



Food
Standards
Agency
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Working Group 1

Science Capability and Assurance

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**OVERALL PACKAGE TO
DELIVER**
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Question set by FSA Chairman Heather Hancock on 16 June 2017

To advise the Board on how it can be confident that FSA has access to the right science capability and is using science to the best of its ability

Drivers for the question: The FSA wants to:

- reinvigorate science at the heart of the organisation
- aspire to be an excellent, modern, accountable regulator
- have a set of capabilities and processes to ensure it has access to the best available scientific evidence, analysis and advice, and uses these effectively to inform FSA policies and advice.

Overall package to deliver – issues identified

The WG identified five issues where there was a need for use of science within FSA

Issue 1	How the FSA identifies new ideas, new research groups, and external and internal expertise
Issue 2	How the FSA accesses the science it needs to inform its advice and policies
Issue 3	How the FSA works effectively with its Scientific Advisory Committees and external sources of expert advice
Issue 4	How the FSA ensures it has the internal science capability to be effective in identifying, accessing and using science to inform decisions
Issue 5	How the FSA provides assurance that science acquisition and use are effective

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Overall package to deliver – layout of the Working Group’s final report

For each issue, the layout is:

- the background to advice and main observations
- elements of good practice
- recommendations for improvement and what they should achieve
- where appropriate, suggestions for how to take recommendations forward

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Overall conclusions of the WG

- The FSA's desire to place science at the heart of all its activities is challenging as it will require increased resources.
- The WG's recommendations:
 - are all important and have not been listed by priority.
 - focus on principles and high-level objectives - FSA is best placed to decide how these should be operationalised.
 - Involve simple changes and also long-term, sustained changes.
- Engagement by FSA Board and Executive Management Team with science and its use in decision-making is important to embed changes into the FSA's culture.
- Many recommendations are for the CSA and CSA's Team to lead, but effective implementation requires commitment from all of the FSA.
- Addressing the recommendations now will help to ensure FSA's capability and assurance remain resilient and fit for the future.

Overall recommendations

In response to this report the WG request that:

R0.1. The FSA should develop an implementation plan

R0.2. The FSA should provide a report to the Science Council on implementation of the WG's recommendations, within 12 months

Issue 1:

How the FSA identifies new ideas, new research groups, and new external and internal expertise

Key areas in recommendations:

- external engagement;
- external communication and profile of FSA science;
- developing new areas

Issue 2

How the FSA can access the science it needs to inform its advice and policies

Key areas in recommendations:

- prioritisation;
- Strategic Evidence Fund;
- external engagement; use external expertise to help focus direction;
- leveraging influence and access to funding and capability

Issue 3:

How the FSA can work effectively with its Scientific Advisory Committees and external sources of expert advice

Key areas in recommendations:

- systematic external engagement;
- better support, remuneration and reward for external experts;
- better external communication of value and impact

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Issue 4:

How the FSA can ensure it has the internal science capability it needs to be effective in developing and identifying, accessing, and using science to inform FSA's decisions

Key areas in recommendations:

- culture, leadership, engagement with science across FSA;
- understand needs of capabilities and capacities and support and maintain these;
- strengthen Business Partner roles;
- better use of field data;
- better links with and between science and users of science, with operations parts of FSA and with key partner organisations

