

HOT ISSUES

dti

Materials and Engineering Newsletter
Hot Issues

Issue 11: May 2004

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the May edition of our Hot Issues newsletter. Issues in this edition include the Emissions Trading Scheme, Vocational Rehabilitation and the EU 7th R&D Framework Programme.

Our continuing aim is to provide you with the most up to date information on policy developments affecting your sector at the time of publishing each edition of Hot Issues. As with the publication of the Emissions Trading consultation on 6 May, we will also EMail you directly with details of any significant policy announcements should they arise before the next edition of Hot Issues.

We are always grateful for any suggestions for new subjects to be covered in future issues of the newsletter. Ambert Prosper at Ambert.Prosp@dti.gov.uk will be happy to take these on board. Alternatively my team would be happy to meet you to discuss issues affecting your sector if you would find this useful. Your first port of call to arrange a meeting should be your relationship manager. Contact details are included in the newsletter should you need them.

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Assistant Director, Influence and Impact Section
Materials and Engineering Sector Unit.

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HOT ISSUES

Issue: Emissions Trading Scheme

Main points:

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), one of the policies being introduced across Europe to tackle emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, is due to begin on 1 January 2005. As part of the implementation of the EU ETS, the UK Government submitted its National Allocation Plan (NAP) for the first phase of the scheme (2005-2007) to the European Commission at the end of April.

The NAPs submitted by all Member States will be subject to review by both the Commission and other Member States. Following this review, it is possible that the Commission may require Member States to make some revisions to the NAPs to meet their requirements. Final approval of NAPs by the Commission is due by 1st October 2004.

On 6 May 2004 a further consultation exercise was launched to accompany the submission of the NAP to the Commission. Details of this were sent to the Hot Issues distribution list at the time of the announcement. This consultation will allow stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the UK NAP as submitted to the Commission, to highlight to stakeholders where allocation issues have changed from those set out in the draft NAP and to elicit comments on the Government's proposed approaches. The consultation addresses a number of issues which were raised by stakeholders as a result of the earlier consultation on the draft NAP. There are sections on the way EU ETS allowances are determined at a sector level and on an installation level and also on new entrants, closure and auctioning. The NAP and consultation document as well as further information on the scheme can be found on the websites given below.

The following sectors are specifically covered by the first phase of the scheme:

- Electricity Generators
- Oil Refineries
- Steel Production
- Processing Cement
- Glass Manufacturing
- Brick Manufacturing
- Pulp and Paper

In addition installations in any sectors that have combustion plants of a thermal input of over 20MW, including aggregated plants on a single site, are also covered.

Deadline for input: 4 June 2004.

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/euetsnap-stagethree/index.htm>

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euets.shtml>

Contact us at Keith.Avis@dti.gsi.gov.uk Emma.Briggs@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: EU Chemicals Legislation – REACH

Main Points:

These are proposals, adopted by the European Commission, for the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH). The aims of the regulation are to improve the protection of human health and the environment while maintaining the competitiveness and enhancing the innovative capability of the EU chemicals industry. REACH would furthermore give responsibility to industry to manage the risks from chemicals and to provide safety information on the substances.

On 30 March the Government issued a consultation paper to help inform the development of its REACH negotiating position. While the focus of the proposals is the management of generic industrial chemicals, it is well recognised that REACH does impact on many within the Materials and Engineering sector and particular importance is placed on ensuring that your views are adequately represented in the policy making debate. You should, therefore take time to consider whether you could be affected. In this regard proposed policy on scope, exemption criteria and registration will be of primary importance. The Consultation Document, with a supporting Regulatory Impact Assessment, can be found at the link below.

Responses to the consultation should be marked “NECS Consultation” and sent to necs@defra.gsi.gov.uk and copied to the contacts below.

Deadline for input: 25 June 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/reach/index.htm>
defra@keystone-group.co.uk

Contact us at: Keith.avis@dti.gov.uk
Chris.mee@dti.gov.uk

Issue: Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance - Developing a Framework for Vocational Rehabilitation

Main Points:

One of the commitments in the Government’s report on the review of Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance published on 4 December 2003 was to produce and publish a Framework for Vocational Rehabilitation by late summer 2004.

