

Science Advisory Council

Governance sub-group (End to End Review)

Update of sub-groups 'end to end' review work

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Not for publication- may be discussed with colleagues on a confidential basis

For information- may be shown freely or discussed with anyone

ACTION REQUIRED BY SAC ON 26 APRIL 2006:

Please note current progress and put forward any comments you may have to the Chair of the sub-group

NOTE: This paper outlines the methodology for SAC-G's frame survey. As members will be aware, SAC-G has now completed its work on the outstanding issues relating to its original quality assurance and peer-review work plan and this has been reported separately. SAC-G is also waiting for a response from Defra regarding advice given on the governance of science advisory bodies and this will be reported on at the next SAC meeting.

1. Background

- 1.1. At the Science Advisory Council (SAC) meeting in April 2005, it was agreed that a sub-group should be convened to consider Defra's quality assurance and peer review program, identifying current good practice and helping Defra develop its program further (see paper **SAC(05)7** paragraphs 7.1 to 7.6). It was agreed that Professor Chris Gaskell would chair the sub-group.
- 1.2. At the Science Advisory Council (SAC) meeting in October 2005 it was agreed that the sub-group, having submitted its report on peer-review as advice to the Chief Scientific Adviser, should draw up new terms of reference to undertake an 'end-to-end' examination of whether research as commissioned was of value in informing policy once delivered (see paper **SAC(05)25** paragraphs 7.11 to 7.13).
- 1.3. The sub-group met to discuss its new terms of reference at a meeting on 23 November 2005. The sub-group was joined by Professor Howard Dalton FRS and representatives of the Science Directorate to discuss a new work plan. This paper sets out the sub group's new proposed terms of reference and provides an outline plan for future work.
- 1.4. Members of the sub-group are:
 - Professor Chris Gaskell (Chair)
 - Professor Philip Lowe
 - Professor Thomas Meagher
 - Professor John Beddington (*ex-officio*)
- 1.5. It is proposed that an additional member from SAC's new intake will be invited to join the sub-group as an observer after their official start date on the SAC proper.

2. Terms of reference

- 2.1. The sub-group's terms of reference are:

To consider Defra's policy–science interface, in particular whether research as commissioned was of value in informing policy once delivered. It will identify and endorse good practice in Defra and advise the Department on how science can inform policy more effectively (in terms of cost-effectiveness and impact on policy). The sub-group will:

- > Consider how policy needs are identified in Defra's Directorate Generals.
- > Consider how scientific research questions are set, including how Defra's stakeholders are engaged in the process.
- > Evaluate how science feeds into policy and whether it is done in a cost-effective way.
- > Consider how Defra's policy–science interface may be developed further.

3. Update on Sub-Group Work

- 3.1. The sub-group has met 6 times in order to take forward their 'end to end' review work, discussing at length how science feeds into Defra policy with the science co-ordinators at a meeting held in January 2006.
- 3.2. At their meeting on 1 February 2006, sub-group members decided to conduct a tick-box survey, to be completed by project officers from each of Defra's Directorate Generals. In addition, each sub-group member would conduct two in-depth case studies each on one of the selected projects, in a policy area suggested by the science co-ordinators. The sub-group was mindful of policy areas chosen by the OST (as part of their science review of Defra) in order to add value to their final report.
- 3.3. The final list of projects was selected by the Chair of the sub-group and the secretariat with guidance from Defra staff. Sub-group members expressed a desire to survey on-going projects so 60% of the final list represented completed projects as opposed to 40%, which were on-going.
- 3.4. The questionnaire used (see Annex 1) was finalised with input from sub-group members, the science co-ordinators and representatives of the Science Directorate.
- 3.5. Questionnaires were sent to the following number of projects from each Directorate General:
 - 16 in the Animal Health and Welfare Directorate General
 - 14 in the Natural Resources and Rural Affairs Directorate General
 - 20 in the Environment Directorate General
 - 18 in the Sustainable Farming and Food Directorate General

The deadline for all questionnaires was Friday 17 March 2006. The overall response rate was 73.5% and the results have now been compiled for preliminary analysis to begin shortly.

