

Daily News 08 / 02 / 2018

Member States to benefit from €98.2 million in investments to improve citizens' quality of life

The European Commission has approved an investment package of €98.2 million to support Europe's transition to a low-carbon, circular economy under the new [LIFE](#) funding programme for the Environment and Climate Action. Today's investment package will contribute towards improving the quality of life for European citizens in five areas: [Nature](#), [Water](#), [Air](#), [Waste](#) and [Climate Action](#). The investment covers 10 projects in Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Spain and Sweden. The EU funding will mobilise investments leading to an additional €2 billion, as Member States can make use of other EU funding sources, including agricultural, structural and research funds, as well as national funds and private sector investment. A [press release](#) and [annex](#) with details on the 10 projects are available online. *(For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)*

Trade Defence: Commission imposes definitive anti-dumping duties on Chinese corrosion resistant steel

The Commission today imposed definitive anti-dumping duties on corrosion resistant steel from China. The investigation confirmed that Chinese producers were dumping the product on the EU market, a finding that already led to imposition of provisional duties in August 2017. The measures that will be in place for the next 5 years range from 17.2% to 27.9%. Corrosion resistant steel is mainly used in the construction industry, for mechanical engineering, in the production of welded pipes and tubes and in the manufacturing of domestic appliances. The value of EU market for corrosion resistant steel is estimated for €4.6 billion, 20% of which has been supplied by Chinese producers. Today's measures will counter the downward pressure on sales prices that has been causing financial problems for EU producers, based mostly in Belgium, France, Poland and the Netherlands. The steel sector is a vital industry for the European Union's economy and occupies a central position in global value chains, providing jobs for hundreds of thousands of European citizens. The global surplus in steelmaking capacity has driven down steel prices to unsustainable levels in recent years and had a damaging impact on the steel sector, as well as related industries and jobs. The EU is using therefore the full potential of its trade defence toolbox to ensure a level-playing-field for its producers and their ability to maintain jobs in the sector. 53 measures are now in place on steel and iron products, including 27 on products coming from China. In March 2016 the Commission issued a Communication presenting a series of measures to support competitiveness of the EU steel industry. Enhanced use of trade defence tools was one of the pillars of the strategy. In addition to that, the Commission engaged in the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity that agreed last November on an [ambitious package](#) of concrete policy solutions to tackle the pressing issue of global overcapacity in the steel sector. The [regulation](#) is available in the EU Official Journal. *(For more information: Daniel Rosario –*

Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

160 innovation grants to bring frontier research closer to the market

Today, 52 winners of an innovation grant competition have been announced. The so-called ‘proof of concept’ grants, each worth up to €150,000, are dedicated to researchers that explore the innovation potential of their scientific discoveries. This will help researchers to bring the results of their frontier research closer to the market. Today’s winners join 108 others that have already been awarded grants in 2017. In total 160 researchers will now investigate business opportunities, establish intellectual property rights or conduct technical validation to proof their scientific concept. They will for example develop new antibiotics that target drug-resistant bacteria, produce graphene sheets to protect works of art or make thermal-regulating paints that could reduce energy consumption of buildings (see further [project examples](#)). The overall budget of the competition was €24 million. In October last year, the Commission has geared its research and innovation funding towards boosting breakthrough, market-creating innovation. Europe is already a world leader in science and technology. To make Europe also a major innovation driver, the Commission has launched a Pilot for a [European Innovation Council](#) (EIC) to support top-class innovators, entrepreneurs, small companies and researchers with bright ideas. The EIC will mobilise €2.7 billion to support high-risk, high-gain innovation. The ‘proof of concept’ grants, announced today, are awarded by the European Research Council (ERC) and are part of the EU’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (see ERC [news item](#)). The ERC, set up by the European Union in 2007, is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year, it selects and funds the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based in Europe. *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)*

State aid: Commission approves PLN 5 billion Polish support for closing coal mines