On 18 May the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published a discussion paper on vocational rehabilitation. Comments on the discussion paper will feed into the development of the Framework.

The discussion paper describes the scope of vocational rehabilitation, outlines why the DWP is developing a Framework for Vocational Rehabilitation and describes what the Framework will look like. DWP is looking to produce a Framework that will:

- Describe the scope of vocational rehabilitation;
- Introduce stakeholders to the key principles and the concepts and ideas associated with vocational rehabilitation;
- Present an overview of current provision, including the support structures, the management approaches and the roles and responsibilities of key players;

- Highlight the basic principles and approaches that are common to how employers, insurers and rehabilitation providers deliver and manage effective vocational rehabilitation;
- Summarise the current evidence base for vocational rehabilitation interventions. This section will be supported by new case studies;
- Introduce the new work that is underway or planned and highlight new areas of analysis to consider.

The discussion paper also gives stakeholders an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences on vocational rehabilitation.

This discussion paper is a very important first step towards producing the Framework. Please find the time to put forward your views on the discussion paper. Responses should be sent to DWP (simon.francis@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) copied to the DTI contact below.

Deadline for input: 12 July 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2004/index.asp

Contacts:

terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Government Consultation on Common Commencement Dates for New Regulations

Main Points:

In the Budget on 17 March 2004, the Government gave a commitment to consult business on the feasibility of introducing common commencement dates (i.e. a single date(s)) when changes are made to an area of either sectoral or generic UK regulations. This would extend the existing arrangement for domestic employment law, which is now implemented on 6 April or 1 October each year.

The harmonisation of commencement dates for new regulation is intended to ensure that changes to policy are made in a co-ordinated fashion and to provide businesses with greater clarity and awareness about when changes will be made. This would assist all parties to plan for new measures and help implement them effectively.

The consultation document can be accessed via the weblink below. Responses should be sent to the Small Business Service at Common.CommencementDates@sbs.gsi.gov.uk.

Deadline for input: 26 July 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

www.sbs.gov.uk/content/consultations/ccdates.pdf

Contacts: Terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: UK Consultation on the EU 7th R&D Framework Programme

Main Points:

On 29 April the Government published a consultation paper on the EU 7th R&D Framework Programme. The €19bn Programme supports leading-edge science and

technology and strengthens international partnerships, providing approximately €0.5bn of funding to UK participants each year.

The Seventh Framework Programme will cover the period 2006-2010/11. The UK Government is consulting widely to inform policy on the new Programme, inviting comments by 26 July. The Government will shortly publish the conclusions of two evidence projects to help identify where the new Programme could have greatest impact.

Consultation responses will inform a UK position paper in early Autumn 2004, which will respond to the Commission's consultation on the shape of their proposals to be launched in early June 2004. The responses will also inform the UK view on the proposals themselves, expected during the first half of 2005.

The Government invites responses on:

- Requirements and aims
- Science and human capital
- Business and competitiveness
- Support for policy
- Funding instruments and research priorities
- Delivery and UK support

The consultation paper can be accessed via the weblink below. Comments should be sent to FP7ConDoc@dti.gsi.gov.uk.

Deadline for input: 26 July 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

<http://www.ost.gov.uk/ostinternational/fp7/index.html>

Contacts: emily.bourne@dti.gsi.gov.uk

OTHER ISSUES

The following are some of the other ongoing issues.

Consultation on Indicators of Productivity

The Government is considering moving towards a focused set of national productivity indicators to benchmark the UK's productivity performance against its major competitors. The consultation seeks the views of users and producers of productivity indicators, and other interested parties, on the following areas:

- Proposal to move towards a focused set of national productivity indicators;
- The methodology used to calculate the evolution of the productivity gap over time;
- The applicability of using a similar set of regional indicators.

