

News story: Smart energy systems: new funding and events

[UK Research and Innovation](#) – through Innovate UK and the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) (EPSRC) – has announced a new fund for research and industry to develop future smart energy systems and prove their use at scale.

The energy revolution challenge will bring together academia with industry to develop and demonstrate new approaches to provide cleaner, cheaper energy. This includes linking low-carbon power, heating and transport systems with energy storage and advanced IT to create intelligent, local energy systems and services.

It is part of the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#).

The first opportunities and where to find out more

The first funding opportunities through this challenge will make up to £41.5 million available for:

- ground-breaking, localised energy system demonstrators. We will be looking to fund projects across the UK
- projects that develop novel concepts that could revolutionise local energy provision

Full details of the competitions will be announced shortly. Businesses that want to find out more in the meantime can go to one of the briefing events:

- [Cardiff on 18 April 2018](#)
- [Belfast on 25 April 2018](#)
- [Glasgow on 26 April 2018](#)
- [Leeds on 9 May 2018](#)
- [London on 15 May 2018](#). You can also [register to watch online](#)

Details of further activity with the fund will also be announced shortly.

To get updates and the latest news from Innovate UK [sign up for the newsletter](#) or to [get email alerts](#).

More about the challenge

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund will make sure that research and innovation is at the heart of government's [Industrial Strategy](#). This sets out 4 grand challenges in industries in which the UK is determined to pioneer progress.

The energy revolution falls under the clean growth challenge, which will support the UK to be a world leader in low-carbon technologies, systems and services.

Find out more about the [energy revolution challenge](#).

Notice: Jason Kenway: application made to abstract water

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

News story: Statement on Ofwat and rebuilding public trust in the water sector

Ofwat, the economic regulator of the water sector in England and Wales, has set out its [agenda](#) for rebuilding public trust in the water sector.

On 31 January, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Defra, wrote to Jonson Cox, Chairman of Ofwat, asking him to investigate what changes could be made to improve water companies' corporate behaviours.

The Environment Agency regulates the environmental performance of water companies. In February, the Environment Agency released the [State of the Environment report for water quality](#).

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

"We welcome the Secretary of State and Ofwat's call for water companies to act as diligently for their customers and the natural world as their owners.

Jonson Cox says they should consider sharing water resources better. Today, the Environment Agency is meeting senior water company representatives to agree how to increase collaboration and coordination across the sector.

“Since 2005, the water industry has invested billions in the environment and brought compliance for discharge at wastewater treatment works to 99 per cent, but this is not a moment for congratulations. Water companies are responsible for at least one serious pollution incident every week. The courts need to make fines for pollution incidents proportionate to the turnover of companies. Sentencing guidelines in 2014 did bring in higher fines for environmental offences, but financial penalties must force board members to seriously consider environment risk, and not see it as an operational expense.

“In line with the ambition of the 25 Year Environment Plan, water companies also need to do more to act on climate change. England’s flood and drought risks are increasing so we need to see more action to provide water security. Water companies shouldn’t think of climate resilience as just expenditure. On Friday, Mark Carney spoke of the major opportunity for investors and creditors it brings in long-term infrastructure.”

News story: Changes to the assessment economic link conditions

All UK fishing licences contain a condition that requires vessels to demonstrate a genuine economic link with the UK. The economic link condition applies to landings of quota species and is assessed on a yearly basis.

From 1 May 2018 we will be changing the current assessment period of 1 April to 31 March to 01 January to 31 December (the ‘calendar year’). This is to bring the assessment period in line with the yearly monitoring of quota uptake and to help those vessel owners who are required to comply with this condition to manage their quota for the year.

This change will also ensure that the English inshore fleet will benefit earlier in the year from quota donations made in fulfillment of the economic link condition. This gives the English fleet a greater opportunity to use the quota in what can be seasonal fisheries.

The way in which vessel owners must demonstrate an economic link with the UK will not be changed and are listed below by:

- landing over 50% by weight of their catch (which are subject to EU quotas) into UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man ports.
- demonstrating that at least 50% of the total crew man days at sea were accounted for by crew normally resident in UK coastal areas.

- providing proof that routine expenditure in the UK on goods and services for the vessel was equal to either: i) 50% of the value of quota stocks landed net of crew wages, or ii) 50% of the vessel's total operating expenditure for the year, net of crew wages.
- donating quota to the English under-10m fleet equivalent to a value representing 10% of the value of catch landed overseas.
- any combination of the above methods agreed by the MMO.

The change to the assessment period is not expected to affect the ability of vessel owners to comply with the economic link condition.

Open consultation: Litter and refuse: updating enforcement guidance

We want to know what you think about our guidance on proportionate and effective use of fixed penalties for littering and related offences. This guidance applies to England only.

The guidance is relevant for other environmental fixed penalty powers such as for abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, parking, and offences related to domestic waste bins.

We committed in the Litter Strategy for England to publish improved guidance to promote proportionate and responsible enforcement. We intend to put this guidance into the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. Land managers in England have to have regard to this code.