
Science and Evidence Strategy 2010–2015

This strategy sets out how we will use science and evidence to meet the challenges of delivering safer food and healthier diets

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Foreword

I am delighted to present our new Science and Evidence Strategy 2010–15, setting out how we will use science and evidence to meet the challenges of delivering safer food and healthier diets.

Science is at the heart of the Agency. Our commitment to an open, science- and evidence-based approach and to independent scientific advice, has helped us make real progress, and has been acknowledged in independent evaluations. This is reaffirmed at the core of our new Strategic Plan and reinforced by our new organisational structure. We must maintain this, but we will need to work harder and more smartly to learn from experience and meet the science and policy challenges ahead. It is only through the robust use of science and evidence that we will be effective in targeting resources, managing risks, and measuring impacts.



This strategy sets out the science we will need to meet our demanding goals for safer food and healthier eating. To touch on just a few major issues, we need to understand how to control foodborne illness, including the challenge of reducing levels of campylobacter in chicken, and how to achieve changes to food products and behaviours that will lead to healthier diets. Evidence on the impacts of food on health must be matched with much better evidence on what actually works in practice to reduce adverse impacts and achieve long-lasting benefits. And as highlighted so clearly in the Pennington Report, we need to develop risk-based and effective controls on food businesses, and understand the behaviours and cultures that contribute to this.

These issues play out in a complex wider environment of policy, political and social factors, and our own rich and varied personal experiences of food. These issues do not fall neatly into scientific or organisational silos, and this strategy reflects the needs of the entire Agency, and prioritises partnership, multi-disciplinary approaches, using a broad definition of evidence and a longer term perspective. Crucially, it sets out a greater commitment to working with others on shared issues. This presents challenges, but we are not starting from nothing – the cross-government strategy, Food 2030, provides a shared vision for safe, healthy, sustainable food, and the cross-government Food Research and Innovation Strategy sets out, for the first time, a plan for working in partnership on shared issues. I look forward to seeing the first fruits of this in initiatives on food security and campylobacter.

This Science and Evidence Strategy gives us an excellent framework for the work ahead. It has benefitted enormously from discussion with our science advisers, partners and stakeholders, and I would like to thank them for their contributions. I look forward to working with them to deliver this agenda – and to reporting progress in my annual reports.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Andrew Wadge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew Wadge, Chief Scientist

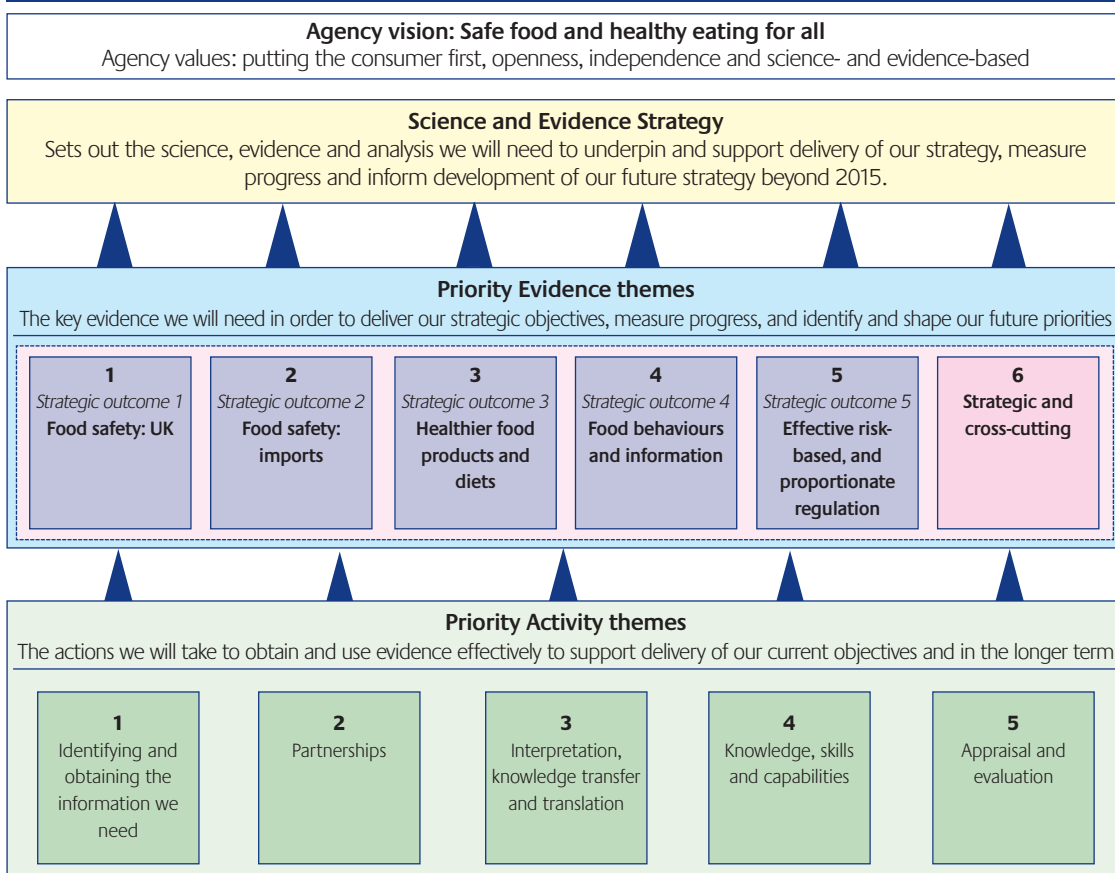
The strategy in summary: what the strategy is for and what it does