The consultation is being jointly conducted by the DTI and HM Treasury. Responses should be sent **by 4 June 2004** to indicatorsconsultation@dti.gov.uk

Further information is available from:

www.dti.gov.uk/economics/indicatorsconsultation.html

Consultation on International Accounting Standards and Modernisation of Accounting Requirements for Companies and Building Societies

On 25 March, DTI and HM Treasury published a consultation paper on proposals to allow companies and building societies to use international accounting standards. The consultation also sets out the Government's proposed approach to implementation of an EU Directive that modernises the existing accounting directives.

The consultation document is available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/consultations. Responses should be sent **by 2 July 2004** to md/ias@dti.gsi.gov.uk.

Operating and Financial Review

The Government has published draft regulations for consultation on the Operating and Financial Review (OFR) and the Director's report. The consultation document contains Government's proposals for a new statutory OFR designed to give shareholders the information they need to help assess companies' past performance and future prospects. This proposal applies to quoted companies only. Directors will need to report on all factors that significantly affect the company and its future performance. These are likely to include the company's impact on the environment and the wider community as well as its relationships with employees, customers and suppliers.

The consultation document and draft regulations can be accessed via the weblink below. Responses should be sent to ofr.condoc@dti.gsi.gov.uk **by 6 August 2004**.

Government White Paper on the New Commission for Equality and Human Rights

On 12 May Government published a White Paper setting out its proposals for the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in detail, including its role, duties and powers, and outline the way in which it will deliver to its key stakeholders. It also sets out the anticipated next steps towards establishment.

The new body will bring together the work of the existing equality commissions – the Commission for Racial Equality, The Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission. It will also take responsibility for new laws outlawing workplace discrimination on religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

The White Paper can be accessed via the weblink below. Responses should be sent to equality.project@dti.gsi.gov.uk by **6 August 2004**.

EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive

The European Commission published its proposal on 20 March 2002 - discussions continue within Europe on the proposed Directive, though no progress has been made since the June 2003 Employment Council. The directive has the broad aim of improving the basic working conditions of Temporary Agency Workers by requiring that, following a qualifying period, they be treated no less favourably than comparable permanent workers in the user enterprise to which the temporary worker is assigned. The UK wants to make sure that both agency workers and their job opportunities are protected, and is calling for a qualifying period that is significantly longer than the current proposal of six weeks.

Contact: Ruth.Catchpole@dti.gsi.gov.uk <<mailto:Ruth.Catchpole@dti.gsi.gov.uk>>
Website: www.dti.gov.uk/er/agency/directive.htm

EU Physical Agents (Electromagnetic Fields) Directive

The Electromagnetic Fields Directive came into force on 30 April 2004 when it was published in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Member States now have until 30 April 2008 to transpose the Directive into national law. The Directive introduces minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (Electromagnetic Fields and Waves).

Contact: Mike.Shepherd@hse.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.hse.gov.uk/radiation
www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex

Physical Agents (Noise) Directive

The Noise Directive came into force on 15 February 2003 upon publication of the text in the Official Journal of the European Communities. We now have until 15 February 2006 to transpose the Directive into UK Regulations, which will replace the Noise at Work Regulations 1989. Essentially the Directive reduces the noise exposure levels at which employers must take action, and introduces a limit value above which employees must not be exposed.

The Health and Safety Commission has now published a consultation document (see weblink below) setting out proposals to introduce new Regulations to control the risks to health from exposure to noise at work. The deadline for responses is **Friday, 25 June 2004** and should be sent to noise.directive@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

Contacts: tarla.patel@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Consultation Document: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd196.htm>

Further information about the Directive can be found on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise>

First Annual Report on the Energy White Paper

On 26 April the Government published *Creating a Low Carbon Economy – the First Annual Report on Implementation of the Energy White Paper*, together with a report on *UK Energy Sector Indicators 2004*, the *CHP Strategy*, the *Energy Efficiency Implementation Plan* and the *2nd Annual Fuel Poverty Report*. The full texts can be found on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn.

EU Batteries Directive

Government has published a consultation document seeking initial views on a proposal by the European Commission for a new Directive on batteries and accumulators. The proposed Directive covers all types of batteries and accumulators, regardless of their shape, volume, weight, material composition or use. Accumulators are defined in the Directive as rechargeable batteries. The Government invites comments on the proposal, both in general terms and also in response to specific questions posed on the main implementation issues.

