



The next 3 years

October 2012 –
September 2015



Introduction

For the Society to make the greatest impact it can, we must ensure continued financial stability and growth.

We aim to achieve this through an increase in membership, financial diversification and an even more positive public profile. For the next three years we will focus on education, membership, and leadership.

We will increase the amount of public engagement work we do, where possible in partnership with Member Organisations and sister societies, to further embed an understanding of biology at a local level.

Policy work will become more proactive, supported by secondments, partnerships and dedicated grants as well as our staff. New special interest groups and professional registers are likely to be established, and our role within Europe and beyond will increase.



Our vision

Our vision is of a society that understands the true value of biology and how it can contribute to improving life for all.

Our mission is to be the unifying voice for biology, to facilitate the promotion of new discoveries in biological science for national and international benefit, and to engage the wider public with our work.

Our values

Vocal

We act as the voice for biology

Inclusive

We support diversity and equality in the life sciences; for students, employees and amateur biologists

Uniting

We bring together individuals and organisations to achieve our vision

Leading

We lead the field in our areas of work with a proactive and honest approach

Evolving

We respond and develop our resources to meet the evolving needs of the sector

Advancing

We advance biology interest, education, professional development and policy through our dedicated staff and volunteers

Inspiring

We aim to inspire our members and the public in the wonders of biology through our communication and engagement



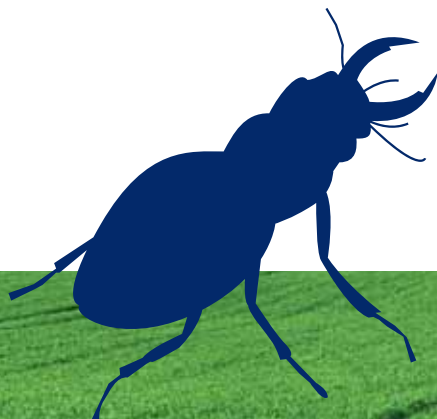
The first three years (2009-2012)

The Society was formed on 1 October 2009 as a registered charity following the merger of the Institute of Biology and the Biosciences Federation.

Since then we have sought to continuously grow our reputation and impact, and create more value for individual and organisational members, policy makers, educators and the public.

Efficiency gains and financial diversification have led to growth in all areas of our work. The number of staff has grown from 12 in 2009 to 30 by the end of 2012, and many new volunteers have helped us too. Individual and organisational membership has grown by more than 15%.

The appointment of dedicated staff for outreach, media and parliamentary affairs and a presence in Scotland have ensured a much higher profile for biology with the public and in all UK parliaments. Unique visitors to our website have doubled over three years, peaking at 30,000 per month.



Winner of Best Magazine Design, The Professional Publishers Association Scotland



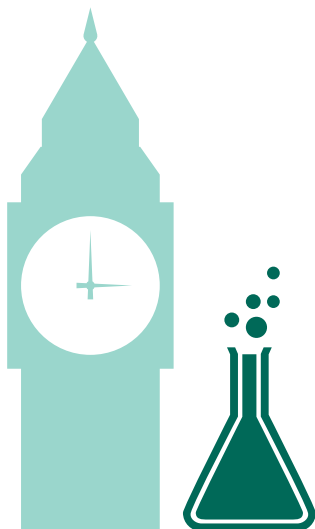
Membership benefits have grown while fees have been frozen. These include two extra additions of *The Biologist* per year, new awards, bursaries, travel grants, networking events and subsidised training. Policy work has also seen major growth and we gave evidence to Parliament twice.

Over 90,000 children took part in competitions and 250,000 members of the public had the opportunity to directly engage with us at hands-on biology events around the country. Our branches ran over 300 events.

New professional registers were introduced, supported by online Continuing Professional Development (CPD); a grant of £1.1m for the accreditation of bioscience degrees was secured from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) in September 2012.

This has all only been possible with the support, collaboration and commitment of our members and sister societies.

All this means we've delivered the key objectives of our first three year plan: ensuring financial stability and creating a unified voice for biology; and being able to work in partnership with chemistry, physics, engineering and mathematics as a major science based organisation.



Membership, marketing and communications

Our vision is to represent the entire spectrum of the life sciences. Membership fees accounted for around 85% of our annual income over the first three years, and our aim is to double our membership and diversify our income.

As of 1st October 2012, we had 12,107 individual members and 90 Member Organisations. We currently offer a range of member benefits, including *The Biologist*, networking events, grants, competitions, discounted training courses, CPD framework, e-newsletters, appropriate post nominal letters and opportunities to be part of the professional registers and feed into our policy work.

