

Minutes of the UKRI Board Meeting of 16th October 2018.

Board Members	
Sir John Kingman (Chair)	Fiona Driscoll
Professor Sir Mark Walport	Professor Alice Gast (items 1-6)
Ian Kenyon	Professor Max Lu
Professor Julia Black	Vivienne Parry (items 1-9)
Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz	Mustafa Suleyman
Lord Browne	Lord Willetts
Professor Sir Ian Diamond	Professor Dame Sally Davies (from item 5)
BEIS Attendees	
Gareth Davies	
UKRI Attendees	
Rebecca Endean	Alex Marsh (from item 8)
Professor Melanie Welham (items 1-4)	Mike Biddle (items 1-4)
Professor Mark Thomson (item 7)	Bryony Butland (item 7)
Tom Crawley (item 10)	
Secretariat	
Chris Chudziak	Linsey Urquhart
Apologies	
Sir Peter Bazalgette	Professor Sir Harpal Kumar

Time: 09:00-13:30

Location: British Library, London.

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks

1.1 The Chair welcomed members to this meeting of the UKRI Board at the British Library.

2. Minutes of 19th September 2018 Board Meeting & Action Log

2.1 Members approved the minutes of the previous meeting and agreed the actions recommended for closure.

3. ISCF Quarterly Update

3.1 The Chair welcomed Melanie Welham and Mike Biddle, who provided the quarterly update on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

3.2 Members discussed the recruitment of Challenge Directors for Wave 2 challenges. Where Directors had not been appointed, good internal candidates had been appointed as Deputy Directors, and the team would look to recruit again alongside recruitment for the Wave 3 challenges.

3.3 There was discussion of the importance of aligning ISCF investments with other UKRI investments, eg. aligning what we are doing on the Medicines Manufacturing Challenge with other work on vaccine development.

3.4 There was a need for UKRI to have a better understanding of the interactions between UKRI and industrial investment in R&D – in particular to work with ONS on a better measure of the profile of industrial investment in R&D in the UK.

3.5 There was positive feedback on the deep dive sessions that had been held with Board members, and that these should continue for Wave 3 challenges.

Decision: The Board agreed to continue the series of ‘deep dive’ sessions on individual ISCF challenges.

Action (B.22): Executive to provide the Board with regular updates on industrial investment in R&D and the investment environment.

Action (B.23): Industrial interest alongside each of the ISCF programmes to be documented.

Action (B.24): Executive to provide the evaluation work behind the ISCF updates to board members.

Action (B.25): Secretariat to commission an item for a future board meeting on developing alternative approaches to measuring the profile of industrial investment in R&D.

4. ISCF Wave 3 Recommendations

4.1 Melanie Welham provided an overview of the process and recommendations presented to ministers on Wave 3 of the ISCF. Mark Walport updated the Board on discussions they had had with the Secretary of State about these recommendations and the further clarifications that had been sought. Announcements are expected around the time of the Budget 2018.

4.2 The Board endorsed the recommendations put to Ministers, noting that further work was needed in presenting the vision behind the challenges, as well as the detail of the work proposed.

4.3 The Board noted there were some challenges which may have been unsuccessful under ISCF, but which may be worth progressing under other funding mechanisms, and that it was important that UKRI continued to receive risky, unconventional proposals.

Decision: Members endorsed the recommendations made to ministers on ISCF Wave 3 and the further work required.

5. Infrastructure Roadmap Interim Report

5.1 The Chair welcomed Mark Thomson, (STFC Executive Chair and Executive Champion, Major Capital & Infrastructure), and Bryony Butland, (Programme Director, UKRI Infrastructure Roadmap), who provided an overview of work towards developing the roadmap and their proposed approach for the interim report, which would summarise (i) work to date on future requirements alongside (ii) an interim landscape analysis of current UK capability. A draft would be presented for the Board's agreement in November and would aim to be consultative in tone, whilst not being a formal public consultation.

5.2 Lord Willetts, Board Champion for the Research and Infrastructure Roadmap, noted that presenting an accurate picture of the current landscape would be a big step forward in itself. As well as a 'Domesday book' of UK research infrastructure, with the right vision this has the potential to be used as a selling point for UK infrastructure.