- 3.6. The case studies chosen originated from the following policy areas:

- Cormorants
- Sheep scab
- Newcastle Disease
- The conservation of plant flora
- Genetically modified organisms
- Cereal aphids

3 case studies have now been completed, using the themes outlined in the questionnaire as a pro-forma, and the results will help contextualise the questionnaire results as well as highlight areas of good practice, which Defra can take forward.

4. Future Work Plan

- 4.1. Sub-group members will complete their case studies in April 2006.
- 4.2. Members have expressed a desire to survey, by means of questionnaire, the policy customers of the 6 case studies. The questionnaire will once again be written in consultation with the science co-ordinators and representatives from the Science, Economics and Statistics Directorate General.
- 4.3. The sub-group will meet in May 2006 to discuss questionnaire and case study findings. This will include an analysis of the questionnaires to policy customers in order to determine whether questionnaires should be sent to the policy customers of all the projects surveyed.
- 4.4. Another sub-group meeting is expected to take place in June 2006.

SAC Secretariat

Science Advisory Council

Governance sub-group: ‘End to End’ Review of Science into Policy

The Science Advisory Council’s governance sub-group is conducting a review of how science feeds into policy in Defra. In order to understand more about the science – policy interface across the Department, we are examining a sample of science projects (completed and on-going) to help build a picture of activity. We would be grateful if you could complete this short survey and return it to us by e-mail by **Friday 17th March 2006**.

Please respond to: science.advisory.council@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Project code & title:

Project Officer:

NOTE: the term scientist in this survey is used to cover physical and social scientists including economists and veterinarians.

- At what stages were the following involved in setting the science questions to be addressed? (check all that apply and comment as necessary)

	Direction of programme	For the specific project	At other stage
Core Defra scientists		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scientists in a Defra Laboratory Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Defra Agency (eg Environment Agency)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External science advisory group/body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other scientist(s) outside of Defra family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other stakeholder(s) outside of Defra family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
End customer (see Q3/4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other/comments:			

The following questions refer to just the specific project highlighted above.

- How was the existence of a knowledge gap that required research established? (e.g. from own knowledge, advice from expert group, review of work, at suggestion of research contractor etc.).
Please comment:
- Was there an identified policy customer for the output of the project **before** it started? (i.e. a named individual responsible for the relevant policy in Defra or for example an external body/stakeholder identified to take up the project results-
NOTE: the customer **can** be the same as the research commissioner)

YES NO

4. a) If there was an identified end customer before the project started who was it?
Please name the individual/organisation:
- b) If the project has now completed, who was the end customer at time of completion (note: the same as above, or different)? Please specify:
5. If there was no end customer identified in **Q3**, was the work commissioned primarily to retain research capacity and/or build the skills/experience base?
YES NO
6. Who was/is involved in conducting reviews of the work whilst the project was/is underway? Please check all that apply:
- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Core Defra scientists | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scientists in a Defra Laboratory Agency | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Defra Agency (eg Environment Agency) | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| External science advisory group | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other scientist(s) outside of Defra family | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other stakeholder(s) outside of Defra family | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| End customer (from Q3/4) | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
- Other/comments:
7. How was the final report for the project signed off/ how will it be signed off prior to publication? (e.g. by the project officer, head of team/division, the DG's Science Co-ordinator, after consultation with a science advisory group, or after peer review etc.) Comments:
8. a) Did/Will the formal report produced for the customer at the end of the project include an interpretation of how the science would fit their (e.g. policy) needs?
YES NO
- b) If yes, who produced/ will produce this interpretation? (e.g. the contractor, core Defra staff, other person?). Comments:
9. Was any assessment done/is any assessment planned of the value to policy of the project output once completed?
YES NO
10. If yes, who was/will be involved in that assessment of value?
- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Core Defra scientists | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Scientists in a Defra Laboratory Agency | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Defra Agency (eg Environment Agency) | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| External science advisory group | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other scientist(s) outside of Defra family | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other stakeholder(s) outside of Defra family | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| End customer (from Q3/4) | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
- Other/comments:

Thank you for completing this survey!