Strategy

Our marketing plan underpins membership growth expectations. We have a strong brand identity and will develop this over the next three years so it remains fresh and supports clear and effective leadership.

We will also continue to increase our media, public relations and public engagement activities to raise the profile of the Society. We will establish "Biology Week" as a key annual event for the bioscience community.

Sector representation will also be widened either through our membership structure or our special interest group framework. The benefits of being part of a 'unified voice' for biology will be communicated to industry.

In the first three years of the Society, we froze membership fees and we will continue to offer the best value for members, aiming to keep fee increases low where possible.

What will be delivered?

By October 2015, we will have 15,000 individual members (13,000 by October 2013, and 14,000 by October 2014).

By October 2015, we will represent over 120 Member Organisations.

The Society's media profile will continue to rise, resulting in a 20% increase in media mentions and circulation figures year on year.

“I joined the Society of Biology as a means of gaining the professional recognition that has been so useful to my career.”

Linda Pitkin, CBiol MSB,
Entomologist and Underwater Photographer

Individual membership target for October 2015

15,000



Public engagement and outreach

Our vision is to reach as broad an audience as possible, and to inspire them to fully appreciate the life sciences.

In the last two years, we have expanded our public engagement activity, reaching a total audience of 250,000 members of the public.

Strategy

We will continue to focus public engagement around an engaging topic annually, and following the Olympics and sports science in 2012, we will focus our events on genetics in 2013 to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the discovery of DNA's structure.

We will aim to reach all age groups, with hands-on activities targeted at eight to 12 year olds, school workshops for 16-19 year olds, and public engagement training and public debates to be targeted at an adult audience.

Ensuring a strategic relationship with the BBC will be vital to reaching a broad audience that includes primary level children.

We will continue to evaluate our public engagement work over the next three years to monitor how many people we have directly and indirectly engaged, as well as looking at qualitative impact.

We will continue to support local and regional activity, encouraging more local public engagement primarily through interaction with schools and universities. To increase our local geographical reach, a new regional grants programme will be launched to which individual members may apply.

What will be delivered?

Increase the number of people we reach through public engagement by 10% year on year

Put into place mechanisms for measuring the qualitative elements of the impact of our public engagement work – 2013

Launch a new regional grants programme for individual members – 2013/14

“I found teaching and explaining areas of biology to children extremely rewarding, and I enjoyed using my own knowledge to cater to individuals' specific interests. One of the best experiences ever.”

Rebekah Butler, volunteer at the Big Bang Fair



Science policy

Our vision is to be recognised as the body responsible for supporting biologists and presenting their views in both public funding and policy debates and discussions of professional, procedural and societal matters.

Over the past three years we have made significant progress in meeting this vision. We are recognised as presenting an authoritative and current account of the views, needs and contributions of the bioscience community.

Importantly we have developed close policy links with bodies representing the other sciences as well as with specialist biology organisations, allowing us to address pan-science issues and help develop powerful, collaborative, science-wide messages.

Strategy

We will continue to reach out to biologists at all stages of expertise and career to encourage an interest in the broader societal context within which biological knowledge is created, understood and used, to deepen their involvement in public dialogue. Methods of enhancing collaboration in the biosciences will be explored.

We will facilitate briefings and training sessions so biologists are equipped to engage with public policy issues, and host workshops and events to help gather views.

What will be delivered?

Three new independent policy statements will be widely and strategically disseminated annually.

The number of web based briefings will grow every quarter over the next three years.

We will increase engagement with our membership, increasing their representation on specialist groups and the use of their evidence in outputs by 2014.

We will expand the support of our special interest groups for key areas in the biosciences by increasing the areas of focus and the range of members within them 2014.

We will continue to strengthen our collaborative work with leading organisations across all science, medicine and engineering disciplines on overarching issues by 2015.

We will establish links with European compatriot organisations and encourage co-ordinated responses to international policy and professional challenges, share knowledge and experience, and promote common objectives, holding international workshops and issuing joint position statements (2015).



Education and careers

Our vision is to ensure that biology education is coherent and engaging and develops scientific leaders of the future.



We support members working and studying in all levels of education, producing policy statements, responding to consultations and contributing to curriculum development. We also offer careers advice and guidance, national competitions and awards.

We attend national careers fairs across the UK, as well as organising our own very popular Life Sciences Careers Conferences for undergraduate students.