The European Commission has found amendments to Poland’s plans to provide public support of PLN 5 billion (approximately €1.25 billion) to alleviate the social and environmental impact of closing uncompetitive coal mines by 2018 to be in line with EU State aid rules. The Commission concluded that potential competition distortions are limited as a result of the support. The Commission had already approved Polish support for the closure of uncompetitive coal mines in [November 2016](#). In line with EU State aid rules, and in particular [Council Decision 2010/787/EU](#) on State aid to facilitate the closure of uncompetitive coal mines, the Commission found that the aid will ease the closure process by providing financial support to workers who have lost, or will lose, their jobs due to the closure of the mines. In particular, the state support will fund severance payments, compensatory pensions and social security benefits for these workers until 2023. Furthermore, it will be used to secure mine shafts and decommissioning of mine infrastructure, repair damage to the environment caused by mining and

re-cultivate land after the mine closures. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [State Aid Register](#) under the case number SA.46891. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of OCTE by Avis Budget Group and Koç Holding

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of OCTE of Greece by Otokoç ABG Holland BV of the Netherlands, which will be jointly controlled by Avis Budget Group Inc. ('ABG') of the US and Koç Holding A.S. ('Koç') of Turkey. OCTE trades as Avis Hellas and, since 2010, has been appointed as Avis' franchisee in Greece for the Avis and Budget brands. ABG is a global provider of rental cars and also operates a car sharing network through its Zipcar brand. Koç is an investment holding company which is active in a range of sectors, including energy, consumer durables, cars and finance. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the absence of horizontal overlaps or vertical links between the companies' activities in Greece. Although ABG, Koç and OCTE all provide short-term and long-term car rental services, their activities take place in distinct national markets. Moreover, there are no existing supplier or customer relationships between them. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8756](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Elenia Group by Macquarie Group and Allianz Group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Lakeside Network Investments S.à.r.l. ("Elenia Group") of Finland by Macquarie Super Core Infrastructure Fund SCSP ("MSCIF") of the UK and Allianz Infrastructure Luxembourg I S.à.r.l. ("AIL") of Luxembourg. Elenia Group owns and operates electricity distribution networks and district heating businesses in Finland. MSCIF is a fund owned by the Macquarie Group, a global provider of banking, financial, advisory, investment and fund management services. AIL belongs to the Allianz Group, a global provider of insurance and asset management products as well as services to private and corporate customers. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited combined market position of the companies following the proposed transaction. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8776](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Lucid Energy by Goldman Sachs and Riverstone

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of joint control over Lucid Energy Group II LLC by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and Riverstone Investment Group LLC, all of the US. Lucid Energy provides natural gas gathering, compression and natural gas processing in Texas and New Mexico. Goldman Sachs is a global investment banking, securities and investment management firm that provides a wide range of banking, securities and investment services worldwide. Riverstone is a private equity firm focused on investments in the energy and power sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as Lucid Energy is not active in the European Economic Area. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8800](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over PSA Panama International Terminal S.A. by PSA International Pte. Ltd. and Terminal Investment Limited Sàrl

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over PSA Panama International Terminal S.A. of Panama by PSA International Pte. Ltd of Singapore, and Terminal Investment Limited Sàrl of Switzerland. PSA Panama International Terminal S.A. is a company operating a container terminal in the Port of Rodman, Panama. PSA International Pte. Ltd. provides stevedoring services at ports, with a particular focus on terminal services for containerised liner ships. Terminal Investment Limited Sàrl is jointly controlled by MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company Holding S.A. of Switzerland, Global Infrastructure Management and Global Infrastructure Partners, both of the US. Its business is in investment, development and management of container terminals. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited impact it would have on the market. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8695](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Hügli by Bell

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Hügli Holding AG by Bell Food Group AG, both of Switzerland. Hügli manufactures soups, sauces, ready-to-eat dishes, desserts and meat substitute products for sale to retailers, wholesalers and the food service sector. Bell is active in the production, processing and sale of meat as well as other related products, seafood and convenience products through various distribution channels. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited overlap between the companies' activities. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8751](#). *(For more information: Ricardo*

Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

STATEMENTS

Discours de la Commissaire Crețu à la session d'ouverture du Forum urbain mondial des Nations Unies