What does the strategy do?

This Science and Evidence Strategy shows how we will use science and evidence to meet the challenges of delivering safer food and healthier diets. It sets out our strategic priorities for the evidence we will need, and the activities we will undertake to make sure we obtain and use that evidence effectively to support delivery of our Strategic Plan 2010–15¹, measure progress, inform development of our future strategy, and support our ability to deliver in the long-term.

We will use our strategy **internally** as the high-level framework to guide our detailed planning, prioritisation and delivery of our science, and **externally** as a statement of our principles and priorities and a basis for discussion with potential partners.

Figure 1: Structure and key components of the Science and Evidence Strategy



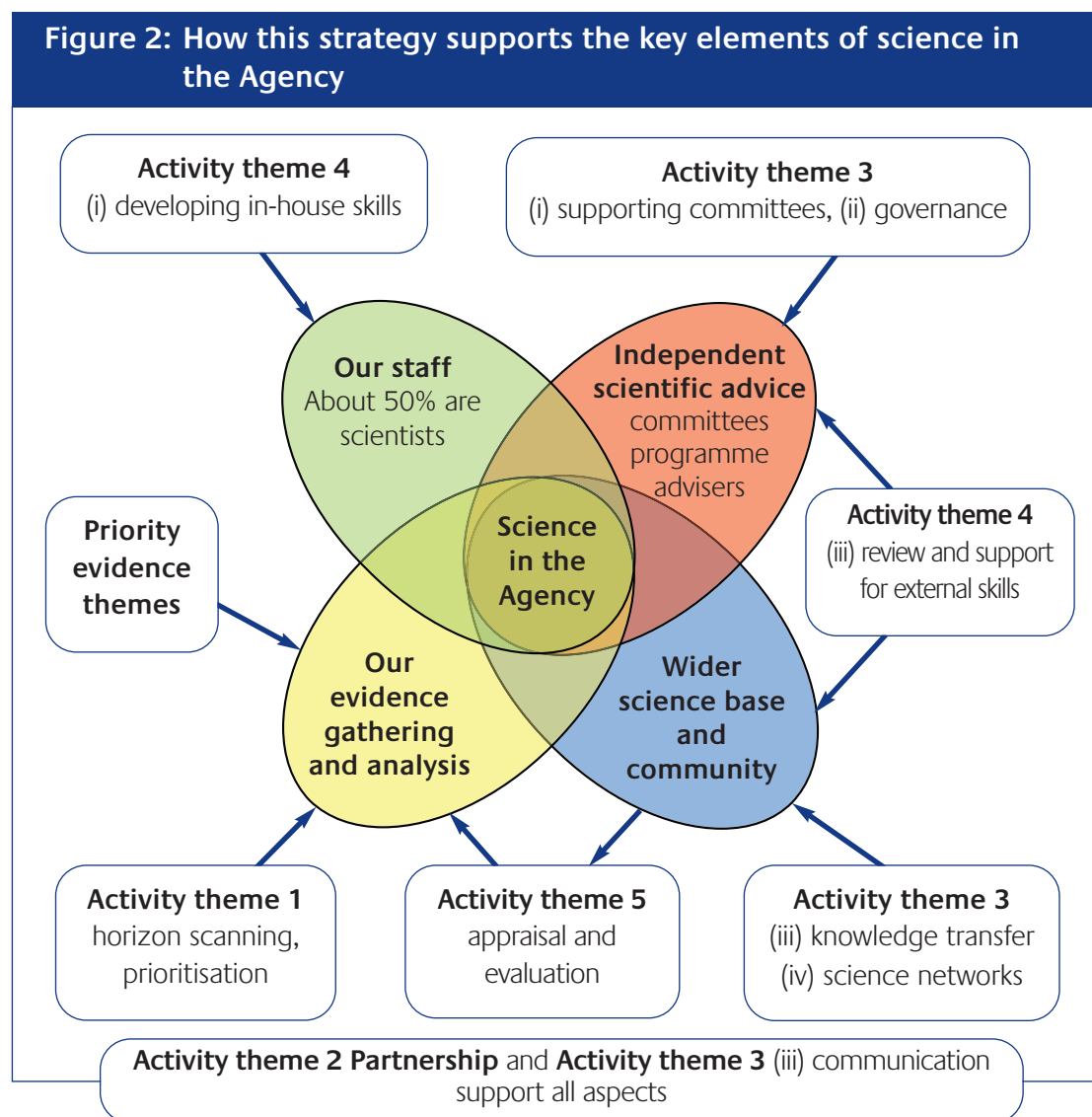
Our strategy focuses on high-level priorities. It does not list everything we will do. We will report regularly on the detail of our science work, including in our Chief Scientist's annual reports. The priorities in this strategy will help us deliver our strategic plan over the next five years. Much of this science work will continue and help to shape and deliver our objectives in the longer term, and will inform our next strategic plan. We want to set a strategic direction and use this to forge partnerships to deliver and use the science we need now and in the future.

The evidence and activity priorities are discussed in more detail later.

¹ food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications/busreps/strategicplan/

Science in the Food Standards Agency

