

Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Initiative

A Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) initiative



Registration deadline for town meeting: 17 September 2012

Town meeting/workshop: 20 September 2012

Capacity and Consortium-Building application deadline: 22 October 2012

Summary

Ensuring the health of trees, woodlands and commercial forests is vital because of their important roles in rural and urban landscapes, the ecosystem services they provide, and their contributions to our heritage, well-being and rural economy.

Recently, new pests and pathogens have emerged as significant risks to the UK's woodlands, commercial forests and urban trees, and globalisation of the plant trade has led to a marked increase in the volume and diversity of plants and plant products entering the UK, which can lead to pests and pathogens, not previously present entering the country. Please see the **call text** in downloads for further information about the threats to tree health and plant biodiversity in the UK.

A consortium of funders has established this joint strategic research initiative to bring the widest possible research capacity and capability to focus on the area of tree health and associated plant biosecurity issues. Each of the funding partners has a different mission and remit, but all of them agree that there is an urgent need for innovative and cutting-edge research to help ensure the future health and resilience of trees, woodlands and their associated ecosystems.

This initiative will provide a commitment of several million pounds over the next few years to support strategic research in this area under the auspices of the Living With Environmental Change Partnership. The initiative also directly supports the objectives of the joint Defra and Forestry Commission **Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan** launched in October 2011.

Purpose

- To generate natural and social scientific knowledge to inform the development of innovative ways of addressing current and emerging threats to trees and woodland ecosystems from pathogens and pests
- To support the future health and resilience of trees, woodlands and their associated ecosystems
- To facilitate collaboration between specialists in tree or forest research, and leading-edge scientists from the wider natural, biological, social, economic or other relevant research communities
- To encourage and make best use of interdisciplinary and systems approaches, and improve the impact and integration of social research and economics in this area

Translation of knowledge and evidence from studies of pests and diseases of agricultural crops, and from ecological and environmental studies is of particular interest.

Scope

The scope of the initiative includes trees in forest, woodland and urban environments and of commercial, environmental and social value. The scope also extends to related plant biosecurity. Please see the **call text** in downloads for full details.

How to apply

The initiative comprises two phases. This initial call is for capacity-building awards. A town meeting and workshop will be held on 20 September 2012 to:

- Introduce the initiative and explain its aims and scope.
- Bring different research communities and disciplines together to explore opportunities for collaborative working in this area and to start building consortia.

The second phase will be a call for collaborative research proposals in spring 2013. The application and assessment processes and funding for each phase will be as follows:

Phase 1: Capacity and Consortium-Building

Interested parties are invited to register to attend a town-meeting and workshop, to be held in London on 20 September 2012, by emailing tree.health@bbsrc.ac.uk. **Registration deadline: 17 September 2012.** Please see the **call text** for full details.

Applications for phase 1 must be submitted on the Defra outline proposal form (see 'Defra: Research competitions' in external links for a competition pack). **Deadline for application: 22 October 2012, 4pm.** Please see the **call text** for full details.

Phase 2: Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Initiative (Research Projects)

An open call to submit proposals for research grants is expected to be launched in April 2013. Further guidance about the requirements for research grant proposals will be provided at that stage. Applications will be submitted through the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system and will be processed by BBSRC. As such, potential applicants should note that eligible individuals or institutions must be registered on the Je-S system. Please see the **call text** for full details about eligibility and how to apply to phase 2.

Timeline for phase 1 - Capacity and Consortium-Building (CCB)

Deadline for registration to attend town-meeting	17 September 2012
Town meeting/workshop (in London)	20 September 2012
Closing date for CCB applications	22 October 2012
Assessment of CCB applications	November 2012
CCB contracting and start of work	December 2012
End of Phase 1	31 March 2013

Timeline for phase 2 - Research projects (provisional timetable)

Launch of call for full proposals	Early April 2013
Closing date for full proposals	End May 2013

Assessment of full proposals	October 2013
Research grants awarded and projects start	December 2013

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