Aujourd'hui, la Commissaire en charge de la politique régionale et urbaine de l'UE, Corina **Crețu**, a représenté l'UE et ses Etats membres lors de la session plénière d'ouverture du 9ème [Forum urbain mondial](#). 15 mois après le lancement du [Nouvel Agenda Urbain](#), le Forum se concentre sur la mise en œuvre des objectifs du [Programme de développement durable](#) à l'horizon 2030. La Commissaire **Crețu** a déclaré: *“Le Nouvel Agenda Urbain trace les contours ambitieux du travail qui reste à accomplir pour des milliers de villes, sur les cinq continents. L'UE est fortement attachée à sa mise en œuvre, d'autant plus qu'elle reflète bien la vision européenne d'un développement urbain durable. En effet, nous plaillons pour une approche intégrée, adaptée à la réalité des lieux et des populations, et qui prenne en compte la diversité des villes et leur contexte territorial plus large tout en s'appuyant sur les liens urbains-ruraux. L'Union européenne et ses États membres peuvent être fiers d'avoir contribué à façonner le Nouvel Agenda Urbain.”* Retrouvez l'intégralité du discours en anglais de la Commissaire [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél .: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-Président Katainen en déplacement à Paris

Le Vice-Président Jyrki **Katainen** chargé de l'emploi, de la croissance, de l'investissement et de la compétitivité est aujourd'hui en déplacement à Paris, France. Il va prononcer un discours à l'occasion du [Capital Markets Summit](#) organisé conjointement par Politico et l'Agefi, évènement auquel Olivier Guersent, Directeur général de la Direction générale Stabilité financière, services financiers et Union des marchés de capitaux (FISMA), participera également. Le Vice-Président **Katainen** évoquera les mesures prises par l'UE pour faciliter l'accès au capital, en particulier pour les petites et moyennes entreprises (PME), notamment via le Marché Unique des Capitaux et le Plan d'Investissement pour l'Europe. Pendant sa visite, le Vice-Président **Katainen** s'entretiendra avec Steven Maijor, Président de l'Autorité européenne des marchés financiers (AEMF), et participera également à un déjeuner de travail avec Sabine Thillaye, Présidente de la Commission des affaires européennes de l'Assemblée Nationale, et les autres membres de la Commission. (Pour plus d'information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Siobhán Millbright – Tél.: +32 229 57361)

Commissioner Stylianides visits Portugal to present rescEU, the EU's plan to strengthen emergency response

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**

is travelling to Lisbon to meet with Prime Minister of Portugal António Costa and Minister of Internal Administration, Mr Eduardo Cabrita. During the visit Commissioner **Stylianides** will present and discuss the state of play regarding the Commission's proposal to strengthen EU disaster management: [rescEU](#). The meetings will serve to enhance the constructive cooperation already established between the Commission and the Portuguese authorities. rescEU aims at creating a more robust [EU civil protection mechanism](#), enabling the EU to better respond to disaster situations and to help citizens when Member States' capacities have been exhausted, as was the case in Portugal last year. The Commissioner will also deliver a speech at a seminar on the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) co-organised by the European Ideas Network. Commissioner **Stylianides** visited Portugal last year, and commended the Portuguese civil protection forces for their work and support for several EU Civil Protection missions. (*For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140*)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

[Member States to benefit from €98.2 million in investments to improve citizens' quality of life](#)

Today's investment package will contribute towards improving the quality of life for European citizens in five areas: [Nature](#), [Water](#), [Air](#), [Waste](#) and [Climate Action](#). The investment covers 10 projects in Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Spain and Sweden. The EU funding will mobilise investments leading to an additional €2 billion, as Member States can make use of other EU funding sources, including agricultural, structural, regional and research funds, as well as national funds and private sector investment.

Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *"One euro from LIFE mobilises 20 euros from other funding sources. In addition to this remarkable leverage, LIFE Integrated Projects directly respond to concerns voiced by citizens about air and water quality and the impacts of climate change. They enable Member States to tap into resources to tackle some of the biggest environmental challenges today, such as air pollution, water scarcity, circular economy or biodiversity loss in a coordinated way. This is a perfect example of EU funds making a real difference on the ground."*

Miguel **Arias Cañete**, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, said: *"These new projects will be a catalyst for regional adaptation to climate change and*

energy efficient housing. They demonstrate that an inclusive, integrated and climate-smart approach to funding can unlock more investment and improve the lives of citizens across the EU.”