Science is at the heart of the Agency's work. We aim to be science- and evidence-based in everything we do. Science in the Agency covers a wide range of resources and activities, from our staff – some 50% of whom are scientists – to independent expert advice, our own science evidence gathering, and the international science base and community. This strategy aims to support and develop all of these aspects of our science.



The Agency spends between £25m and £30m each year on commissioned science and evidence, about 17 to 20% of our total resource, among the highest such proportions in UK government.² We work with other funders to help develop and benefit from the wider base of evidence and expertise, in the UK and internationally. We communicate our science and evidence openly, including on our open-access research repository Foodbase³, so that others can use and benefit from our work. Our Board has concluded that it cannot 'ring-fence' our science spend, because it must retain flexibility to manage resources in the face of developments, but it has put on record its desire to maintain our commitment to a robust science base.⁴

² Based on the definition of evidence set in this strategy. Previous figures based on a narrower definition are not directly comparable. For comparison, our spend in 2009-10 on a like-for-like basis was about £26m.

³ foodbase.org.uk/

⁴ food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/board/boardmins090714.pdf

What science and evidence do we need?

The challenges we face require multi-disciplinary approaches. We will bring together evidence and expertise across the natural and social sciences, and deliver using multi-disciplinary teams within the Agency and with our partners. We will consider evidence broadly, and give proper emphasis to gathering, reviewing and using existing evidence, translating evidence into actions, and evaluating progress and impacts of our work, as well as commissioning new evidence.

