

Departmental Response to the consultation on the draft DAERA Science Strategy Framework

July 2020

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) invests around a quarter of its annual budget on science services. These services include monitoring and surveillance and research and development. Science outputs are used to inform policy development, meet statutory obligations, measure outcomes, provide advice and information, promote innovation, manage risks to society and the environment, and support rural affairs. In the context of the UK leaving the EU, the importance of the science evidence DAERA uses to support policy development and underpin statutory requirements is increased.
- 1.2 A DAERA Science Strategy Framework is being developed. This will guide how DAERA can optimise its use of science to help deliver Departmental and Programme for Government objectives and contribute to international agreement commitments.
- 1.3 A consultation was published to seek views on the draft strategy framework and how it might be improved. The consultation ran from 27 August to 22 October 2019.
- 1.4 A total of nineteen responses were received from a range of organisations (see Annex A). Some respondents did not answer the questions asked in the consultation document, but provided general comments. Additionally, not all respondents provided an answer to every question, with some responding to some questions and not others.
- 1.5 This document summarises the main issues raised by respondents and provides a DAERA Departmental Response to those issues. The final version of the DAERA Science Strategy Framework incorporates revisions to the strategy as detailed in this document.
- 1.6 Respondents to the consultation were generally supportive of its proposals. However, they often indicated they would have preferred to see greater acknowledgement or consideration given to sectoral issues, for example, issues relating to the environment or agri-food sector. The Science Strategy Framework applies to all science services that DAERA uses in all circumstances. Given this very wide remit, it is necessary for it to be defined in

a general way. Once finalised, operational strategies to implement it for Innovation, Research and Development and Monitoring and Surveillance science will be developed. These will then be applied to all science services commissioned and managed by DAERA, across all sectors within the departmental remit.

- 1.7 A further common concern expressed by respondents was that timeframes proposed for implementation of strategy objectives were unambitious. In defining these proposed timeframes, consideration was given to the work needed to achieve each. These have been reviewed in response to the consultation feedback. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the strategy framework is finalised. The timeframes proposed in the consultation are confirmed as challenging, credible estimates for when objectives will be achieved.
- 1.8 The Department would like to express its thanks to all those who have responded to this consultation. As noted above, many responses related to sectoral issues and whilst these may not have resulted in changes to this high level framework, they will be fed into and considered in the development of policy and operational strategy that will follow its finalisation. The Department also intends to engage further with stakeholders in the development of these operational policies and strategies.

2. RESPONSES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 2.1 This synopsis of responses includes a list of names of organisations that responded but not the names, addresses, or other contact details for individuals who responded. None of the responses below are attributed to any individual or organisation.
- 2.2 As stated in the consultation document, any information provided in response to the consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with access to information legislation (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information regulations 2004).
- 2.3 Under the General Data Protection Regulations, for those responses that contained personal information, such as individuals' names, addresses and email addresses, DAERA is duty bound to tell you that we will store your information securely and will only share information where it is necessary to for DAERA to carry out lawful business activities and only then with the person's approval to do so.

3. Departmental Response

Part 1: Draft DAERA Science Strategy Framework

Strategic Context

- 3.1 The draft strategy framework summarises the strategic context within which DAERA science operates. This includes Departmental and Programme for Government outcomes for which the Department is responsible, along with national, international and global commitments. This context informs on the current strategic influences impacting the sectors the department serves, which signal and / or drive the strategic direction DAERA should adopt to support these sectors in achievement of its strategic outcomes.

Question 1: What are your views on the strategic drivers identified?

The Science Strategy Framework provides a summary of the strategic context for use of science by DAERA. This is supported by an in-depth evidence base. Consultees were asked for their views.

Summary

11 respondents replied to this question.

Generally there was agreement that the strategic context was appropriate.

Departmental response to main issues

Sectoral focus

Many of the respondents commented they would have wished to see greater consideration being given to sectoral issues, for example environment or agri-food related issues, in the consultation document, or that some sectoral issues were not fully considered and / or balanced. The Department will review the evidence base to consider the issues highlighted and will make adjustments to the summary included in the Strategic Context section.

