

biodiversity and the environment.

The productive life of an oil-palm crop is 25–30 years and, because the boom in oil-palm cultivation began in the mid-1980s, large areas of ageing oil palm in southeast Asia now need replacing. However, the long-term nature of the crop has allowed biological complexity to build up around it over time.

There is therefore a risk that the replanting phase — just like the initial clearance for planting — will disrupt natural habitats by indiscriminate removal of vegetation and heavy disturbance of soil and hydrological systems.

We suggest that large-scale replanting operations should be carried out carefully with a view to minimizing such adverse effects on the environment.

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## Fees could damage public data archives

Dryad, one of the largest public data repositories in the life sciences, last month imposed modest fees on researchers for archiving their data (see <http://datadryad.org/pages/pricing>). We believe that this strategy is misguided. It will further discourage researchers from participating in public data archiving.

Authors' participation in archiving is already low, and many fail to comply with journals' policies in this regard (see, for example, B. T. Drew *Nature* **493**, 305; 2013). Even when their work is publicly funded, researchers can be reluctant to share their data through public archives because they lose priority access to it. And compensatory benefits — such as those arising from increased citation of their papers — are not always forthcoming. Requiring scientists to pay fees from their own research funds is adding one more hurdle.

Of course, public repositories of data need to be maintained and paid for. But rather than

billing researchers, costs could be met using more subtle methods — much as they are for 'free' restaurant bread and hotel Internet access. Payment could come from private- or public-sector grants, institutional contributions, dedicated funds quarantined by grant agencies, or from partnerships with journal publishers. That way, funders' budgets or publishers' profits would foot the bill.

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## Celebrating 80 years of science solidarity

The Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), which supports persecuted academics worldwide, celebrates its 80th anniversary this year. Today, as never before, intellectual leaders in every country need the freedom to teach, research and publish the global solutions on which future generations will depend.

Speaking in October 1933 on behalf of CARA, then known as the Academic Assistance Council, Albert Einstein urged a packed audience at London's Royal Albert Hall to “resist the powers which threaten to suppress intellectual and individual freedom”. This was the first major UK fund-raising event to support German academics, many of them Jewish, to whom Adolf Hitler had begun to close German universities.

Among the many helped by CARA during the ensuing years was the German neurosurgeon Ludwig Guttmann. He set up the Stoke Mandeville Spinal Injuries Unit near Aylesbury, UK, where he revolutionized the treatment of people with spinal-cord injuries, for whom palliative care had previously been the only option. In 1948 he founded the Stoke Mandeville Games, which were retrospectively adopted by the International Olympic Committee as the Paralympic Games in 1984.

Today, CARA runs regional programmes focusing on Iraq, Syria and Zimbabwe. In parallel

with its core rescue efforts to provide sanctuary to academics at risk, CARA works to sustain those who choose to remain in crisis-affected countries.

Recent achievements include establishing a virtual lecture hall at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare in 2012 to revive the teaching of health and veterinary sciences. Our work is supported by the CARA Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network, now incorporating 95 universities.

To mark our anniversary, we have established an annual ‘Einstein Lecture’ to explore the link between science and civilization in a modern context (see [www.cara1933.org](http://www.cara1933.org)).

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## Analyse impact of health priorities

There is a dearth of evidence for the assumed beneficial effects of involving patients and the public in health-research decisions (S. Petit-Zeman and L. Locock *Nature* **501**, 160–161; 2013). This is just one example of the general difficulty of measuring the impact of setting health-research priorities.

These priorities are decided by researchers and policy-makers to stimulate urgent research (see, for example, [go.nature.com/pxealf](http://go.nature.com/pxealf)). The guidelines for evaluating such priority-setting processes (R. F. Viergever *et al. Health Res. Policy Sys.* **8**, 36; 2010) need to be extended to cover impact measurement and analysis.

Impact measurements might include: evaluating general changes, such as in the attitudes of researchers and policy-makers; monitoring the research that is undertaken in line with the established priorities (for example, by looking at conducted clinical trials or published articles: see J.-A. Røttingen *et al. Lancet* <http://doi.org/n4c>; 2013); and assessing the impact of that research on factors such as health or socio-economic status (see R. Banzi *et al. Health Res. Policy Sys.* **9**, 26; 2011).

Analysis of these impact measurements could be useful for

building evidence to justify and improve prioritization in health research and to monitor progress for informing future priority-setting.

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## A call to forge biodiversity links

For the upcoming calls for Horizon 2020 research funding, the European Commission has said that it would prefer bids from open, collaborative consortia rather than the competitive bids seen in previous funding programmes. To this end, the organizers of 18 European biodiversity informatics projects agreed at a meeting in Rome last month (see [go.nature.com/jouc9](http://go.nature.com/jouc9)) to the overarching goal of predictively modelling the biosphere (see D. Purves *et al. Nature* **493**, 295–297; 2013).

This goal is arguably more complicated than climate modelling, for example. Working out the first steps to take during the Horizon 2020 funding period will hinge on researchers forging links among a wide range of disciplines, including ecology, microbiology, agriculture, socioeconomics, remote sensing, taxonomy and molecular biology.

We therefore invite readers to contribute to the discussion on project ideas at <http://h2020.myspecies.info>, where consortia are now being built.

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### CONTRIBUTIONS

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