We need to work effectively and achieve value for money in our science work. This means focusing on priorities, asking the right questions, using evidence effectively and translating results. We need to work with national and international scientists, food business, enforcement and other partners domestically and internationally, to add value and improve impact – for example by sharing data, planning and costs.

What is evidence?

In this strategy, evidence means robust, reliable information that we can use to make well-informed decisions about our policies and advice, and evaluate their impact. It includes:

- collection of new data and information (quantitative and qualitative), including investigative research to describe phenomena and understand their underlying causes and mechanisms
- monitoring and surveillance
- analysis and modelling of existing statistical, economic or other data (including qualitative information), to identify gaps
- reviewing and synthesising knowledge from existing research, stakeholder consultation and expert knowledge, including advice from independent expert advisers
- evaluation of previous, current or prospective new policies

How do we use evidence?

- to develop and improve our risk assessment and advice
- to develop and support policy, including identifying and assessing risks to delivery
- to track progress and evaluate the impact of our policy and advice
- to track developments in the evidence base and evaluate their implications for policies
- to identify future issues and evidence gaps and develop options to respond to them

Setting and reviewing priorities

Two key innovations in this strategy are to:

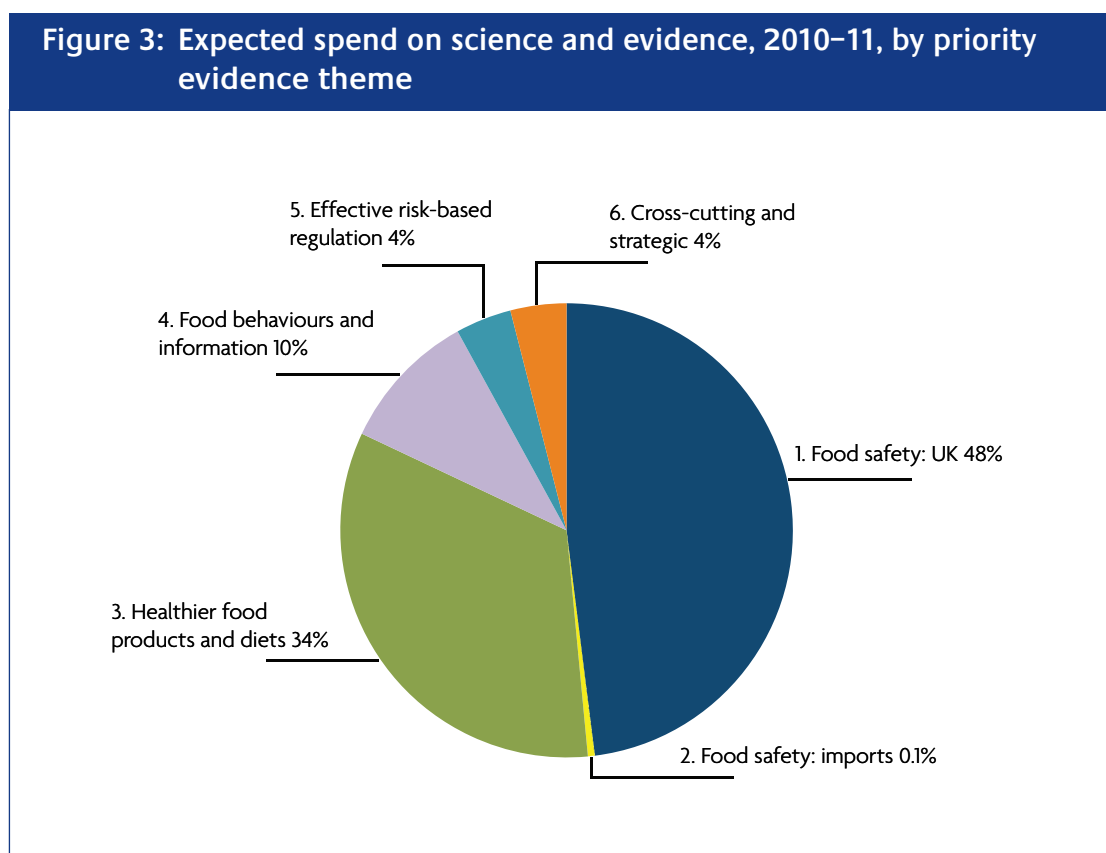
- move to a **broader definition of evidence** – to make sure we bring together all the relevant expertise and evidence we need to meet the challenges we face, and
- use this to conduct **strategic prioritisation of our evidence needs** across all our work, so we can identify the best package of work across all our needs.