External research funds as a strategic driver

A respondent advised that consideration should be given to how external resources for promoting and supporting science can be a driver for science commissioned by DAERA. The Department will revise the evidence base to consider the issue and will make appropriate adjustments to the summary included in the Strategic Context section.

Question 2: What are your views on the types and applications of science that DAERA uses?

The Science Strategy Framework provides definitions for the types and applications of science used by DAERA and asks consultees for their views on these.

Summary

13 Respondents provided an answer to this question.

Generally there was consensus the types and applications of science used by DAERA were appropriate.

Departmental Response to Main Issues

Greater sectoral emphasis

Some respondents would have welcomed a clearer definition of how the types and applications for science used by DAERA apply to their sector. These are defined in general terms, which is necessary as they apply to a very wide and diverse range of services and circumstances.

Innovation

Some respondents emphasised the importance of innovation and the need for it to be prioritised and appropriately supported, so that it effectively enables impact at sectoral level. Once the Science Strategy Framework is finalised, operational strategies will be developed. This includes a specific strategy focusing on how DAERA can support and enable innovation across all the sectors within its remit.

Vision and Mission

Question 3: What are your views on the Vision and Mission DAERA has proposed for its Science Strategy Framework?

The Science Strategy Framework proposes a Vision and Mission and consultees were asked to provide their views on the proposals.

Summary

15 respondents provided a response to this question.

Generally there was consensus the Vision and Mission were appropriate.

Departmental Response to Main Issues

Greater sectoral emphasis

Some respondents considered the Vision and Mission needed to have a greater sectoral focus, as they are defined in general terms. Once the framework is agreed, these will apply to all science services that DAERA commissions and uses, so they need to be relevant and applicable to a very wide and diverse range of services and circumstances.

Principles

Question 4: What are your views on the principles behind what, why and how DAERA will use science?

The Science Strategy Framework proposes a range of principles behind what, why and how DAERA will use science and consultees were asked to provide their views on these.

Summary

12 respondents provided a response to this question.

Generally there was a consensus the principles were appropriate.

Departmental Response to Main Issues

Greater sectoral emphasis

Many of the respondents considered the principles were too DAERA focused and needed to have a greater sectoral emphasis. The principles in this high level Science Strategy Framework are general in nature. Once the framework is agreed, the principles will apply to all science services that DAERA commissions and uses, so they need to be relevant and applicable to a very wide and diverse range of services and circumstances.

Question 5: From your perspective, are these goals appropriate?

The Science Strategy Framework proposes a range of goals and consultees were asked to advise if they considered they were appropriate.

Summary

17 Respondents provided an answer to this question.

Generally there was consensus that the goals were appropriate.

Departmental Response to Main Issues

Judgement and assurance of science quality

Some respondents were concerned that judgement and assurance of science quality would be confined to use of the REF system¹¹. This high level Science Strategy Framework, will apply to all science services that DAERA commissions and uses, so to a very wide and diverse range of services. Once it is finalised, operational strategies considering R&D, monitoring and surveillance science and innovation will be developed. Appropriate assurance methods for science quality will be considered at this level.

Need for a programme based approach

Some respondents advocated a programme-based approach should be implemented to improve the quality of R&D. Once the Strategic Science Framework is finalised, DAERA intends to develop an R&D Operational Strategy, aligned with it, which will include reviewing the current approach to R&D commissioning and management.

Sectoral issues need to be considered

Some respondents considered the goals identified were vague, or aspirational, or not linked to sectoral issues. This high level Science Strategy Framework, will apply to all science services that DAERA commissions and uses, so to a very wide and diverse range of services. To optimise clarity and brevity, it has been considered appropriate to keep the definition of goals at a general level. Once it is finalised, operational strategies considering R&D, monitoring and surveillance science and innovation will be developed. These will be applied to all science services commissioned and managed by DAERA at a sectoral level.

¹ REF – The Research Excellence Framework is an impact evaluation which assesses the research of British Higher Education Institutions.

Need for all-island collaboration

Some respondents identified the need for all-island collaboration to fully understand and address some issues (for example environmental issues). The Science Strategy Framework will be adjusted to include DAERA science leaders are aware of external changes and that they will work in partnership with others to better serve the department's mission.