Supporting Member States towards a low-carbon and circular economy

The 10 projects have a total budget of €182.2 million, including €98.2 million of EU co-financing.

In the area of the **environment**, projects have a total budget of €152.7 million, including €80.2 million of EU co-financing, and plan to make use of some €886 million of complementary funding:

- **Nature:** 5 projects in Denmark, France, Greece, Lithuania and Sweden will help conserve Europe’s nature on a wider scale. For example, by improving the implementation of management plans for nature protected areas (Greece) or by providing incentives to farmers to manage their land in a more environmentally-friendly manner. The specific project in Denmark will help farmers harvest biomass from natural areas, through the development of high-value specialty products, sold at a premium of at least 25%.
- **Water:** Projects in Malta and Spain address water scarcity, offering solutions for sustainable water management, such as investing in water treatment and greater reuse of water.
- **Waste management:** A project in France aims to improve waste management and prevention in the region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, contributing to the transition to a circular economy. The project’s aim is to increase the amount of organic waste being collected by around 30% and significantly reduce the amount of landfilled household waste.

In the area of **climate action**, a budget of €29.4 million is available for 2 projects, of which €17.9 million is EU-funded. They will also access more than €1.16 billion in complementary funding in support of energy efficiency and climate change adaptation policy priorities.

- **Energy efficiency:** A project in Belgium will help renovate more than 8500 homes improving their energy efficiency, while the project in Spain will help the Navarra region with implementing its 2030 climate change adaptation goals.
- **Climate change adaptation:** A project addressing climate change adaptation in the region of Navarre, Spain for example by introducing early warning systems for river floods and emergencies involving wastewater treatment.

Descriptions of all 10 new integrated projects can be found in the [Annex](#) to this press release.

Background

The LIFE programme is the EU’s funding instrument for the environment and climate action. It has been running since 1992 and has co-financed more than 4500 projects across the EU and in third countries, mobilising over €9

billion and contributing over €4 billion to the protection of the environment and climate.

Since their introduction in 2014, there have been 25 Integrated Projects in 14 Member States, with a combined budget of more than €460 million. These ongoing projects are facilitating the coordinated use of more than €5 billion in complementary funding from other EU and national funds and the private sector.

For more information on LIFE

[LIFE Programme](#)

Press release: Clean Growth top of the agenda for ministerial visit to Teesside

The region has the potential to exploit opportunities from future growth industries such as carbon, capture usage and storage (CCUS), district heating and the hydrogen economy.

The UK government has made a firm commitment to regeneration and clean energy production in the Teesside area, with an ambition for 25,000 new jobs and over £1 billion of investment across a 10-year period, and today, the minister spoke about making that a reality.

Energy Minister Claire Perry said:

Today I have seen the exciting opportunities here to regenerate this iconic site, and, crucially, bring skilled jobs and clean growth to the area. I look forward to seeing the development of these proposals to develop and breathe new life into this site.

The government has already invested substantial amounts in the area and the Autumn Budget set out a further £123 million of funding to continue work to secure the site. Today, the minister met Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Clean Growth investors, the South Tees Development Company and members of the South Tees Site Company as well as taking a tour of the former steel site at Redcar and Cleveland.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said:

Our concentration of industry along the coastline perfectly places

the region as the go-to location for green energy proposals such as Carbon Capture and Storage. It is fantastic that government recognises our industrial strengths and has reaffirmed their commitment to developing this transformational proposal. I was delighted to share our ambitious plans with the minister today, and made clear to her that Teesside is ready and waiting to take this forward.

A move to low-carbon, clean energy offers a remarkable economic opportunity for our area and the UK as a whole. Our projects would attract inward investment, create jobs and put Tees Valley at the forefront of the clean energy revolution. Now we need to work constructively with government to push ahead and make these schemes a reality.

The site is of particular interest in the development of carbon capture usage and storage – which aims to capture carbon dioxide emitted from industry and power plants for permanent storage under the North Sea. This game-changing technology and many more exciting projects were discussed as part of today's visit.

