘The total cost of ownership has usually been assessed against a balance between capital costs and operational costs. So many procurement practitioners would be used to a call for an LCA to be based on balancing capital and operating expenditure.

‘However, times are changing, and now product LCA is defined more as the environmental impact of the product from source to destination.’

In another development, McKay has noticed that the cost of carbon is replacing conventional monetary values in assessments. ‘For the first time in 2016, I witnessed a client inserting a mandatory clause into its contract works information, which asked the procurement team to demonstrate how a lifecycle assessment process will be implemented to identify and reduce the embodied environmental impacts in the procurement process,’ he says. ‘So clients are becoming much more informed about the impacts of materials rather than just the cost.’

**Design element**

At project level on new builds, interpretation of the client’s carbon reduction demands invariably falls first to the design community. BIM Level 2, as outlined in PAS 1192-2: 2013, is now mandatory in the UK. Data presented in a construction product EPD can be combined in 3D CAD/BIM software tools, including IES-VE and TALLY, to quantify the environmental impact of materials for whole building analysis. The results generated by the IES-VE IMPACT compliant tool can be used in whole building assessment schemes such as BREEAM.

EPD capability in a whole building context is significant to the whole supply chain and in particular to several actors. Professor Jacqueline Glass, of the School of Civil and Building Engineering at Loughborough University, says: ‘Designers can see clearly the balance of impacts for a given product. If EPD is configured correctly, this can lead to better decision making. As they are first engagers on a project, it’s critical they have access to such transparent, consistent and comparable analysis and data.

‘Looking up the supply chain, EPD provides manufacturers with a detailed analysis of their impacts – and therefore costs – across their product ranges and production facilities. This gives them the opportunity to improve efficiency, reduce costs and enhance their environmental credentials by targeting production and manufacturing processes and materials to tackle the most significant environmental impacts.’

**Benefits for producers**

One company that holds EPD in high regard is building materials firm Forterra. David Manley, environment and energy manager, says: ‘We were one of the first to be issued with a BRE BS EN 15804 EPD. Declarations are a recognised, clear and transparent method of communicating the impacts of a product, and allow users to decide which indicators are most relevant to their particular project. They also make it possible for us to compare with either generic sector declarations or direct competitors’ EPD to establish whether our impact can be further reduced.’

He discerns a link between EPD and the international standard for environmental management systems. ‘Since the latest version of ISO 14001: 2015 introduced lifecycle thinking into the standard, EPD has a crucial role in how Forterra can demonstrate its commitment to environmental management with the development of simple tools that allow us to produce our own product declarations. This, in turn, will ensure they become a more common tool within our product development, allowing us to quickly modify recipes, including using more recycled or alternative raw materials, and swiftly see what effect this has on the overall impact.’

Travis Perkins, one of the UK’s building product merchants, looks to EPD to support its drive to reduce carbon emissions and improve resource efficiency across its business. Its focus is the supply chains as this accounts for 98% of the firm’s impact across energy, water and waste. Direct operational, logistical and transport impacts account for the balance. Jez Cutler, group environmental director, says EPD provides an accessible framework. ‘EPD will not on its own to transform markets nor is it the perfect vehicle for declarations, but anything that increases transparency must improve performance,’ he says.

Travis Perkins has identified four product groups – timber, plasterboard, cement and insulation – as a primary focus for product declarations. The groups represent the heaviest impact across the company’s supply chain by overall volume and value (not per m² of environmental impact). ‘The big challenge is timber,’ says Cutler. ‘FSC certification alone is not enough. For too long the sector has seen FSC, BES 6001 and EPD as interchangeable. However, product declaration through EPD is the most promising tool we have to drive improvement.’

**Room for improvement**

Although EPD may be the best available, no system is without room for improvement. Glass highlights some of the criticisms levelled at EPD. ‘Declarations can be between four and 40 pages. Some believe they can be both too simple for an expert and too detailed for a lay consumer. So it is critical to produce declarations that are appropriately detailed for the intended end-use and end-user.’

EPD accounts solely for environmental data, which some critics argue is an artificial distinction and urge
Integration of information on social and other aspects. Glass is one. She says: ‘There is no equivalent standard or methodology for producing social declarations. So information tends to remain very separate.’

She warns consumers must be aware of the types of EPD. ‘Environmental data can be produced and disseminated by the “host” organisation, or by a third party. There are different degrees of depth, credibility, evaluation and auditing, which can be confusing.’

