

Food
Standards
Agency

**THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY'S
RESEARCH WORKING PARTY**

SECOND MEETING

27 October 2000

Conference Room C
Food Standards Agency
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
PO Box 31037
London SW1P 3WG

**AGENDA FOR THE SECOND MEETING OF THE FOOD STANDARDS
AGENCY'S RESEARCH WORKING PARTY**

**TO BE HELD IN CONFERENCE ROOM C OF NOBEL HOUSE, 17 SMITH
SQUARE LONDON SW1P 3JR ON 27 OCTOBER 2000 – 10:00 TO 12:30
HRS**

1. Chairman's introduction and apologies for absence
2. Agreement of the minutes of the first meeting RWP MIN1

Discussion Papers

3. Progress report on the consultation exercise RWP 006
4. Agreement of the format of the Report of the Working Party to the Research Review Group RWP 007
5. Communicating the results of Agency-funded research RWP 008
6. The use of E-science to enhance the Agency's research portfolio RWP 009
7. Possible improvements to the current ROAME research management system RWP 010
8. Benchmarking of Agency-funded research RWP 011
9. Any other business and date of next meeting

**MINUTES OF THE 1ST MEETING OF THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY
RESEARCH WORKING PARTY HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2000**

Present

Members

Dr. Jon Bell	(Chairman)
Dr Malcolm Anderson	(Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council)
Dr. Richard Burt	
Dr Angela Cooper	(Medical Research Council)
Mr Ian Grattidge	
Professor Alan Malcolm	(Institute of Biology)
Mr Robert Marsh	(RHM Technology Limited)
Professor John Mathers	(University of Newcastle)
Professor Bevan Moseley	(Programme Advisor)
Professor Harry Nursten	(University of Reading)
Dr George Paterson	
Dr Roger Skinner	
Dr Andrew Wadge	

Secretariat

Dr Andrew Dunn
Mr Fayaz Aziz

Chairman's introduction and apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Mr Stephen Pugh.
2. Dr Bell opened the meeting and thanked the 7 external members for participating in the Working Party.
3. Dr Bell gave a brief description of the Agency's structure, the type of research it funds and the way it is managed and briefly explained the reasons for setting up the Research Review Group and its Working Party and the way the two bodies will operate. Consideration was being given to

an increase in membership of the Working Party and nominations for a consumer representative on the Working party were invited. A list of Working Party members, along with the agendas, papers and minutes of Working Party meetings will be published on the Agency's website.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 2 The terms of reference, and the programme and procedures for the Research Working Party (RWP 001)

4. Dr Bell asked members to highlight any gaps in the Working Party's terms of reference. Members were generally content with these. The Working Party were asked to flag up any areas that the review does not cover adequately for future action.

Action: Working Party

5. The research strategy for the Agency was discussed and the suggestion made that there should be a distinction between long-term and short-term strategies. Dr Bell confirmed that the secretariat was gathering information on food research and research management as carried out by others and this would be included in a future Working Party paper.

Action: Secretariat

6. Concerns were raised that the split in responsibilities for nutrition research might lead to it being under-funded. Greater interaction with other research funders was recommended to prevent this occurring. It was agreed that the wording of the consultation letter should be amended to take into account the Working Party's concerns regarding the dissemination of the findings of the Agency's research.

Action: Secretariat

7. Members agreed that identifying how and in what areas the Agency could profitably collaborate with other research funders was important and that collaborative projects with organisations outside the UK should be encouraged in order to acquire the best possible research. It was agreed that an assessment of other funders' activities in this regard should be conducted.

Action: Working Party

Agenda item 3: The current research portfolio of the Food Standards Agency, its relevance to the Agency's aims and objectives and presentation of the 1999/2000 Annual Research Report of the JFSSG (RWP 002)

8. Dr Bell reminded the Working Party that the review would cover the Agency's funding of both research and surveys. Members agreed that only funding research programmes that *directly* support the Agency's aims and objectives was too restrictive. Members agreed that there needs to be a clear agreement of objectives and responsibilities between other funders and the Agency and that the Agency should be active in recommending lines of research to other funders. It was suggested that the Agency may need to fund a limited range of underpinning fundamental research to fill gaps in strategic food research. Members agreed that the Agency needs to develop, and follow through, long-term strategic aims.

Action: Working Party

9. It was suggested that although food safety should continue to be the Agency's major area of research funding, social science projects to address consumer issues could provide useful information to Agency policy makers and so could be considered for funding. It was suggested that expert committees such as COT and COMA should be asked for their views on emerging issues.

Action: Secretariat

10. Members debated if an economic analysis of the success or failure of Agency aims was needed. Opinion was split. There was some support for funding studies on methodologies which would help the Agency's economists to assess the impact of its policies. Others took the line that the Agency's research programme should focus mainly on food safety and standards issues. Dr Bell commented that the actions of the Agency must be proportionate and that the Agency needs to be informed as to the consequences of its actions.

Agenda item 4: Research Management in the Food Standards Agency (RWP 003)

18. Members recommended that the appraisal stage of ROAME needs special attention. The idea of generating ideas for research projects and programmes from researchers was supported. Concern was expressed that the monitoring aspect of ROAME is being applied too strictly by the Agency and might be counter-productive. There was support for the suggestion that evaluation should consist of a scientific peer review, and assessments made of value for money and the impact of the research on policy. Members were concerned that in the past the evaluation stage has seldom been fully carried out and rarely acted on. Research findings should be disseminated quickly and used widely.

19. The problem of evaluating programmes containing projects that do not fit well into a programme structure was debated. The systems used by some of the research councils and the food industry to evaluate their research programmes were discussed, but members thought it unlikely that they would be suitable for use by the Agency.

20. Members generally agreed that a flexible approach to procurement is needed. The majority of the Agency's research should continue to be funded through an open competition process. However, there is some justification for limited Agency funding of a few centres of excellence. The Working Party would be interested to hear from research councils what centres of excellence they supported, how and at what level.

Action: BBSRC and MRC

21. It was agreed that the current Agency practice of issuing four Research Requirements Documents (RRDs) a year, instead of just one, is advantageous to the contractor. It would also assist contractors if the Agency could publicise on its website which areas of research are going to be covered in each RRD issue.

Action: Secretariat

22. It was agreed to investigate if a logging system could be used to register "hits" on the Agency's website as a means of identifying potential contractors and to also look into the possibility of establishing links between the Agency's website and those of the research councils.

Action: Secretariat

23. It was suggested that in submitting proposals for research contracts, contractors should summarise what the most and least optimistic outcomes of their research might be.

Agenda item 5: Allocation of funds for research in the Food Standards Agency – the way forward? (RRG 004)

24. Members' opinions on which prioritisation system to use to help the Agency in dividing up its research budget were split. One argument was that as measuring benefit is difficult and as the Agency has a broad remit and must spend some money in all areas, a cross between a weight of evidence approach and a ranking system should be used.

25. Others maintained that the Agency must attempt some form of economic analysis in order to justify its expenditure and that the Agency needs to identify who its research benefits and how. It was suggested that a cost benefit analysis could be used together with an assessment of the chances of success of a research proposal to decide if it would be funded. The secretariat is to take members' views forward in the prioritisation exercise.