Issue 5

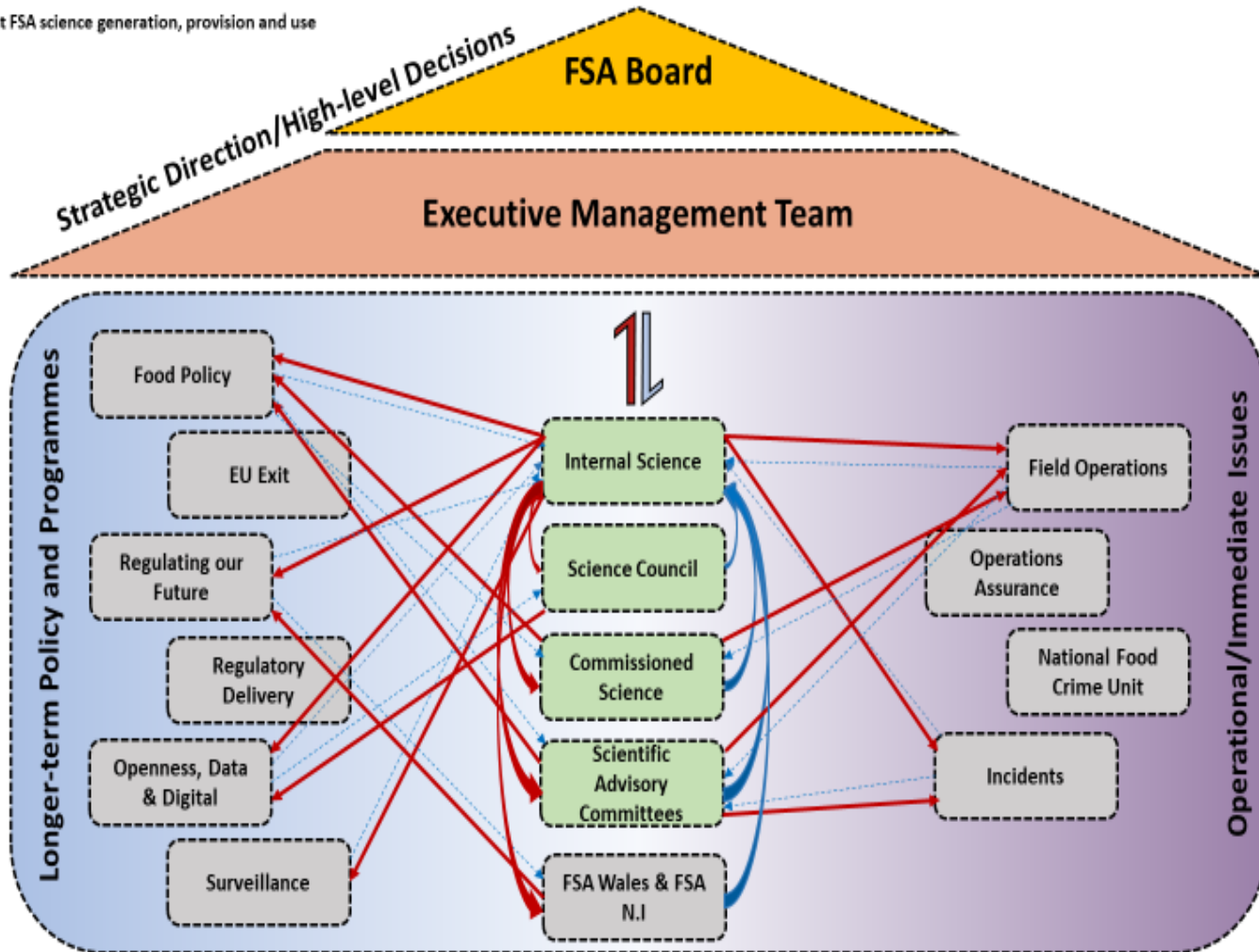
How the FSA can put processes in place which provide assurance that its science and evidence activities are operating effectively and with integrity

Key areas in recommendations:

