

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1: Do the 2011-2016 strategic priorities remain robust and relevant for the period 2016-2021?

Yes, we support the three strategic priorities.

Question 2: Do these 'enabling principles' set the right context or should additional principles be adopted?

Yes, we strongly support both the ethos of a collaborative science base with an outward focus on the needs of end users and the enabling principles to achieve this.

However, for knowledge exchange to be effective it must be a **two** way process with the knowledge of the end users, as well as their needs, being communicated to the science base. The text implies more of a science to end user focus. Coupled to this it is essential to engage with end users at a very early stage in the process if knowledge exchange is to be successful.

Question 3: Are the high level outcomes sufficiently clear, if not, what changes would you propose?

Yes, the high level outcomes are clear and supported by a good description of some of the main challenges. It would be useful to explicitly map the policy drivers and statutory requirements in relation to each outcome in order to help inform any future prioritisation that may be required and help get policy and end user buy in.

Question 4: Are the three broad themes identified an appropriate way of structuring our work? If not, what alternatives should be considered?

Yes, the themes seem sensible and we fully support the focus on systems thinking and therefore establishing links between these themes will obviously be important. The next steps in this process will be key to achieving the outcomes. End user engagement, input and commitment at an early stage needs to be sought with significant time given to developing the detail and getting the questions right given the outward focus aim of the programme.

Question 5: How can the SG maximise the benefits of on-going investment in the MRPs to build and benefit from connectivity with the wider science base?

Connectivity to the wider science base (in the UK and beyond) is essential for the Centres of Expertise, in particular.

Given the outward facing nature of the programme with a strategic priority on supporting policy and practice it would seem appropriate to support

initiatives from the wider science base such as assessments of knowledge gaps and research needs prioritisation across areas identified as important by end users, and/or assessments of state of knowledge/scientific consensus, again in areas identified by end users.

Initiatives such as these (potentially reaching out beyond Scotland to the rest of Europe and beyond) would have many benefits including; helping to ensure long term impacts of SG's investment in research, raising the importance of science in supporting and evaluating policy and, integration into European funded initiatives such as Horizon 2020.

Question 6: What are your views of the performance and operation of the CoEs to date, are there any additional areas that would benefit from such support?

CREW delivers accessible research and expert opinion to support Scottish Government and its delivery partners in the development and implementation of water policy in Scotland. CREW has evolved since its inception in line with the needs of policy and policy makers and practitioners.

A recent review of CREW has shown it is working well to connect water research and policy. End-users fully support the CREW concept and believe the work delivered responded to the needs of science, policy or practice. The findings also showed that previous CREW work has contributed to policy impact in a number of ways from evidence and guidance provision to influencing the text of legislation. Clearly CREW is filling an important gap between the science base in Scotland and the needs of the users of that science.

Consideration should be given to rolling out this model to either the whole programme or to high priority areas within the programme, identified by end-users.

Question 7: Do you agree with the SG's proposal to end support for SPs and to explore alternative mechanisms to strengthen engagement between its investment in research and the business sectors it aims to support?

Comments No comment

Question 8: Do you have any proposals for how the research portfolio can better link to the business community to deliver the desired outcome?

CREW has the potential to establish links to the business community and already does so with the water industry. The CoEs should look to support policy as their key priority, but innovative delivery requires the integration of policy, research and industry to develop robust policies and approaches. In Scotland there is a short "path-length" between these three components and this should be encouraged, and the CoEs could play an important role in this context.

Question 9: Is the purpose and value of underpinning capacity sufficiently clear, if not how can it be improved?

Comments No comment

Question 10: Do you have any views regarding the performance and use of the Contract Research Fund including how it could be improved?

It is our experience that there is a lack of knowledge about the respective roles of the CoEs, the CRF and the SP within the end user community. From an engagement with end users perspective we recommend that one simple front end is presented in terms of research needs. The actual source of that funding should then be co-ordinated by RESAS.

Question 11: Could the overall delivery model be further simplified in a way which still enables SG to meet its strategic priorities for the portfolio, if so how?

No comment

Question 12: Do you have specific suggestions as to how the RESAS research strategy can contribute to the delivery of the objectives of the CAMERAS partnership?

The RESAS strategy could and should have a key role to play in delivery of the CAMERAS Evidence Strategy thereby increasing links to the policy and practice community.

Question 13: Do you have any suggestions for developing the partnership with other research funders?

It is vital that research funders work more closely on identifying knowledge gaps and prioritising research need, again driven by policy and end user requirements, to avoid duplication and maximise benefit. There are examples of duplication of effort within the research funding landscape in the UK. This could be minimised through better co-ordination of the Research Funders across the UK and through greater integration with Europe.

Question 14: Do you have any particular suggestions as to how greater engagement with the HEI sector might be achieved?

From a waters perspective we have identified that there are over two hundred experts working in this area in Scotland. It is obviously essential to

tap into this pool of knowledge and CREW forms a valuable link to the HEI community via a specific focus on funding joint projects between HEI and the MRPs. We will be seeking to develop and expand links in the coming year. In particular, we have ambitions to access funding sources, in collaboration with HEIs and MRPs, in line with CREW's remit for knowledge exchange and policy engagement, which could help lever external funding into Scotland. In addition, as in our response to question five, direct support to e.g. synthesise scientific consensus on key topics would be a good way to engage the HEIs.

Question 15: Are the research outputs from the RESAS portfolio of research readily accessible or can this be further improved, if so how?

Although there is a significant body of potentially valuable research underway accessibility and therefore impact could be improved. Our experience with end users suggests that in some areas there is a poor understanding of what research has or is being carried out, by whom and for what purpose. CREW and the other CoEs could play a more prominent role here in the future acting as the knowledge exchange interface for relevant aspects of the programme. Again, ensuring user engagement at the outset of the programme is essential to ensuring impact and long term usefulness of the research.

Question 16: Is the current performance management approach fit for purpose or can it be improved, if so how?

No comment