

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

Comments

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

Comments

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

Comments

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

Comments

**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?**

Comments

**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?**

ClimateXChange, the Scottish Centre of Expertise on Climate Change, has been funded by RESAS since April 2011. ClimateXChange (CXC) has two modes of operation: a Call-down Service where policy teams pose particular policy relevant research questions and CXC researchers respond providing independent and impartial analysis and advice; and a co-designed work programme comprising projects spanning many topics to inform policy making on the low carbon transition and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. CXC has a membership of 16 institutions including all of the MRPs and many Scottish HEIs. The Call-down Service draws on expertise within CXC and also pulls in expertise from elsewhere in the Scottish HEI sector through use of a Commissioning Budget managed by the Centre’s Directors.

CXC's Call-down Service has consistently provided timely, authoritative evidence and analysis in response to specific questions posed by policy teams. Feedback from policy teams on the performance of the Call-down Service has been overwhelmingly positive, with policy officials finding the Service "very smooth and easy" to deal with, and noting that "communication is key to ensuring that the policy need is understood and met. This is being done well." The performance of CXC's co-designed programme of work has been good. In the early days of the Centre, certain aspects of this work did not – whilst being scientifically important, worthwhile and robust – have the traction with the policy community that had been foreseen. These teething issues were rapidly addressed by CXC's Directorate, which, working with RESAS and key policy contacts, reshaped the work to focus more on directly policy relevant research.

In the Directors' experience, the Centre has performed best where policy teams have been able to articulate their needs and where CXC's researchers have been able to work together with the policy community to generate policy-relevant, researchable questions. Feedback tells us we are delivering outputs that inform policy thinking, on a timescale that fits with the policy cycle. One policy lead said: "The report has provided a good evidence base, which will be used to provide Ministers with final policy options for decision." Others noted: "findings ... have been useful for internal discussion across the Scottish Government on how to progress policy in this area" and "The findings of the report have informed ongoing policy thinking".

In terms of CXC's operation, there have been some challenges around inter-institutional working. But our experience is that these can be readily resolved by having good projects to collaborate on. CXC has been effective at interdisciplinary working. Examples include work to better understand the greenhouse gas mitigation effects of woodland expansion in Scotland, and the development of a suite of indicators of climate impact and adaptation action. The management of the Call-down Service by the Secretariat has been highly effective, with tight delivery criteria and deadlines being consistently applied to Call-down outputs.

Interface with policy teams has been led by the Directorate, Secretariat and individual researchers. Through this CXC has built up a strong understanding of the policy landscape and challenges. This in turn has strengthened knowledge exchange capacity across the institutional teams involved in CXC, and more broadly in the external HEI teams contracted to support the Call-down Service. In this regard, the availability and use of the Commissioning Budget has been a real boon. The Directors welcome this aspect of the Centre and are very pleased that the Budget has increased in size over the past two years. This has been key to enabling CXC to deliver to its remit and to extend the Centre's reach beyond our immediate membership, as well as to create new projects where MRPs and HEIs are collaborating. The functional role of the Secretariat in managing relationships, projects, communications and information flows within the

Centre has been extremely important.

CXC will continue to evolve. Plans for 2016-21 include further outreach to the Scottish HEI Sector through new policy-focused post-doctoral fellowships and further use of the Commissioning Budget. We have ambitions to leverage new sources of funding to bring in new expertise and to strengthen our knowledge exchange function, which speaks to the wider objectives set out in this RAE consultation document. We will build on our relationships with other research programmes, including at UK and EU level. And we will continue to deliver a programme of highly policy relevant work through collaboration between the MRPs and CXC's HEI members.

**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

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

Comments

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

Comments

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

Comments

**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?**

Comments

**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?**

Comments

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

Comments

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

The CoE model provides an effective way of involving the HEIs in collaboration with the MRPs, providing complementary expertise and connectivity with wider research programmes, including internationally. CXC's Directors suggest that the CoEs could be used to formalise these links to strengthen them and make them more explicit. For example, the CoEs could be used to build formal partnerships with other research centres and programmes, including those funded at UK and EU level, through funded or co-funded research posts, secondments or sharing of datasets and modelling capacity. CoEs can provide the mechanism for this sort of enhanced relationship, and also for the linkage back into the Scottish Government and indeed the wider Strategic Research Programme. We suggest that these sorts of mechanisms would be attractive also to the HEI sector, because the CoEs could help the HEIs achieve, evaluate and report their research impact.

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

Comments

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

Comments