

FSA Science Council Working Group Capability and Assurance (Working Group 1)
Minutes of teleconference 14 November 2017 10-11 am

Participants:

Working Group members:

Laura Green (Chair)
Sandy Thomas
Paul Turner

Food Standards Agency:
Guy Poppy (Chief Scientific Adviser)
Patrick Miller
Jane Ince
Emma Lamb
Gwen Aherne
Rachel Mumford

Unable to attend:

Sarah O'Brien
Patrick Wolfe

Ways of Working:

1. Laura Green highlighted that, as she had discussed in a pre-meeting with the Secretariat on the previous day, it is important that documents which are presented to the Working Group by the Secretariat are focussed and with clear questions for the WG to respond to. The paper on draft principles had not received comments from the WG before the meeting and this may be because its purpose had been unclear. The Secretariat and Laura will have wash up meetings after WG meetings to agree actions and next steps and ensure Secretariat and WG effort can be focused on the right areas.

Minutes of the first meeting: include agenda item number and paper numbers

2. The minutes of the meeting including the action points were accepted as being an accurate reflection of the meeting.

ACTION 1: Secretariat to prepare the final version of the 30 September minutes for the record.

Paper on draft principles:

3. The paper on draft principles on capability and assurance is an attempt to develop the best practice points identified by the WG into a set of principles and a framework for their operationalisation by FSA. This could be helpful for the FSA

to develop further and adopt as its own guidance, rather than being a document which the WG wished to develop further at this stage as a WG product. This could be revisited towards the end of Phase 2.

4. Guy Poppy had welcomed the very useful advice provided at the first meeting. It was agreed that these outputs should be presented in a shorter and simpler format. This document should include:
 - an introductory narrative describing the drivers for the work (from Heather's question within the context of FSA's aim to be an excellent, modern and accountable regulator)
 - the approach taken by the WG, considering where science should fit into the policy cycle and the heat map to identify the five discussed at the first meeting where there was a need or opportunity to improve and where the WG was well-placed to help.
 - the WG's advice in the form of the good practice identified and the recommendations to the FSA for things it could do in order to maintain/develop good practice.

ACTION 2: Secretariat to draft this document and send to Laura Green

5. It will be necessary in Phase 2 of the work to explore how science is used within the FSA, and this will lead to further best practice advice.
6. It is important to be clear on the ownership of pieces of work developed by the Science Council and the FSA, and at what point co-developed products are approved/endorsed by the Working Group / Council and handed over to the FSA for adoption/ownership.

Leveraging:

7. The Secretariat had taken forward actions from the previous meeting and provided further information for the WG to consider. The WG Chair found this information very useful. The WG asked if the FSA's co-funding data could be benchmarked against similar data from other Government departments such as Defra and Department of Health. It also asked if there were data available on the FSA's work with Horizon 2020 funding which is relevant to FSA's work. It was noted that this is not direct co-funding but aligned work with other types of co-ordination and support, so may be more difficult to quantify.

ACTION 3: Secretariat to provide data on co-funding from other departments and on Horizon 2020 if possible

8. Guy Poppy will raise with the Government CSA network the idea of a cross-government analysis of how to increase leverage of public science funding.
- ACTION 4 Guy Poppy to raise cross-government discussion on increasing leverage from public science funding

Engaging researchers:

9. The Secretariat had provided information on how researchers can access information on tenders and will seek to develop this further as a 'quick win' in response to the WG's advice, consulting with Defra on their use of Bravo

ACTION 5: Secretariat to develop access to information on tenders for potential researchers

Strategic Evidence Fund:

10. The Secretariat had produced ideas on how to develop the fund. These would be circulated again for comment by the WG.

ACTION 6: Secretariat to re-circulate ideas on how to develop SEF for further suggestions from the WG

Phase 2

11. Guy Poppy noted that the WG would need to engage in a wider way across FSA on Phase 2. As a first step, meetings will be planned for Laura with key people from FSA who are or should be commissioners or users of science, including policy, operations and legal teams. These meetings will start to be scheduled as soon as possible and will inform the WG's approach to Phase 2.

ACTION 7: Secretariat to schedule meetings for Laura Green to meet staff across FSA

Meeting actions list

Action	Detail	Owner	Deadline
ACTION 1	Prepare the final version of the 30 September minutes for the record.	Secretariat	24 November
ACTION 2	Secretariat to draft this document with recommendations and send to Laura Green	Secretariat	22 November
ACTION 3	Secretariat to provide data on co-funding from other departments and on Horizon 2020 if possible	Secretariat	End of December
ACTION 4	Guy Poppy to raise cross-government discussion on increasing leverage from public science funding	Guy Poppy	End of December

ACTION 5	Secretariat to develop access to information on tenders for potential researchers	Secretariat	As soon as possible
ACTION 6	Secretariat to re-circulate ideas on how to develop SEF for further suggestions from the WG	Secretariat	End of November
ACTION 7	Secretariat to schedule meetings for Laura Green to meet staff across FSA	Secretariat	Hold meetings by February 2018