

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE IEA

Press Release issued: Thursday, January 28, 2016

NEW PARTNERS ANNOUNCED AT OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYTICS

The Institute for Environmental Analytics (IEA), a new organisation bridging the gap between scientific research and industry, has been officially launched by DEFRA Minister Rory Stewart.

He joined Sir David Bell KCB, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Reading, to meet CEO of the IEA, Colin McKinnon, and Partners including Sainsbury's, Microsoft and Telespazio Vega, at London's Digital Catapult on Tuesday, January 26th.

The IEA is a major initiative, funded by HEFCE Catalyst Fund and the IEA partners, to support the development of the environmental big data analytics market. It will act as an intermediary between world-leading scientific expertise and industry, undertaking pre-commercial R&D and the development of proof-of-concept demonstrators. Partners and clients will be able to tap into cutting-edge scientific research to help develop new products and services and improve their business operations.

It will work across five main sectors:

- Agri-food
- Insurance
- Built environment and infrastructure
- Logistics and transport
- Utilities

The IEA will also deliver training courses to tackle skills gaps in environmental analytics.

Stewart highlighted that environmental data is at the centre of all that Defra does, making a real difference to people's lives including managing floods, saying: "My discussion with you about exactly what we're going to do with a clean air zone in Birmingham or Leeds or Nottingham or Derby, and my discussion with you about what we want to do on the **Upper Thames** in order to stop a business flooding or a home flooding, comes down in the end to very, very sophisticated modelling of information and we are in a world in which this information is getting to a very exciting stage."

He went on: "I really want to encourage everybody in this room to get involved with this. We [Defra] are driving a data revolution, we are putting those data sets out there, it's only going to be any good if you in the room really make use of this. Come back to us, challenge us, fight with us as necessary, disagree with us if you want to but please get involved in the conversation so that we can genuinely make Britain a model for how this stuff is done."

He noted that there is a skills gap in understanding environmental data – including within government - saying: "I'd also like to really get people in this room involved in developing skills in government, understanding of this stuff in government. It's all very well us pontificating but if nobody really gets how this stuff works, if we're not working out how to really make use of it and harness it, nothing will happen."

Sir David said: "There is a long and distinguished history of environmental and climate research at Reading. The IEA helps translate some of the outputs of this to specific challenges in a range of sectors."

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McKinnon said: "We are proud to see the reality of the IEA taking shape, with early project wins and most of the team in place - just last week we delivered our first training course on utilising the free data being generated by the new EU Copernicus satellite programme which was sold out; we are in advanced discussions with further partners; we have finished our first demonstrator for the insurance sector and we are working on two more, with seven or eight others in the pipeline.

"With the collaboration of our Partners, the IEA is looking forward to creating value and growth for the UK from the environmental data analytics.

"Businesses of all sizes need to be making commercial use of environmental data, or risk falling behind their competitors, and we can provide the expertise to support them."

McKinnon announced three new Partners – BMT Group, ERM and Agrimetrics – who join the 13 founding Partners: University of Reading, Airbus Defence & Space, Deimos Space UK, Lighthill Risk Network, The Met Office, Microsoft UK & Microsoft Research, National Centre for Earth Observation, University of Oxford, Sainsbury's, Satellite Applications Catapult, Science & Technologies Facilities Council, University of Surrey and Telespazio Vega."

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Contact for more information and interview opportunities: Colin McKinnon, CEO of the IEA 0118 378 6820 email: c.mckinnon@the-iea.org ; Sally Stevens Marketing & Communications IEA, 0118 378 6821 / 07740 674074, Email: s.stevens@the-iea.org

Images attached taken at the IEA launch at Digital Catapult, London. PHOTO CREDIT: DR JULIE STEVENS: Colin McKinnon, CEO of the Institute for Environmental Analytics (IEA); Rory Stewart MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Sir David Bell KCB Vice-Chancellor University of Reading IEA logo. Further images from the launch are available by request, email: s.stevens@the-iea.org

Note to Editors:

The Institute for Environmental Analytics (IEA) was founded in January 2015 and is a unique flagship centre, funded by the HEFCE Catalyst Fund and hosted by the University of Reading. Harnessing the expertise of world-leading academics and commercial organisations, the IEA is developing the technologies and skills that are urgently required to transform big data into commercially-relevant solutions.

Led by CEO, Colin McKinnon, the IEA aims to become a leading worldwide centre of excellence supporting the development of the environmental big data analytics market. The IEA works closely with clients to help them tackle environmental challenges drawing on a range of advanced data analytics expertise from within the core team and across the partners. Key sectors include insurance, agri-food, infrastructure, transport and utilities.

Services include applied, near-market R&D, the development of proof of concept demonstrators, the establishment of training courses and the broader dissemination of the opportunity of big data analytics for industry, policymakers and the third sector.

IEA Founding Partners include the University of Reading, Airbus Defence and Space, Deimos Space UK, Lighthill Risk Network, Met Office, Microsoft UK & Microsoft Research, National Centre for Earth Observation, University of Oxford, Sainsbury's, Satellite Applications Catapult, Science and Technologies Facilities Council, University of Surrey and Telespazio Vega. The IEA also works closely with the UK Space Agency and hosts the Climate Data from Space Stakeholder Group (CDSSG) and UK Space Sector Skills Manager.

For more information on the IEA please visit www.the-iea.org or email info@the-iea.org

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