Action: Secretariat

26. Members discussed the consultation exercise on priority setting and research management and the issues that need to be included in the consultation letter. It was agreed that a short summary of the Agency's research portfolio would be annexed to the letter. In addition, the last annual research report of the JFSSG would be placed on the Agency's website.

Action: Secretariat

27. It was agreed that the consultation letter will go out to contractors and other stakeholders such as consumer organisations as well as being published on the Agency's website. The secretariat is to summarise responses in time for the third meeting of the Working Party.

Action: Secretariat

28. There followed a brief discussion on the questions that should be included in the questionnaire and amendments were suggested for the secretariat to take into account in the consultation letter.

Action: Secretariat

29. Several members commented on the need for a consumer-friendly Agency website where information on research can be easily accessed. The number of visitors to the website should be monitored to ensure that the information on it is getting out to consumers etc.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 6: The Food Standards Agency's liaison on food research with other funders (RWP 005)

30. Members agreed with the need to establish links and collaborate with other research funders. However, the Agency will need to identify its priorities for research before it can enter into collaborative research projects and some research areas won't be suitable for collaboration. It was suggested that the Working Party should develop guidance on protocols for collaboration.

Action: Working Party

31. Members supported the need to liaise widely including with non-research funders such as consumer groups and trade associations and suggested organisations for the secretariat to contact.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 7: Any other business and date of next meeting

32. The dates for the second and third meetings of the Working Party were confirmed as the 27 October 2000 and 14 December 2000 respectively. Both meetings will run from 10:00 hrs to 12:30 hrs.

**ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE 1ST MEETING OF THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY RESEARCH WORKING PARTY
HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2000**

Paragraph	Description of action point	Action by	Progress made
4	To flag up any areas that the review does not cover adequately for future action.	Working Party	On-going. Last action is for the final report
5	To gather information on food research and research management as carried out by other agencies for a Working Party paper.	Secretariat	In progress
6	Amend the wording of the consultation letter to take into account the Working Party's concerns regarding the dissemination of the results of the Agency's research.	Secretariat	Completed
7	Conduct an assessment of other agencies' research activities.	Working Party	Input awaited.
8	Develop long-term strategic aims for the Agency..	Working Party	Action for 4 th meeting.
9	Ask expert committees such as COT and COMA for their views on emerging issues.	Secretariat	None to date.
21	To report on the centres of excellence supported by BBSRC and MRC, how they are supported and at what level.	BBSRC & MRC	Input awaited.

22	To publicise on the Agency's website which areas of research are going to be covered in each RRD issue.	Secretariat	Noted for future action.
23	to investigate if a logging system could be used to register "hits" on the Agency's website as a means of identifying potential contractors and also the possibility of establishing links between the Agency's website and those of the research councils.	Secretariat	None to date.
26	To take member's views forward in the prioritisation exercise..	Secretariat	Action for 3rd meeting
27	To place the last annual research report of the JFSSG on the Agency's website.	Secretariat	Completed.
28	To summarise contractor and stakeholder responses to the consultation letter in time for the third meeting of the Working Party.	Secretariat	In progress (RWP 006)
29	Secretariat to amend the consultation letter questionnaire taking into account members' suggestion.	Secretariat	Completed.
30	The number of visitors to the Agency's website should be monitored to ensure that the information on it is getting out to consumers etc.	Secretariat	None to date.
31	To develop guidance on protocols for collaboration with other food research funders.	Working Party	For discussion at 4 th meeting?
32	To investigate possible liaisons with non-research funders.	Secretariat	Contact list being compiled.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

Executive Summary

This paper summarises the action that has been taken to date to progress the consultation exercise on priorities for Agency research, and the management and dissemination of Agency-funded research. The Working Party is asked for its **views** on:

- what additional actions might usefully be taken to progress the consultation; and
- whether there are organisations that are not on the consultation list (Annex B) which should be asked to take part in the exercise.

Contact points:

Steve Pugh, (Secretary)

tel: 020 7972 5079 (GTN 396 25079)

Andrew Dunn, RCU

tel: 020 7972 6573 (GTN 396 26573)

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

Issue

1. This paper summarises the action that has been taken to date to progress the consultation exercise on priorities for Agency research, and the management and dissemination of Agency-funded research. The Working Party is asked for its **views** on:
 - what additional actions might usefully be taken to progress the consultation; and
 - whether there are organisations that are not on the consultation list (Annex B) which should be asked to take part in the exercise.

Background

Progress to date

2. At its 1st meeting on 26 September 2000, the Working Party discussed the proposed consultation exercise on priorities for Agency research, and the management and dissemination of Agency-funded research (RWP 004).
3. A consultation letter (Annex A of this paper) has now been sent out to a total of 303 organisations consisting of 167 current contractors, 31 consumer organisations and 105 other stakeholders such as other government departments, trade associations and research councils. The list of consultees to date is attached as Annex B.
4. Non-contractors were selected for the consultation exercise from over 1,000 nominations made by the Agency's policy divisions and regional offices. For organisational purposes and to minimise delay, two mail-shots were carried out between 9 October and 17 October 2000. The first mail-shot was to contractors and the second to consumer organisations and other stakeholders. A consultation list was attached to each mail-shot.
5. In addition to the mail-shots, the consultation letter inviting comments was placed on the Agency's website on 19 October 2000. It is hoped that this will encourage responses from organisations or individuals not on the list but who would

nevertheless like to take part in the exercise. Consultees have been requested to respond to the consultation letter by 24 November 2000.

6. The consultation letter (Annex A) invites responses to 10 questions. It also refers consultees to the 1999/2000 annual research and surveillance reports which are on the Agency's website and are also available from the secretariat. These reports provide useful background reading and help put the review in context. An annex summarising the historical Government spend, according to themes, on research programmes and surveys now funded by the Food Standards Agency was included with the consultation letter. The table in the annex was compiled from the data in the two annual reports mentioned above and is useful in that it gives a quick picture of the overall science spend in the different areas.

Research Working Party action required

7. The Working Party is asked for its **views** on:
 - what additional actions might usefully be taken to progress the consultation; and
 - whether there are organisations that are not on the consultation list (Annex B) which should be asked to take part in the exercise.

9 October 2000

Reference: RCU 03/54C

FOOD RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

The Food Standards Agency is currently reviewing its research portfolio and its future strategy for its research and surveys programmes. A Research Review Group, chaired by Sir John Arbuthnott, is undertaking this task, assisted by a Research Working Party working under its direction. The Working Party is made up of Agency executives and external experts and will carry out most of the detailed work of the review. Papers submitted to the Research Review Group and its Working Party are on the Agency's website at www.foodstandards.gov.uk. The membership of both the Review Group and the Working Party may also be found on the website.

The Research Working Party recognises that many people and organisations have an interest in the programmes of research and surveys funded by the Agency and its future strategy for this work. It therefore wishes to seek views on these issues.

The Agency has responsibility for developing and implementing policy on issues affecting the safety, composition, labelling and nutritional value of food. To ensure that its policies are based on the best available science, it will need wide-ranging programmes of research and surveys to generate the information and data needed. The total annual cost of the current programmes plus associated scientific work is approximately £27 million. Annual reports for 1999 covering respectively the research and surveillance programmes are on our website or, alternatively, are available from the above address.