Business Minister Richard Harrington was also in Teesside today setting out his vision through a keynote speech to workers, industry and local MPs at Community Union's Steel Sector Conference. The minister talked about his commitment to steelmaking regions across the UK and the importance of putting the sector at the heart of the UK's Industrial Strategy.

Last year, the government set out its plan for growth and regeneration across the UK with its [Industrial Strategy](#) aiming for an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK. A key part of that is growing new jobs, and Teesside has a crucial role to play.

Notes to editors

Photos and videos of the visit are available by contacting gillian.capewell@beis.gov.uk.

[Press release: New projects see UK space firms tackle global challenges](#)

Improved disaster response in Commonwealth states and tropical disease control are among the goals of 10 new projects involving British space organisations, Science Minister Sam Gyimah announced today.

The Industrial Strategy highlights the importance of bringing together the UK's world-class research with business investment to develop technologies

and industries of the future that benefit society, as well as our economy. The UK Space Agency's International Partnership Programme uses UK space expertise to deliver innovative solutions to real world problems across the globe. This helps some of the world's poorest countries, while building effective partnerships that can lead to growth opportunities for British companies.

The successful projects, worth £38 million in total, are led by a diverse range of organisations from the UK's growing space sector, from large companies such as Inmarsat and CGI, to start-ups such as Guildford-based Earth-i. The UK Space Agency and industry are working together to grow the UK's share of the global space market to 10% by 2030.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

"The UK's space sector is going from strength to strength. It pioneers new technology and provides jobs for 40,000. Today I can announce that the space sector's capabilities are being put to use to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges.

"The UK Space Agency's International Partnership Programme will help developing countries tackle big issues like disaster relief and disease control, while showcasing the services and technology on offer from our leading space businesses."

The International Partnership Programme is part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF): a £1.5 billion fund from the UK Government, which supports cutting-edge research and innovation on global issues affecting developing countries.

There are 22 existing projects already delivering benefits, including a partnership between Inmarsat and the Philippine government to reduce the impact of natural disasters using satellite communications, which was called into action in December and January when tropical storms killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands more to evacuation centres. The project used British technology and expertise to help relief workers get information in and out of the disaster zones which greatly increase the effectiveness of the response effort, helping them save lives and restore critical infrastructure.

Rupert Pearce, CEO of Inmarsat, said:

"Inmarsat was originally founded to save lives at sea and we are proud that, almost 40 years later, our robust, reliable satellite communication services are deployed throughout the world to assist following natural disasters and humanitarian crises, wherever they occur.

"With the invaluable support of the UK Space Agency, we have been able to pre-equip disaster response teams in the Philippines with vital satellite communications solutions. This meant that when two deadly cyclones hit the country over a two week period, resulting in loss of life and serious damage to terrestrial communications infrastructure, Philippine authorities were able to utilise Inmarsat's mobile connectivity services to assess the damage and identify the needs of those regions most affected."

All IPP projects are match-funded by consortium members and international partners to ensure maximum value for money. The programme is fully compliant with Official Development Assistance (ODA) with the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recently reporting that the UK Space Agency had developed robust procedures for ensuring ODA eligibility and was thorough in its ODA

compliance screening.

The UK Space Agency is also funding five Business Applications Ambassadors to work with industry across the UK. The Agency already supports a network of business incubators and the new ambassadors will advise on business applications and other opportunities in the UK.

Full list of new projects:

1) British Geological Survey, Nottingham: Modelling Exposure Through Earth Observation Routines (METEOR): EO-based Exposure, Nepal and Tanzania

Grant: £2.8 million

Target countries: Nepal and Tanzania (test countries), rolling out to all 48 Least Developed ODA countries

Theme: Disaster Management

At present, there is a poor understanding of population exposure in developing countries, which causes major challenges when making Disaster Risk Management decisions. METEOR takes a step-change in the application of Earth Observation exposure data by developing and delivering more accurate levels of population exposure to natural hazards. Providing new consistent data to governments, town planners and insurance providers will promote welfare and economic development in these countries and better enable them to respond to the hazards when they do occur.