Question 6: From your perspective, is there anything missing?

The Science Strategy Framework proposes a range of goals and consultees were asked to advise if they considered any goals were not identified.

Summary

17 respondents provided a response to this question.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Sectoral issues need to be considered

Some respondents considered the goals identified were vague, or aspirational, or not linked to sectoral issues. This high level Science Strategy Framework, will apply to all science services that DAERA commissions and uses, so to a very wide and diverse range of services. To optimise clarity and brevity, it has been considered appropriate to keep the definition of goals at a general level. Once the Science Strategy Framework is finalised, operational strategies considering R&D, monitoring and surveillance science and innovation will be developed. These will be applied to all science services commissioned and managed by DAERA at a sectoral level.

Assurance of access to appropriately skilled staff

A respondent identified a need to confirm external and independent review of science priorities as well as for assessing the quality and relevance of the science delivered. The Science Strategy Framework will be adjusted to include this.

International horizon scanning

A respondent considered that the goals did not consider the need for horizon scanning beyond the NI / UK context, or the need for engaging in international networks to be aware of all issues which may impact the sectors within the DAERA remit. As identified in response to question 5, the Science Strategy Framework will be adjusted to include that DAERA science leaders are aware of external developments and that they will work in partnership with others to better serve the department's overall mission.

Question 7: From your perspective, are there any of these goals which are more important than others? If yes, which are they?

The strategy proposes a range of goals and consultees were asked to advise if they considered one or some were more important than others

Summary

11 respondents replied to this question

Some respondents had a concern that the order of presentation represented a priority order. Others provided a range of views on the relative importance of the strategy goals; several considering it was difficult to identify which was most important; others considering leadership for science and measuring impact to be of a higher priority. Considering the responses, the Department is concluding there is no priority order for the Science Strategy Framework goals. It will adjust the wording of the Science Strategy Framework to outline they are not presented in order of priority.

Enablers

Question 8: What are your views on the enablers identified for DAERA to implement the Science Strategy?

DAERA identifies a range of enablers it will use to implement the Science Strategy Framework. These include funding, skills, infrastructure, IT / Data, Governance and dissemination. Consultees were asked to provide their views on these.

Summary

12 respondents replied to this question.

Generally there was consensus that the enablers identified were relevant and important and several respondents emphasised the importance of individual enablers to the provision of science services.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Relationships with key delivery partners

Some respondents highlighted that relationships and collaboration with key research delivery partners in government, academia and industry are also a key enabler. The Science Strategy Framework will be revised to include “Relationships with key delivery partners” as an additional enabler.

Description of enablers too broad

Some respondents advocated for greater definition of the enablers. This is a high level Science Strategy Framework, which will apply to all science services that DAERA commissions and uses, so a very wide and diverse range of services. To optimise clarity and brevity, it has been considered appropriate to keep the definition of the enablers at a general level.

Objectives to Achieve Goals (renamed Milestones)

Question 9: What are your views on the objective to enhance stakeholder engagement?

The strategy identifies a proposed objective for DAERA to identify and establish new stakeholder engagement mechanisms to facilitate DAERA having a holistic insight on the current and future issues which could impact the environmental, agri-food and rural sectors in NI to inform its identification, prioritisation and commissioning of science to meet its needs. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

15 respondents provided a response to this question.

Generally, there was support for this proposal from respondents.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Review and build on existing mechanisms

Some respondents advised there are already stakeholder engagement mechanisms in place and these should be reviewed and built upon. It is the intention to review and learn lessons from the existing stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

Stakeholder engagement should happen throughout the process

Some respondents advised current engagement practices do not facilitate engagement throughout the process and this is a weakness. Once the Science Strategy framework is agreed, this issue will be taken into account in the design of effective stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

Ensure identification of stakeholders is comprehensive

Some respondents highlighted there is a very broad range of stakeholders across the DAERA remit and stakeholder engagement processes, need to facilitate appropriate engagement with all. Once the Science Strategy framework is agreed, this issue will be taken into account in the design of effective stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

Timeframe too long

Some respondents considered the timeframe to achieve this was unambitious. There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, to implement this proposal. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the Science Strategy Framework is agreed. The proposed timeframe has been reviewed and is considered realistic.

