

Message from the Coordinator

After a quiet 2011, I would like to welcome everyone back to the Network. With new resource now in place to support the Secretariat, we will be looking to reinvigorate activities over the coming months. In addition to this newsletter, you will start to see updates being posted to the SKEP website. These will include details of current developments within Network organisations, and new science-policy initiatives which are taking place.

The aspiration for the Network has always been that it would provide added value for its members – by sharing expertise, research and information. In the current economic climate, this has never been more important.

There are a number of exciting opportunities for the Network to play a key role in, both on a European level, and at a Member State level. There will be a several proposals which will brief members on these, and ask how we want to engage in them.

I would like to encourage members to increase the interface between their own, and other, Network organisations - in order that staff sharing an area of expertise in different organisations can talk directly to each other to share their knowledge. I would also like us to look at practical ways of increasing the number of organisations using the Network as a portal to share evidence with each other.

We have a number of tools in place to support this, including our website and a wiki site. We have also recently created a SKEP Network 'LinkedIn' group to allow us to identify international experts.

Simon Gardner
SKEP Network Co-ordinator

New "SKEP Workshop" telecon for ALL Network Members

We would like to hold a network teleconference to provide a sounding board to discuss and solve the issues that members face in the own organisations. We are planning to call these "SKEP Monthly Workshops" and we hope that they will be of great use to you all, each meeting will be different. We are here to help, so please use this resource and determine the agenda. This is your meeting and a great opportunity to raise issues/opportunities.

Please let me have your availability for W/C 12th Dec.

Suggested agenda items so far:

1. What are you working on? – Looking for synergies in the Network
2. Partners – Are we working/looking to work with same partners?
3. Experts for next meeting – do you have a specialist who is doing some new/innovative work?
Please suggest a participant to highlight their work internationally in these teleconference sessions.

Please could you let [Jack](#) know if you have any proposed agenda items, and which days you will be available?

New Resources for Members

We have started a Linked-In group for the SKEP Network. The main function of this is to allow greater networking opportunities between members outside of meetings and to allow members to post questions online through the forum for other members to answer/comment on.

We are keen for you to publicise this initiative to other environmental professionals and organisations that share our goals. Please lookout for your invite to the Group which should be with you early in December.

Defining practical solutions for strengthening the European science and policy interface (15th – 16th September 2011)

This DG-ENV hosted workshop was intended to support the 'Science and Environmental Policy Interface' (SEPI) project. The aim of this project is to provide guidance for a future EU environment policy-making framework, reinforcing the way in which science is acquired and deployed as policy is developed and implemented. The study will provide some of the 'building blocks' to enable the Commission to access the best possible scientific evidence in support of environment policy. Project tasks include the following:

- Analysis of the scientific evidence used and science knowledge gaps in 10 key policy areas deemed to have the highest potential to benefit from an improved science / environment policy interface throughout the policy making cycle.
- In-depth survey and assessment of how policy-makers consult with scientific advisers, through a review of methods and practices at international, national and regional levels. These case studies will support an analysis of what works best, to inform science / policy development in the Commission. It should also help generate or strengthen links with a range of knowledge providers.
- A workshop, bringing together scientists and policy experts involved in integrating science into policy (i.e. within ministries, public authorities), to explore best practices and synergies aiming to strengthen the science / environment policy interface.
- Recommendations on how the Commission can best engage with work already underway aiming to improve the science and environment policy interface.

The workshop discussed the findings of the previous December 2010 meeting which included a review of common barriers to the take up of evidence. The evidence framework which supports DG-ENV activities was reviewed and a series of current evidence gaps identified. In 2012 the Commission will be developing a 'knowledge base' paper, which will incorporate the discussions and material used in this workshop.

For more information please visit the SKEP Network website, or contact [Simon Gardner](#)

Regulatory portal developments

As part of the delivery of the Defra Better Regulation Evidence Action Plan, a regulatory portal will be developed. The outline vision for this portal is to:

- provide a service where users will be able to find peers and experts who share their interests, to help each other, and develop how they work. This will raise general awareness of what evidence is required, and its availability.
- create a tool that will develop networks of people to link up with.
- create a collaboration space where expert connections are made.
- offer greater visibility and access to conversations.
- map areas of strong skills and identify knowledge gaps.

Initial discussions within the UK are taking place over the potential placement of this portal on the SKEP Network website. The aim would be to develop the website as a knowledge-exchange hub for the view of international regulators. This would lead to increased traffic on the website, and the use of forums to share evidence to support environmental regulation. It would also promote awareness of SKEP activities, and widen our funding base. A proposal on this will be drafted, and put to Network members shortly.

For more information contact [Simon Gardner](#)

Nano-Materials Report

This SKEP led study is about to be published on our website (all members should already have a copy). It is jointly funded and provides a great example of how the network can jointly work on a cross cutting issue that affects all members.

We will shortly publish the report on the [SKEP website](#). We are looking for maximum media coverage for the report and consequently the Network, so please let [us](#) know if you can help promote it through your contacts.

SNOWMAN Meeting Update

The SNOWMAN Network (*'Sustainable management of soil and groundwater under the pressure of soil pollution and soil contamination'*) met 9/10 November in Paris. It's interest is in developing and sharing evidence and best practice for the sustainable management of soil and groundwater. Its focus is to provide a clear and objective evidence base, which can be used to inform policy discussions at both national and European level. The network has increased its profile over the last 12 months and although smaller than SKEP is very active, and has 14 projects underway and has mobilised €4.5m of research funds.

For more information please contact [Jon Greaves](#).

Meet a SKEP Colleague - Jack Bradley

I'm the new member of the SKEP secretariat at the Environment Agency for England and Wales. I'm an Evidence Advisor and my role is to co-ordinate the network to ensure that it runs as smoothly as possible.

I have worked at the Environment Agency for over 8 years in a variety of roles; my last role was working in one of national operational teams and prior to that I worked on improving the customer experience for our waste permit holders. It's fair so say I am an engagement and partnership building specialist. That's why I am looking forward to working with you all on this project.



What is your role in the SKEP network?

I have just started working in the network Secretariat based at the Environment Agency for England and Wales, at our Head Office in Bristol. I work in Simon's team co-ordinating the network and ensuring that members have access to the services they need. I'll be a key contact for you, so please [contact me](#) and say hello!

What area of research really interests you?

How we use arguments and messages to change minds to tackle climate change and other environment issues.

What area of the SKEP Network really interests you?

I like to ensure that we provide excellent service for members of the Network. In terms of research I am interested in better regulation and climate change adaptation. My background is in changing attitudes and opinions.

I also really want to know what members are currently working on so that we can look for synergies and areas of joint working. This does not have to be large scale projects. It could be knowledge exchange, advice about dealing with a funder, comments on a report, or to highlight a useful conference to the network.

How do you share information on SKEP and our reports in your organisation and country?

I'm responsible for ensuring that SKEP is well run and the website, newsletters and events are informative, well co-ordinated and efficient. I would particularly like to see Network members using the online channels that we are developing. We can discuss this in more detail at the teleconference.

Who you would most like to have dinner with, and why?

As a keen photographer I would like to have dinner with [Ansel Adams](#) (American landscape photographer) to hear more about his philosophy and photographic technique. Ideally it would be in Yosemite National Park where he took most of his pictures.