

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

In general. Yes. It is important of course that if supporting policy and practice is a high priority, policy and practice should be evidence based and allow itself to be informed by the research.

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

Yes

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

No. The Health and Wellbeing priority is particularly vague. What is meant by a community? This is important when considering resilience, which is often best achieved by co-operation between communities. Several of the objectives are behavioural (e.g. healthy diets are about food choices as all the elements are widely available) and it is not clear why these are regarded as rural or environmental issues, rather than health and social issues. Adding these in could lead to dilution of the other two, directly relevant priorities, both in resources and focus.

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

For the reasons above, I think that moving to three themes is not justified. I prefer a structure based on the existing two theme programme.

I was also unclear about the distinction between agriculture and other rural activities with regard to the challenge of climate change. Should sustainable intensification be a component of productive and viable land use? I am also uneasy when I see "mitigation and adaptation strategies". Mitigation and adaptation are distinct activities, with different purposes. Recent IPCC report has stressed the likely need for effective adaptation, given that mitigation efforts at the global level are and are likely to remain wholly inadequate. In particular, we can expect new and extreme weather patterns and resilience needs to take these fully into account. It could be argued that this is the single biggest challenge and facing it should be an objective on its own, not lumped in with other related activities.

**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?**

This is always a tricky issue. One idea might be to ring fence a percentage of funds to MRPs for them to collaborate with HEIs through strategic programmes.

**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?**

I am not sufficiently familiar with the centres to comment.

**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?**

Yes; the culture and practice of business does not sit easily with strategic research providers. Business is quite capable of establishing partnerships where it sees a need.

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

Ensure a broadly based high quality research programme at the pre-competitive level.

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

Yes

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

Such a fund would seem to be essential as a contingency. I have no views on its past use.

**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?**

Delegate as much authority as possible to MRPs against very clear strategic objectives.

**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?**

No suggestions (except to say the question could and probably should be reversed).

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

No

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

See Q5

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

Yes, they are accessible to the relevant users and or stakeholders

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

The Programme Board is heavy on Senior Science Administrators. The addition of more hands-on research expertise would give a better balance.