Question 10: What are your views on the objective to encourage joining up of NICS and UK Government Science?

The strategy identifies a proposal for DAERA to encourage the joining up of NICS and UK Government science to develop a more co-ordinated approach, so that the value of investment in science is optimised. Consultees were asked for their views on the proposal.

Summary

Responses to this question were received from 12 respondents.

There was strong support for this proposal.

Question 11: What are your views on the priority framework to guide prioritisation and investment in DAERA science priorities?

The strategy identifies a proposed objective for DAERA to establish and apply a framework of principles to guide investment in and use of science by DAERA in line with its remit and the strategic priorities of the NI Executive. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

10 respondents provided a response to this question.

Generally there was support for this proposal from respondents.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Importance of meeting sectoral, local, UK, EU and international commitments when identifying DAERA priorities

Many respondents emphasised the need for this framework to consider sectoral, local, UK, EU and international commitments when identifying DAERA priorities. It is the intention that the work to establish a framework of principles will include establishing a holistic understanding of science needs.

Timeframe too long

Some respondents considered the timeframe to achieve this was unambitious. There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, to implement this objective. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the Science Strategy Framework is agreed. The proposed timeframe has been reviewed and is considered realistic.

Question 12: What are your views on the plan to publish Operational Strategies for Research and Development, Monitoring and Surveillance Science and Innovation?

The strategy identifies a proposed objective for DAERA to publish Operational Strategies for Research and Development, Monitoring and Surveillance science and Innovation. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

9 respondents replied to this question.

Generally there was support for this proposal from respondents.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Clarification on Research & Development priorities and commissioning process.

Some respondents advised specifically that details of R&D priorities and the commissioning process should be included. It is the intention that the R&D Operational Strategy, which will be progressed once the Science Strategy Framework is finalised, will include R&D priorities and outline the commissioning process that will be implemented.

Question 13: What are your views on the plan for DAERA to enhance its understanding of intellectual property and have clear accountabilities in place to maximise the benefits of science in the NI and UK economy?

The strategy identifies a proposed objective for DAERA to enhance its understanding of intellectual property (IP) and to have clear accountabilities in place to maximise the benefits of science in the NI and UK economy. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

10 respondents replied to this question.

Respondents expressed a range of views, including that optimising the IP potential of science may not be the best use of or an appropriate role for public funding; and other UK research funders have guidelines on how intellectual property should be handled and DAERA should consider adopting a similar approach.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Lack of clarity on the proposal

The range of views indicate there is a lack of clarity in what DAERA is proposing. The Department will revise the wording used, to clarify its intention to become a more informed customer for science, which includes building a greater understanding of how IP should be handled and contract design managed.

Question 14: What are your views on the plan to commission science from the most appropriate provider in terms of mitigating risk, obtaining quality, delivering efficiency and meeting DAERA's needs effectively?

The Science Strategy Framework identifies a proposed objective to commission science from the most appropriate provider in terms of mitigating risk, obtaining quality, delivering efficiently and meeting DAERA's needs effectively. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

12 respondents replied to this question.

Generally there was support for this proposal from respondents.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Timeframe too long

Some respondents considered the timeframe to achieve this was too long. There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, to implement this proposal. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the Science Strategy Framework is agreed. The proposed timeframe has been reviewed and is considered realistic.

AFBI's role

Some respondents highlighted the need for the AFBI research platform to be effectively resourced so that it is competitive.

The 2018 Review of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), DAERA's Non-Departmental Public Body, identified the need for an arms-length body to undertake a proportion of the DAERA science portfolio, which needs to be undertaken under its control and in Northern Ireland. (For example, the need for key emergency response capability). This science requirement will be specified and fit-for-purpose resources (both human and physical) will be funded to assure the quality of its delivery.

Question 15: What are your views on the plan for DAERA to assure it has appropriately skilled academic staff in place to facilitate the necessary quality, objectiveness and robustness of science evidence that DAERA identifies needs to be undertaken locally and under its control?