There are several barriers to widespread adoption. Manley says cost may be one, given most assessments are carried out by specialists. Also, many potential users may not realise how they compare with the generic sector EPD and may have concerns over how a declaration could be interpreted. For example, Forterra’s paint grade block has a slightly higher carbon footprint than its standard equivalent. But this is offset in use because there is no need for treatment before painting.

McKay identifies three significant barriers and challenges, the first of which is ignorance. ‘Ask 100 people in construction what an EPD is and, unless a person is a sustainability or environmental manager, most – with the exception of one or two enlightened procurement managers – would say “I have no clue”. That could also be the same for consultants, designers and architects. So the biggest barrier at present is communication and education.’

The value of EPD is another issue. McKay says: ‘Most people in the industry, in my opinion, would struggle to understand why we should spend money on getting an EPD when no one asks for it. I would say that is true at present. But, if you look for how far the industry has come on responsible sourcing since around 2007 when we all first started to explore the subject, having an EPD in the future could give a manufacturer a significant advantage.’

McKay identifies a third barrier in the lack of a route map on including declarations in the procurement process and the value that should be assigned if it becomes part of a balanced scorecard assessment. ‘Most clients would say we leave the procurement to the main contractors and main contractors say we leave the procurement of materials to the trade contractors. But who is educating the trade contractors on the subject of EPD?’

So the learning may be steep and challenging with several high barriers to hurdle, and the journey a long one but, on balance, the construction sector backs EPD. ‘In short, EPD is an excellent tool for our industry,’ says Manley. ‘But it needs to be utilised as part of a wider assessment of the building fabric, as opposed to a like-for-like basis.’

McKay agrees: ‘EPD is not only here to stay but will become a significant source of data in the next five years to demonstrate how companies are becoming more responsible in their management and procurement systems. And, in 2020, if we ask ourselves the same type of questions that we have today around EPD, we won’t struggle to answer them in a more positive manner.’

Gordon Miller is co-founder and chief operating officer of communications business Sustain Worldwide and a trained BREEAM assessor. For more information on BRE’s GreenBookLive EPD verification scheme visit bit.ly/1Yg0AbJ.
Lucy Candlin
Director, Planet & Prosperity

Why did you become an environment/sustainability professional? By accident! I originally planned to be a doctor, but that didn’t work out and Manchester University’s policy of passing applicants onto other science departments led to a degree in botany and ecology. When I look back, that was actually the right place to be. As a small child growing up in the inner city, I was always playing with wildlife on the waste ground and doing things ‘horticultural’ in my dad’s small garden.

What was your first environment/sustainability job? I was appointed as technical assistant to the Knowsley council ecologist. But the ecologist post did not immediately get filled, so I ended up working on maintenance and management plans with the team responsible for land and landscape management of the council’s land holdings.

How did you get your first role? Probably through a job advert in the Guardian, which even back then had a reputation on environmental matters.

How did you progress your environment/sustainability career? I did a lot of voluntary practical conservation work with BTCV when working at the council. I got a job working with my former colleagues, working in Staffordshire on a range of projects, which gave me practical skills in management systems and people/project management. I was asked to join the Groundwork Trust by its founding director, and this experience led to the job with Aspinwall & Company.

What was the last training course/event you attended? The Energy Institute’s level 1 Certificate in Energy Management to support my qualification as an ESOS lead assessor.

What did you bring back to your job? Better understanding of the practical aspects and technologies underpinning energy accounting and audit.

What is/are the most important skill(s) for your role and why? Moving beyond being ‘the specialist’ in an organisation and integrating our skills and experience into other functions, such as R&D, procurement and HR, etc. We need all the other functions to understand and integrate management of environmental risks/opportunities that relate to their area so that they can help move their organisations to a position of resilience.

What does your current role involve? Providing support to clients on environmental and sustainability risk management, including developing and evolving management systems based on ISO 14001 and other standards; emissions accounting and assurance; advising regulators and governments on monitoring, reporting and verifications; and verify accreditation and training both in Europe and internationally.

How has your role changed over the past few years? Not significantly. I have been independent since 2003, so the role hasn’t changed but the nature of the work and standards has evolved over time depending on the needs of clients for advice and assistance.

What’s the best part of your work? Meeting new people, learning new things and seeing organisations start to get to grips with their sustainability issues by integrating them into their activities.

What’s the hardest part of your job? Persuading some clients that this is core to organisational governance and not just a ‘badge on the wall’ to meet contract requirements.

What advice would you give to someone entering the profession? Do not assume you have to be the ‘specialist’; look at wider opportunities across a range of different functions and bring your environmental enthusiasm and skills to bear to change approaches and behaviours.

How do you use IEMA’s environmental skills map? With mentees and applicants for Full IEMA membership, as well as with clients when we are discussing training needs and embedding environmental sustainability skills/understanding in their workforce.

