



Report on feedback from Strategy Consultation Process

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to disseminate the findings of the consultation on the STFC's draft Corporate Strategy and explain how the results of this consultation exercise will be used. STFC is using consultation as a driving force to improve its policies and science delivery and this report sets out what it plans to do next as a result of this consultation and why.

What the Consultation was about?

STFC's emerging Corporate Strategy benefitted from input from a variety of sources including STFC's Science Board, the Economic Impact Advisory Board, staff focus groups and informal consultation with a variety of stakeholders.

STFC then formally consulted stakeholders on its draft Corporate Strategy to gather views on its future direction, establish a framework for its future spending and prioritisation decisions. The formal consultation period commenced on 19th December 2008 and closed on 23rd March 2009.

How and who did STFC consult?

STFC activities impact on, and are impacted by, a wide range of stakeholders and we designed our consultation process following a full stakeholder analysis, identifying the most effective ways of consulting and engaging with specific groups and individuals. This tailored approach produced a robust and systematic consultation, ensuring that it was both inclusive and representative, focussing on a number of key methods of consultation.

The Strategy Consultation document was placed on STFC's website with a commenting facility. Emails and posters were sent to stakeholders including the academic and science communities. 2,200 STFC staff were informed of the consultation via the STFC intranet, notice board and 'In Brief', STFC's in-house magazine. The Science Board, STFC's Committees and Council were advised about the consultation. The following events were held to inform and gather feedback:

- Internal staff focus groups and staff conferences;
- External meetings and workshops with 4 learned societies;
- Individual meetings with the other science Research Councils;
- Ongoing dialogue with users of STFC facilities.

The Responses received

During the 3 month period STFC received the following feedback:

- 42 email/web responses; 28 of which were from the academic community, 9 from STFC staff, 2 from learned societies and 3 from business;
- Feedback from 60 people who attended four key “learned society”/university academic meetings/workshops;
- Detailed comments from 3 key Research Council meetings;
- Responses from 138 senior managers and staff who attended internal consultation events.

STFC asked the community for views on a number of specific issues including our strategic priorities, suggestions for alternative funding models for facilities and the relative importance of different thematic areas. This broad invitation generated a wide variety of feedback and comment, sometimes offering a strategic view and on other occasions reflecting the most important priorities for their science area. The three broad key messages received from the consultation responses were:

- That the Draft Strategy required more work to present a clear vision and set of scientific priorities with timescales; the current message was unclear and “everything” seemed to be a priority;
- A desire from staff, at all levels, to have a clear direction, effectively communicated by a strong leadership team;
- That future changes to the programme in response to reduced funding should be focused on specific areas, not spread too thinly across all activities.

STFC recorded and analysed the detailed feedback identifying key themes to help shape the next phase of STFC’s strategic framework. The feedback was that the strategy should:

- Be a shorter, more focused 20-page document which presented science in a more exciting way;
- Ensure a joined-up approach with the strategies of other Research Councils but ensure the STFC’s objectives are clearly distinctive;
- Be more proactive in describing investments in education and training; it should make more of inspiring students to STEM subjects and how education and training produces economic impact;
- Present a better picture of a merged organisation, one that is more than the sum of its parts, adding value rather than showing it has identity problems;
- Make a more compelling case for the development and role of Campuses and Gateway Centres, currently the STFC campus strategy is unclear;
- Be upfront and proud of the commitment to curiosity led science;

- Be more explicit about the process of getting the balance right between exploitation grants and investing in new facilities;
- Direct more attention to Economic Impact, Skills and Campus to match the attention on science;
- Be aligned with international priorities and provide more clues as to how STFC will develop greater international influence;
- Show more clearly how outcomes will be measured and monitored through performance indicators;
- Do more to stimulate economic benefit from research;
- Consider more investment and support for nuclear physics, as its development and current skills shortage will impact heavily on the UK in the coming years;
- Take the positive lead on maximising the benefits of science;
- Commit to host/partner new large scale facilities and renewal programmes at both campuses for the Strategy to succeed.

Most stakeholders recognise that STFC is facing a challenge to balance its future programme and some difficult decisions ahead, however stakeholders made it clear that they want STFC to lead and take decisions, as long as they have been regularly consulted along the way.

Annex 1 sets out the questions that STFC posed about its Strategy during the consultation, the responses to those questions and what action STFC will be taking in moving the Strategy forward.

How and why responses to the consultation will impact on STFC's Strategy and what happens next?

The responses have helped us in our understanding and made it clear that we have more work to do to complete our Strategy, establish scientific priorities and signpost a way forward with clear objectives and timescales. These are the actions that we will take.

