

UK Research and Innovation

Paper: 19-01
UKRI EDI External Advisory Group
Author: [REDACTED]

Draft minutes of the third UK Research and Innovation External Advisory Group meeting for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Meeting held on 7th December 2018, Swindon.

Attendees	
Professor Jennifer Rubin (Chair)	Dr Dina Belluigi
Zabeen Hirji	Professor Wendy Loretto
Dr Karen Salt	Dr Claire Murray
Dr Eugene Oteng-Ntim	
UKRI attendees	
[REDACTED] (Secretariat)	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Apologies	
Simon McKeown	Zamila Bunglawala
Rosanna Duncan	Professor Giovanni Razzu

1. Welcome and Introductions

[REDACTED] welcomed attendees to the third UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) External Advisory Group meeting. Apologies were noted from [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

2. Minutes from last meeting and actions

Members agreed the minutes without amendment.

[REDACTED] provided an oral update on the outstanding action relating to circulating the bullying and harassment communications plan to members. It was noted that this work is in progress highlighting that the recent commissioning of an evidence review for bullying and harassment contributed to this overall policy agenda.

[REDACTED] noted that the joint meeting with the UKRI Strategy and Implementation Group (SIG) was successful and asked [REDACTED] to pass on thanks to members for their preparation work.

Action: [REDACTED] to pass on thanks to SIG members for their contributions to the joint EAG/SIG meeting.

All other actions were noted as complete and for discussion under the agenda.

3. Update on EDI evidence Reviews

[REDACTED] informed members that following an open and transparent procurement process, UKRI was now at the stage of confirming the successful suppliers for all three evidence reviews: Bullying and Harassment evidence review, Review of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI): challenges and interventions in the UK context and, in the International context. In addition to this, challenge

workshops would be held on 13th and 14th December with a range of stakeholders to provide challenge and advice on the proposed methodology and approach.

Members noted that the final outputs for the bullying and harassment evidence review would be delivered mid-February 2019. Interim findings for the UK and international context reviews would be delivered to UKRI early March and conclude final outputs on 1st April 2019.

Information pertaining to the evidence reviews will be made available on the UKRI website in due course.

4. UKRI Strategic Framework Update

██████████ presented an update on the development of the UKRI Strategic framework highlighting that following the previous EAG meeting, and a discussion at UKRI Strategy Committee, the framework has been refined in an iterative process. UKRI has now started to 'use-test' the framework against current and planned UKRI initiatives with input from the cross-council EDI leads, to assess whether activities can be adequately described using the framework, and to test if the framework is fit for purpose.

Following the 'use-test' of the framework, a number of key questions had arisen for consideration by the EAG. A summary of these issues are as follows:

- *Characteristic-focussed initiatives:* the framework focuses on broad points in the 'career pipeline', and does not currently capture cross-cutting, characteristic-focussed initiatives (such as Women in Innovation', or panel membership targets etc). The EAG was asked whether the framework should be adapted to this end. Members discussed the clear need for data and transparency before taking positive action to minimise inadvertently disadvantaging certain groups. Members agreed positive action did not need to be a high-level objective however, was important to acknowledge that such an approach could be undertaken in any number of areas, as part of the 'Learn, experiment and evaluate' approach. It is important to also recognise that some of the differences are beyond UKRI's control and agreed a statement from UKRI acknowledging this, and emphasising what we are doing to address this, would be beneficial.
- *Language and phraseology:* inconsistent feedback has been received on the wording used in the framework, and members were asked to advise. Members discussed phraseology recognising a number of connotations that could be associated with use of words "merit", "talent" or "excellence". It was felt it may be helpful to consider the thematic objectives in the context of the landscape or community rather than placing an emphasis on the individual.
- *Access and the environment:* Members discussed the merits of thematic objective 2 remaining as a single thematic objective, or alternatively, of separating the two into distinct areas to represent access and the environment. Members agreed that the thematic objectives were part of a framework in which could become a 'living tool' that can be used to engage in conversations across the landscape.

Members discussed the proposed publication of the strategic framework acknowledging that this will consist of three elements:

- Situational context which provides an overview of the population data by EDI considerations, which provides the data and scene-setting for the research and innovation ecosystem;
- UKRI policy publication, consisting of an expanded explanation of the strategic framework – aim, approaches and thematic objectives – which defines how UKRI will conceptualise and group activities, and measure progress against common objectives; and,
- Building the evidence base, which will draw together existing evidence of 'what works' as a resource for the sectors and could include a commitment to funding further research to fill evidence gaps.

Members agreed that the framework should not be used as a stand-alone or 'bolt-on' document but is used to guide and enhance decision-making in all parts of UKRI, and at all levels. It was acknowledged that stakeholder engagement was crucial and that it would be beneficial to use the

thematic objectives as questions, through which stakeholders can help UKRI articulate how they might address the challenges. Members agreed to consider where they may have existing contacts or networks in which could help inform the approach and longer-term engagement plan.

██████████ emphasised the need to ensure thought is given at the earliest opportunity to the design of the document to ensure consideration is given to accessibility e.g. design colours, language and braille.

Action: EAG members to provide UKRI Strategy with key contacts and/or networks which could inform a longer-term engagement plan.

5. Recent EDI reports and potential working groups

██████████ informed members that there are a number of recent EDI reports published for which it would be beneficial for the group to have an overview of, and to consider any implications for UKRI. Members discussed the importance of engagement highlighting the benefit of potentially inviting those that have led or commissioned such reviews to attend EAG meetings. This would enable UKRI to engage more broadly in the evidence base across the sector as well as provide UKRI with an understanding of any strategic implications before such reports are finalised or published.

Members were supportive of the approach and ██████████ agreed to lead this work. ██████████ highlighted that it would also be beneficial to work with the various 'What works' centres to help identify good practice and identify ways in which to do this more efficiently. ██████████ agreed to send a request to members outside of the meeting for volunteers to support this work once clarity on financial support had been provided.

Action: ██████████ to follow up offline with members who may wish to be involved in reviewing external EDI reports across the sector and their potential implications.

Members also agreed that it would be beneficial to have material from UKRI in which to use to support them when they are 'out and about' and engaging on behalf of UKRI. UKRI Strategy agreed to provide members with a set of key messages and questions as part of an 'ambassadors' pack for EAG to make use of.

Action: UKRI Strategy to provide members with an 'ambassador' pack which includes key messages, for engaging on behalf of UKRI.

It was noted that it was unclear on what financial support was available to members undertaking tasks on behalf of UKRI outside of the external advisory group meetings, such as honoraria or travel and subsistence. UKRI corporate services was asked to clarify such arrangements for EAG members, and for other external groups with similar undertakings.

Action: UKRI Corporate Services to provide clarity on the financial support available to EAG members for supporting additional work/tasks beyond EAG meetings.

6. AOB

UKRI website: ██████████ informed members that a dedicated section on equality, diversity and inclusion was now live on the UKRI website. ██████████ proposed that it might be beneficial to include pictures of EAG members engagement as an opportunity to demonstrate visibility and transparency.

Action: UKRI Strategy to work with UKRI Comms to ensure pictures of EAG members are visible on UKRI website.

Name plates: Members agreed it would be beneficial to have name plates for future meetings to help identify both members and guests.

Action: UKRI Strategy to arrange nameplates for future EAG meetings.

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Future meetings: [REDACTED] informed members that future meetings were yet to be scheduled however, it was proposed a slight increase in the frequency of EAG meetings over the next six months to support the development of the strategic framework. UKRI Strategy will canvass for availability in due course.

[REDACTED] thanked members for their engagement and commitment in 2018 and wished colleagues a pleasant winter break.