



Minutes of the UKRI Board Meeting of 11 September 2019

Board Attendees	
Sir John Kingman (Chair)	Vivienne Parry
Professor Sir Mark Walport	Professor Sir Ian Diamond (Items 1-9)
Mike Blackburn	Fiona Driscoll
Professor Julia Black	Professor Max Lu
Lord Willetts	Professor Dame Sally Davies
Lord Browne	Professor Alice Gast
Sir Peter Bazalgette	
UKRI Attendees	
Geoff Robins	Alex Marsh (Item 9)
Emma Lindsell	Dan Hodges (Item 9)
Isobel Stephen	David Sweeney (Item 11)
Katrina Nevin-Ridley (Item 8)	Prof Andrew Thompson (Item 10)
Becky King (Dragon Rouge, Item 8)	
BEIS Attendees	
Jo Shanmugalingam (Items 1-8)	
Secretariat	
Chris Chudziak	Tom Goodsir
Amy Smith	
Apologies	
Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz	Professor Sir Harpal Kumar
Mustafa Suleyman	

Time: 08:30 – 14:00

Location: 58 Victoria Embankment, London.

1. Non-Executives' Session

2. Welcome & introductions

2.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2.2 The Chair noted this was Alice Gast's last meeting and thanked her for her service on the Board.

2.3 The Chair welcomed Mike Blackburn, noting his formal appointment to the Board as interim CFO, which will run until 8 March 2020; as well as Jo Shanmugalingam from BEIS, and Emma Lindsell and Isobel Stephen as the new Executive Director of Strategy and Governance. Mark Walport gave a brief update on recruitment for the permanent UKRI CFO.

3. Minutes of 29 May 2019 Board Meeting, 29 July correspondence paper and Action Log

3.1 The minutes were **approved**, and members agreed the actions recommended for closure.

4. CEO report

4.1 The Chief Executive reported on activities since the last Board, highlighting:

- Recent discussions with new Ministers have focused on the Spending Review, and a proposed increase in research and innovation spend and considering ways to reduce the administration burden of grants applications.
- Six Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) Challenges have been announced. These are: Accelerating detection of disease; Digital security by design; Driving the electric revolution; Future flight; Industrial decarbonisation; and Smart sustainable plastic packaging.
- The second cohort of Future Leaders Fellowships (FLF) have been awarded and will shortly be announced.
- EU Exit preparations, and the HMG commitment to guarantee funding for all successful competitive UK bids to Horizon 2020 that are submitted before Exit Day.
- A recent visit to the Netherlands.

5. CFO report

5.1 Mike Blackburn provided updates on the development of UKRI's Corporate Centre; the BEIS upgrading of UKRI's financial management to Green-Amber; revised management arrangements for State Aid; the Outline Business Case for the Low Cost Nuclear ISCF project; recruitment of Digital, Data and Technology senior managers now being completed; and the external aspects of the bureaucracy review. Members noted that those external aspects would help UKRI reduce the administration of managing its funding, so they should be considered as part of the spending review but had no further comments on the CFO Report at this stage

6. Transformation update

6.1 Geoff Robins updated the Board on UKRI's Transformation programme, and the phased approach being adopted. Geoff updated on the progress being made in key areas such as HR and IT and outlined the activities being initiated to develop the next phase of the plan.

6.2 Members discussed EU Exit, and plans for exit day, noting the importance of clear communications to the research and innovation community.

6.3 The Chair thanked Geoff for his work so far and asked for an update to Board on the transformation plan towards the end of the year. UKRI Audit, Risk, Assurance and Performance Committee (ARAPC) will also discuss the Transformation programme in November.

Action B2019.33: Geoff Robins to present a transformation plan to Board in November. Secretariat to schedule a discussion for Transformation at November's Board.

Action B2019.34: Katrina Nevin-Ridley and Anne Dixon to continue developing communications to key UKRI stakeholders in preparation for EU exit day.

7. Approval of governance structure for investment decisions

7.1 Mike Blackburn presented proposals to reconstitute Investment Committee as a sub-Committee of the Board. The new Committee will give additional scrutiny over UKRI's largest investments.

7.3 Members were supportive of the proposal, noting that further engagement is needed with BEIS and HMT to ensure we are strengthening the governance processes, and to ensure that Board is sighted on investment decisions.

Decision: The Board **approved** the governance structure for investment decisions.

8. Approval of UKRI brand strategy

8.1 Katrina Nevin-Ridley presented the UKRI Brand strategy. The new branding reflects the updated UKRI brand, whilst retaining the identify of individual Councils.

Decision: The Board **approved** the UKRI brand strategy.

9. Spending Review Update

9.1 Alex Marsh and Dan Hodges led discussion on the spending review, noting recent discussions with Government on increasing research and development spend, being mindful of delivery constraints. Board discussed:

- possible trajectories of funding towards achieving the Government's committed target of 2.4% of GDP,
- balance of spending across different categories of investment;
- the relationship with industry, the contribution of private research and innovation spend towards reaching the target; and,
- possible models for establishing an agency for investing in long term disruptive research in the UK.

9.2 The Chair noted that UKRI is uniquely placed to support Government's objectives in this space. UKRI Staff will keep Board updated on progress and will circulate a weekly email to ensure Members are briefed.

Action B2019.35: Executive to draft a weekly update email on spending review plans for Members.

Action B2019.36: CEO Office to schedule a discussion between Mark Walport and Lord Browne on zero carbon initiatives.

10. Future funding scenarios for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

10.1 Andrew Thompson updated Board members on the GCRF, a £1.5 billion fund to support research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries, setting out a proposed future approach for GCRF.

10.2 Members noted the progress made by UKRI to date in delivering GCRF in line with UKRI's strategic objectives and discussed the proposed portfolio of thematic opportunities and financial investment. The Chair thanked Andrew for his work and noted that GCRF was an example of where UKRI had managed a large fund very effectively. The Board agreed UKRI's future approach for GCRF.

Decision: Board **approved** the proposed future approach for GCRF.

11. Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) next steps

11.1 Alice Gast (Imperial College London), Julia Black (London School of Economics) and Max Lu (University of Surrey) declared conflicts of interest with regards to their respective university roles.

11.2 David Sweeney joined to set out a proposed approach to next steps in implementing the KEF.

11.3 Members discussed the metrics used in assessing the knowledge exchange, and the balance of ensuring an accurate picture of knowledge exchange without creating an additional administrative burden on universities. David Sweeney explained that KEF would largely be based on previously submitted data in the first year, with universities providing additional information as they could make available.

Decision: Board **approved** the proposed approach to implementation, subject to further engagement between Mark Walport and David Sweeney on the specific metrics used in KEF.

12. Forward Look

12.1 The Chair briefly discussed the forward schedule of Board meetings, which will include meetings in Cardiff in November, Swindon in January, and Belfast in March.

13. AOB

13.1 No further business.

14. Non-Executives' Session

Date of Next Meeting: 13th November 2019 in Cardiff