- The support for production of a shorter document, that was more focused and visibly exciting with a shift in emphasis to take account of current economic circumstances, will be taken forward by the early production of STFC's Vision document which will be published in Summer 2009;
- The call for clear timescales and a transparent process in producing our strategic framework will be met by developing a project timetable in Summer 2009; this will schedule the development of our Corporate Strategy, underpinned by establishing science priorities and the balance between funding exploitation grants and investment in facilities. This prioritisation will be undertaken in discussion and analysis with advisory panels and key stakeholders. The Strategy will ensure that issues such as the role of Campuses and Gateway Centres is clear and that high level performance management indicators and criteria are clearly identified;

- We will respond to the appeal for effective communication and regular discussion by establishing regular communications with key RCs, key stakeholders, our community and staff on further development of our strategic framework and other matters of mutual interest

Next Steps in preparing STFC's Strategy

The Executive Board of STFC has recently tasked a sub group to develop the STFC Corporate Strategy, long term plan and science priorities through engagement and consultation with advisory panels, key stakeholders and our community. This will be in place by mid July. Over the next 12 months STFC will be taking the following actions:

- Publish our Vision document "A New Vision for New Times" in Summer 2009;
- Develop the Corporate Strategy, long term plan and science priorities through engagement with key stakeholders, staff and our community;
- Establish regular communications with key RCs on matters of strategic importance and mutual interest is established at least at Research Director level.

Lessons learned from consultation process

The main lessons that STFC has learnt from the strategy consultation process were:

- For the most part, the RCs, learned societies and academia welcomed the opportunity to engage with the STFC. Consultation with stakeholders has evidently been irregular in the past and the constructive feedback is positive and should benefit future discussions on the strategic decision-making process;
- The web is the minimum form of engagement and STFC should develop the other more successful forms of consultation that it employed and learn from best practice across other Research Councils;
- More time needs to be factored in to plan an effective consultation process;
- More analysis of our stakeholder community and therefore who should be consulted is required;
- The steps in the consultation process need to be clearly identified and communicated more effectively;
- Some of the questions were considered to be ambiguous, and in a few responses not all were answered.

If you have any queries on this report, contact Sharon Cosgrove, Director, Strategy STFC (email: Sharon.Cosgrove@stfc.ac.uk; tel: 01793 444370) or Linda Baines, Head of Reporting, Parliamentary & Government Liaison (email: Linda.Baines@stfc.ac.uk; tel: 01235 445467).

Annex 1: Response to questions

Consultation Question	Response	Comment/Action
<p>Q1. In what way could we improve the definition of our top-level objectives?</p>	<p>Give greater emphasis to science funded by STFC.</p> <p>Too many high level objectives are listed in the document – need some ‘where we want to be’ ambitious statements.</p> <p>Link SMART objectives to the grand challenges.</p> <p>Balance facility build with exploitation – better linkage between PALS & RCs.</p> <p>Two top level objectives – aggressively pursuing fundamental research and providing high-tech facilities for the scientific community at large.</p> <p>Make clear that the strategy is for 10 years.</p> <p>Be explicit in the case for blue skies research and cite recent case histories illustrating spin offs.</p>	<p>Will be considered in the evaluation of STFC’s science priorities</p> <p>STFC’s Vision document to be published in early Summer 2009 sets out a vision for where STFC wants to be. These will be further developed in STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>Performance indicators will be developed to monitor STFC’s strategy.</p> <p>Will be considered in the evaluation of STFC’s science priorities and development of STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>These points will be considered in the development of STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>This will be reflected in STFC’s Strategy.</p>

		These points will be considered in the development of STFC's Strategy.
Q2. What do you see as the most appropriate way to determine the optimum balance of our research portfolio between curiosity-driven and application-led?	<p>Set distinctive goals with respect to the other RCs, be wary about interdisciplinary science; celebrate STFC solely funded world leading science.</p> <p>STFC should do more curiosity-led research than application-led because the former provides fertile ground for the latter.</p> <p>Ask for an uplift in the CSR to support application-led science. Develop a light touch approach for themed programmes where STFC can really have an impact – don't over-hype what we can do.</p> <p>Identify the best science.</p> <p>Define curiosity-driven vs. application led – is this grants vs. facilities or S&T vs. KE?</p> <p>Use metrics and expert panel review.</p> <p>Industry should invest in R&D.</p>	<p>Will be considered in the evaluation of STFC's science priorities and development of the Strategy.</p> <p>Will be considered in the evaluation of STFC's science priorities and development of the Strategy.</p> <p>Resourcing issues will be addressed in STFC's strategy. This approach will be considered as part of STFC's approach to the next CSR round.</p> <p>We identify the best science through our peer review processes</p> <p>The programme balance will be reviewed through the reassessment of our science priorities.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
Q3. What is your view of the	Health and Wellbeing is for MRC/BBSRC to	These comments need to be

