

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

Yes

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

As reflected in the consultation document, the 'enabling principles' should embody the importance of ensuring the strategy has an outward facing focus on the needs of end users. The 'Exchanging Knowledge' principle could be re-worded to reflect this aspect more clearly.

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

Alongside agriculture, research programmes relating to Scotland's forests will contribute to all three of the proposed high level research themes. As such it would be appropriate for this to be more clearly reflected, particularly in the Productive & Viable Land Use, and Ecosystem Services outcomes.

The context of the Strategy (p4) should also highlight that SG funded forestry-related research has an important role to play in ensuring the delivery of priority work of importance to Scotland's environment, whilst also complementing the cross-border strategic priorities set out in the Science and Innovation Strategy for Forestry in Great Britain.

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

Yes, although the importance of supporting the development and use of integrated land use solutions could be better reflected, eg. in the Land Use theme under which the outcomes currently only refer to integration in the context of pest & disease management.

**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?**

To complement direct investment in the MRPs, the SG could expand and strengthen the role of mechanisms such as Centres of Expertise as a means of encouraging and funding collaborative working and connectivity within the scientific community.

**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?**

Our experience suggests that, as they evolve, the CoE's are becoming an increasingly effective mechanism for a) improving collaboration between research providers; and b) strengthening their outreach to, and connection with, policy makers in key agencies. In addition to the 3 existing CoE's consideration should be given to establishing a similar arrangement focussed around land use related issues, policy and research.

**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?**

Agree with the proposal to explore alternative mechanisms.

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

Perhaps a useful first step would be to establish a fresh consultation process with the business community within relevant sectors to seek views on mechanisms that will improve the effectiveness of future research programmes to support innovation and sustainable economic development. There may also be opportunities to better align research funding mechanisms with support for business innovation delivered via the enterprise companies.

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

Although the principle purpose of the Underpinning Capacity funding is understood, it is more difficult to assess the value delivered. The proposed review should therefore include a detailed critical evaluation of this aspect with a view to improving clarity.

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

We would suggest that the performance of the CRF could possibly be improved by exploring alternative funding mechanisms including the establishment of a 'challenge fund' or similar, targeted at underpinning collaborative research in specific areas of identified need. A mechanism such as this would also build on the success of the CoE's and link directly with the aims of the SG's CAMERAS initiative. Communication on the role and objectives of the CRF could also be improved to increase awareness.

**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?**

Consideration could perhaps be given to combining the funding streams previously used for both SP's and the CRF, thus helping to streamline the

delivery model.

**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?**

See Qu. 10 above. More direct alignment of the CRF with CAMERAS objectives would improve collaboration and help avoid duplication within partner research commissioning programmes.

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

Alongside other political and organisational processes it will remain important to maintain effective cross border collaboration and funding mechanisms to address Scotland's research needs. In the area of forestry related research close integration will be required with Defra funded programmes under the Science and Innovation Strategy for Forestry in Britain to help maximise the effectiveness of cross border partnership approaches to research.

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

Suggest consideration is given to developing more tailored incentives through the Scottish Funding Council and other agencies to encourage HEI's to engage collaboratively in delivering innovation and knowledge exchange in priority areas to support evidence based policy making more directly.

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

Accessibility could be improved through improving co-ordination with relevant RAE related outputs from research providers out with the MRP community eg. perhaps through extending the scope of the knowledgescotland website portal. This would link in strongly with the aims of the SG's CAMERAS initiative.

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

No specific comments.