5.3 Members noted the importance of presenting research and innovation infrastructures within an international context – investing in areas of UK comparative advantage, where the UK can provide a lead beyond 2019 – and that UKRI must avoid investing in sub-scale infrastructure. The report should also be used as an opportunity to identify synergies with what UKRI is doing in other areas, eg. SIPF or ISCF, as well as how this aligns with what other funders are investing in, (notably the medical charities), and the role UKRI can play in bringing funders together.

5.4 There was discussion of the role of the interim report in presenting capability needs versus the role of the roadmap in presenting the specific pieces of infrastructure which UKRI should invest in, with members noting:

- The landscape analysis of current UK capability should show the geographic spread.
- There should be consistency across the themes in terms of how the strategic vision is presented.
- The report should be clear on the technical skills base that would be needed if the UK is going to invest in specific areas of infrastructure, and that investment requires both capital and operating costs – that 'batteries are included'.
- That while one purpose of our research infrastructure would be to serve current challenges, there was also an important need to maintain broad capacity such that future challenges can be met.

Action (B.26): Mark Thomson and Bryony Butland to engage Ian Diamond and Mustafa Suleyman for a more detailed discussion on how social science and e-Infrastructure are presented in the report.

6. CEO Report

6.1 Mark Walport presented an overview of UKRI developments, including cross-cutting funds, spending review planning and recent engagements. Members congratulated Sir Greg Winter on his recent Nobel prize, together with the MRC Laboratory for Molecular Biology.

6.2 There was discussion about compliance with the European Commission's guidelines for state aid and how UKRI should deal with any breaches.

7. CFO Report

7.1 Ian Kenyon provided an update on progress across corporate services since the last meeting, including the relocation of the London office to new premises at 58 Victoria

Embankment.

7.2 Ian presented the Q2 finance report. Spend was in line with forecasts, there were significant pressures on 2019/20 budgets. An update on financial implications of the tax situation was presented.

7.3 An update was provided on Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) decision notices requiring release of information relating to peer review which had been requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

8. 19/20 Budget Bids

8.1 Alex Marsh provided an update on the 19/20 Budget bids, including preliminary feedback from ministers. Members were content with progress.

9. SR Update

9.1 Alex Marsh provided an overview of Spending Review preparations, including a high-level timeline. The proposal would be to build the case for UKRI in totality, including emphasising how the 2.4% target is critical for success, then to allocate funding internally within UKRI.

9.2 Members commented on plans for the 2.4% document:

- The vision for the UK should be a headline focus for the opening chapter
- The opening chapter should be politically engaging, emphasising both challenges and opportunities
- Comms team should be involved in this to ensure it's inspiring to the target audience

9.3 Members also commented on plans for the internal allocations:

- There needs to be mention of plugging any gaps in basic science if we lose EU funding
- There should be a fresh approach to the language used for core or block grant funding to better explain how it is allocated.

9.4 Members were content with progress made on plans for the Spending Review.

Action (B.27): Secretariat to table a discussion of David Sweeney's QR review.

10. EU-Exit

6.1 Rebecca Endean provided members with an update on EU Exit issues, including Horizon 2020 contingency plans, in the case of a "no deal" exit, where UKRI would be responsible for delivering governmental guarantees, and where, at the point of exiting the EU, certain EU-funded schemes would need to be picked up mid-way.

6.2 There was discussion on domestic alternatives to European Research Council (ERC) grants, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Awards (MSCA) and the SME Instrument, where a no deal departure may mean UK organisations could no longer host these awards.

6.3 Members noted that additional staff would be needed to cover the full range of contingency activities. One option would be to look to short term secondments from the academic community, to help fill these vacancies.

6.4 Members were content with the progress made on Horizon 2020 contingency planning and on the long-term alternatives to Horizon Europe.

11. Board Forward Look

11.1 The Board were content with the forward look of discussion items until the end of the financial year, which been aligned with the Board's Terms of Reference.

12. AOB

12.1 John Kingman informed members of an upcoming engagement at the Royal Society.

12.2 The Board plan to hold a meeting at Imperial College's White City campus early next year.

The next UKRI Board meeting will be held at the British Museum, on Wednesday 21st November.