The Working Party would like your views on the way the Food Standards Agency should manage all aspects of its research projects and surveys. Comments on the following issues would be particularly welcome:

- a. What areas of research and surveys do you think that the Agency should fund as priorities and why? Are there any obvious gaps in our current research and surveys portfolio?
- b. Is the Agency's current system of commissioning all its research and surveys through open competition (Research Requirements Document) or a tendering process appropriate?
- c. Are there better ways of making researchers aware of our needs for research?
- d. Should the Agency make longer-term commitments to specific contractors to create centres of excellence? If so, what percentage of this annual budget do you think that it should commit to these?
- e. How can the Agency improve the monitoring and management of its research projects and programmes? If you have any experience of managing research programmes we would be especially pleased to hear from you.
- f. How might the FSA best co-ordinate its research efforts with other funders of food research?
- g. How can the Agency communicate the results of its research so that it is both useful and understandable to consumers and other interested parties?
- h. How should the Agency determine whether it is obtaining value for money for its research programmes, recognising that the impact of these programmes may vary from immediate to long-term?
- i. How can the Agency best use independent experts to help inform and manage its research programme?
- j. What improvements would contractors and others with an interest in the management of the Agency's research portfolio wish to see made ?

If you would like to comment on these, or other, issues please write to, send an E-mail to or telephone the secretariat at the following contact addresses and 'phone number:

Mr Fayaz Aziz
Food Standards Agency
Room 593D,
80 London Road
Skipton House
P O Box 30077
London SE1 6XZ

E-mail: fayaz.aziz@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7972 5099 Fax: 020 7972 6555

Early responses would be greatly appreciated, but in any case these should arrive no later than 24 November 2000. In line with the Agency's policy of openness all replies will be published on our website.

More information on the Agency's research programme can be found on our website at www.foodstandards.gov.uk. In particular, you are advised to refer to the Joint Food Safety and Standards Group Food Research Programmes Annual Report 1999 – 2000. This Report is a useful summary of the research portfolio inherited by the Agency. Alternatively, for more information write to the secretariat.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stephen Pugh
Secretary to the Research Working Party
Research Co-ordination Unit

[ANNEX TO CONSULTATION LETTER]

HISTORICAL GOVERNMENT SPEND ON RESEARCH PROGRAMMES AND SURVEYS NOW FUNDED BY THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY

Programme area	Cost in 99/00 (£ million)
Genetically modified and novel foods (including novel food processing)	1.06
Chemical contaminants (including food chemical emergencies and radiological safety of food)	4.25
Food additives and food contact materials	1.35
Risk management and risk communication	0.22
Chemical toxicity including food intolerance	3.37
Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies	2.60
Microbiological food safety (including meat hygiene)	3.49
Nutrition	5.43
Food quality and authenticity	1.86
Animal feedingstuffs	0.09
Improved methods of analysis and data quality	0.33
TOTAL	24.05

N.B. The above figures are the historical spend for research programmes and surveys previously funded by MAFF and DH but now funded by the Food Standards Agency. The figures do not include spend on associated scientific studies and advice.

MAILING LIST FOR CONSULTATION ON FOOD RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

Contractors

1. ABB CLIMATE SYSTEMS
2. ADAS CONSULTING LTD
3. AEA TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT
4. AGENCY OF SCOTTISH RURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, FRS MARINE LABORATORY
5. ASHWELL ASSOCIATES
6. ASTON UNIVERSITY, PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
7. BEATSON INSTITUTE FOR CANCER RESEARCH
8. BIBRA TOXICOLOGY INTERNATIONAL
9. BIRBECK COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON), DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
10. BRITISH MARKET RESEARCH BUREAU LTD
11. BRITISH NUTRITION FOUNDATION
12. CAMPDEN & CHORLEYWOOD FOOD RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
13. CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY, MOLECULAR BIOLOGY UNIT
14. CENTRAL SCIENCE LABORATORY
15. CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE
16. CENTRE FOR APPLIED MICROBIOLOGICAL RESEARCH
17. CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCE (CEFAS)
18. CHIMAERON LTD
19. DEFENCE EVALUATION & RESEARCH AGENCY (DERA)
20. DEMONTFORT UNIVERSITY
21. DEPT OF AGRICULTURE, AQUATIC SCIENCES RESEARCH DIVISION.
22. DUNN CLINICAL NUTRITION CENTRE
23. ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE DIVISION
24. EUROFINS SCIENTIFIC

25. GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, FOOD RESEARCH LABORATORIES
26. GLASS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES LTD
27. GRAMPIAN HEALTH BOARD
28. GUY'S KING'S & ST. THOMAS' LONDON, DIVISION OF BIOCHEMISTRY
29. HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
30. HORTICULTURE RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL, HORTICULTURE RESEARCH UNIT
31. HVR CONSULTING SERVICES LTD
32. ICON, I C CONSULTANTS
33. IIS, A DIVISION OF MINTEL INTERNATIONAL GROUP
34. IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH FUND, DEPARTMENT OF MATHS, STATS & EPIDEMIOLOGY
35. IMPERIAL COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)
36. IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICINE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON), T.H. HUXLEY SCHOOL
37. IMPERIAL COLLEGE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON), DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND PUBLIC HEALTH
38. IMPERIAL COLLEGE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)
39. INSTITUTE OF BIOCHEMISTRY
40. INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)
41. INSTITUTE OF FOOD RESEARCH
42. INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
43. INTERNATIONAL ANTIOXIDANT RESEARCH CENTRE, SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE
44. JOHN INNES CENTRE
45. KAS MYCOTOXINS
46. KINGS COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON), SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
47. KINGS COLLEGE LONDON (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON), SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES, DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS
48. LABORATORY OF THE GOVERNMENT CHEMIST
49. LABORATORY OF THE PUBLIC ANALYST

50. LASER INSTALLATIONS LTD
51. LEATHERHEAD FOOD RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
52. LONDON SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND TROPICAL MEDICINE, IID DATA ARCHIVING
53. LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE
54. LUTHER PENDRAGON
55. MANCHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL
56. MANCHESTER ROYAL INFIRMARY, DEPT OF MEDICINE
57. MARINE LABORATORY - ABERDEEN
58. MARKET & OPINION RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL
59. MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, HUMAN NUTRITION RESEARCH UNIT
60. MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, TOXICOLOGY UNIT
61. MICROCHEM BIOSCIENCE LTD
62. MORRISTON HOSPITAL NHS TRUST, CARDIAC CENTRE
63. MOUCHEL CONSULTING LTD, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY
64. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL BOTANY
65. NATIONAL RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION BOARD
66. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL
67. NORTH EAST WALES INSTITUTE
68. OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS
69. OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY
70. PIRA INTERNATIONAL
71. PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICES
72. PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICE, FOOD MICROBIOLOGY RESEARCH UNIT
73. Q P SERVICES
74. QUANTISCI LTD
75. RAPRA TECHNOLOGY LIMITED
76. RCD - RADIO CARBON DATING
77. READING SCIENTIFIC SERVICES LIMITED
78. RESEARCH SERVICES LTD
79. RHM TECHNOLOGY
80. ROWETT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

