

General Advisory Committee on Science

Presentation to ACMSF
3 December 2009



Colin Blakemore

Chair of the General Advisory Committee on Science

Role and composition of GACS

*“providing **independent** challenge and advice to the Agency Chief Scientist and Board on the Agency’s governance and use of science”*

Membership

A directly-appointed Chair: Colin Blakemore

Chairs of the nine SACs advising the Agency (or Deputies), ex officio

Six directly-appointed members:

4 expert Professor Janet Bainbridge
Professor Jeya Henry
Professor Duncan Maskell
Professor Anne Murcott
2 lay Mrs Pamela Goldberg
Mrs Leen Petré

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GACS view of Agency science

Areas of good practice:

- *commitment to science- and evidence-based policies*
- *openness*
- *use of expert committees*

Where the Agency could do better:

- *more & better evaluation of impacts of interventions & policies*
- *better framing of research questions & partnerships in funding*
- *clarity on relationship between risk assessment & management*
- *better communication and interaction between SACs and with a wider networks of experts*

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Horizon scanning

Advice on key strategic issues:

- *climate change and its effects on food supply*
- *food security, including water and energy security*
- *nanotechnology/synthetic food other new technologies.*

Advice on approaches:

- *Work with wide range of experts; better collaboration with funders, NGOs and industry*
- *Agency needs to be clearer on how to assess outcomes and what to do as a result.*

GACS activities:

- *Acts as hub to draw together & review outputs from HS across Agency*
- *GACS' own HS workshops: first one 24 June 09, on broader implications of trends in food production.*

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Evidence Base: Strategy, priorities and balance

GACS views:

- *Important to maintain Agency's science budget*
- *Opportunities to improve the definition of research questions*
- *Scope to increase the range and styles of research: mechanisms & partnerships*

GACS activities:

- *Science and Evidence Strategy - input on approach, priorities & principles*

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Science expertise and advice, SACs, engagement

Issues identified:

- *clarity around the risk assessment process and policies*
- *consistent application of procedures and good practice*
- *recognising & explaining uncertainty and the assumptions that underlie it*
- *Defining where, when and how to engage with wider input from experts and other stakeholders (including industry and NGOs).*

GACS activities

- *Working group on risk assessment and risk management - case studies - how governance and good practice have worked*
- *Principles for a 'Network of Experts'*

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Performance Indicators and Evaluation

Performance Indicators

- *Developed by a GACS Working Group and agreed by GACS*
- *initial PIs and is supporting work on tools and systems*
- *Agency has adopted these PIs*
- *GACS to look at the outcomes & identify any areas for development*

GACS role in the GO Science Review of the FSA

- *Advice to inform Agency's response*
- *Checking and challenging on progress with implementation*

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Future priorities

Implementation of Agency response to the GO Science Review

- *Checking and challenging on progress with implementation*

The role of scientific evidence & advice in risk assessment, risk management and policy framing

- *Working group looking at case studies*
- *Any gaps or revisions to procedures and practice?*

Science and Evidence Strategy

Advice and challenge on implementation and on priorities/balance of the Agency's science spend

Developing the Network of Experts

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Thank you!

