

Minutes

NIRAB Thirteenth meeting

14th December 2016, 13:00-16:00

The Royal Society, London

Attendees:

MEMBERS

Dame Sue Ion	Chair		
Tim Abram	University of Manchester	Bob McKenzie (on behalf of Mick Gornall)	Springfields Ltd
Neil Bateman	EPSRC	Martin O'Brien (on behalf of Steve Cowley)	CCFE
Marie Carlick (on behalf of Andrew Carlick)	DBD Ltd	Neil Thomson	EDF Energy
Bill Lee	Imperial College	Laurence Williams	CORWM
John Molyneux	Rolls-Royce	Peter Wylie	Sellafield Ltd

OBSERVERS

Derek Allen	Innovate UK	John Loughhead	BEIS
Melanie Brownridge	NDA	David Senior	ONR

OFFICIALS

Craig Lucas	BEIS	Rupert Wilmouth	GO-Science
Rob Arnold	BEIS	Kate McCready	BEIS
Malwina Gradecka	BEIS	Jenny Scattergood	BEIS

SECRETARIAT

Gordon Bryan	NIRO	Paul Nevitt	NIRO
Andrew Howarth	NIRO	Simon White	NIRO

Apologies:

MEMBERS

Andrew Carlick	DBD Ltd	Malcolm Joyce	Lancaster University
Steve Cowley	CCFE	John Lillington	AMEC Foster Wheeler
Richard Clegg	Lloyd's Register	Andrew Sherry	NNL
Mick Gornall	Springfields Ltd	Paul Stein	Rolls-Royce
Paul Harding	URENCO	Mike Tynan	NAMRC
Neil Hyatt	Sheffield University		

OBSERVERS

Tim Dafforn	BEIS	Sir Mark Walport	GO-Science
Robin Grimes	FCO		

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members and observers for the thirteenth and final meeting of NIRAB. The draft minutes from the last meeting (NIRAB-121-1) were accepted.

Agenda Item 2 – Actions from previous NIRAB meetings

All actions had been closed out prior to the meeting with the exception of action 11.9 which was discharged during agenda item 7.

Agenda Item 3 – Government Update

The Minister of State for Energy and Intellectual Property briefly joined the meeting as a guest and addressed the meeting and expressed strong thanks for the work that the Board has carried out. The Minister reminded members of the research competition recently launched by BEIS under which £20m is available for the first phase of a programme covering 5 major areas. NIRAB's advice had been used to shape the detail of this competition which is in line with The Government's desire to upgrade expertise and position the UK as a global leader in innovative nuclear technologies.

The Chair thanked the Minister for her comments and highlighted the fact that all of the recommendations made by NIRAB have been formulated to achieve outcomes aligned to Government policy drivers. The current £20m competition is a welcome first step, but will need to be followed with subsequent phases to have the required impact. NIRAB recommended research to the value of about £250m and subsequently identified a high priority £125m programme to set a trajectory to meet long term objectives. Investment of less than this would necessitate a lowering of ambition and some hard decisions would need to be made about which benefits and outcomes to sacrifice. This would effectively result in a managed decline of the industry.

The Minister of State left the meeting.

Government advised that it is anticipated that a consultation will take place early in the New Year on the development of Industrial Strategies. The Chair suggested that NIRO coordinate a response drawing inputs from NIRAB members.

Agenda Item 4 – NIRAB Final Report

The second draft of the final report was discussed. The report was approved subject to the addition of two further recommendations. The first was a recommendation to carry out further R&D landscape surveys in the future as a means of monitoring the health of the landscape and the impact of government interventions. The second was to make a specific recommendation on resuming active participation in the Generation IV International Forum.

Agenda Item 5 – Landscape Survey

A summary was given of progress made in preparing an update to the civil nuclear R&D landscape, a first draft was discussed and some of the detailed data underpinning the early conclusions was presented. Guidance was sought on what type of analysis would be useful to Government when considering the geographic distribution of research. Members recommended that additional data be compiled to enable international comparisons.

Agenda Item 6 – Select Committee enquiry into the implications of Brexit

The House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee is currently carrying out an enquiry into *“Leaving the EU: negotiation priorities for energy and climate change*

policy". It was agreed that NIRO should submit evidence on behalf of NIRAB and a draft submission was discussed. The draft will be updated and submitted in line with the discussion.

Agenda Item 7 – UK initiatives update

Following the Departmental reorganisation that took place in the summer the business case for further NNUF investment has been rewritten and resubmitted. The Chair noted that the NNUF funding has been announced more than once during the term of NIRAB, but funding has yet to be released. NIRAB's recommendations are based on the assumptions that the planned NNUF expenditure takes place.

Funding has begun to flow for the Sir Henry Royce Institute with £11m of capital and recurring revenue allocated to Culham and NNL. Plans are in hand to reconstitute the Governing Board to include more stakeholders and fewer partners/beneficiaries.

Agenda Item 9 – NIRAB Chair/NIRO Additional Notable Activities

A paper containing NIRAB Chair and NIRO stakeholder meetings was distributed to the board.

Closing remarks

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking NIRAB members for their contributions over the last 3 years, noting, in particular, that effort has been provided on a pro bono basis.