The Science Strategy Framework identifies a proposed objective for assuring appropriately skilled scientific staff are in place to undertake the proportion of the DAERA science portfolio that needs to be taken forward under its control and locally. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

12 respondents provided an answer to this question

Generally there was support for this proposal from respondents, with some indicating current gaps and weaknesses they are aware of at a sectoral level.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Timeframe too long

Some respondents considered the timeframe to achieve this objective was unambitious. There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, to implement this proposal. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the Science Strategic Framework is agreed. The proposed timeframe has been reviewed and is considered realistic.

Questioning of DAERA's need to undertake science under its control and locally

Some respondents were confused by the description “science that needs to be taken forward under its control and locally”; and whether DAERA needed to undertake any science under its control. DAERA science services are currently undertaken directly by DAERA staff in the Department, including in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Veterinary Epidemiological Unit; provided by the Department’s Arms-length body, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI); and by a range of other science providers.

The need for DAERA to undertake some services under its control was confirmed in the 2018 Review of AFBI, DAERA's Non-Departmental Public Body. It will be necessary to define which services need to be undertaken under DAERA control, as well as extend the assessment to all science services provided by DAERA. DAERA needs to assure appropriately skilled staff are in place to undertake these science services.

The Department will revise the wording used, to clarify this intention relates to the proportion of science requirements identified as needing to be done under its control and locally.

R&D Programme approach

Some respondents identified a programme or platform based approach to R&D, facilitating fewer, larger, more long-term projects may assist in development and retention of appropriately skilled scientific staff. Once the Science Strategy Framework is finalised, DAERA intends to develop an R&D Operational Strategy, aligned with it, which will include reviewing the current approach to R&D commissioning and management.

Question 16: What are your views on the plan to invest in modern, fit for purpose facilities for science that needs to be undertaken locally and under DAERA control?

The strategy identifies a proposed objective to invest in modern, fit for purpose facilities for science that needs to be undertaken locally and under DAERA control. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

11 respondents answered this question.

Generally, there was support for this proposal from respondents, with some advising they consider that some of the current facilities are unfit for purpose.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Timeframe too long

There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, to implement this proposal. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the Science Strategy Framework is agreed. The proposed timeframe has been reviewed and is considered realistic.

Question 17: What are your views on the plan to develop a science management information system that effectively and efficiently collates, stores, manages and facilitates the use of DAERA science data, to support integration and collaboration between internal and external science teams?

The strategy identifies a proposed objective to develop a science management information system that effectively and efficiently collates, stores, manages and facilitates the use of DAERA science data, to support integration and collaboration between internal and external science teams. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

11 respondents answered this question.

There was general support for this proposal from respondents.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Timeframe too long

Some respondents considered the proposed timeframe too long.

There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, to implement this proposal. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the Science Strategy Framework is agreed. The proposed timeframe has been reviewed and is considered realistic.

Cost effectiveness of investment

Some respondents advised the Government has a less than satisfactory track record of implementing large scale IT projects and question whether the return from its implementation would justify its cost. The collaboration, science evidence dissemination and reporting ambitions of this Science Strategy Framework (which have been supported by respondents) cannot be delivered effectively, without the implementation of the proposed science management information system. Effective, externally assured, governance mechanisms will be applied to the implementation of this proposal, to assure value for money.

Question 18: What are your views on the plan to develop and deliver a strategic approach for the systematic dissemination of DAERA scientific data and findings both within and external to DAERA?

The strategy identifies a proposed objective to develop and deliver a strategic approach for the systematic dissemination of DAERA scientific data and findings both within and external to DAERA. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

11 respondents answered this question.

There was general support for this proposal from respondents.

Question 19: What are your views on the plan to establish and publish an Annual Report outlining the impact of DAERA investment in science at industry and sector level?

The strategy identifies the intention to develop an Annual Report to outline the impact of DAERA investment in science on the industry and sectors within its remit; and to seek to provide appropriate benchmarks for these. The Science Strategy Framework proposes the first Annual Report would be published by September 2023. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

10 respondents replied to this question.

