

# UK Research and Innovation

**Paper No 2019-B32**

Approved by UKRI Board: 27 March 2019

Author: UKRI Secretariat

## Minutes of the UKRI Board Meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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<b>Board Attendees</b>	
Sir John Kingman (Chair)	Vivienne Parry
Professor Sir Mark Walport	Professor Alice Gast
Ian Kenyon	Fiona Driscoll
Sir Peter Bazalgette	Professor Sir Harpal Kumar (until 11:30)
Professor Julia Black	Professor Max Lu
Lord Willetts	Mustafa Suleyman
Lord Browne	
<b>UKRI Attendees</b>	
Rebecca Endean	Professor Andrew Thompson ( <i>for item 8</i> )
Alex Marsh ( <i>for items 1-6</i> )	David Sweeney ( <i>for item 13</i> )
Professor Melanie Welham ( <i>for item 6</i> )	Jo Peacock ( <i>for item 15</i> )
Ian Campbell ( <i>for item 6</i> )	
<b>BEIS Attendees</b>	
Jenny Dibden (BEIS)	
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Chris Chudziak	Linsey Urquhart
Nawaz Shaikh	
<b>Guests</b>	
Sir Michael Barber (OfS) ( <i>for item 13</i> )	
<b>Apologies</b>	
Professor Sir Ian Diamond	Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz
Professor Dame Sally Davies	Gareth Davies (BEIS)

**Time:** 08:30- 13:00

**Location:** Molecular Sciences Research Hub, Imperial College, White City, London

## 1. Welcome & introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Alice Gast for hosting the Board at Imperial College's White City campus.
- 1.2 No conflicts of interest were declared.

## 2. Minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 Board Meeting and Action Log

- 2.1 The minutes were approved as corrected. Rebecca Endean provided an update on open actions, and members agreed those recommended for closure. She has also set up a separate meeting with Lord Browne to discuss issues around measurement of R&D.

## 3. CEO Report

- 3.1 Mark Walport provided an update on recent activity, noting:
  - Discussions with the Secretary of State on round 1 of the Strength in Places Fund are ongoing.
  - Wave 1 of the Strategic Priorities Fund has been agreed with Ministers, we are now working with Ministers on Wave 2, which will create commitments into the next Spending Review period.
  - Work across government departments to join up on security of digital technologies.
  - There had been strong applications from academia on the Future Leader Fellowships (FLF), there is a need to improve success rates from business for future rounds. It would be important to consider how we measure impact and track how this cohort develops.
  - On ISCF, level of investment through the Faraday Battery Challenge and UK Battery Industrialisation Centre would be kept under review as the technology develops.

**Action B2019.10: Fiona Watt** to update the Board on impact measures for FLF.

**Action B2019.11: Secretariat** to plan a Deep Dive on investment in battery technology, and consideration of how ISCF develops in the next Spending Review period.

## 4. CFO Report

- 4.1 Ian Kenyon provided an update on CFO activities:
  - The team are currently working with BEIS on end year final figures and how underspends can be managed through QR flexibility.
  - ARAPC are looking into how the Research & Innovation Funding Service (RIFS) is managed as a programme – Duncan Wingham is now leading on this and is in discussions with Fiona Driscoll and Mustafa Suleyman.
  - Councils are commencing the next wave of recruitment of Council members – appointments will be approved by Nominations & Remuneration Committee on behalf of the Board, at present Executive Chairs are reviewing their recruitment requirements.

## **5. What are the big balance of funding questions to consider in the Spending Review?**

5.1 Alex Marsh and Jo Peacock updated the Board on Spending Review (SR) timings, opening a discussion of the questions they would want to consider in the SR:

- Impact on sustainability should be one of our criteria when taking decisions on balances of funding – particularly if challenge funding were to grow.
- We should consider the balance of funding from the perspective of industry and whether we have the right investments in place to grow investment at the development stage – for example, the episodic nature of challenge funding can be difficult for business.
- We should consider where the UK's comparative advantage lies - eg. small scale applications.
- It would be helpful to see industrial investment broken down further by sector and understand the sectors where industry will be better able to grow research investment.
- The Board should consider marshalling its resource behind priority technologies over the next few years to transform delivery and successful scale up.
- There is a need to consider academic culture when considering the drivers for success in academia and the impact this can have on facilitating change.
- There is a need to be pragmatic about where the markets are, and which sectors can best grow in the UK.

## **6. ISCF Quarterly Update**

6.1 Melanie Welham and Ian Campbell provided the quarterly update on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF):

- A dashboard has been introduced which shows where matched funding has been delivered across each of the challenges – the Board agreed it would be helpful to show profiles of committed funding, as well as delivered funding.
- The team were starting to build an understanding of which challenges might benefit from a further wave of funding beyond the current four years.
- There was also some discussion around how we would manage projects if they underdelivered against industrial investment targets – in the first place further investment would be paused whilst realignment plans were developed, ultimately the Board could decide to cease a challenge in discussion with Ministers.
- It is important to ensure the baseline measurement is correct and it would be prudent to find out from industry what they expect to get from the investment to strengthen our appeal to business in future.

6.2 There was some discussion around the need to improve the gender balance of challenge directors.

## **7. EU exit and Horizon 2020 contingency: Update**

7.1 Andrew Thompson provided an update on contingency planning and the development of domestic alternatives to EU-funded programmes. UKRI preparations are ongoing for in-flight applications and significant progress has been made.

7.2 There was some discussion around how UKRI communicates with the community on preparations for a 'no deal' scenario.

**Action B2019.12:** To provide Board with press lines for a 'no deal' scenario – being as transparent as possible about what we are doing.

**Decision:** The Board agreed not to look at options to reprioritise existing UKRI funding to Brexit, unless requested to by Ministers.

## **8. FIC - Decision on Round 2 advice to Ministers**

8.1 Andrew Thompson provided an update on the Fund for International Collaboration (FIC). The Board approved the FIC Board's recommendation to fund 13 proposals in round 2 and to provide extra funding to existing round 1 activity.

## **9. ARAPC Update**

9.1 Fiona Driscoll provided an update on ARAPC's activities, including looking at the new funding service, working with the National Audit Office, new accounting standards, a workshop to plan the work programme for the next three years, and taking action on KPMG's report on Innovate UK.

## **10. Items for discussion by exception**

10.1 The Board considered three papers for discussion by exception. The Board endorsed the proposed approaches to 2019/20 budget allocation; research integrity; and publications in 2019. Clarification was sought on the remit of the Research Integrity work – there is a need to consider a wider view of reproducibility and the availability of data. This will form a longer-term priority.

**Action B2019.13: Secretariat** to plan for a Board discussion on reproducibility and seek an update from Frances Rawle's Research Ethics Committee.

## **11. Board Forward Look**

11.1 Members were invited to propose other big, strategic questions they would like to discuss for the forward look of agenda items, which has been extended to the end of 2019.

## **12. AOB**

12.1 There is a Board visit to CERN planned for 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> July.

## **13. OfS: Shared Priorities and ways of working**

13.1 The Board were joined by Sir Michael Barber, Chair of the Office for Students (OfS), and David Sweeney for a discussion of shared priorities and ways of working. Following a review with the sector, OfS had a clearer view of institutions' financial sustainability. The Board noted the Augar review and any impact of UK migration policy on international students could be expected

to have a significant impact on university finances. The Board encouraged further closer working on sustainability, skills and other areas of common interest.

**Date of Next Meeting: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019**