2) Satellite Applications Catapult, Didcot: Space Enabled Monitoring of Illegal Gold Mining

Grant: £3.3 million

Target country: Colombia

Theme: Mining

This project is about improving detection and efficiency in monitoring illegal gold mining in remote forested areas in Colombia. The project will make use of freely available Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) data, and incorporate machine-learning techniques to show suspected areas of illegal mining, in a user-friendly web portal. The project will support the promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers, and a reduction in the health-related effects from the high rates of mercury contamination associated with illegal mining.

3) EARTH-i Ltd, Guildford: ACCORD

Grant: £2.7 million

Target countries: Kenya and Rwanda

Theme: Agriculture

Coffee is the second most traded commodity globally, with revenues directly benefitting farmers in developing countries. Despite this, in Kenya and Rwanda 67% and 80% of people respectively live in poverty, including most smallholder coffee farmers. Unpredictable weather, pests, diseases, nutrient depletion and other factors limit earning potential by hitting coffee quality and quantity. ACCORD will deliver advice from satellite Earth Observation to help smallholder coffee farmers make significant improvements to crop quality and yield, providing them with access to timely, geo-targeted advice through

a simple mobile application. This will allow smallholder farmers to achieve higher incomes for their work, improving quality of life for their families.

4) Rothamsted Research, Harpenden: EcoProMIS

Grant: £3.9 million

Target Country: Colombia

Theme: Agriculture

The EcoProMIS project aims to help Colombian rice and oil palm farmers to improve productivity and stabilise incomes, allowing them to compete globally whilst responding to climate change and producing responsibly. The project uses satellite Earth Observation alongside environmental and crop data to research the impact of crop and ecosystem management on biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and productivity. The outcome will be a partnership of farmers, research institutes and industry experts that creates comprehensive sets of crop and ecosystem data. This data will be made freely available for the Colombian partners to improve the environmental, technical and financial efficiency of their processes. It will also provide information to insurance firms, government food processors and further beneficiaries to create income for sustainable knowledge.

5) HR Wallingford, Wallingford: An integrated dengue early warning system driven by Earth Observations in Vietnam

Grant: £4.1 million

Target Country: Vietnam

Theme: Health

This work will provide a tool that enables advance warning of likely dengue outbreaks, allowing public health authorities to mobilise resources to those most in need. The project will also provide forecasts of dengue fever under a range of climate change scenarios. The system will link Earth Observation data with climate forecasting and a land-surface model to predict for the first time the impacts of various elements (such as water availability, land-use, climate), on the likelihood of future dengue epidemics. The dengue forecasting tool will also include a water assessment module, delivering the additional benefit of improving water management in Vietnam's transboundary river basins.

6) Janus TCD, Stourbridge: Improved Situational Awareness In Fisheries (ISAIIF)

Grant: £5.5 million

Target Country: The Philippines

Theme: Illegal Fishing

The ISAIIF project will use satellite technology to help the Philippine government tackle Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in its waters. This project aims to halt the decline of a fisheries sector that employs more than 4 million people. The project will use a wide variety of data sources, including satellite data to understand the location, time and behaviour of specific vessels at sea. This will be combined with a satellite navigation application with an authentication tool through which Philippine fisherfolk confirm their compliance, creating a new digital barrier to IUU

fishers within the supply chain. Outcomes will include better monitoring and enforcement of IUU by the Philippine government, improved safety, security and economic productivity for Philippine fisherfolk, benefits to the Philippine economy, and an improvement in the international reputation of Philippine fisheries.

7) CGI, Leatherhead: Peatland Assessment in SE Asia by Satellite (PASSES)

Grant: £2 million

Target Countries: Indonesia, Malaysia

Theme: Forestry

Tropical forest fires affect over 20 million people in South East Asia, leading to significant deteriorations in public health and premature mortalities as well as contributing to global CO2 emissions and other negative environmental impacts. Many fires occur over drained peatland areas. This project will use satellite observations and measurements to map peat condition, even when under a forest canopy. By monitoring water levels and improving hydrology in the peatland areas, the risk of fire can be dramatically reduced. By using freely available observations from satellites through the EU Copernicus programme and use of emerging industrial hosted processing capabilities, PASSES will prove that peatland monitoring is a cost effective way to reduce forest fires.

