

## SCIENCE AND INNOVATION STRATEGY DELIVERY

### Purpose

1. To update the Commissioners on the next steps towards implementing the Science and Innovation Strategy for Forestry in Great Britain (SIS).

### Background

2. The publication of the Science and Innovation Strategy for Forestry in Great Britain (SIS) in March 2014 was suitably timed to reflect the need for forestry science to adapt to the many changes in the way in which forestry is governed and managed in Great Britain.

3. The SIS seeks to achieve four strategic outcomes:

- Provide the evidence base for the delivery of healthy and resilient forest and wider ecosystems to provide benefits for society;
- Provide the knowledge to deliver woodland management and expansion, as a component of sustainable land-use change;
- Provide the evidence base to allow the forestry sector to deliver a wide range of benefits from trees and woodlands to support sustainable economic growth in Britain;
- Result in changes to policy and practice through implementation by informed and engaged stakeholders, provide access to a high quality skill base of forest researchers, and be effectively leveraged to provide additional resources to increase the evidence base.

### Process

4. The SIS sets the Forestry Commission objectives for its research commissioning programmes, and provides indicators to measure their success. There are three phases in the strategy process. Phase one concluded with endorsing of the strategy by ministers in England, Scotland and Wales and its subsequent launch at Forest Research's Northern Research Station on the 14th March 2014 by Sir Mark Walport, the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor.

5. We are now in Phase two, which involves the development of research briefs for the science we wish Forest Research and external providers to deliver. The briefs are being developed following a GB wide series of consultation workshops with stakeholders across government, industry and NGOs.

6. Phase three will be the delivery phase, which will commence on 1 April 2015. This phase is expected to last for 4-5 years.

# Science quality review

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## Research briefs

7. The research briefs set out the key research areas and challenges which have been identified in the consultation exercise. These relate to one or more of the strategic outcomes above. The Forest Research brief has been delivered to allow FR colleagues and CFS analysts to start drafting the new research programmes. We want these to be interdisciplinary across social and physical science, to be collaborative with a range of different partners, and to use FC funds to leverage as much additional resource as possible without compromising the science deliverables. We are working closely with colleagues from Defra, the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Government to ensure that these programmes complement and add value to those being developed in their own science strategies. The brief has been peer reviewed by the members of the Expert Committee on Forest Science, and takes into account the views of the Research Strategy Management Board.

8. A further brief for our external research work will be prepared later this year to support the science from Forest Research, and provide skills and capabilities, which are not available in house. Annex 1 shows a diagrammatic representation of this process.

## Risks

9. There is still a degree of uncertainty in the medium term as to how much of the strategy can be delivered. The main risks are:

- Uncertainty about what SR15 will mean for FC finances and the level of research which can be afforded within a settlement;
- Reducing levels of finance if the current government's austerity programme is continued post May 2015;
- The continuing role of a UK Cross Border Forestry Body and its shape and form;
- The impact of Scotland's vote on independence and what this may mean for forestry and related research.

## Recommendations

10. Commissioners are asked to:

- (i) note and comment on the paper
- (ii) consider if country boards would find an update on the Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry useful at future meetings.

Roger Coppock  
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# Annex 1 – Research Delivery Process

## Science and Innovation Strategy for Forestry in Great Britain – Delivery approach

Provider	2014					2015			
	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr....
Forest Research	Research Plan & Peer Review	RSMB sign off	Develop FR Programme proposals					Peer review RSMB signoff	Research starts
External Research					Research Plan	RSMB sign off			External contracts
IFOS	National Forest Inventory sample plot data collection				NFI Reports				