Career file

Qualifications:
BSc, MSc, CEnv, IEMA Fellow

Career history:
2010 to now director, Planet & Prosperity
2003 to 2010 director/principal adviser, Future Perfect
2000 to 2003 manager, sustainability advisory services, KPMG
1997 to 2000 director/principal consultant, Enviros Singapore Pte Ltd
1996 to 1997 senior consultant, Aspinwall Clouston Pte, Singapore
1993 to 1996 senior consultant, corporate environmental affairs, Aspinwall & Company
1988 to 1993 projects director/acting executive director/deputy director/projects manager, Black Country Groundwork Trust
1985 to 1988 senior field officer/regional training and development officer, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
1984 to 1985 technical assistant (ecology), Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Where would like to be in five years’ time? Living off grid and really practising some of what I have been preaching for 30 years.
More successful IEMA members

IEMA would like to congratulate the following members on recently upgrading their membership as part of their ongoing commitment to learning and professional development. This month members are being upgraded to the new Practitioner (PIEMA) level. IEMA has added the grade because of industry demand for a membership level for those working in an operational role. Those who were on an Associate level course before the launch of Practitioner on 13 June may now find themselves earning the PIEMA grade.

Practitioner

Magsud Aghayev, Saipem-Azfen JV
Anne Ajakaiye, Ampak Nigeria
Oluwatoyin Ajao, Transmission Company of Nigeria
Mohammad Al-Budaiwi, Sabic Terminal Services
Mohammed Al Otaib, Hadeed Saudi Iron and Steel
Ammar Balhadad, SAFCO
Reut Barak, Powermarket
Colin Barnes, Liverpool Airport
Brian Bunning, System Concepts
Alex Burdett, Magnox
Leigh Carter, CR360
Catherine Clifton, Wartsila UK
Thomas Coulter, Premier Foods
Scott Cunnington, Technip E&C
Luke Dorey
Abdulqader Fallata, Kemya-Sabic
Abdullah Felemban, AIFC
Marie Fox, Environment Agency
Martin Frost, De La Rue
Taligat Gabdullin, Zhaikmunai LLP
Khalid Gaid, Saudi Yanchu Petrochemical
Janine Galliano, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Christopher Gaylard
Mohammad Ghazwani, United-Sabic
Niall Gibbons, Atkins
Suzannah Gore, BioRegional
Christine Goulding
Matthew Harris, Costain
Catherine Hill, Environment Agency
Claire Hindmarsh, Surrey County Council
Yusuf Jinadu, National Environmental Standards And Regulations
Enforcement Agency
Amanda Keen, Highland Spring
James King
Mark Magaharan, Cranswick
George Morgan-Jones, Wales & West Utilities
Lewis Neilson
Kelechukwu Njoku, Ecobank
Uchenna Ogbonnaya, Federal University Ekiti
Nusirat Ogunnuse
Eniola Olowu, Etina Environmental Services
Kim Parmar, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Lyazzat Sagitova, Baitau Partners LLP
Ahmed Sahab, Sabic
Marie Scaife, Natural Power Consultants
Gordon Scott, Tullow Oil
Kanat Seikereyev, Zhaikmunai LLP
Tristan Semple
Nina Slamikhina, Zhaikmunai LLP
Claire Squires, Advisian
Babatunde Sunmola, Sterling Bank
Henry Unwin, BioRegional
Rustam Uteshev, Zhaikmunai LLP
Clifford Uzochukwu
Uzundu, Machenuz Enviros
Vanessa Wall, AECOM
Sara Wilkes, Aston University
Alan Wilson, A W Safety

Full and Chartered environmentalist

Anthony Armitage, CBRE Managed Services
Gerardo Austria, Network Rail
Aimen Badawy, BP Global
Caroline Coletto, WSP|Parsons Brinckerhoff
Joanna Cottin, Scottish Water
Rebecca Cottington, WSP|Parsons Brinckerhoff
John Dwyer, Arvia Trains
Jonathan Foster, Atkins
Marina Johnson, URS
Peter Kelly, Sir Robert McAlpine
Joseph Leddy, Aescia Pharmaceuticals
Richard Mackay, Mott MacDonald
Conor McGimpsey, Mabett and Associates
Celeste Pendi, Arcadis
Catherine Sugden, WSP|Parsons Brinckerhoff
Charles Symonds, Stannah Stairlifts
Graham Taylor, Skansa UK
Philip Togwell, Corus
Louise Webster