The consultation document can be accessed via the weblink below. Responses should be sent **by 5 August 2004** to paul.creary@dti.gsi.gov.uk.

Contact: paul.creary@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Consultation document: www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/ep/Batteries_Consultation.pdf

EU Environmental Liability Directive

The Directive was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 30 April 2004 and has now come into force. Member States have until 30 April 2007 to transpose the Directive into national law. Transposition in the UK will involve two or three formal public consultations, the first of which is likely to begin around November 2004.

Websites: Environmental Council minutes:

<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/loadbook.asp?BID=89&LANG=1>

DG Environment site: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/liability/>

Contact: Terry.Martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Alex.Wilson@dti.gsi.gov.uk

European Commission proposals for an eco-design for Energy-using Products (EuP) framework Directive

The European Commission adopted a proposal for a framework Directive on the eco-design of energy-using products, such as electrical and electronic devices or heating equipment, on 1 August 2003. The proposal does not introduce directly binding requirements for specific products, but does define conditions and criteria for setting requirements regarding environmentally relevant product characteristics (such as energy consumption).

The new proposals combine and replace two previous EC initiatives - the proposals for a EEE (eco-design for Electrical & Electronic Equipment) Directive and those on EER (Energy Efficiency Requirements). The current text of the Commission's proposal can be accessed from the weblink below or from the DTI's sustainability website.

The EuP proposals were presented to a meeting of the EC Energy Council Working Group in September and were discussed by Ministers at the full meeting of the Energy Council on 15 December.

At the same time, MEPs in the Environment Committee of the European Parliament have been considering their Report on the Commission's text and came up with just under 350 amendments to the original text. A plenary discussion of the Directive took place in May, where the list of amendments was reduced but it is now too late for a final agreed text to be adopted before the current European Parliament is dissolved.

It now falls to the incoming Dutch Presidency to take discussions forward from 1 July, with final agreement unlikely before the end of the year and possibly early next.

Contact: Steven.Andrews@dti.gsi.gov.uk <mailto:Steven.Andrews@dti.gsi.gov.uk>
Website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/eco_design/index.htm

EU Integrated Product Policy Directive

As reported in previous issues, the European Commission adopted a Communication on Integrated Product Policy (IPP) on 18 June 2003 that outlined its strategy for reducing the environmental impact caused by products. IPP represents a new approach and puts emphasis on three dimensions:

- Life-cycle thinking - when pollution reduction measures are identified, consideration is given to the whole of a product's life-cycle from cradle to grave;
- Flexible - as to the type of policy measure to be used, working with the market where possible;
- Full stakeholder involvement

The Environment Council reached its formal conclusions on the Commission Communication in October 2003 and the European Parliament produced a Draft Report on 1 March 2004, which is now under consideration.

Contact: Steven.Andrews@dti.qsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ipp/ippcommunication.htm>
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ipp/qa.pdf>

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE) and the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) Directive

The DTI's second consultation on the WEEE & ROHS Directives ended 1 March 2004. There were 219 responses. DTI has published the results of the consultation. Copies of the consultation, a summary of responses and other relevant documents are available from the DTI website:

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/weee/index.htm>.

The next step, following this consultation and in the light of further discussions with stakeholders, is for the Government to develop draft implementing legislation and guidance for the WEEE and RoHS Directives, which will be issued for consultation in a month's time. Preparation of these is in hand.

Contact: chris.tollady@dti.qsi.gov.uk

Groundwater Directive

In September 2003 the European Commission published a proposal for a new Groundwater Directive. Defra's consultants, Risk Policy Analysts Ltd, have carried out a partial Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) of the proposal. See weblinks below.

The main stated aims of the proposed directive are to complement the Water Framework Directive without duplicating its provisions, and to set out provisions which will ensure no diminution of groundwater protection when the existing Groundwater Directive is repealed in 2013. Your views on the extent to which these aims are likely to be achieved would be particularly welcome.

