

## **News story: GC team thanked for leading interactive DNA extraction workshop**

Dr Malcolm Burns represented the UK at the European Network of GMO Laboratories (ENGL) Steering Committee meeting held at the end of June

[Dr Malcolm Burns](#), Principal Scientist and Special Advisor to the GC, represented the UK at the 33rd ENGL Steering Committee meeting held at the JRC-Ispra (Italy) site in June.

Malcolm gave a presentation to the ENGL Steering Committee, summarising the outcome and action points resulting from the [DNA extraction workshop](#) he had helped organise and chair in early June. The ENGL Chair and Head of Unit of Food and Feed Compliance (EC Directorate F), Prof. Hendrik Emons, personally thanked Malcolm for the model approach to organising such an interactive workshop, citing all of the positive feedback he had received from participants in attendance at the event.

As a result of the workshop, the ENGL Steering Committee approved a draft proposal to establish a new Working Group in this topical area and asked Malcolm to contribute to the mandate of the Working Group. Malcolm was also asked to spearhead any publications from the workshop, and to consider leading on any official EU/ENGL guidance in the area.

For more information on our work on the GMO area contact us.

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## **Press release: New export partnership with Turkey to boost UK trade**

The government's export credit agency, UK Export Finance (UKEF) and its Turkish counterpart, Export Credit Bank of Turkey (ECBT) have signed the agreement as the government increased its support for UK businesses trading with Turkey.

UKEF and ECBT will partner to identify and promote opportunities for UK-Turkey trade. They will also now be able to co-finance projects in other countries, combining their financial support to help UK and Turkish exporters secure major global contracts.

This comes as UKEF support for exports to Turkey doubles to up to £3.5

billion, making an additional £1.75 billion available for UK companies selling to Turkey and for Turkish investors buying British products and services. UKEF financing is also now [available in Turkish Lira](#), along with 40 other global currencies, making it easier for Turkish companies to buy UK products using their local currency.

International Trade Minister, Greg Hands, said:

This partnership is a boost to our trading relationship and businesses in both countries. Working with Turkey to secure contracts for UK and Turkish exporters, and increasing our support for UK businesses trading with Turkey, will open new opportunities, not only in Turkey, but across the world.

Adnan Yildirim, General Manager, Export Credit Bank of Turkey, said:

I am very excited about this partnership, as the opportunity for stronger ties between UK and Turkish businesses will have huge benefits for both countries' continued growth and prosperity. This agreement lays the groundwork for significant engagement and will act as a strategic tool to enhance the already robust economic relations between the two countries who are longstanding close allies. I expect that both sides will start to reap the fruits of the agreement in the shortest time.

The UK and Turkey already shared £11.9bn worth of trade in 2016, up 70% on 2009. The UK and Turkey are committed to further strengthening this relationship in coming years.

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. UKEF can support companies of any size and in any sector, from goods to services and intellectual property.
4. UKEF has a [regional network of export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
5. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:
  - Bond insurance policy

- Bond support scheme
- Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
- Direct lending facility
- Export insurance policy
- Export refinancing facility
- Export working capital scheme
- Letter of credit guarantee scheme

6. Find the latest information on [UKEF's country cover positions](#).

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## **News story: CMA proposes to amend penalties guidance**

The CMA is consulting on proposals to amend its penalties guidance in order to reflect experience gained in applying it since it was issued in 2012.

The penalties guidance sets out how the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will calculate the financial penalties it can impose for breaches of competition law. The proposed amendments are intended to enhance transparency and clarify specific aspects of the CMA's approach to calculating penalties, rather than representing major changes in the CMA's practice.

The changes include provision of further details around the assessment of seriousness of infringements, additional information regarding some illustrative mitigating and aggravating factors and the application of discounts where the CMA considers approving voluntary redress schemes.

Further information on the proposed changes and the draft revised guidance is available on the [consultation page](#).

Interested parties are encouraged to respond to the consultation, which will run until 27 September 2017. Responses should be submitted by email to [penaltiesguidance-consultation@cma.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:penaltiesguidance-consultation@cma.gsi.gov.uk) or by post to:

Penalties Guidance Team  
Policy and International  
Competition and Markets Authority  
6th Floor  
Victoria House  
37 Southampton Row  
London WC1B 4AD

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# News story: £3 million Dragon's Den style competition shortlists ideas to clean up old nuclear plants

The shortlisted entries, many of which come from companies that have never worked in the nuclear industry before, now have around 3 months to develop their ideas for a chance to move on to the next stage. They'll start fleshing out their concepts on how to safely dismantle a large number of highly radioactive rooms or 'cells' at Europe's most complex nuclear site, Sellafield in Cumbria.

Melanie Brownridge, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA) Head of Technology, said:

This competition is an amazing opportunity for creative, forward-thinking and innovative companies to collaborate and come up with cutting-edge solutions for cleaning up some of the UK's most complex nuclear sites.

[The competition](#), which is being run by the NDA, and the UK government's innovation agency, Innovate UK, is awarding an initial £750,000 to a shortlist of 15 newly formed consortia to help them develop their ideas. Full details remain under commercial wraps but more will be revealed when the winners are picked at the end of the year and begin to build prototypes, supported by the remaining funds.