81. ROWETT RESEARCH INSTITUTE, ANTIOXIDANTS & DNA DAMAGE GROUP
82. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACOLOGY
83. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
84. ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY
85. ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY, ANALYTICAL METHODS COMMITTEE

86. ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE
87. SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SPORTS SCIENCE, FOOD MICROBIOLOGY UNIT
88. SCOTTISH AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE (SAC)
89. SCOTTISH PARASITE DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY, DEPARTMENT OF BACTERIOLOGY
90. SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES RESEARCH & REACTOR CENTRE
91. SILSOE RESEARCH INSTITUTE
92. ST THOMAS' HOSPITAL, CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH
93. ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON), WILLIAM HARVEY RESEARCH UNIT
94. THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST, DEPT OF FOOD SCIENCE (MICROBIOLOGY)
95. THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST, VETERINARY SCIENCES DIVISION
96. THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST, INST OF CLINICAL SCIENCES, DEPT OF SURGERY
97. TRADA TECHNOLOGY LTD
98. TRENT UNIVERSITY NOTTINGHAM, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, DIVISION OF NUTRITIONAL BIOCHEMISTRY
99. UMDS-FREE RADICAL RESEARCH, DIVISION OF BIOCHEMISTRY
100. UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CHESTER
101. UNIVERSITY COLLEGE WALES
102. UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OF SOUTH MANCHESTER

103. UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN, DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE AND THERAPEUTICS
104. UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN, APPLIED FOOD MICROBIOLOGY GROUP, DEPT OF MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY
105. UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL, DIVISION OF FOOD ANIMAL SCIENCES, DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL VETERINARY SCIENCE
106. UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL, SCHOOL OF VETERINARY SCIENCE, DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL VETERINARY SCIENCE
107. UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE, LANCASHIRE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
108. UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE, DEPARTMENT OF MOLECULAR & CELLULAR BIOLOGY
109. UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE, DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE
110. UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE, CENTRE FOR APPLIED NUTRITION RESEARCH
111. UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE, BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE
112. UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA, SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
113. UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, DEPT PUBLIC HEALTH
114. UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, INSTITUTE OF CELL AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
115. UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
116. UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
117. UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, MEDIA UNIT
118. UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW , INSTITUTE OF BIOMEDICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES, DIVISION OF BIOCHEMISTRY & MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
119. UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH
120. UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER , ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
121. UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, PROCTOR DEPARTMENT OF FOOD SCIENCE
122. UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, NUFFIELD INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
123. UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, CENTRE FOR ANIMAL SCIENCES, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGY

124. UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, OXIDATIVE STRESS GROUP, DIVISION OF CHEMICAL PATHOLOGY
125. UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, MRC CENTRE FOR MECHANISMS OF HUMAN TOXICITY
126. UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, DEPT CHEMICAL PATHOLOGY
127. UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL, DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE
128. UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL , SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
129. UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER, SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCE
130. UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE, THE DENTAL SCHOOL, HUMAN NUTRITION CENTRE
131. UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE, FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, DEPT. OF BIOLOGICAL & NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES
132. UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE , MEDICAL SCHOOL,
133. UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, THE MEDICAL SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY
134. UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, WELLCOME RESEARCH LABORATORIES, HUMAN NUTRITION RESEARCH CENTRE
135. UNIVERSITY OF NORTH LONDON, FACULTY OF SCIENCE COMPUTING AND ENGINEERING, SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SPORTS SCIENCE
136. UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, FOOD SCIENCES DIVISION
137. UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, DIVISION OF FOOD SCIENCES
138. UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION
139. UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, LIFE SCIENCES, FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
140. UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH
141. UNIVERSITY OF READING, DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE & ECONOMICS
142. UNIVERSITY OF READING, DEPARTMENT OF SOIL SCIENCE
143. UNIVERSITY OF READING, THE HUGH SINCLAIR UNIT FOR HUMAN NUTRITION, DEPT. OF FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
144. UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD, CENTRE FOR HUMAN NUTRITION

145. UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD , MOLECULAR BIOLOGY & BIOTECHNOLOGY
146. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON, VIRUS GROUP
147. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON , BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES BUILDING
148. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON, FACULTY OF MEDICINE HEALTH AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, INSTITUTE OF HUMAN NUTRITION
149. UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS, SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY
150. UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE , CENTRE FOR SOCIAL MARKETING
151. UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
152. UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, SCHOOL OF HUMAN SCIENCES
153. UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
154. UNIVERSITY OF SWANSEA, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
155. UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER, DEPT. OF BIOLOGICAL AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
156. UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER, SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES, CENTRE FOR RESEARCH INTO DIET & HEALTH
157. UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE CARDIFF, FACULTY OF BUSINESS LEISURE AND FOOD
158. UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
159. UNIVERSITY OF WEST ENGLAND
160. UNIVERSITY OF YORK, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, UNIT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CARCINOGENESIS
161. VETERINARY LABORATORIES AGENCY
162. W S ATKINS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
163. WESTLAKES RESEARCH (TRADING) LTD
164. WESTMINSTER UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL & HEALTH SCIENCES
165. WRC-NSF LTD
166. WYE COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON), DEPT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE
167. ZENECA CENTRAL TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY (CTL)

Non-contractors

168. ACTION AGAINST ALLERGY (BOURNEMOUTH)
169. ACTION AGAINST ALLERGY (SCOTLAND)
170. ACTION WITH COMMUNITIES IN RURAL ENGLAND (ACRE)
171. AGE CONCERN
172. ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT RETAILERS
173. ALLIED BREWERY TRADERS ASSOCIATION
174. ANAPHYLAXIS CAMPAIGN
175. ANGLO-EUROPEAN LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION
176. ANGLO-SCOTTISH FISH PRODUCERS ORGANISATION
177. ARENA
178. ASSOCIATION CULINAIRE FRANCAISE
179. ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE & ENGINEERING (AwiSE)
180. ASSOCIATION OF MEAT SUPPLIERS TO CATERERS
181. ASSOCIATION OF BAKERY INGREDIENT MANUFACTURERS
182. ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ABATTOIR OPERATORS
183. ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ABATTOIR OWNERS LTD
184. ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
185. ASSOCIATION OF CATERING EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS & IMPORTERS
186. ASSOCIATION OF CHEESE PROCESSORS
187. ASSOCIATION OF CONVENIENCE STORES
188. ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF NORTHERN IRELAND
189. ASSOCIATION OF SEA FISHERIES COMMITTEES
190. BABRAHAM INSTITUTE
191. BAKERY ALLIED TRADER'S ASSOCIATION
192. BIOTECHNOLOGY & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL (BBSRC)
193. BEECHWOOD LABORATORIES
194. BREWERS AND LICENSED RETAILERS ASSOCIATION
195. BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF NUTRITIONAL THERAPISTS
196. BRITISH CONSUMERS GASES ASSOCIATION (BCGA)
197. BRITISH CONFECTIONERS ASSOCIATION
198. BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION (BDA)
199. BRITISH EGG INDUSTRY COUNCIL