Responses to the consultation should be sent by **11 June 2004** to:
esther.kurash@defra.qsi.gov.uk

Consultation papers:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/groundwater-dir/ria.pdf>

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/groundwater-dir/index.htm>

Consultation on EU Services Directive

On 29 March, DTI launched a consultation on the EU Services Directive, which introduces plans by the European Commission to make it easier for businesses to provide services across the EU. The proposals are designed to increase service provision across the EU. Companies will find it easier to set up in other Member States and trade across borders, giving consumers more choice at more competitive prices.

The EU Directive on Services in the Internal Market will affect most services and aims to:

- get rid of unjustifiable or onerous national restrictions;
- simplify authorisation and licensing procedures
- create single points of contact to help with all the necessary formalities; and
- allow service providers established in one Member State to trade across borders in another Member State, under their home country's regulations.

The deadline for comments is **30 June 2004**. The consultation document is available from the DTI website www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/servgen.htm.

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

£50 million call for innovative R&D proposals under new technology programme

On 26 April Science Minister, Lord Sainsbury, announced a £50 million call for innovative R&D proposals for seven priority areas:

- bio processing;
- technologies to support environmentally-friendly transport;
- advanced composite materials and structures;
- inter-enterprise computing;
- renewable technologies;
- disruptive technologies in electronics and displays; and
- sensor and control systems.

The money will be made available by open competition through two of the DTI's new business support products: Knowledge Transfer Networks and Collaborative Research and Development. These products were developed as part of a restructuring of DTI's business support that replaced a complex array of schemes with just nine products that are easier to use and understand.

The deadline for calls is **midnight of 21/22 June**. Further details can be found on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/technologyprogramme/

Environment Agency Water Efficiency Awards 2005

If you have an outstanding example of water efficiency take the opportunity to promote it to a national audience by entering the Environment Agency Water Efficiency Awards 2005. Winning a Water Efficiency Award can provide you and your organisation with high profile national recognition for environmental good practice.

The deadline for entries is **30 July**. For further information visit the Environment Agency website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater.

National Metals Technology Centre (NAMTEC)

The National Metals Technology Centre (NAMTEC) was launched following DTI sponsored research which found overwhelming support for a metals centre of excellence.

Funded by the DTI, Yorkshire Forward and Objective 1, NAMTEC aims to increase the global competitiveness of the UK's metals sector by stimulating high technology innovation and research and development.

With a remit that encompasses every metal, every sector and every application, NAMTEC aims to be a flagship organisation, bringing value to the metals industry by a combination of knowledge sharing, technology transfer and focussing of research and technology activity.

NAMTEC's activities focus on three main areas:

Technical help

A technical helpline is staffed by a team of experienced metallurgists who will advise on metals related problems and identify solutions. Over 600 enquiries have been dealt with by NAMTEC over the past year.

Information

The DTI survey which led to the establishment of NAMTEC showed that information was the most important issue to both industry and the science base. The NAMTEC website (www.namtec.co.uk) allows registered users to search information about metals and their properties, processing technologies and applications.

Project management

A team of project management specialists can identify funding opportunities and partners, co-ordinate funding bids and manage secured projects. They are currently working on 20 metals related projects.

A key development over the past year has been the establishment of an advisory council made up of key figures from industry, trade organisations and universities. The council meets twice a year and provides a forum in which different sectors in the industry can share experiences, discuss the different issues they face and make recommendations for a way forward.

NAMTEC's technical expertise has been recognised with the award of Centre of Expertise in Manufacturing status by MAS.

For further information contact:

NAMTEC
Q Block
Swinden Technology Centre
Moorgate Road
Rotherham
S60 3AR

Telephone: (01709) 724990

Email: info@namtec.co.uk

www.namtec.co.uk

HOT ISSUES COMMENT FORM

HOT ISSUE TITLE(S):

COMMENT(S):
(Including likely impact of proposals on your company/sector)

Name:
Title:
Company Name:
Address:

Tel:
Fax:

Date:

PLEASE EMAIL FORM TO Ambert.Prospert@dti.gsi.gov.uk OR
ALTERNATIVELY FAX FORM TO MESU ON 020 7215 3773

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