The framework we use to prioritise our evidence needs is outlined in Annexe A.

This will result in an **evidence plan** of the main work we wish to commission for the next one to two years, which we will refresh annually. We will publish the evidence plan, to provide transparency and to invite external comments, before we commission new work on:

- existing data that could address the identified needs
- opportunities for collaboration
- whether we have defined our evidence needs in the best way

Our expected spend on commissioned science and evidence in the first year of this strategy, 2010–11, is approximately £29m,² split across the six priority evidence themes as shown below.



Note 1: Theme 1. Food safety: UK includes statutory monitoring, representing approximately £5m.

Note 2: Theme 3: Healthier food products and diets, includes the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, which provides key data on food consumption that also supports all the other themes.

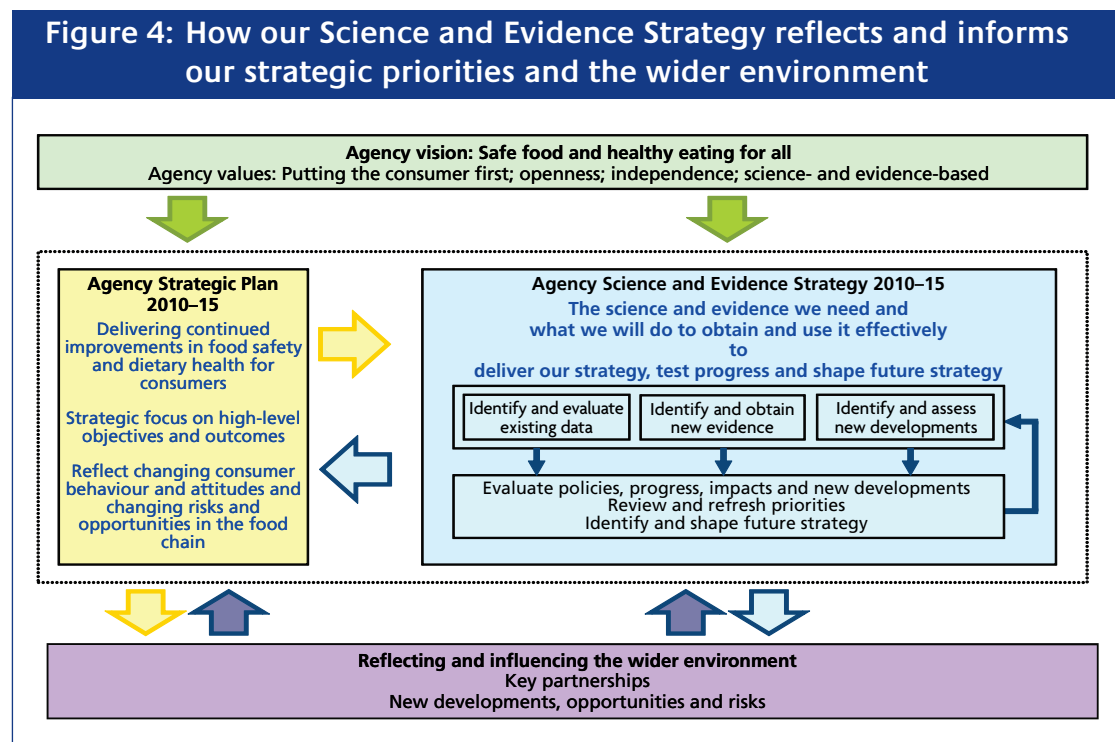
Over the course of this strategy we would expect the three cross-cutting themes (4, 5 and 6), which contribute both to food safety and to healthier diets, to develop as we establish detailed requirements and commission new work. The initial spend in theme 2 (Food safety: imports) is relatively small, but we also expect this area to develop once current, wider work on food safety in theme 1 allows us to identify and prioritise specific risks and issues on imports, which will be addressed in detail in theme 2.