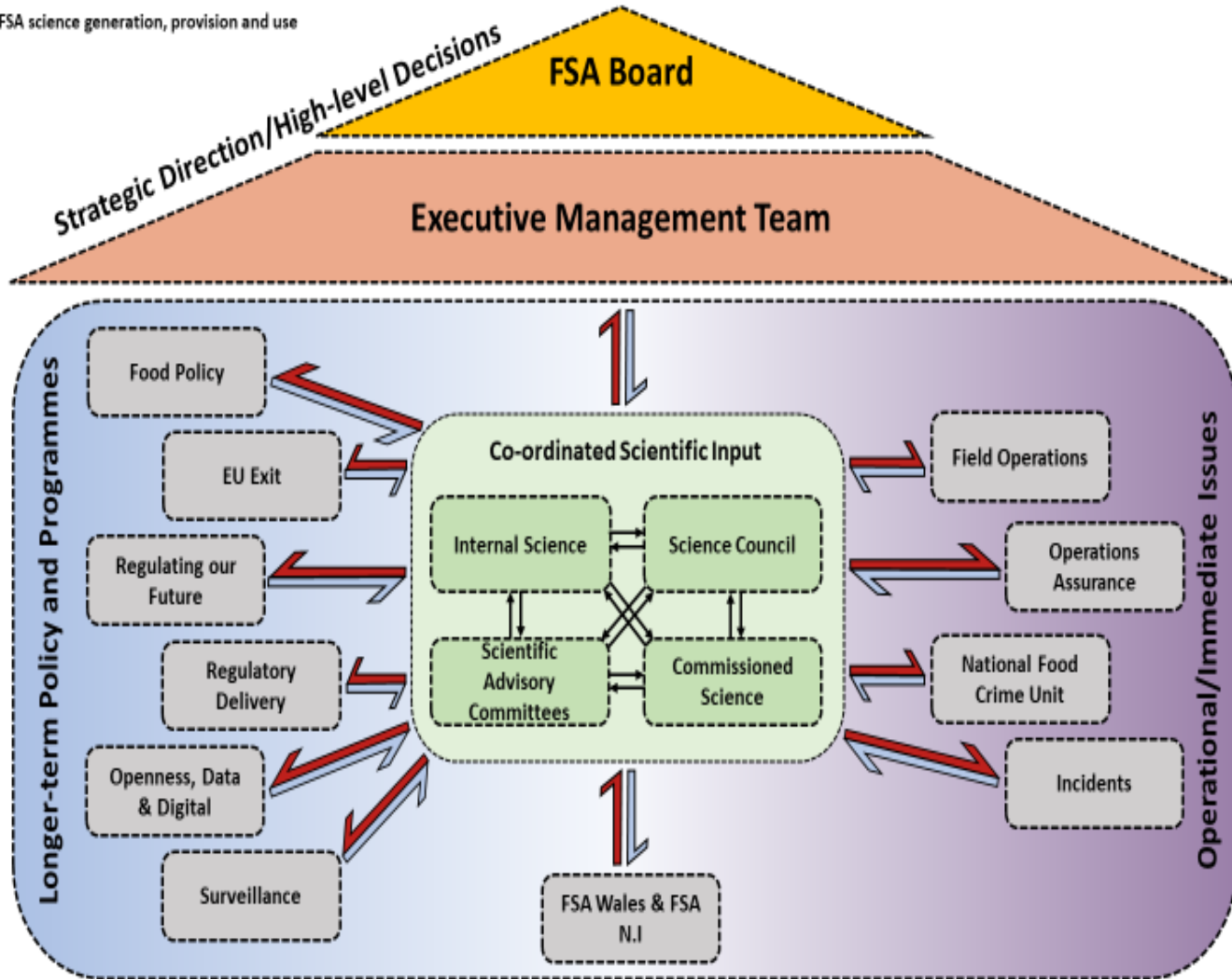
- develop assurance framework;
- expectations of use of evidence in decision making;
- documentation and publication of evidence trails in making decisions and advice;
- develop audit programmes;
- internal sharing of good practice

Diagrams of current and 'ideal' FSA science generation, provision and use

Current FSA science generation, provision and use



'Ideal' FSA science generation, provision and use



NEXT STEPS

- Working Group to hand over its recommendations to the FSA



- FSA to provide a response to the Working Group's recommendations



- FSA to provide periodic update to the Science Council on progress on their implementation