200. BRITISH FROZEN FOOD FEDERATION
201. BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION
202. BRITISH HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION
203. BRITISH HOTELS RESTAURANTS & CATERERS ASSOCIATION
204. BRITISH MEAT FEDERATION
205. BRITISH MEAT MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
206. BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM
207. BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION (BSI)
208. CCSB
209. CENTA
210. CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP (CPAG)
211. CICL
212. COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING(CIWF)
213. CO-OPERATIVE UNION
214. CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LTD
215. CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY (CBI)
216. CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION
217. CONSUMERS IN EUROPE GROUP
218. COOKERY AND FOOD ASSOCIATION
219. COUNTRY LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION
220. COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE
221. DAIRY INDUSTRY FEDERATION
222. DAIRYMEN'S ASSOCIATION
223. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
224. ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (ESRC)
225. EUROPEAN COMMISSSION (DG RESEARCH)
226. EUROPEAN COMMISSSION (DG SANCO)
227. FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES
228. FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESS
229. FEDERATION OF WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS
230. THE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES IN NORTHERN IRELAND
231. FLOUR ADVISORY BUREAU
232. FOOD & DRINK FEDERATION
233. FOOD ADDITIVES INDUSTRY ASSOC LTD

234. FOOD COMMISSION
235. FOOD FROM BRITAIN
236. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (UK)
237. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH (SCOTLAND)
238. GENERAL CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR NI
239. GREENPEACE UK
240. HALAL FOOD AUTHORITY
241. HEALTH FOOD MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
242. HEALTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
243. HOSPITAL CATERERS ASSOCIATION
244. INCORPORATED NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH AND IRISH MILLERS
245. INDEPENDENT FOOD RETAILERS CONFEDERATION
246. INSTITUTE OF ANIMAL HEALTH
247. INSTITUTE OF ARABLE CROPS RESEARCH
248. INSTITUTE OF BREWING
249. INSTITUTE OF FOOD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
250. INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT CATERING ASSOCIATION
251. INTERNATIONAL
252. IN-FLIGHT CATERERS ASSOCIATION
253. INTERNATIONAL LIFE SCIENCES INSTITUTE (ILSI)
254. JOHN INNES CENTRE
255. JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL FOR MEAT TRADES IN UK
256. JOINT INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL FOR THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE INDUSTRY
257. LICENSED ANIMAL SALVAGE & SLAUGHTER ASSOCIATION
258. LOCAL AUTHORITIES CO-ORDINATING BODY ON FOOD & TRADING STANDARDS (LACOTS)
259. MEAT AND LIVESTOCK COMMISSION
260. MEAT INDUSTRY LIAISON GROUP
261. MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
262. MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
263. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES & FOOD (MAFF)
264. MONITOR LABORATORIES
265. NABMA

266. NAMBA
267. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH AND IRISH MILLERS
268. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SHOPKEEPERS
269. NATIONAL CATERING FEDERATION
270. NATIONAL CONSUMER COUNCIL
271. NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN
272. NATIONAL FARMERS UNION
273. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CONSUMER GROUPS
274. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRODUCE MERCHANTS LTD
275. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES
276. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES - WALES
277. NATIONAL SUMMER FRUITS ASSOCIATION
278. NATIONAL UNION OF RETAIL CONFECTIONERS
279. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL
280. NUTRITION SOCIETY
281. ORGANIC FARMERS AND GROWERS
282. PESTICIDES SAFETY DIRECTORATE
283. PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND
284. RESEARCH SERVICES LTD
285. RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION GB
286. RETAIL DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION INC
287. ROSLIN INSTITUTE
288. ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF ENGLAND
289. SCOTTISH CONSUMER COUNCIL
290. SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES POLICY RESEARCH & ADVICE NETWORK
(SUPRA)
291. SCOTTISH WOMEN'S RURAL INSTITUTE
292. SOCIETY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY
293. SOIL ASSOCIATION
294. SRA
295. SUSTAIN - THE ALLIANCE FOR BETTER FOOD AND FARMING
296. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT (SAFE)
ALLIANCE
297. ULSTER BRANCH BDA

- 298. WELSH CONSUMER COUNCIL
- 299. WELSH FOOD ALLIANCE
- 300. WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION
- 301. VEGA RESEARCH
- 302. VEGAN SOCIETY
- 303. VEGETARIAN SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

**AGREEMENT OF THE FORMAT OF THE REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY
TO THE RESEARCH REVIEW GROUP**

Executive Summary

This paper presents proposals for the format of the final report of the Working Party to the Research Review Group. The Working Party is asked to **consider** these and **comment** on the list of topics to be covered as set out in the Annex.

Contact points:

Steve Pugh, (Secretary)

tel: 020 7972 5079 (GTN 396 25079)

Andrew Dunn, RCU

tel: 020 7972 6573 (GTN 396 26573)

**AGREEMENT OF THE FORMAT OF THE REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY
TO THE RESEARCH REVIEW GROUP**

Issue

1. This paper presents proposals for the format of the final report of the Working Party to the Research Review Group. The Working Party is asked to **consider** these and **comment** on the list of topics to be covered as set out in the Annex.

Background

2. Under its 4th term of reference (RWP 001, Annex B), the Working Party is to provide a mid-term report to the Review Group for its January 2001 meeting and a full draft report for the Review Group to present to the Board in April 2001. This will be considered by the Review Group at its meeting in late March 2001. It is now timely to discuss the format of the final full report, as this will largely determine the structure of the mid-term report.
3. There are two options for the format of the final report:
 - a. To base it on the 7 terms of reference of the Research Review Group (RWP 001, Annex A); or
 - b. To base it on the principal tasks carried out under the terms of reference.
4. Option a. has the advantage that it is easy to see exactly what has been done under each term of reference. The disadvantage is that some of the tasks being carried out in the review relate to several terms of reference. In particular, the high profile consultation exercise, which needs to feature prominently, relates to all of them. This would make the report unduly complex so that it would be difficult to see what had been achieved under each task.
5. Option b. has the advantage that the tasks form discrete pieces of work that can be reported on and referred to easily. The disadvantage is that it is harder to see just what has been achieved under each term of reference. A solution to this would be to link each task to the term or terms of reference under which it was carried out. The links could then be summarised in an annexed table cross-referencing tasks and terms of reference.

6. If the Working Party decides to adopt option a., then the format of the paper has already been essentially decided by the terms of reference themselves, i.e.

- Foreword by Chairman
- Introduction
- 7 headings under the terms of reference
- Summary of recommendations and conclusions
- Annexes

7. If, however, the Working Party decides to adopt option b, then some thought needs to be given to the structure of the final report. The secretariat is proposing the format in the Annex to this paper as a basis for discussion.

Research Working Party action required

8. The Working Party is asked to **decide** on which of the two formats proposed should be adopted.

9. If option b. is favoured, the Working Party is asked to **comment** on the list of issues to be covered as set out in the Annex.

