



SSAC Update Report - October 2014

The SSAC is Scotland's highest level science advisory body, providing independent advice and recommendations on science strategy, policy and priorities to the Scottish Government's Chief Scientific Adviser. Professor Muffy Calder, the Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland (CSA) and Dr Chris Masters are co-chairs of the SSAC.

SSAC issues a short report following each quarterly meeting to provide an update on their latest workstreams and areas of interest. This is the eighth of these reports. The SSAC held its last meeting at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh on 11 September 2014.

REVIEW OF SSAC WORK STREAMS

SSAC has now completed its work on the current scientific evidence around Synthetic Biology and the impact of novel biology on the Scottish economy. The report **Synthetic Biology: opportunities for Scotland** was published on 17 October following a launch event at the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 16 October. The event was attended by an invited audience of individuals from research, industry, public sector organisations and NGOs who have an interest in and actively participated in the development of this report. The report examines both the advances in this new technology and the evidence for and against its use including economic and environmental opportunities and threats. The report highlights a number of key findings including that the Scottish research base already has significant expertise in synthetic biology and so the country is well placed to capitalise on further opportunities in this area. A copy of the report can be found on the SSAC website at the following [link](#).

- ✚ Dr Allan, Minister for Learning Science and Scotland's Languages invited SSAC to consider current **Scientific Infrastructure and Scotland's needs and requirements for the future** and report back to him. This request follows a recent House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology report on Scientific Infrastructure published in November 2013. The request from Dr Allan resulted in the SSAC report **Research Infrastructure: SSAC recommendations** which was published on the 25 September. In order to write the report the SSAC working group consulted widely with the science and engineering community in Scotland in order to collect evidence to support this work. It is hoped that the report will inform policy-makers and others. This timely piece of work also informed a SSAC response to the BIS consultation on long-term science and research capital investment. A copy of the report can be found on the SSAC website at the following [link](#).

OTHER NEWS

✚ **SSAC Recruitment 2014 Update.** A number of the SSAC membership will be stepping down in January 2015 (nine members in total) as their term of membership had come to an end. In order for SSAC to continue to deliver on its remit the SSAC Secretariat have started the process of recruiting new members. The application process for new members has now closed (30 June).

However, since the advertisement of positions to SSAC commenced, the CSA for Scotland and SSAC Co-Chair Professor Muffy Calder has announced that she will be stepping down as Chief Scientific Adviser at the end of the year. In light of this news, **the decision has been taken to delay the process of recruiting new SSAC members until a new CSA for Scotland has been appointed.**

This allows the new CSA to have input into the recruitment process. In the interim, we will hold all applications that have already been received and there will be a further period, prior to the recruitment process commencing again, where we will accept any additional new applications following a period of notice on the SSAC website. For further information please contact the SSAC Secretariat.