Strategy

We believe that the key to maximising the impact of our efforts lies in a greater degree of collaboration with students, teachers, and other science bodies concerned with education.

Over the next three years we will increase collaboration with Member Organisations on education policy and support for schools and universities. We will lead the biological community's input into key education policy developments, including but not limited to the National Curriculum Review, Key Stage 4 reform, A-level reform and vocational education.

We recognise that the teaching community is central to ensuring the next generation of biologists; therefore we will focus on support for teachers in five to 19 education, as well as for primary education over the course of the plan.

What will be delivered?

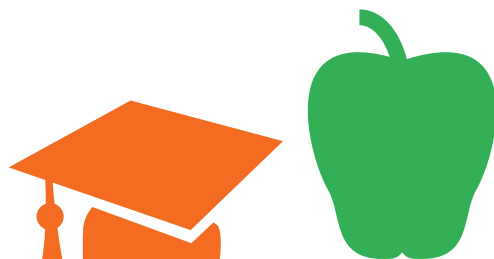
Submissions to the HE Teaching website will increase 10% yearly, leading to a large source of Open Education Resources available to the bioscience community.

By September 2013, a discussion forum, namely Talk Biology, will be accessible to the public.

By January 2014, an online resource providing contact details of 75 members willing to offer careers talks to schools will be available, to school and college members and through the Talk Biology forum.

The number of organisations participating in Undergraduate Research Bursaries will increase by three new organisations by the end of the business plan. By 2015, 60 bursaries will be available to students, ensuring consistency with previous levels.

We will develop dedicated primary resources for teachers often drawing on the excellent work of Member Organisations.



Accreditation of bioscience degrees

Our vision is to establish the Degree Accreditation Programme as a way to highlight degree programmes that best equip graduates with research skills for industry or academia.

The award of a substantial Growth and Innovation Fund grant from the UK Commission for Education and Skills in September 2012 has enabled us to expand accreditation across the whole bioscience community, while focusing on excellence in the areas where there is demand for more skilled graduates.

With continuing input from the UK bioscience industry, along with multiple leading academic institutions and Learned Societies, we are now in a strong position to expand and develop the degree accreditation programme.

Strategy

External funding is crucial to the success of accreditation and will be maintained through a marketing campaign targeted at specific stakeholders.

A clear financial forecast and strategy will ensure sustainability after funding ends in October 2014. By the end of this business plan, accreditation will be established as a valuable resource for all stakeholders.



What will be delivered?

The website for accreditation information will be visible to the public, and institutions will be able to submit applications and supporting documentation (from July 2013).

Our annual careers event for accredited graduates, to be held in 2013 and 2014, will attract at least 100 attendees and five exhibitors.

By September 2015 we will have accredited 64 programmes across the UK.

“Practical experience is essential for a research career. The earlier you start to acquire practical skills, the better. #biologyaccreditation”

From @AnneOsterrieder via Twitter



Co-investment from



UK COMMISSION FOR
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Growth and Innovation Fund

Professional development and registers

Our vision is to encourage good practice and personal development by assessing professional competence through our registers and qualifications.

Since 2009, the number of professional registers and schemes administered by the Society has doubled.

Our registers and schemes are an essential part of recognising and promoting expertise in the relevant sector by providing colleagues, employers and regulators with confidence about registered members. The registers have been successful internationally, e.g. the International Register of Fetal Morphologists has members based in USA and Europe, as well as the UK.

Strategy

The approach over the next three years will be to review the current programmes. This will ensure they are fit for purpose and accurately reflect current thinking and working practices, and meet expectations in a changing environment. Further, we will raise the profile of the programme to ensure that the advantages of being on an externally accredited register and participation in CPD are considered an essential part of career development by individuals and employers alike.

What will be delivered?

Application forms, guidance and office procedures across all Society registers will be reviewed for areas of improvement and revised by December 2013.

Four profile-raising activities, including articles, presentations at conferences and meetings with employers, will be undertaken annually for all Society registers and examinations.

We will increase the total membership of each register by 20% each year through increased participation and clearer benefits.

“Chartered status and the CPD programme demonstrate that our scientists are professional biologists who maintain high standards of competence”

**Meg Parkinson CBiol MSB,
Manager, General Toxicology, GlaxoSmithKline**



Special interest groups

Special interest groups will continue to provide a way to bring together biologists with specific interests in an independent forum within the Society.



