

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

Yes, including the additional two priorities relating to scientific excellence and impact and multi-disciplinary working.

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

Yes, the enabling principles do set the right context and cover everything well. QMS is particularly supportive of the outward facing focus on the needs of end users.

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

Yes, the high level outcomes identified are very clear. In particular those relating to productive and viable land use are very pertinent to the aims of our own organisation.

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

Yes. By moving to three broader themes which tie the overall strategy with the outcomes it makes it a lot easier to follow and understand.

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?

SG should introduce a prescriptive programme of collaboration between MRPs and HEIs (based on successful collaborations in the current strategy period) to ensure this is built upon and improved for the next 2016-2021 period. For example, the tender process could include a requirement for MRPs and HEIs to collaborate on projects over a certain scale.

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?

QMS has had limited dealings with the CoE on Climate Change and virtually none with the CoE on Water. However, we had dealt extensively with the CoE on Animal Disease Outbreaks, known as EPIC (Epidemiology, Population health and Infectious disease Control), and indeed have contributed to groups brought together to advise the CoE on potential future disease threats to the cattle and sheep sectors. Our experience of EPIC is one of a very effective collaboration between a MRP and HEIs and connects well with policy makers and non-scientific stakeholders. We are very confident in the performance and work of EPIC and look forward to

contributing to this in future. Additional areas that could benefit from a similar approach would be the rural economy and food, health and nutrition.

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 and use the principles of successful partnerships (as highlighted for plant breeding and livestock improvement) when developing alternative mechanisms. Building on the successful CoE model and focussing on best practice should help attract the business sector.

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

A successful example are the current EPIC-run groups which involve stakeholders representing the industry concerned with the impacts of animal disease outbreaks linking with the scientific community to deliver a desired outcome. This can be considered best practice in terms of engaging with organisations who represent the target industry and potentially have the greatest impact in terms of delivering the outcomes.

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

Yes. Scientific research in Scotland has a sound international reputation which attracts business and industry to Scotland. Therefore it is a sector whose basic infrastructure needs continued support.

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

The CRF is a useful resource to have for the reasons outlined in the consultation paper.

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?

Difficult to see how it could be further simplified – already quite a lot of consolidation in the proposals which should be allowed to bed in. One area that is important to highlight is the need for SG to have a resource for short-term policy led research projects.

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?

Research consistently tells us that consumers want meat from high animal welfare systems. We have concerns that this outcome does not receive enough prominence in the strategy and therefore warrants greater emphasis within the strategic high level research theme of Productive and Viable Land Use.

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

No suggestions save to emphasise the need to develop partnerships which can potentially leverage additional funding resources.

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

Engagement with HEI is essential in future and perhaps focussing on students who need to complete a report such as a dissertation as part of their degree could be useful. Such students tend to be very receptive to 'close to market' concepts in developing their projects which could prove useful in terms of the strategic partnerships.

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

In theory everything is accessible nowadays thanks to the internet. However, how well the routes to the research outputs are known beyond the scientific community is debateable. A resource aimed at non-scientific end users (e.g. farm business consultants, veterinary surgeons and others working in the supply chain) which would encourage them to access research outputs could be very beneficial. Each research output should have a clearly identified element of Knowledge Transfer to be implemented upon completion which can then be the focus for the industry to act upon if deemed relevant.

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

Any approach should be focussed primarily on the outputs and outcomes.