**PROPOSED FORMAT FOR THE FINAL REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY
TO THE RESEARCH REVIEW GROUP**

1. Foreword by Chairman
2. Introduction
 - Inherited research portfolio
 - Aims of the Food standards Agency
3. The consultation exercise
4. Review of inherited research portfolio
 - value for money
 - how well does it fit in with Agency objectives?
5. Prioritisation of research (by themes)
 - Method(s) used for prioritisation
 - Outcome of the prioritisation exercise
6. Research strategy
 - Developing a research strategy that supports the overall strategy, aims and objectives of the Agency
7. Research procurement
 - Research aims and objectives
 - The ROAME A as a bidding document
 - Commissioning new research
8. Research management
 - Improvements to the ROAME system
 - Alternatives to ROAME

9. Evaluation of programmes and projects

10. Potential new initiatives

- E-science
- Intellectual property rights
- Joint funding

11. Review work still to be carried out

12. Summary of recommendations and conclusions

13. Annexes

- Table cross-referencing tasks to terms of reference

COMMUNICATING THE RESULTS OF AGENCY-FUNDED RESEARCH

Executive Summary

This paper outlines the current system used for communicating the results of Agency-funded research and suggests possible improvements to the presentation, dissemination and use of research outputs.

The Working Party is invited to give its **views** on improvements to communicating the Agency's research results.

Contact points:

Steve Pugh, (Secretary)

tel: 020 7972 5079 (GTN 396 25079)

Andrew Dunn, RCU

tel: 020 7972 6573 (GTN 396 26573)

COMMUNICATING THE RESULTS OF AGENCY-FUNDED RESEARCH

Issue

1. This paper outlines the current system used for communicating the results of Agency-funded research and suggests possible improvements to the presentation, dissemination and use of research outputs.

Background

2. The Food Standards Agency plays a key role in providing information and advice on all aspects of food relating to public health. The Agency needs to actively communicate this information in ways that improve public confidence in our stewardship of food safety and standards. This means that the information must be accurate, timely and scientifically sound. The outputs of Agency-funded research must be presented in a form that is understood by the target audience (not only researchers but consumers) and easily accessible to them. However, the focus of effort has so far been on procuring and managing research and less has been done to ensure that the results of research are made widely available and effectively communicated. More emphasis therefore needs to be placed on communicating the outputs of the Agency's research and robust procedures need to be developed to ensure this happens effectively.

Current procedures for presenting and disseminating research results

3. The findings of the Agency's research are important not only to the policy divisions and to the scientific community but also to the general public, industry and others. The policy divisions are the principal customers of the research commissioned by the Agency and need to receive the findings of the research projects in useable form.
4. The most comprehensive document detailing an individual research project's work and findings is its final report. Final reports will be lodged in the Food Standards Agency library and copies are available to the general public on request. These reports are generally lengthy documents, usually only comprehensible to scientific/technical experts. Most of these final reports have not been through an external peer review. The reports are normally only received in hard copy and so are not placed on the website. The format of final

reports and the system of appraising them is currently under discussion, with a view to more effectively disseminating the outputs of the Agency's research.

5. The Agency publishes summaries of research findings in its Food Safety Information Bulletin; separate annual reports for the food research programmes and for food surveys; and Food Surveillance Information Sheets. Previously a "Food Research News" newsletter was also published. All of these documents are made available through the Agency's website.
6. The Agency also disseminates its research findings through programme workshops and seminars. Currently, these workshops, which take place annually in each area, are used mainly to improve communications between contractors, generate new ideas for research and as an ongoing peer review of projects. Key stakeholders are sometimes invited to attend these workshops. Contractors are encouraged to publish the findings of their research in the peer-reviewed scientific literature wherever possible and to give the results wide publicity.

How should the results of research be disseminated?

7. More and more people are using the internet to access information. Currently, the research pages on the website are directed at the informed reader and a separate more consumer-friendly section suitable for the lay reader and the general public could be developed.
8. Not everyone has access to or knows how to use the internet and so publications in the form of reports, leaflets, newsletters or educational videos etc are still needed. This is especially important if the Agency is targeting special interest groups with communication difficulties.

Key issues for the Working Party to discuss

- Who are the main target audiences for communicating research results? The Working Party will need to bear in mind that the audience may differ depending on the subject area.
- What are the best methods of communication for reaching our target audiences?
- Who should be the target audiences for the research pages of the Agency's website?
- How much detail should the research website contain?
- Should final reports be available on the website?

- Are the current procedures used by the Agency sufficient for disseminating its research results?
- In addition to the final project reports that are publicly available, should a simplified one page brief for each research project be produced? This could be made available on the website.
- Should the Annual Reports for food research and food surveys continue in their current form or is a new format required? Perhaps a smaller, glossy document would be more useful (both to stakeholders and to the Agency).
- Should the Agency be producing a Food Research Bulletin aimed at the research community, or a newsletter directed more at the consumer, or both?
- Can the Agency workshops and seminars be improved to optimise the dissemination of research results?
- Are there any other routes by which the Agency should be communicating its research findings?

Research Working Party action required

9. The Working Party is invited to give its **views** on improvements to communicating the Agency's research results.

THE USE OF E-SCIENCE TO ENHANCE THE AGENCY'S RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Executive Summary

This paper explains how the Food Standards Agency might benefit from using modern technologies to develop further its science. The Working Party is recommended to **agree** that the Agency should develop an e-science network as an aide to managing its research portfolio.

Contact points:

Steve Pugh, (Secretary)

tel: 020 7972 5079 (GTN 396 25079)

Andrew Dunn, RCU

tel: 020 7972 6573 (GTN 396 26573)

THE USE OF E-SCIENCE TO ENHANCE THE AGENCY'S RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Issue

8. This paper explains how the Food Standards Agency might benefit from using modern technologies to develop further its science.

Background

9. E-science is the use of the electronic media, the internet, JANET, Super JANET, etc to facilitate the development of science. The internet and email is becoming ever more pervasive and for scientists the use of internet technologies can have some real advantages. For example, by speeding up the communications process it allows more time for consideration of difficult problems. Funding organisations are increasingly asking for more collaborative work and for improvements in information exchange between researchers. There is an increasing requirement to peer review research papers and to assess independently the quality of research projects. The internet facilitates an exchange of views on research papers and at the same time gives researchers more flexibility in their working practices. Increased access to the databases held by other organisations may also facilitate the exchange of information. For the Agency, the internet reduces its reliance on paper and face to face meetings and reduces the administrative burden.
10. The main benefit of e-science to the Agency is that it will allow it to involve a greater range of external experts in developing its research strategy and appraising research proposals. Developing an e-science capability will also help the Agency fulfil its Modernising Government objectives.

Areas where e-science could be implemented in the Food Standards Agency

11. There are many documents on which the Agency needs to elicit an expert view. These include the Agency's research strategy, individual research requirements, project proposals, interim reports, final reports and proposed publications. At present, views on these documents are sought at face-to-face meetings thus limiting the range of experts who can be consulted. Many of these views could however be sought over the internet allowing experts in other parts of the world to be consulted. They could also consider the comments of other researchers and

exchange views. This should help improve the quality of research and expert advice for the Agency.

