

Renewable energy strategy

The Institute of Biology has replied to a consultation on the renewable energy strategy by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). The IOB welcomes the Government's ambition to increase the proportion of energy drawn from renewable resources but stresses that renewable energy projects should take account of overall environmental impact.

In order not to compound errors made in previous biofuels policies, the Institute emphasises that environmental and social sustainability should be considered as core challenges along with ensuring energy security and tackling climate change. Further, these processes should take an ecosystem approach. Moreover we recommend coordination with other rel-

evant activities within the Planning Bill, Marine Bill, Climate Change Bill, waste strategies, transport policies and of course energy reviews.

We recommended encouraging the renewables sector to work with ecology and environment researchers to identify and maximise potential fringe benefits such as the possible creation of artificial offshore reefs – as well as in the reduction of unintended adverse consequences. In the marine context we recommend increased emphasis on the monitoring of key predators and primary and secondary consumers in environmental impact assessments, rather than reliance upon charismatic bird and marine mammal species.

The IOB's response to this consultation is at www.iob.org/consultations

Teaching practical biology

At the end of September, a major new web resource for biology teachers was launched. The Practical Biology website is a much needed facility to support teachers in the delivery of high quality practical activities in the class-

room – and best of all, it is free. However, the fact that it is free to users means that it has required sponsorship to develop. The Institute of Biology is one of the principal sponsors of the project and is pleased to provide this support.

Neil Roscoe, the Institute's Head of Education, said: "This site is a very welcome resource for all teachers of biology and couldn't come at a better time, as there is considerable concern that good quality practical work is on the wane in schools. Let's hope this site helps to redress the balance. It will be especially useful to those new to the teaching profession."

The experiments have been chosen to support the new school biology curriculum, and in the fullness of time will include practicals previously published in the *Journal of Biological Education*. If you are currently a teacher of biology, we would urge you to see what's on offer at: www.practicalbiology.org.

B is for Biology