<p>appropriateness of our priorities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Health and Wellbeing? •Safety and Security? •Economic Wellbeing? •The Knowledge Economy? •The Changing Environment? •Energy and Sustainability? •The Fundamental Secrets of Nature? •Is there life elsewhere in the Universe? •The Evolution of the Universe? 	<p>fund, Safety and Security for MOD/others RCs, Energy and Sustainability is for EPSRC?</p> <p>STFC dominates in the last three bullets. Need to get policy makers to value these areas of science.</p> <p>First 6 are DIUS challenges, last 3 are what STFC does. The consultation document does not help with decision making e.g. new space mission vs. new neutron facility, Alzheimer's vs. breast cancer.</p> <p>Identify areas where we can have a significant impact and map onto the challenges.</p> <p>What is the validity of these priorities and can STFC change or shape them?</p> <p>The STFC's priorities of equal weight should be (i) developing a suite of world-leading facilities to underpin world-leading research in support of health and wellbeing etc and promoting their use to the benefit of science and society ensuring that the UK plays its part in addressing the key issues of the 21st century and promoting the quality</p>	<p>balanced against Government ambitions for all science disciplines to contribute to the big challenges of our age where appropriate. STFC operates facilities that are often used by those seeking to advance our knowledge in these areas and so are uniquely placed to contribute.</p> <p>Noted. These comments will feed into the development of STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>This approach will be reflected in STFC's Vision document and in its Strategy.</p> <p>These priorities have been identified by Government as the big challenges of our age; STFC operates facilities that are uniquely placed to make a valuable contribution.</p> <p>Noted. These comments will feed into the development of STFC's Strategy.</p>
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	of life and prosperity (ii) supporting and pursuing basic research into the structure of space, time and matter and origins of the Universe and its evolution.	
Q4. Recognising that our light sources, neutron sources and lasers are general purpose facilities that contribute across the research base, what other thematic areas should we consider when planning the future development and evolution of these facilities?	<p>Make the best use of facilities for inspiring kids to take up STEM subjects. Have visitor centres.</p> <p>Use the strategic priorities of the other RCs.</p> <p>Look internationally at where STFC could uniquely contribute.</p> <p>Develop more specific themes within the grand challenges.</p> <p>Fusion as an alternative energy source.</p> <p>Why no reference to high performance computational facilities?</p> <p>When is a laser not a light source?</p> <p>Investment in international facilities is good for big science but local economies gain huge benefit and an opportunity to develop skills.</p>	<p>Noted. These comments will feed into the development of STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted. We will be working with the RC family on our strategic development.</p> <p>Noted. These comments will feed into the development of STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>These comments will feed into the development of STFC's Strategy.</p>
Q5. STFC builds & operates its own facilities (e.g. ISIS, CLF) and does so through joint ventures with other partners (e.g. Diamond	Follow the Wakeham review recommendations for handling of international subscriptions and domestic budgets (section 8.9 of the Wakeham	This approach will be considered as part of the RCUK's response to the Wakeham recommendations.