8) e0sphere Limited, Didcot: SIBELIUs: Improved resilience for Mongolian herding communities using satellite derived services

Grant: £1.6 million

Target Country: Mongolia

Theme: Disaster Management / Insurance

Mongolia is a large country with around 30% of its population dependant on livestock herding who are exposed to extreme weather events (dzuds). Dzuds are increasingly exacerbated by climate change and are highly damaging to Mongolia's economy and devastating for the poorest herders. A typical dzud can impact tens of thousands of herders, many of who will lose all their livestock leaving them in extreme poverty, with associated impacts for the wider economy. The SIBELIUs project will provide greater dzud-resilience for herders by providing the Mongolian Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment with new sources of satellite data, plus a geo-spatial database for distributing new and upgraded environmental products to key stakeholders supporting herding communities.

9) United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR): CommonSensing

Grant: £9.6 million

Target Countries: Fiji, The Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

The overall aim of CommonSensing is to improve resilience towards climate change, including disaster risk reduction, and contribute to sustainable development in three selected Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The project will combine earth observation data to provide stakeholders with access to important information regarding disaster risks (including disaster risk planning, food security, climate risk and other environmental concerns). This information will be

accessible to beneficiaries through a web portal and mobile applications. CommonSensing project will create long-term investment loops, define priorities for future climate funds proposals and ensure a sustainable service-platform, running three years after IPP project end.

10) HR Wallingford, Wallingford: Minimising the risk of tailings dams failures through the use of remote sensing data

Grant: £2.7 million

Target Country: Peru

Theme: Mining

Tailing dams are earth embankments used to store toxic mine waste and effluent which can be more than 100m high. Their rate of failure is high, due to poor design regulations and less rigorous construction methods than for normal water-retaining dams, especially in low-income countries. This project will use Earth Observation and Global Navigation Satellite System technologies to allow for more effective monitoring of the dams and therefore quicker action can be taken to avoid the tailings dams failures. The project will help to reduce damage to ecosystem services downstream of mines upon which many vulnerable communities rely for both their source of water and their livelihoods.

Black-headed gull carcass tests positive for H5 virus

A carcass of a black-headed gull found in Lau Fau Shan, Tin Shui Wai was suspected to be positive for the H5 avian influenza virus based on preliminary testing, a spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said today (February 8). Further confirmatory tests are being conducted.

The bird carcass was found and collected near a public toilet at Ngau Hom Tsuen, Lau Fau Shan today. The black-headed gull is a common winter visitor.

The spokesman said the two chicken farms are within 3 kilometres of where the dead bird was found. The AFCD already informed the chicken farms concerned and found no abnormal mortality or symptoms of avian influenza among the chicken flocks so far. The AFCD will also phone poultry farmers to remind them to strengthen precautionary and biosecurity measures against avian influenza. Letters will be issued to pet bird shop owners and licence holders of pet poultry and racing pigeons reminding them that proper precautions must be taken. The AFCD will continue to monitor the situation closely.

The Hong Kong Wetland Park is also within 3 km of where the bird was found. Cleansing and disinfection has been stepped up at the Wetland Park.

Notices have also been put up to remind visitors to pay attention to personal hygiene. The Wetland Park will keep a close watch on the situation of birds inside the Park.

The spokesman said the department will conduct frequent inspections of poultry farms and the wholesale market to ensure that proper precautions against avian influenza have been implemented. The department will continue its wild bird monitoring and surveillance.

“People should avoid personal contact with wild birds and live poultry and their droppings. They should clean their hands thoroughly after coming into contact with them. The public can call 1823 for follow-up if they come across suspicious, sick or dead birds, including the carcasses of wild birds and poultry,” the spokesman said.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will continue to be vigilant over live poultry stalls. It will also remind stall operators to maintain good hygiene.

The Department of Health will keep up with its health education to remind the public to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene to prevent avian influenza.

The AFCD, the FEHD, the Customs and Excise Department and the Police will strive to deter the illegal import of poultry and birds into Hong Kong to minimise the risk of avian influenza outbreaks caused by imported poultry and birds that have not gone through inspection and quarantine.

All relevant government departments will continue to be highly vigilant and strictly enforce preventive measures against avian influenza.

Health advice is available from the “H5N1 Health Advice” page on the AFCD website at www.afcd.gov.hk.