

COUNCIL

6 April 2011

STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD STRATEGIC ISSUES LOG [last updated: 16 March 2011]

SUMMARY

This paper provides a list of high-level strategic issues upon which the BBSRC Executive or Council may wish to seek advice and input from Strategy Advisory Board (SAB). It is intended as a means of logging issues and suggestions as they arise, and will be used to help inform the forward-looking SAB agenda.

Actions

Council is invited to:

- **NOTE** the Strategic Issues Log
- **ADVISE** on any issues that should be added to the Strategic Issues Log

Corporate Policy and Strategy
March 2011

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ISSUES LOG

[no particular order , further details – see over]

1. Analysis of BBSRC funding by research area ('mapping the landscape')
2. Implementation of BBSRC's CSR delivery plan
3. BBSRC role in research and skills underpinning the Low-carbon economy
4. Future positioning of BBSRC bioscience within Europe (5-10 years ahead)
5. International Partnerships and leverage
6. Horizon scanning
7. BBSRC strategy for data-intensive research
8. BBSRC strategy for synthetic biology
9. BBSRC strategy for digital organisms
10. Distribution of UK public funding in priority areas
11. Infrastructure and national facilities
12. External speakers
13. Review of BBSRC's relationships with other funders
14. Embedding public engagement

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

	Background and scope	Likely timing
1. Analysis of BBSRC funding by research area ('mapping the landscape')	<p>BBSRC office has been working with a subgroup of SAB, to develop a set of high-level analyses of BBSRC funding by area of research that can be used to inform future discussion on the balance of BBSRC's funding portfolio, and underpin the development of evidence-based policies and strategies.</p> <p>SAB's advice would be sought on issues such as the balance of BBSRC's funding portfolio, criteria for prioritisation, and mechanisms for shifting balance to desirable trajectories.</p> <p>The analyses will be updated and provided to SAB annually, or as necessary in relation to specific items.</p>	<p>Considered at November 2010 meeting</p> <p>Updates and trend data to be provided to SAB annually</p>
2. Implementation of BBSRC's CSR delivery plan	<p>BBSRC's Delivery Plan 2011-2015 will set out the Council's delivery priorities for the period, in the context of its CSR settlement. BBSRC will need to plan carefully to ensure efficient and effective delivery of these priorities.</p> <p>SAB will help BBSRC to consider some of the specific actions that will be required to implement BBSRC's CSR Delivery Plan.</p>	<p>March 2011 - working with HEIs inc. equipment sharing</p>
3. BBSRC role in research and skills underpinning the Low carbon economy	<p>The low carbon economy is an important policy ambition where bioscience will have a vital role in new low carbon feedstocks, industrial processes and fuels as well as agri-environmental approaches to mitigation and adaptation to climate change (e.g. the soil as a carbon sink)</p> <p>A SAB discussion on this topic would help BBSRC to develop a clear case for how activities across the Strategic Plan priorities - particularly industrial biotechnology, bioenergy, and food security - contribute to a low-carbon economy. (NB this item goes wider than just IB and bioenergy)</p>	<p>TBC</p>
4. Future positioning of BBSRC bioscience within Europe (5-10 years ahead)	<p>BBSRC already has extensive links to, and engagement in, European activities, including leading for the UK on a Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) with France. Nevertheless a look at the bigger picture of how UK bioscience will fit into the changing European bioscience landscape 5-10 years hence will help guide the positioning of BBSRC policy and research. Considerations could include priorities for the eighth Framework Programme (FP8), opportunities for leverage of funding, and how BBSRC bioscience can contribute to key EU initiatives such as the development of a Knowledge-Based BioEconomy.</p>	<p>TBC</p>
5. International partnerships and leverage	<p>Recognising that BBSRC is already well engaged internationally, particularly through Food Security, there would be value in a more systematic look across the international landscape (particularly in light of new Strategic Plan) to identify key international partners (perhaps some BBSRC had not previously thought of) and potential mechanisms for engagement in each of BBSRC's strategic research priority areas, including opportunities for leverage</p> <p>SAB's advice will help to ensure that BBSRC makes the most of international partnerships in strategic priority areas.</p>	<p>March 2011 - international strategy</p>