Heads of University Biosciences

Heads of University Biosciences (HUBS) will develop as a forum for discussing national issues on the provision of research and teaching in the biological sciences. The group will contribute to national debates on priorities in the biosciences and higher education, informed by the 3,000 plus specialists in the UK's academic departments.

UK Biology Competitions

UK Biology Competitions (UKBC) will continue to encourage excellence in biology by organising the annual British Biology Olympiad (BBO) and Biology Challenge for school level students.

It will also seek to increase the numbers of schools entering both the Biology Challenge and BBO on an annual basis by 10% year on year and develop a clear strategy to target state maintained schools in England and schools in the devolved nations.

UKBC will develop a clear strategy to host the International Biology Olympiad in the UK in 2017.

The Natural Capital Initiative

The Natural Capital Initiative (NCI) is a leading UK forum bringing together scientists, policy-makers and industry to discuss how an ecosystem approach might be implemented in practice. The NCI achieves this through organising workshops, debates and seminars, and communicating findings through reports, briefing notes and direct engagement.

UK Plant Sciences Federation

The UK Plant Sciences Federation (UKPSF) brings together the plant science community in the UK and creates a coordinated approach to research, industry, funding, education and outreach in this vital sector of the biosciences. In 2013 it will act as national coordinator for 'Fascination of Plants Day', launch a 'state of the nation' report and run a national academic conference annually.

Animal Science Group

The Animal Science Group (ASG) will continue to be an inclusive forum for animal science, representing a wide range of organisations. It will retain a clear interest and expertise in the use of animals in research but broaden its work across agriculture and animal husbandry issues, producing proactive white papers in key policy areas.



Resourcing the plan

At the inception of the Society around 85% of total income came from membership. In order to grow and provide greater benefits to both the public and members, there will be a need to diversify income sources further while continuing to increase membership.

At least 50% of our income will come from sources other than membership contributions over the next three years. By diversifying our income we've reduced our dependence by 36% since 2010 and will continue to increase our fundraising activity.

Staff & Volunteers

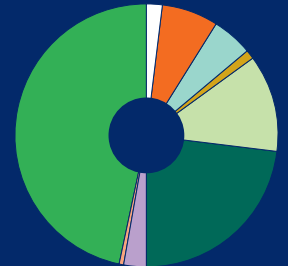
Professional, dynamic and motivated staff are critical to the delivery of the business plan. Over the three year period staffing is expecting to remain stable with a head count of 30 to 35.

Volunteers at all levels will remain essential to successful delivery of this plan both regionally and centrally. Public engagement work, training and policy development will expand the number of volunteers supporting the Society, which is expected to almost double by the end of 2015.



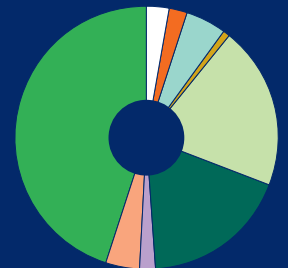
2012-13

Registers income	2%
Education	7%
Other charitable activities	5%
Generated funds	1%
Accreditation	12%
Other grants	23%
Sponsorship & donations	3%
Public engagement	0%
Membership	47%



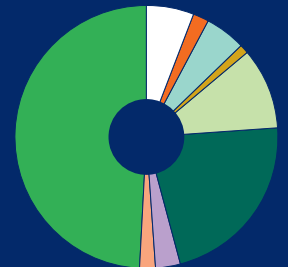
2013-14

Registers income	3%
Education	2%
Other charitable activities	5%
Generated funds	1%
Accreditation	20%
Other grants	18%
Sponsorship & donations	2%
Public engagement	4%
Membership	45%



2014-15

Registers income	6%
Education	2%
Other charitable activities	5%
Generated funds	1%
Accreditation	10%
Other grants	22%
Sponsorship & donations	3%
Public engagement	2%
Membership	49%



	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Total income	£2.66m	£2.74m	£2.6m
Total expenditure	£2.63m	£2.73m	£2.71m
Funds CFWD	£760,956	£765,679	£651,563

Our competitions

We have established a set of great competitions and awards that are increasingly popular.

Science communication awards

Photography competition

Book awards

School teacher of the year

HE teacher of the year

British Biology Olympiad

Biology Challenge

Travel grants

School essay competition





The UK's largest
professional body
for the life sciences

Professional development

Professional recognition

Meet other bioscientists

Continuing Professional
Development

Chartered Biologist status



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Telephone: 0844 858 9316

Join





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