<p>Light Source), and through international subscriptions (eg ILL, CERN, ESO). What alternative models could we consider in the future for facility provision, and what benefits would these models deliver?</p>	<p>report).</p> <p>Transfer the risk of building and operating facilities to commercial companies. – but cost of access may become high and priority for access not guaranteed.</p> <p>Enable SMEs to access large and smaller scale facilities.</p> <p>Spin Diamond into STFC to obtain alignment and operations under the same strategic umbrella.</p> <p>Operate/provide access to all facilities/subscriptions to the same policies and standards.</p> <p>Operate JVs in a “joint” way not as the DLS JV has operated.</p> <p>Fund large scale facilities on a rolling programme basis.</p> <p>Ensure that facilities are exploited in proportion to the investment.</p> <p>The current model where facilities are designed, built and operated in labs such as RAL, CERN is a good one.</p>	<p>This approach will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy</p> <p>This approach will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy</p> <p>This approach will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
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<p>Q6. Which of the areas of current and planned STFC activities would you prioritise for investment, and why? If faced with a funding choice, which areas of current and planned activity would you reduce in priority?</p>	<p>HiPER is an important project for RAL.</p> <p>Emphasise areas distinctive to STFC; get other RCs to contribute to facilities where appropriate.</p> <p>Are Gateway centres core to the strategy? They create on-going operational costs.</p> <p>Move RCs to HSIC.</p> <p>Operations fund for large facilities as well as capital.</p> <p>Invest in infrastructure.</p> <p>Astronomy – because it’s my area! Difficult not to be partisan.</p> <p>New multidisciplinary facilities should be high priority – renewal of facilities is key to retention of leading edge capability.</p> <p>Injection of new funding should be focused on specific areas rather than spread thinly throughout the programme.</p> <p>People and training should be a priority. Investment in facilities takes a long time to</p>	<p>Noted and will be considered in the development of our science priorities.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC’s Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>This will be considered in</p>
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	<p>show impact.</p> <p>Programmatic review outcomes still stand.</p> <p>There is a case for sustainable investment in all areas.</p>	<p>developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
<p>Q7. How can STFC best engage with its stakeholders and partners to maximise the science return of our programme and its impact?</p>	<p>Greater delegation within the advisory structure is needed.</p> <p>Coordinate and prioritise stakeholder engagement with accessible named contacts.</p> <p>Have professional conference facilities at each campus for scientific, technology and industrial meetings.</p> <p>Continue to build on the collaborations that already exist between STFC staff and the UK communities.</p> <p>Get good media coverage.</p> <p>Ensure that the UK is represented geographically on Council and other advisory bodies.</p> <p>People should be reassured that their</p>	<p>Noted. This will be considered.</p> <p>This is being done.</p> <p>These facilities already partly exist and will be upgraded and additional ones provided.</p> <p>This will be reflected in STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>This being done as part of the development of a STFC Communications Plan.</p> <p>Comments will be passed to DBIS.</p> <p>Fuller communications on the implications of prioritisation will be addressed as part of ongoing</p>

	<p>science wasn't going to be harmed by it. They should also be told how it relates to a grand plan.</p> <p>STFC should engage with University VCs to get joined up pressure to mutual advantage.</p> <p>Rebuild trust through regular interaction and openness.</p> <p>Develop high level joint funding strategies at RCUK level.</p>	<p>communications.</p> <p>Will be addressed as part of ongoing communications with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Will be addressed as part of development of a STFC Communications Plan.</p> <p>This being done as part of the development of a STFC Communications Plan.</p>
<p>Q8. How would you envisage interacting with our science and innovation campuses and what benefits would you foresee?</p>	<p>Marketing of the campuses could be better. They must build effective relationships with HEIs.</p> <p>Conflicts of interest must be handled well.</p> <p>Exploit synergies.</p> <p>Need specific resources to market STFC's</p>	<p>This approach will be reflected in STFC's campus development plans.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>This approach will be reflected in STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted and to be considered in the</p>

	<p>skills and capabilities.</p> <p>More 1:1 activity with industry.</p> <p>Continue with collaborative approach.</p> <p>STFC to be a shop window for HEIs?</p> <p>Share IP with HEIs.</p>	<p>development of the STFC Strategy.</p> <p>This approach will be considered in the development of STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. This will be considered in developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>STFC has an agreed policy on IP that will be reflected in STFC's Strategy.</p>
<p>Q9. Have you identified any areas of impact which are missing from the Economic Impact strategy? If so, could you please provide details?</p>	<p>The potential contribution of STFC to contribute to the STEM issues in education.</p> <p>How will EI link with performance and evaluation? Is EI core or a side shoot?</p> <p>Detail in the consultation document suppresses the key EI messages. They should be clearer and more succinct.</p> <p>Corporate Social Responsibility.</p> <p>Where are the STFC Campus Strategies?</p> <p>Why are AWE & DSTL missing from the stakeholder map?</p>	<p>Noted. This will be considered in developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>This approach will be reflected in STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted. These gaps have been addressed and STFC will consult</p>

	Procurement processes should encourage researchers to work with UK companies	AWE and DsTL in future. Noted.
Q10. Are there any apparent existing or emerging skills gaps which we should consider?	<p>STFC should expand in the area of ASICs (application specific integrated circuits); also large scale engineering support and FEA (finite element analysis).</p> <p>Are the skills within STFC used to best effect? We have a lot of consultants.</p> <p>STFC could contribute to up-skilling for UK PLC.</p> <p>The development of visible, inspirational leaders is required.</p> <p>Lack of succession planning.</p> <p>Commercial skills.</p> <p>Renewal of biological & physical science skills base post SRS at DL.</p> <p>Doctoral training provision should be revisited.</p> <p>Nuclear physics.</p> <p>More accelerator science students.</p>	<p>Noted. This will be considered in developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC's Strategy.</p> <p>This will be considered in developing STFC's science priorities.</p> <p>This will be considered in</p>

		developing STFC's science priorities and Strategy.
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