



British Ecological Society

## Response to the European Commission on Research Themes for the 7th Framework Programme

### British Ecological Society

December 2004

#### 1. Introduction

The British Ecological Society is an independent learned society founded in 1913. The Society's mission is: *To promote the science of ecology worldwide.*

- **Membership:** The BES has over 4,500 members within the EU and internationally.
- **Meetings:** The BES holds an annual meeting, symposium and other scientific meetings.
- **Publications:** The BES publishes four scientific journals.
- **Grants:** The BES funds a number of grants aimed at promoting ecology and supporting young ecologists worldwide.
- **Education:** The BES supports school teachers develop field work and ecological education into their curriculum.
- **Policy advice:** The BES provides advice to policy makers so that science can better underpin decision-making.

#### 2. Summary

The British Ecological Society strongly believes that the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework theme of *global change and ecosystems* should be continued and strengthened in the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework, because it contributes to EU policy objectives, Europe has research potential in this area, and European research provides added value.

#### 3. Contribution to EU policy objectives

The continuation of *global change and ecosystems* theme is of strategic importance to the EU. Research in this area is needed to meet the following EU's policy objectives:

- **Sustainable Development** is a core EU policy objective set out in the Gothenburg Summit, the Draft EU Constitution and agreed to at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.
- **Lisbon Strategy** called for integrating economic, social and environmental objectives at the same time. Ecological research is needed to make integrating environmental objectives into other policy areas (e.g. energy, agriculture, fisheries, biotechnology, health, and transport) more efficient and effective.
- **The Sixth Environmental Action Plan's** core concerns of climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment, health and quality of life and natural resources and waste all require ecological research to underpin policy developments.

- **Gothenburg Declaration** stated the EU would halt biodiversity loss by 2010. Ecological research is needed to monitor and develop strategies for meeting this target.
- **Kyoto Protocol** on climate change requires continued research on global change and ecosystems so that policy developments on mitigation and adaptation are informed by science.

New knowledge needs to be generated through global change and ecological research if the EU is going to meet the policy objectives in the above treaties and policy commitments. *Global change and ecosystems* is of current importance, but will be increasingly important in the medium to long term, as well.

#### **4. European research potential**

Europe has a strong research record in *global change and ecosystems*. The EU has had specific environment-related themes in its Environment Research Programmes from 1973 to 1990, and the EU Framework Programmes for research from 1991 to 2006. The 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme would build upon the past and current investments and successes in supporting research on *global change and ecosystems*. There are excellent centres of research in the EU that would be able to undertake world-class research in this area and convert and disseminate its findings to economic, social and environmental benefit.

#### **5. European added value**

Research into *global change and ecosystems* needs additional public funding at a European level, because it has positive externalities in improving the EU's quality of life, environment and achieving sustainable economic development. European level intervention in this area is needed to promote European centres of excellence through collaborative research to tackle pressing global and pan-European issues such as climate change, biodiversity, soils, water and other environmental issues. Europe has a strong record of research in this area and greater support in the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework would increase the visibility of European research excellence and contribute to achieving progress on pressing issues facing Europe and the wider world.

#### **6. Further Information**

Should the European Commission have any questions regarding this response then please contact:

Nick Dusic  
 Science Policy Manager  
 British Ecological Society  
 26 Blades Court  
 Deodar Road, Putney  
 London, SW15 2NU  
 United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8871 9797  
 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8871 9779  
 E-mail: [Nick@BritishEcologicalSociety.org](mailto:Nick@BritishEcologicalSociety.org)