

ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THE REVIEW OF STRATEGIC ADVISORY ROUTES

In December 2012 EPSRC Chair, Dr Paul Golby, commissioned a review of EPSRC’s strategic advice routes led by Dr Suzanne Fortier, Past President of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Canada. The review was conducted during spring 2013 and its conclusions and recommendations were presented to EPSRC Council in July. Council welcomed the recommendations and agreed to strengthen our current processes, in a context of the need to balance our sponsorship ambitions with constrained resources. A sub-group worked over the summer to consider how best to prioritise and implement the recommendations and this sub-group presented its report to Council on 15 and 16 October. Council agreed all the recommendations made by the sub-group and this action plan sets out how the recommendations will be implemented.

Recommendation	Agreed action to support recommendation	Timescales
<p>Recommendation 1: SAT and SAN members should be appointed by open and transparent processes with explicit criteria.</p>	<p>The processes for both SAN and SATs will be harmonised as far as it is possible to do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and publish revised nomination and selection processes (including criteria) for SAN appointments • Define and publish nomination and selection processes (including criteria) for SAT appointments <p>Council will have a role in the nomination and selection processes for SAN, SATs and related type appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sub-committee of Council to act in the capacity of an “appointments assurance committee”. The sub-committee should consist of the Chair of Council, 2 other Council members and a member of RAC. • Publish the sub-committee’s terms of reference 	<p>The revised nomination and selection processes for SAN and SAT appointments was published on 29 October – the processes will apply for all new appointments starting with effect from 1 June 2014 for SAN and 1 April for SATs</p> <p>End of 2013</p> <p>The terms of reference for the sub-committee were published on 29 October</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: There should be a public document describing all of the EPSRC’s strategic advisory routes and processes and explaining the respective roles and responsibilities of those involved.</p>	<p>The roles, responsibilities and processes for both SAN and SATs will be harmonised as far as it is possible to do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and publish the roles and responsibilities of both the SAN and SATs • Publish a short document which describes the nature and purpose of strategic relationships 	<p>The roles and responsibilities for SAN and SATs were published on 29 October</p> <p>End of 2013</p>

<p>Recommendation 3: Minutes of SAN and SAT meetings should be available on the EPSRC website. It is acknowledged that on occasion these would need to be redacted for the purposes of confidentiality</p>	<p>A note of meetings will be published to reflect the diversity of discussion and the rationale for any decisions taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish an unattributed note of SAT meetings and SAN work streams on the EPSRC web site 	<p>Spring 2014</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: In the case of major strategic deliberations and decisions, EPSRC's consultation and communication plans should be inclusive, involving two-way engagement both before and after decision making with the broader communities of researchers and institutions – universities, learned societies, industry, etc. Circumstances when this might not be possible should be communicated. This plan should form part of the public document mentioned earlier (see recommendation 2).</p>	<p>Engagement with the wider HEI/stakeholder base will feature as an explicit consideration for major strategic deliberations by Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a set of principles and approaches (constitutional framework) for transparency of advice: wider stakeholder engagement and feedback 	<p>End of 2013</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: The circumstances under which agenda items at SAT and SAN meetings must be taken in confidence and not reported in the published minutes should be made clear.</p>	<p>This has been addressed in the response to recommendation 2.</p>	<p>See Recommendation 2</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: To the extent possible, the EPSRC should feed back into the community which advice has been accepted and how and where it has been used. Reasons for setting advice aside should also be given</p>	<p>This has been addressed in the response to recommendation 4.</p>	<p>See Recommendation 4</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: All of the advisory routes should be operated within an integrated and focused</p>	<p>This has been addressed in the response to recommendations 1,2, 3, 5 and 9.</p>	<p>See Recommendations 1,2,3, 5 and 9</p>

management process.		
<p>Recommendation 8: The specific roles and responsibilities of SATs and SAN should be reviewed and clarified taking into account EPSRC's change from a funder to a sponsor</p>	<p>Greater clarity and understanding about the aim of the sponsorship model and the potential implications will be developed and communicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a work stream to address this issue and to make recommendations to Council. In order to get sufficient diversity of perspective the membership should be expanded beyond just SAN members. 	<p>Commission work stream by end of 2013 Report to Council in Spring 2014</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: SAN and the SATs should ensure that they have assembled the expertise needed to meet their roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>This has been addressed in the response to recommendations 1 and 2.</p>	<p>See Recommendations 1 and 2</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: Each SAT and each SAN Working Group should be chaired by a member of the relevant community. We believe it is good practice for a member of Council to continue to be on each SAN Working Group.</p>	<p>SAN working groups and SATs will be chaired by a member of the relevant community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of the SAN will be nominated to chair the work stream or the Council member assigned to the work stream will chair it • SATs will have fixed term chairs – details are incorporated into the nomination and selection and terms of reference documents - see recommendations 1 and 2. • Council will review this recommendation after one year. 	<p>In place for new work streams To tie in with April 2014 nomination and appointment process Council to review Spring 2015</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: The ownership and leadership of the SAN and the structuring of its work programme should be more clearly established to align with the Council's requirement to seek advice in a planned and comprehensive manner to support all aspects of its principal decision making; the mechanism for this is for Council to determine.</p>	<p>The SAN work plan together with brief updates on particular work stream activities will be a regular agenda item for Council.</p> <p>Council members should be encouraged to find time to attend the annual all SAN conference.</p>	<p>In place September 2014</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: SAN and SAT members should see in</p>	<p>This has been addressed in the response to recommendations 4 and 6.</p>	<p>See Recommendations 4 and 6</p>

<p>writing how their advice has been presented to Council and have the resulting Council decision fed back to them.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 13: Council should determine how best to ensure it has 'sight lines' into the work of SAN and SATs.</p>	<p>For the SAN this has been addressed in the response to recommendations 10 and 11.</p> <p>For SATs there will be regular poster sessions or presentations at Council covering SAT activities.</p> <p>Council members should be encouraged to attend the all SAT Conference.</p>	<p>See Recommendations 10 and 11</p> <p>Spring 2014</p>
<p>Recommendation 14: All of the advisory routes should be subjected to periodic audit, including, in particular, the relevant risk assessments.</p>	<p>Periodic audits of the strategic advisory routes should be part of the audit programme.</p> <p>It was also felt that risks should be a more formal consideration in both SAT and SAN deliberations.</p>	<p>In place with next audit due 2015/16</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: Every effort should be made to ensure that EPSRC has the resources and skills development capacity needed to achieve the transformational change it has embarked on successfully.</p>	<p>There will be further consideration at Council to see what more might be done to support the administrative functions.</p>	<p>Spring 2014</p>