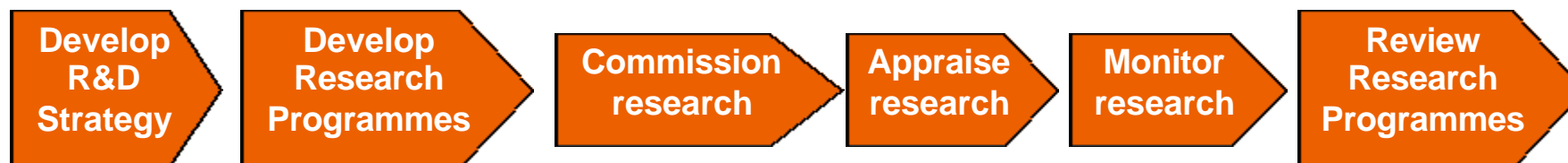
12. The initial e-science initiative would use technology similar to an internet bulletin board with an appraiser e-mailing their comments to an internet site. The other appraisers (and only these) could read these comments. An e-mail dialogue could develop and a consensus view be reached on the quality of research. If both policy and scientific appraisers are involved in the process it should lead to a better understanding of the other's perspective. The same experts could be used to develop the criteria upon which a proposal should be judged and to carry out the final appraisal. This should lead to better defined requirements, better evaluation and better research.

13. The technologies involved in e-science work quickly and are largely already in place. If action is taken immediately, it may be possible to have an e-science consultation framework in use by January 2001.

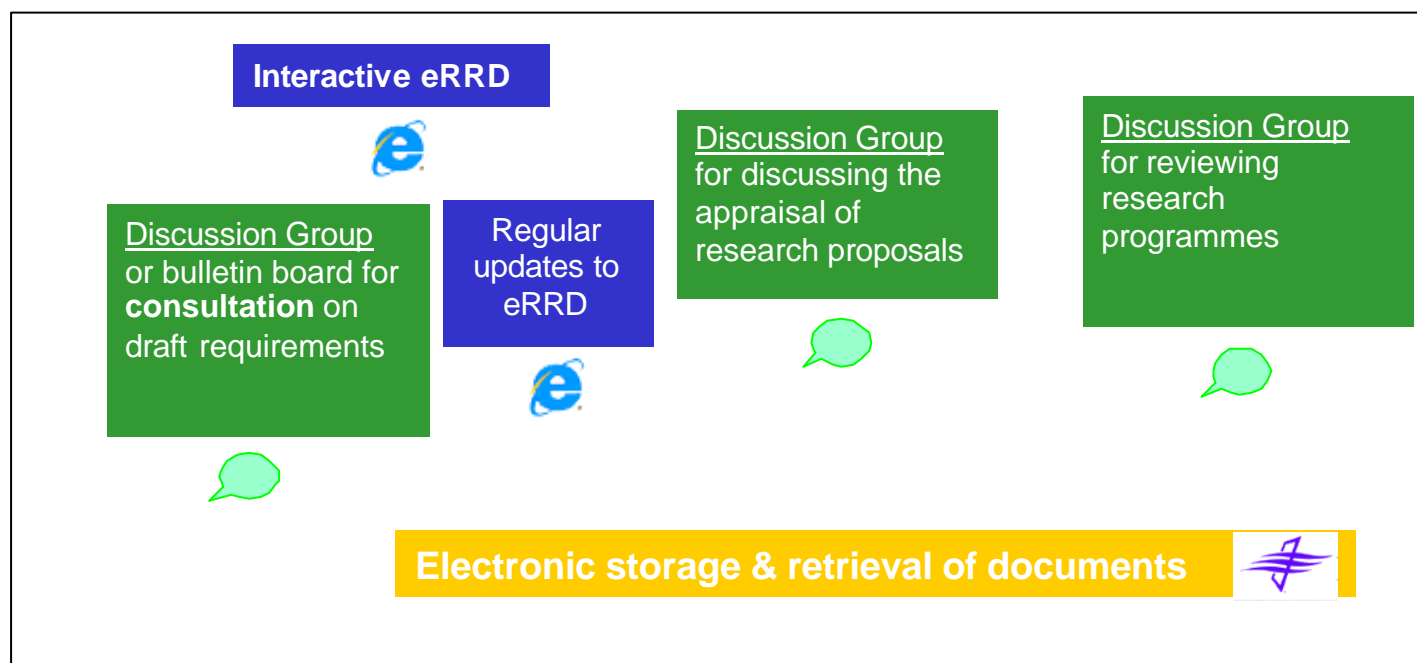
Research Working Party action required




14. The Working Party is recommended to **agree** that the development of an e-science network (Annex) should be explored by the secretariat.

Outline for the Development of an e-science network for the Food Standards Agency



E-enabling science & research



-  Internet
-  Discussion Group
-  Filenet EDM software

**POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT ROAME RESEARCH
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Executive Summary

This paper sets out draft recommendations for improvements in the ROAME management system, as applied by the Food Standards Agency. If accepted by the Working Party, these recommendations will be included in its Report to the Research Review Group. The Working Party is recommended to:

agree the draft recommendations as discussed in this paper and listed in the Annex.

Contact points:

Steve Pugh, (Secretary)

tel: 020 7972 5079 (GTN 396 25079)

Andrew Dunn, RCU

tel: 020 7972 6573 (GTN 396 26573)

**POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT ROAME RESEARCH
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Issue

1. This paper sets out draft recommendations for improvements in the ROAME management system, as applied by the Food Standards Agency. If accepted, these recommendations will be included in the Report of the Working Party to the Research Review Group. The Working Party is recommended to **agree** the draft recommendations.

Background

2. At its meeting of 19 September 2000, the Research Review Group decided that, as part of the review of the Agency's research portfolio and its management, the Working Party should:
 - seek short-term improvements to the Agency's ROAME system of research management; and
 - investigate the possibility of alternatives to the ROAME system for introduction in the medium term.

This paper addresses the first of these requirements.

3. The Research Review Group made some suggestions for improving the Agency's ROAME management system at its meeting in September. In addition, the Working Party identified a number more at its meeting of 26 September 2000, when the ROAME system was discussed in more detail (RWP 003). The Secretariat and research managers in the Food Standards Agency have also made some suggestions. These have been summarised in the following paragraphs.

Rationale and Objectives

4. The Agency currently has an annual budget of approximately £27 million with which to fund research and surveillance. Effective management of research is essential to ensure that Agency policy has a sound foundation and that the work undertaken provides value for money. The rationale behind a research programme and the programme objectives, should therefore be clearly set out from the beginning. A budget profile should also be provided for each financial year together with permissible financial tolerances.

5. Recommendation: The Agency should develop procedures to ensure that research programmes are of fixed cost, and fixed term (max 5 years) with profiled costings and tolerances.
6. The Agency intends to base its decisions and advice on the best evidence available. One of the sources of this evidence will be the Agency's portfolio of research programmes. A clear link between this and the Agency's business plan is therefore essential.
7. Recommendation: Research managers should link research, to the objectives, aims and targets set out in the Agency's Business Plan.
8. It has been suggested by the Review Group that before commissioning a new research programme the Agency will need to do more than merely set the rationale and objectives. It will also need to assess the likely impact of the research on policy and plan ahead accordingly.
9. Recommendation: The document setting out the rationale and objectives for a research programme should also include a section that assesses the potential policy impact of the research for a range of outcomes and flags up the possible action that the Agency may need to take as a result. Particular regard should be paid to how the results of the research might affect consumers.