Lead contractor	Project title
A.N. Technology Ltd	A Flexible Measurement and Waste Led, Robotics-Based Decommissioning Project
Amec Foster Wheeler	Integrated Innovation for Nuclear Decommissioning
Barrnon Ltd	Barrnon Integrated Decommissioning System
Cavendish Nuclear Ltd	Sellafield In-Cell Decommissioning System (SIDS)
Costain Oil, Gas and Process Ltd	Stabilisation, Excavation and Segregation
Createc	Elephants to Ants: Innovation in Integration
Davy Markham Limited	Integrated & Transferable Decommissioning Toolkit
Eadon Consulting Limited	Versatile Decommissioning System (VDS)
James Fisher Nuclear Limited	Hot Hatch Cell Recovery
MDA Space & Robotics Ltd	DecomSmart
Nuvia Limited	Nu-Decom
Oliver Crispin Robotics Ltd	LaserSnake++

Lead contractor	Project title
Rovtech Solutions Ltd	Integrated Keyhole Remote Decommissioning System
University of the West of England	Integrated robotic system for characterisation and decommissioning
Westinghouse Electric Company UK Limited	Integrated Innovation for Nuclear Decommissioning

Over the next few years several major plants at Sellafield will come to the end of their operational life, such as the [Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant \(THORP\) and Magnox Reprocessing Plants](#), which are used to reprocess spent nuclear fuel from power stations across the UK and the rest of the world.

This will mark the start of an important decommissioning challenge to deal with a number of highly radioactive ‘cells’ containing a complex network of contaminated pipes, vessels and several miles of steelwork. The competition set out to find and fund technology that will clean up the ‘cells’ as safely, quickly and cost-effectively as possible whilst minimising risks to the workforce.

The winning technologies will need to find ways of safely accessing the cells, surveying the contents, cleaning them out and putting the radioactive waste into packages for safe storage. The proposals feature the use of leading-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, robots, drones, lasers and specialised remote sensors and detectors.

Although initially focused on Sellafield, the winning ideas could be used to clean up the other nuclear sites owned by the NDA, which date back to the earliest days of the UK nuclear industry.

Melanie added:

The NDA is continually seeking the best ways to encourage new ideas from the supply chain and ensure everyone has an opportunity to get involved. The response we have had to this competition has been fantastic. We’ve been really impressed by the standard of proposals and the healthy numbers of applicants.

I’m also extremely encouraged by the high level of interest from organisations outside the nuclear sector, offering highly innovative solutions from industries such as the oil and gas sector, defence industries and even space exploration.

Derek Allen, Innovation Lead at Innovate UK, said:

We are delighted to be working again with the NDA as they continue to support innovation to deliver their programme.

We are looking forward to seeing the integration and demonstration of some of these technologies that will ultimately lead to safer,

faster, cheaper nuclear decommissioning. This has the potential to open up significant business opportunities for UK organisations both nationally and globally.

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## **Press release: New powers to introduce tough sanctions against individuals, organisations and foreign governments**

The government has today (Wednesday 2 August) [published plans](#) to enable post-Brexit Britain to continue to play a central role in global sanctions to combat the threats of terrorism, conflict and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Proposals include additional powers to cut off funding for terrorists by making it easier to freeze assets and block access to bank accounts.

The Sanctions Bill would ensure the UK has the necessary legal powers to implement sanctions after Brexit, as well as greater flexibility in choosing when and how to introduce new measures. The UK will also continue to play a central role in negotiating global sanctions as a member of the UN Security Council.

At the moment, the UK implements over 30 sanctions regimes, including those against Russia, North Korea, Iran, Daesh and Al Qaida.

The government's response to the 9-week public consultation of these new powers is to:

1. Create new powers to impose, implement and enforce sanctions regimes, drawing on the current EU model
2. Introduce an annual review of regimes to ensure that they remain appropriate
3. Ensure individuals and organisations can challenge any sanctions imposed on them
4. Enable the government to issue exemptions when needed, for example in delivering humanitarian aid in regions affected by sanctions; and
5. Make it easier to stop suspected terrorists from accessing their money

The UK currently negotiates and imposes non-UN sanctions against specific countries through EU laws. This Bill will repatriate powers on non-UN sanctions from Brussels, reflecting and building on the measures that the UK currently has under EU law.

Minister for Europe Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP said:

The new Sanctions Bill will ensure that when the UK leaves the European Union, we retain the ability to impose, update and lift sanctions regimes, both to comply with our international obligations and in pursuit of our foreign policy and national security objectives.

This will enable us to impose sanctions as appropriate either alone or with partners in the EU and around the world, to take targeted action against countries, organisations and individuals who contravene international law, commit or finance terrorism or threaten international peace and security.

The government's proposed plans will also make it easier to freeze a suspected terrorist's bank accounts and stop them making money from their assets, such as selling their house or car.

At the moment, to freeze a person's assets, the government must reasonably believe that the person is, or has been, involved in terrorism, and that freezing their assets is necessary to protect the public.

The new proposals would make it easier to stop suspected terrorists in their tracks as the government would only need to have reasonable grounds to suspect the person or group is or has been involved in terrorism and that sanctions are an appropriate action.

This is important given the evolving nature of terrorism. Terrorists are now causing significant damage using very small amounts of funds and resources.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury Stephen Barclay said:

These new powers will help us keep the British public safer from terrorist attacks by keeping money out of the hands of those wishing to cause us harm.

Our counter terrorist financing proposals will make it easier for law enforcement and government to impose sanctions on those that present a threat to our national or international security.

These powers will help us continue to lead the global fight against Daesh and form part of the review of Britain's counter terrorism strategy announced in the Prime Minister's speech in June.