

NERC Management Board (NMB) Meeting

Summary of discussions

**22 July 2019 MRC,
London**

Members present:

Professor DJ Wingham, Ms C Bault, Mr N Bird, Mr PJ Fox, Mr R Gledhill, Mr P Hayden, Dr P Heads, Ms A Robinson.

Apologies: None

Other attendees: Professor S Mobbs (Director, NCAS, item 2), Ms E Body (Head of Strategy and Planning, item 3), Ms C Snelling (Deputy Head of Sustainability, item 4), Dr S Hodgson (Interim Associate Director National Capability, items 5 and 6), Dr S Gardner (Head of Innovation Programmes and Partnerships, item 7), Mr A Bidwell (NERC Risk Business Partner, item 9), Mr S Caswell (NERC Finance Business Partner, item 10).

Secretary: Mrs SJ Morrell.

Executive Chair Update

Professor Wingham opened the meeting and welcomed members.

He provided an update on the Ownership and Governance of NERC Centres ([GRO](#)).

Business Model for External Access to FAMM

NMB was presented with background information to the funding of FAAM and explained that to ensure sustainability going forward, external funding would be required.

The Board requested that the document be developed further and that Head Office would work with National Centre for Atmospheric Science (NCAS) to do this. A revised paper should be presented to NMB in December 2019.

Head Office Plan – quarterly exception report

An update was provided on the progress against the milestones identified in the Head Office Plan, following the quarterly review for the period April to June 2019. The Board reviewed the exceptions and provided updates.

Safeguarding in Research

NMB was provided with an update of the current NERC and UKRI safeguarding in research activity. The UKRI lead for International Development would be attending a NERC senior leaders meeting in October to provide a further update and assurance on the management of this activity. The

Board provided some comments to feed into the discussion and requested that the item come back to NMB in the spring.

NERC National Capability Official Development Assistance (NC ODA) awards

The Board was told that the current NC ODA awards, funded by NERC's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) allocation, would finish in March 2020. Delays in the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) process meant that NERC would not know its GCRF allocation before a decision on the next phase of NC ODA funding is required.

A one-year extension to the current awards was exceptionally agreed to by the Board. The Centres would therefore be required to submit a short proposal, which would be assessed by an expert panel in January 2020. This approach would not be supported for a second year if the same situation arose the following year.

Relationship Agreement and NC Awards Terms & Conditions (variants)

The context and framework for NERC's relationship with Research Centres had changed due to the replacement of NERC by UKRI as legal entity on the funder side, and by the intended independence of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) on the provider side. The relationship between NERC and the Research Centres required clarity and put on a sustainable footing.

NMB noted the 'holding' agreement with CEH and NOC as there were some last minute legal changes to make, and approved the template relationship agreement document. It was agreed that the agreements for the National Centre for Atmospheric Science (NCAS) and the national Centre for Earth Observation (NCEO) would be reviewed at a later date.

[Announcement of Opportunity: Digital Solutions programme](#)

The Board was informed that this had previously been known as Dodona but had been re-scoped into this programme, which complimented the NC investment and had an institutional focus to funding. A few changes were suggested for the Announcement of Opportunity, which NMB agreed could be signed off by Professor Wingham once the document had been amended.

Transformation

The Board was informed that there were no updates to give.

Matters arising from UKRI meetings

The Board was provided with updates from recent meetings.

Standing items

NMB also noted a couple of standing items including the monthly finance update, the risk register review and the rolling programme of business.

Date of next meeting

The next NERC Management Board meeting will be held on 21 October 2019. The September 2019 meeting had been cancelled.