Reviewing and refreshing our strategy

We will review this strategy regularly and refresh it as needed, in light of developments. The outputs from this strategy will inform the review and revision of our strategic priorities.

Our Chief Scientist's annual reports will provide updates on our level and balance of resourcing, and report progress, new developments, and any revision of priorities. The General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS) will provide independent commentary and challenge on these issues.

Figure 4 sets the Science and Evidence Strategy in context, showing how science and evidence reflects and informs the Agency's strategic priorities and the wider environment.



Part 1: Priority Evidence themes

The first five priority evidence themes address the outcomes in the Agency's Strategic Plan 2010–15, while the sixth supports the underpinning and longer term work that looks beyond the period of the Strategic Plan 2010–15.

Priority evidence themes set out the key evidence we will need, to deliver our strategic objectives, test progress, and shape future priorities

Evidence theme 1 – Food safety: UK production and consumption

Supports strategic plan outcome 1: food produced and sold in the UK is safe to eat

Overall objectives for this priority are to:

- improve our understanding of the nature, patterns, trends and importance for health of risks from chemical and biological hazards and from allergens in food and feed
- improve our ability to anticipate and minimise the effects of food and feed incidents

Evidence priorities include:

- Survey, monitoring and epidemiological data, and research to address gaps, on patterns and drivers of risks from chemical and biological hazards and allergens in food and feed, including robust data on foodborne illness across the UK. Major areas of work include:
 - campylobacter in food, focusing on chicken, to support risk-based interventions
 - risks and controls for other major pathogens, drawing on data from the IID2 study,⁵ including underpinning evidence on risks to inform risk-based controls for meat.
- Horizon scanning and intelligence to identify current and future technologies, trends and new and re-emerging risks – taking a 'whole food chain' approach.
- Better access and use of data from other sources, particularly from industry, official and unofficial controls, surveys and from incidents and outbreaks.
- Data collection and analysis to support our ability to respond to current and emerging food safety threats, including CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) threats.

Evidence theme 2 – Food safety: imports

Supports strategic plan outcome 2: imported food is safe to eat

Overall objectives for this priority are to:

- identify and capture current data on imported food
- analyse the data to identify critical gaps and risks
- develop proposals for more effective, targeted measures to spot and control risks
- test how effective existing and new measures are in practice

Specific priorities:

- Analysing data to evaluate and prioritise risks across the different ingredients, chains, points of entry and controls for food and feed, and the underlying factors that affect these.
- Modelling and testing options to improve controls.
- Horizon scanning, intelligence sharing and information management to pick up current and future trends and risks relating to food and feed imports.

⁵ The second study of Infectious Intestinal Disease in the community (IID2) is a major research project to update the baseline data on the burden and causes of infectious intestinal disease (IID) in the UK population.

Evidence theme 3 – Healthier food products and diets

Supports strategic plan outcome 3: food products and catering meals are healthier

Overall objectives for this theme are to:

- improve our understanding of patterns and trends in food composition and consumption, and their effects on health
- understand the scope to produce healthier products by changing composition (reformulation) and portion size, and to prioritise options with the greatest impact
- understand which measures work best to promote the availability and uptake of healthier products and diets – focusing on saturated fat, salt and calories – and evaluate their impact in practice on diet and health outcomes

Specific priorities include:

- Systematic gathering, analysis and reporting of data on UK food consumption and nutritional status, including the National Diet and Nutrition Survey and the supporting food composition data published in the McCance and Widdowson series.
Developments include:
 - improved ability to track trends in food consumption, identify problem areas and respond to emerging policy issues
 - better data on catering and out of home food consumption
 - links with other relevant national and international data sets.
- Research and analysis to improve risk-benefit assessment of the effects of diets on health, including by proxies and markers of exposure and effect, and to develop and support consistent criteria on ‘healthier’ foods and diets.
- Translational research to test the effects of dietary interventions on health outcomes in representative, large-scale studies, to make sure that dietary recommendations are based on robust evidence.
- Research on critical gaps to allow us to assess the impact of options to change the composition of foods, including overcoming technical barriers to reformulation, and to understand which measures have most impact in changing products and behaviour.
- Evaluation to measure the effects of changes to products and consumer behaviour on the overall diet and on health outcomes, including unintended consequences.

Note: The data on food consumption from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey also supports all other evidence themes.

Evidence theme 4 – Food behaviours and information

Supports strategic plan outcome 4: consumers understand about safe food and healthy eating, and have the information they need to make informed choices

Overall objectives for this theme are to:

- understand which interventions work best to help people achieve healthier diets
- assess and test what influences food behaviours and choices in practice and evaluate the impact on diet and on health
- develop evidence-based messages for consumers on food safety and healthier diets, including information at point of purchase or point of choice

Specific priorities include:

- Analysis and targeted research to identify and test interventions that have the biggest impact on food behaviours that contribute to good food hygiene practices and to healthier diets, including learning from other sectors and contexts.
- Data and analysis to improve baseline knowledge on what works in influencing food behaviours, and to identify critical gaps, including:
 - what influences food behaviour inside and outside the home, and why, and the impacts of these on food safety and diet
 - behaviour and culture in food businesses and enforcement
 - where and how to refine messages for specific groups
 - how food safety and healthier eating interact with other factors to influence food behaviour (such as waste, ethics, cost, brand, etc.).
- Evaluating the uptake and impact of existing and new interventions on actual behaviour and health outcomes (including unintended consequences). To include innovative ways to deliver food information, for example Scores on the Doors and similar schemes, front-of-pack labels, and information in catering and food service contexts.
- Robust evidence and analysis to inform integrated advice to consumers on food issues.

Evidence theme 5 – Effective, risk-based and proportionate regulation

Supports strategic plan outcome 5: regulation is effective, risk-based and proportionate, is clear about responsibilities of food business operators, and protects consumers and their interests from fraud and other risks

Regulation covers self-regulation, assurance, guidance and inspection, as well as formal statutory controls and enforcement

Overall objectives are to:

- underpin our response to the Pennington Report⁶
- develop a consistent, evidence-based view of proportionate, effective regulation across the food chain
- develop new approaches and evaluate which are most effective in reducing risks in practice

Specific priorities include:

- Data, analysis and research to understand risks and benefits of options for controls, to identify which work best to reduce risks and adverse impacts on health. To consider:
 - cultures and behaviours of key people and organisations in regulation, to understand the scope for effective controls and incentives, and their impact
 - data and analysis to develop and assess options for meat controls
 - gaps in coverage and compliance and their consequences
 - better use of survey and incidents data to identify high-risk activity and causes.
- Data and analysis to audit the pattern and impact of enforcement activity across the UK.
- Monitoring, analysis and research on critical gaps on: protecting consumers from risks from food fraud and misleading practices, and compliance with labelling and compositional standards, with a focus on areas of highest risk.

⁶ The Public Inquiry into the September 2005 Outbreak of *E.coli* O157 in South Wales (2009). Available at: wales.gov.uk/ecolidocs/3008707/reporten.pdf?skip=1&lang=en

Evidence theme 6 – Strategic and cross-cutting evidence and analysis

Overall objectives are to:

- deliver robust, cross-cutting evidence and analysis to support delivery, and to evaluate progress and the impact of our work across all our objectives
- inform future strategic priorities and our ability to deliver them in the longer term.