Chartered environmentalist

James Brocklehurst, Royal Boskalis Westminster
Joanna C M Wong, Atkins

IEMA events

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Lisa – 01296 611338 or Lisa.toms@shirleyparsons.com
Matt – 01296 611318 or Matthew.bransby@shirleyparsons.com

Get in contact
For more information regarding any of these opportunities or to apply please call 01296 611300 or email response@shirleyparsons.com

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SELECTION OF CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

Environmental Manager
SOUTHERN HOME COUNTIES £40,000 - £45,000 + CAR LO 8829
A global manufacturing and processing organisation is currently seeking a highly qualified and knowledgeable Environmental Manager. The successful candidate will be responsible for providing technical guidance and advice for a range of environmental issues relating to regulations and legal compliance. Suitable candidates will hold a degree in a relevant environmental subject.

Environmental and Safety Advisor
NORTH WEST £30,000 - £35,000 MB 8836
We are currently working with a specialist waste management organisation that is seeking an Environmental and Safety Advisor. The role will see the successful candidate deliver technical expertise for environmental and safety areas; audits, assessments, training etc. Suitable candidates will hold an Environmental Diploma and have experience within a waste management or process environment.

Environmental Advisor
LONDON £25,000 - £34,000 + CAR LO 8858
A leading infrastructure specialist is currently seeking an Environmental Advisor to join their large and successful SHEQ team. You will be based within the civils division and will be responsible for supporting the rest of the environmental team in providing technical environmental advice on major projects. Candidates will have a degree in a relevant environmental subject and environmental experience within construction/civils.

Senior Ecologist
NORTH WEST £40,000 + CAR LO 8814
A global multi-disciplinary construction and civil engineering company are currently seeking a highly capable and experienced Senior Ecologist to provide ecological support across a number of major projects. You will report directly into the Business Unit Leader and you will be responsible for driving environmental and ecological performance across site. Candidates must be a member of CIEEM and have experience working as an ecologist on major construction sites.

Environmental and Safety Advisor
SOUTH WEST £30,000 - £35,000 MB 8835
We are currently working with a specialist waste management organisation that is seeking an Environmental and Safety Advisor. The role will see the successful candidate deliver technical expertise for environmental and safety areas; audits, assessments, training etc. Suitable candidates will hold an Environmental Diploma and have experience within a waste management or process environment.

Associate / Associate Director – Ecologist
UK WIDE COMPETITIVE LO 8628
A leading UK based environmental consultancy is currently seeking Associate / Associate Director level ecology professionals covering either the Manchester or Bristol region. Within this role, you will manage, mentor and support a team of ecologists and complete high level ecology reports. Candidates must have ecology experience and hold full CIEEM membership.

Sustainability Advisor
SOUTHERN HOME COUNTIES £220 PER DAY LO 8818
A highly successful construction and maintenance company is seeking a Sustainability Advisor for a 4 month contract in East Sussex. You will be joining a highly successful environmental and sustainability team who are seeking support on a range of matters from management of ISO 14001 to driving improved sustainability standards across the business. Suitable candidates will have relevant experience.

Noise Specialist
LONDON £COMPETITIVE LO 8866
A principal contractor is currently seeking a noise specialist to be based from their office in London. You will be responsible for providing technical advice with relation to noise and vibration to the consents and wider construction teams. A minimum of 1 year's experience in a similar post is required.

BREEAM Assessor
SOUTH WALES £28,000 - £33,000 + PACKAGE MB 8866
We are currently working with an exciting environmental consultancy, who is seeking a BREEAM Assessor to cover multiple projects. This role will see you provide technical support to clients in your remit and maintain relationships with key customers in the company's portfolio. Candidates must have experience of BREEAM assessments and be degree educated within an environmental/ engineering related discipline.

Associate EIA Consultant
ENGLAND £COMPETITIVE LO 8472
A leading multi-disciplinary consultancy is currently seeking both Associate and Associate Director EIA Consultants to join their growing EIA team. You will be responsible for providing technical advice on large-scale infrastructure and property developments as well as growing new business opportunities. Suitable candidates will be a Chartered Environmentalist and have experience delivering complex EIAs/SEAs.
Accredited by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES), this course has been designed specifically for environmental professionals and to help you achieve a competitive advantage over your peers.

Our course offers you ideal preparation in fields of work such as environmental consultancy or pollution control by studying specialist modules and developing management skills and allows you to put into practice what you learn, strengthening both your knowledge and expertise as you go. You can also gain a Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Management while progressing on to the full MSc.

Alternatively you can choose to specialise with our online MSc Environmental Management (Climate Change) pathway to focus on the increasing importance and impact of global climate change within the industry.

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