Shading represents items considered at the SAB meeting on 8 March 2011

	Background and scope	Likely timing
6. Horizon scanning	<p>Expanding on the Board's previous 'longer term' horizon scanning activities (SAB March 2009; Joint Strategy Meeting July 2010), SAB will be invited to help develop BBSRC's vision for UK bioscience beyond the next spending review and current Strategic Plan. This will include consideration of external factors (e.g. changes in government policies, legislation etc) that may impact on the science agenda.</p> <p>Outcomes of SAB's discussions will include advice to BBSRC on the actions that need to be taken now to ensure that UK bioscience is set up to capitalise on the medium to longer-term opportunities identified.</p>	2012
7. BBSRC strategy for Data-intensive Research	<p>BBSRC support for data intensive bioscience will be important in enabling researchers to exploit the vast quantities and diversity of data available to them, to the benefit of UK bioscience and industry. As such, BBSRC is reviewing its strategy in this area.</p> <p>Advice from SAB will help BBSRC to refine and further develop its strategy for data-intensive research.</p>	September 2011
8. BBSRC strategy for synthetic biology	<p>Synthetic Biology is an area in which BBSRC must maintain a clear delivery strategy. Furthermore, at its meeting in April 2010, Council requested advice on BBSRC's position in this area, in light of the recent House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Inquiry into Bioengineering</p> <p>SAB's advice will help BBSRC to develop its forward strategy for synthetic biology, building on BBSRC's current activities in this area (including funding of Synthetic Biology Networks, public engagement, web statements and links with European activities)</p>	November 2010 - briefing paper
9. BBSRC strategy for Digital Organisms	<p>Given BBSRC's strong advocacy for integrative and systems biology, there is a need for BBSRC to have a clear position and strategy regarding the development of digital organisms.</p> <p>A subgroup of the ISB Strategy Panel has been established to take this activity forward and SAB's wider advice on the outcome will be helpful</p>	Dependent on ISB
10. Distribution of UK public funding in priority areas	<p>To inform BBSRC's future strategic direction, it is important to consider BBSRC's research investment in strategic priority areas in the context of the 'total UK strategic investment', particularly in areas of interface with other funders. BBSRC should work with other funders to build up a comprehensive understanding of public funding in the areas of health, food security and industrial biotechnology.</p> <p>The SAB Policy Evidence Subgroup will help BBSRC to develop these analyses, and the board's advice will be sought on BBSRC's positioning and investment strategy within these wider funding landscapes.</p>	September 2011 - update on progress

 Shading represents items considered at the SAB meeting on 8 March 2011

	Background and scope	Likely timing
11. Infrastructure and national facilities	<p>Recognising the likely funding pressures on UK research infrastructure in coming years, there is a need for BBSRC to explore opportunities to share responsibility for maintaining research facilities (including land) with other funders. At the same time BBSRC must ensure that it retains 'control' of the key facilities needed to deliver its strategy.</p> <p>SAB will help BBSRC to explore options for sharing facilities with other funders.</p>	
12. External speakers	<p>External speakers relevant to BBSRC's strategic priority areas will be invited to future SAB meetings as necessary, particularly in areas where an understanding of the work and strategic direction of other organisations (e.g. NMRI, LMB, TSB) could help BBSRC in developing its own forward strategy.</p> <p>The board will help BBSRC to identify relevant speakers, and will advise BBSRC on the possible impacts and opportunities that the strategies of other organisations will have for BBSRC.</p>	March 2011 - speaker from Wellcome Trust
13. Review of BBSRC's relationships with other funders	<p>BBSRC's Delivery Plan highlights the importance of joint working with other funders for greater synergy, efficiency and leverage. BBSRC should review its relationships with other [public] funders in key areas, nationally and internationally, and whether these could be managed more strategically.</p> <p>SAB will advise BBSRC on its strategy for engagement and further opportunities for joint working with other funders in priority areas.</p> <p>This item also relates to Item 10 - Distribution of UK public funding in priority areas</p>	
14. Embedding Public Engagement	<p>Public engagement continues to be an important part of BBSRC's forward strategy. In addition to specific public engagement activities (e.g. public dialogues), BBSRC is seeking to embed public engagement more routinely in the research and training activities it funds. For example, applications for Research Council grants may request resources and time to undertake PE activities to achieve their Pathways to Impact, and the importance of developing of skills around the societal impact of research, including public engagement and outreach, is recognised in the new BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnerships scheme.</p> <p>SAB's advice will be sought on how public engagement can be further embedded across all areas of BBSRC business, and in particular on the development of strategic approaches to public engagement in priority areas on which BBSRC is leading (e.g. food security, bioenergy, synthetic biology)</p>	

Shading represents items considered at the SAB meeting on 8 March 2011