Appraisal

10. Traditionally, the research and surveillance programmes are currently managed separately. However, given the way in which research and surveillance programmes and projects frequently interact, there seems little reason to maintain this distinction. Combining the budgets would make for more flexible management. If this was to be done it will be necessary however to develop the Agency's procurement arrangements so as to ensure that financial flexibility was not reduced.
11. Recommendation: The Agency should combine its budgets for research and surveillance.
12. One of the first stages of the procurement process is to generate ideas for new projects to meet the programme objectives. The holding of workshops/brainstorming sessions involving a wide range of interests has been shown to be an effective way of doing this in the past but its use has been somewhat patchy.
13. Recommendation: The Agency practice of using of workshops to generate new ideas for research should become more widespread.

14. The Agency currently commissions its research projects through open competition. This is done by means of quarterly Research Requirements Documents and more specific *ad-hoc* tender documents. Open competition is particularly appropriate when seeking proposals in new areas of research. However, for some work only a limited number of laboratories possess the necessary expertise. It is possible to identify such laboratories by, for example, an initial call for expressions of interest in a particular area. The laboratories which respond can then form the basis of a limited call for tender which saves both time and money. In certain cases, where it is necessary to build up and maintain a body of specialist expertise, the Agency could also consider supporting the establishment of centres of excellence by guaranteeing contacts over a period of some years.

15. Recommendation: As a general rule, the Agency should commission projects through open competition, but in certain limited cases other methods, including limited tenders and support for centres of excellence, should also be considered as long as they are likely to deliver value for money.

16. There is a need to obtain a clear indication from contractors at the tendering stage as to how far their research is likely to meet the Agency's requirements. Contractors should therefore be asked to summarise in their applications the least and the best outcomes that their projects might achieve.

17. Recommendation: Project proposals provided by contractors should include worst-case and best-case assessments of how far their research is likely to meet the Agency's requirements in the timescales laid down.

Monitoring

18. Several members of the Review Group and Working Party have reported that some contractors find the level of monitoring demanded by the Agency excessive. In some cases this has resulted in a disproportionate amount of time being spent writing interim research reports. Monitoring of projects needs to be proportionate to risk but contractors should ensure that sufficient resource is costed into each project to accommodate the degree of monitoring specified in the call for proposals.

19. Recommendation: Progress reports should only be necessary at specific milestones agreed between the contractor and the Agency before the work begins. Research managers should ensure that the degree of reporting demanded is proportional to the amount of work being undertaken and the risks involved.

Evaluation

20. Evaluation of research programmes, and the projects within them is carried out as part of a formal review at the end of the programme. This is intended to assess how well a programme has met the scientific and policy objectives set out at the beginning and whether value for money has been obtained. It also generates ideas for future research. In the past, programme reviews have taken the form of large open meetings held towards the end of a programme. The holding of some smaller, additional, reviews during the course of the programme would however be beneficial.
21. Recommendation: The end of programme review should be supplemented by periodic within-programme reviews to help maintain the direction of the programme as a whole.
22. It has been suggested that projects should be evaluated by means of scientific peer-review at the time of submission to the Agency. This will help to ensure that the results can be used rapidly and with confidence.
23. Recommendation: The outcome of projects should be evaluated on an individual basis by means of external scientific peer-review that would judge scientific value and assess how far they have met the Agency's requirements.
24. Programme managers should be seeking to use the emerging findings of existing programmes to inform their future research needs. Programme workshops provide a suitable vehicle to assess the outcome of research projects as they progress and enable contractors to share ideas and expertise.
25. Recommendation: Programme managers should use workshops etc. during the lifetime of a programme to allow them to take stock of the research as it progresses and to allow contractors to assist each other with ideas and shared expertise.
26. Members have remarked that checks on whether and how the results of completed projects are disseminated and utilised are not made as often as they should be.
27. Recommendation: On completion of a project, a date should be set for an evaluation of whether and how the results of the research have been applied.

Research Working Party action required

The Working Party is recommended to:

agree the draft recommendations as discussed in this paper and listed in the Annex.

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ROAME
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, AS APPLIED BY THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY**

- The Agency should develop procedures to ensure that research programmes are of fixed cost, and fixed term (max 5 years) with profiled costings and tolerances.
- Research managers should link research to the objectives, aims and targets set out in the Agency's Business Plan.
- The document setting out the rationale and objectives for a research programme should also include a section that assesses the potential policy impact of the research for a range of outcomes and flags up the possible action that the Agency may need to take as a result. Particular regard should be paid to how the results of the research might affect consumers.
- The Agency should combine its budgets for research and surveillance.
- The Agency practice of using of workshops to generate new ideas for research should become more widespread.
- As a general rule, the Agency should commission projects through open competition, but in certain limited cases other methods, including limited tenders and support for centres of excellence, should also be considered as long as they are likely to deliver value for money.
- Project proposals provided by contractors should include worst-case and best-case assessments of how far their research is likely to meet the Agency's requirements in the timescales laid down.
- Progress reports should only be necessary at specific milestones agreed between the contractor and the Agency before the work begins. Research managers should ensure that the degree of reporting demanded is proportional to the amount of work being undertaken and the risks involved.
- The end of programme review should be supplemented by periodic within-programme reviews to help maintain the direction of the programme as a whole.
- The outcome of projects should be evaluated on an individual basis by means of external scientific peer-review that would judge scientific value and assess how far they have met the Agency's requirements.

- Programme managers should use workshops etc. during the lifetime of a programme to allow them to take stock of the research as it progresses and to allow contractors to assist each other with ideas and shared expertise.
- On completion of a project, a date should be set for an evaluation of whether and how the results of the research have been applied.

BENCHMARKING OF AGENCY-FUNDED RESEARCH

Executive Summary

This paper briefly describes the concept of benchmarking and outlines a presentation on the subject which will be made to the Working Party at this second meeting.

The Working Party is asked for its views on whether it wishes to recommend that a benchmarking exercise of the Agencies research and / or survey programmes be carried out.

Contact points:

Steve Pugh, (Secretary)

tel: 020 7972 5079 (GTN 396 25079)

Andrew Dunn, RCU

tel: 020 7972 6573 (GTN 396 26573)

BENCHMARKING OF AGENCY-FUNDED RESEARCH

Issue

1. This paper briefly describes the concept of benchmarking and outlines a presentation on the subject which will be made to the Working Party at this second meeting. The Working Party is asked for its **views** on whether it wishes to recommend that a benchmarking exercise of the Agencies research and / or survey programmes be carried out.

Background

2. The Food Standards Agency wishes to fund the best possible science for its research and survey programmes. The present review of the Agency's research makes it timely for the Working Party to consider measuring the Agency's success, or otherwise, in doing this through a benchmarking exercise.
3. Dr Jacqueline Senker of SPRU at the University of Sussex has kindly agreed to make a presentation on benchmarking in order to assist the Working Party in its deliberations. SPRU is one of the world leaders in policy research on science, technology and innovation and its wider economic, social and environmental implications.
4. Dr Senker's presentation will be in four parts:
 - The underlying concepts of benchmarking and how to carry out measurements;
 - A brief report on how these principles were applied to a study of ~400 research groups on human genetics;
 - A summary of the current exercise being carried out to benchmark biotechnology research centres in Europe and the USA; and
 - The difficulties that are encountered in benchmarking exercises.

Research Working Party action required

5. The Working Party is asked for its **views** on whether it wishes to recommend that a benchmarking exercise of the Agencies research and / or survey programmes be carried out.