

A COORDINATED AGENDA FOR MARINE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS SCIENCE (CAMERAS) (2011-2016)

Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC)
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Scottish Funding Council response to Scottish Government consultation on CAMERAS

Purpose

1. To provide a response from the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) to the Scottish Government consultation on science in support of Marine, Environment, Rural Affairs Science (CAMERAS).

General

2. We agree that the name and address of SFC will be made available to the public in the Scottish Government library/and or on the Scottish Government website) and that we are content for our response to be made publicly available.
3. As a Scottish Government NDPB providing funding to Scotland's colleges and HEIs, we have provided broad comments, rather than detailed responses to the structured questions.

Response

4. SFC welcomes the publication of this document. It is clearly presented and seeks responses to important questions for this complex delivery landscape.
5. We consider that Scotland's ambitions should be world leading in these areas, and that a statement to this effect would be helpful.
6. We are broadly supportive of the main themes as articulated, although we recognise that the policy remit spreads well beyond that of RERAD.
7. Given this, it would be helpful if connections with other parts of the Scottish Government for major cross-cutting policy areas (such as Energy) could be mapped and articulated to relevant stakeholders. This would ensure that relevant sectors understand the interfaces between different policy areas within the Scottish Government.
8. It would be helpful to have clarity around the role of CAMERAS in relation to relevant areas not covered by RERAD's remit.

9. We note the statement on page 5 that “Each public body supporting science relevant to the Scottish Government Marine, Environment, Rural Affairs and related policies will use the structure of CAMERAS (to be agreed by April 2009 building on the responses to this consultation) to help align their scientific activities.” although we note that SFC and other relevant publicly-funded organisations such as DEFRA are not included in the diagram in Annex 2. In addition, we are pleased that the document emphasises the alignment with *Science for Scotland* and the forthcoming Innovation Framework. **This alignment is essential to ensure a coordinated and non-contradictory approach.**
10. We welcome the reference to CAMERAS as a complementary part of overall funding for research investments in these disciplines, recognising the role played by SFC and the UK Research Councils in dual support.
11. We agree that the delivery landscape is complex. Main Research Providers are directly funded by Government and provide an essential and complementary role to that of universities. Universities are autonomous institutions which function differently, and to different timescales. They receive funding for infrastructure through SFC in addition to competitively funded research grants from UK Research Councils, UK Government, Industry and Charities.
12. We believe it is important to maintain the capacity of the MRPs to ensure the continued provision of discrete Scottish Government-directed research and provide flexibility for RERAD in directing and obtaining research output. They also have an important role in long-term monitoring and maintenance of data sets and other facilities.
13. We are aware of recent concerns around the merging of research institutes into UK universities, with a potential loss of research expertise and capacity in the long term.
14. SFC strongly supports knowledge exchange activities to maximise the potential of the research base throughout Scotland. We recognise that developing and sustaining effective engagement between key stakeholders is important prerequisite for successful knowledge exchange

Presentational issues

15. Page 15: Footnote. EBRC stands for “Easter Bush Research Consortium”
16. Annex 2: Diagram omits SFC and the universities.

Further information

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