There was a general consensus among respondents that this was welcome and needed.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Proposed timeframe too long

Many respondents considered the timeframe too long to initiate measurement of outcome of the strategy. There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, to implement the Science Strategy Framework before a meaningful Annual Report can be produced. The intention is that underpinning work will be initiated immediately the Science Strategy Framework is agreed. The proposed timeframe has been reviewed and is considered realistic.

Benefits

Question 20: What are your views on the proposals for how we can measure benefits delivered from the implementation of this strategy?

The consultation identifies a range of the types of benefits DAERA considers it will gain from the implementation of the strategy and provides illustrative descriptions of how these benefits may be manifested. Consultees were asked for their views on this proposal.

Summary

11 respondents answered this question.

There was agreement on the need to measure benefits. Some respondents considered the focus was largely internal to DAERA

Departmental Responses to main issues

Measurement of benefits

Many respondents were interested in how the Department would measure the achievement of benefits; wanted to see benefits articulated at a sectoral level and some advocated the use of benchmarking. The intention identified in the strategy is to develop an Annual Report, which addresses these issues.

Additional improved value for money benefit

A respondent highlighted that R&D into new approaches and techniques may deliver efficiencies in monitoring and surveillance science, resulting in improved value for money. The Department will revise the Science Strategy Framework to include the potential of improved value for money benefit from R&D.

Part 2: Rural Needs and Equality Considerations

Question 21: Are there any considerations on rural needs you wish to raise at this point? Do you have any evidence that would be useful to the Department? If so please describe this evidence and provide a copy.

The consultation advised that a Rural Needs Assessment to identify potential impacts of the strategy on rural areas has been undertaken. Consultees were asked to advise on any rural needs considerations they wished to be considered and to provide DAERA with any evidence they considered would be useful to the Department.

Summary

2 respondents provided an answer to this question.

Departmental Responses to main issues

Statutory Duties

There was acknowledgement the department was acting in line with its statutory duty under the Rural Needs Act and the Brown Principles.

Opportunities

It was proposed the implementation of the Science Strategy Framework should consider the opportunity to gain more from Citizen Science; and may enhance the potential for income from tourism. The opportunities identified will be considered in relevant operational strategies and sectoral policies.

Question 22: Are there any considerations on equality that you wish to raise at this point? Do you have any evidence that would be useful to the Department? If so, please describe the evidence and provide a copy.

The consultation advised that a High Level Impact Assessment to evaluate the equality issues set out in Section 75 of equality legislation has been completed. It is planned that all policies that cascade from this Science Strategy Framework will be equality screened and where necessary a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken. This is in line with the DAERA Equality Scheme. Consultees were asked to advise on any equality considerations they wished to be considered and to provide DAERA with any evidence they considered would be useful to the Department.

Summary

No additional issues or evidence was provided.

4. Next Steps

Publication of the Strategy

- 4.1 The final strategy will be published and made available on the DAERA website, as will this Departmental Response.

Implementation of the Strategy - Governance structures

- 4.2 A high-level Governance Group, chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Central Services and Contingency Planning and consisting of Group Heads representing all DAERA business areas has been established to take ownership of and provide direction on the implementation of the strategy.

Operational Policies and Strategies

- 4.3 The Department intends to develop and implement a number of operational policies and strategies relating to Monitoring and Surveillance, Research and Development, Emergency Response Capability and Innovation.
- 4.4 Working groups have been established to take forward the development of these strategies under the governance of DAERA senior officials. It is the Department's intention to engage further with stakeholders in the development of these operational policies and strategies.
- 4.5 Public consultation on the first of these operational policies and strategies, the Innovation Strategy, is planned for early 2020.

5. Annex A – List of Respondents

Respondents A-Z	
1.	Agri Search NI
2.	Agri-Food Quest, QUB
3.	Arc 21
4.	Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC)
5.	Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
6.	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
7.	Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
8.	Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL)
9.	Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association Ltd (NIFDA)
10.	Northern Ireland Water
11.	QUB - Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise
12.	Queens University Marine Laboratory, Portaferry
13.	RSPB-NI
14.	Sinn Féin
15.	True Harvest Seeds, Strangford
16.	UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
17.	Ulster Angling Federation (UAF)
18.	Ulster Arable Society (UAS)
19.	Ulster Farmers Union (UFU)

