NERC Management Board (NMB) Meeting
Summary of discussions
17 October 2018
BEIS, 1 Victoria Street, London

Members present:
Professor DJ Wingham, Mr PJ Fox, Mr R Gledhill, Dr P Heads, Ms A Robinson,

Apologies: Mr P Hayden,

Other attendees: Mrs F Goff (Head of Evidence, item 2), Dr N Badcock (Head of National Capability Commissioning, items 2&3), Mrs C Turner (Finance Director, item 4), Dr S Gardner (Head of Innovation Programmes, item 5), Dr M Webb (Head of Research, Marine, item 7), Miss N Probert (Risk & Assurance Manager, item 8), Mrs Wickenden (Head of Governance & Management Information, item 10).

Secretary: Mrs SJ Morrell.

Chief Executive Update
Professor Wingham opened the meeting and welcomed members.
He advised that there were no significant issues of the moment for discussion.

BGS evaluation

The Board was provided with the proposed BGS monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework and its suitability to fulfil NERC requirements.

Some amendments were suggested and a request for the revised paper to be presented back to NMB at its December meeting.

National Capability Award Terms & Conditions

NMB was presented with the variants to the UKRI-NERC standard terms and conditions to be applied to National Capability awards. The Board agreed to the wording of the document and noted that the award letters would be issued by Christmas and any changes to the NC variants would be brought back to NMB.

NERC Funding Framework

The Board was advised that the document had already served its purpose in terms of GRO and that no further changes should be made to it. Checks would be made to ensure consistency across all published documents.
Dodona Commissioning update

NMB discussed the paper submitted on the proposed role of the Dodona Director and the positioning of the appointment in the context of the overall NERC Data Service activity.

It was felt that more detail and clarity was required and further discussions would be held by the Head Office Executive team.

Annual Research Integrity Statement

The Board was informed that this would be the final NERC statement, as future ones would be produced by UKRI, which NERC may contribute to.

The report stated that there had not been any reported allegations over the past year. Further questions had been raised to establish whether there had been any allegations in previous years to establish what the trend was.

Options for the NERC Incentive Model for Marine Facilities

NMB was shown three options for the incentive model for the National Marine Facilities (NMF) that will build a 'pool' of funding to pay for reward days and provide a significant incentive for NERC Research Centres to secure third party income.

The Board made some changes to the paper and agreed that the paper should be signed off as part of the Governance, Responsibility and Ownership (GRO) project.

Centre Assurance Boards (CABs) – consideration of NERC’s internal assurance arrangements

NMB was presented with a summary of the Centres Activity and Resource Plans (CARPs), and the main shared risks and issues as well as specific Centre issues coming out of the July round of CAB meetings. The Board then reviewed the trial of the attendance of Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) at the CAB meetings, as a way of strengthening the CAB process by providing independent challenge. The feedback was positive from both the NEDs and attendees of the meetings. It was therefore agreed that the existing two NMB NEDs would continue to attend the CAB meetings. It was agreed in principle to supplement the CAB process by creating a NERC Assurance Board, with the detail of this to be brought back to the November meeting of NMB.

Modern Slavery Act Annual Statement

The Board reviewed the statement and suggested some slight amendments.

It was noted that this would be the final NERC statement as future ones will be produced by UKRI with input from the research councils.
Internal NERC Delegations

The Executive Chair had received a draft financial delegation and allocation letter from the UKRI Chief Executive and a Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) delegation letter from the Non-Executive Chair. The next step was for NERC to agree and set up NERC internal delegations.

NMB suggested some changes to the internal NERC delegations and when these were made then the principles of delegation and guidance on cascading delegation would be shared with Directors in their delegation letters.

Matters arising from UKRI meetings

The Board was informed that there were no issues raised at these meetings.

Standing items

NMB also noted a couple of standing items including the monthly finance update, the risk register review and the rolling programme of business.

Date of next meeting

The next NERC Management Board meeting will be held on 20 November 2018.