Specific priorities include:

- A new funding stream for strategic evidence, to address cross-cutting and longer term evidence needs, including:
 - horizon scanning to identify, analyse and prioritise cross-cutting and longer term issues, threats and opportunities, including better understanding of how climate change impacts on food safety and nutritional standards, and opportunities from the use of new technologies
 - support for longer term and cross-cutting work that cannot be picked up in existing programmes, including scoping, ‘start-up’ costs, or ongoing support, for example for collaborative projects, including in EU programmes
 - other evidence needs that do not fit in existing themes and programmes.
- Data, analysis and research on critical gaps to develop a more consistent understanding of risks and benefits across the food chain. This will inform prioritisation based on an understanding of risk-benefit and impact. Developments include reflecting variation within and between groups of people, and support for evidence prioritisation.
- Robust data, analysis and research on critical gaps to develop impact assessment of proposed regulations and other initiatives, and post-hoc evaluation of impacts.
- Implementing and evaluating the social science strategy⁷ with guidance from the Social Science Research Committee (SSRC), including:
 - robust evidence and analysis on consumer attitudes and behaviours across the UK, from a new flagship rolling survey on Food Issues
 - developing a strategic partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council, including collaborative work on why people eat what they eat and the Understanding Society longitudinal study.

⁷ [food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/committee/ssrcstrat.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/committee/ssrcstrat.pdf)

Part 2: Priority activity themes

Activity theme 1 – Identifying and obtaining the evidence and analysis we need

We need to:

- identify the evidence and analysis we need
- prioritise effectively and transparently
- deliver good quality work that addresses the prioritised evidence needs

Priority Activity Themes set out the actions we will take to obtain and use evidence effectively and innovatively, to support delivery of objectives now and in the longer term.

Priority activities:

- **Develop a wider definition of evidence** to make sure we balance horizon scanning; gathering and using existing data; commissioning new work, analysis and interpretation; translating evidence into actions; and evaluating impacts. We will make better use of existing data by increasing our awareness of data and by systematic analysis and review.
- **Horizon scanning** to pick up new issues, threats and opportunities, through the scientific advisory committees and other projects and activities, joining up across the Agency and across government.
- **Prioritisation:** We will ensure the best combination of work across all our objectives and between current and future priorities by prioritising our evidence needs centrally using a common framework. An outline of the prioritisation process is at Annexe A. We will publish the results as an **evidence plan**, setting out the main work we wish to commission in the coming one to two years. This will provide transparency and give us external comment, before we commission new work, on:
 - existing data that can address the identified needs
 - opportunities for effective collaboration
 - whether we have defined our evidence needs in the best way.

We will produce the first evidence plan arising from the prioritisation in spring 2010 to coincide with the start of this strategy. We will refresh the evidence plan annually on a rolling basis.

- **An end-to-end review of evidence commissioning** will be carried out in 2010 to make sure:
 - we have consistent, appropriate external peer review of new evidence requirements, submitted proposals and completed work
 - the scoping of new work sets out the expected outcomes, and the plans and resources for how and with whom the outcomes will be used and translated into impacts
 - commissioning is effective and fit for purpose for us and for our contractors.

Activity theme 2 – Partnerships

We need to:

- Work in partnership with other funders and stakeholders to ensure coherent approaches, avoid gaps and duplication, and exploit opportunities to do things better by working together.
- Collaborate effectively across the Agency.

Priority activities:

- We will promote **effective internal collaboration** by:
 - setting a common framework for all our science work in this strategy – emphasising cross-cutting and underpinning themes and mechanisms to make this easier
 - building multi-disciplinary teams across the Agency to make sure we get the range of expertise and skills and we integrate science and policy work
 - evidence prioritisation across the Agency that helps us identify internal partnerships.
- Prioritise and support the delivery of collaborative work with external partners in our new **Strategic evidence programme** (see Activity theme 1).
- **Evidence prioritisation** will include explicit consideration of the potential for partnership in all new work and this will be reinforced by publishing a forward look of evidence needs.
- We will deliver through partnership in the UK, EU and beyond, to identify, share and analyse data, identify and respond to opportunities for strategic collaboration, and develop effective responses (see the following box on page 16 for key examples).

Key partnerships

With **other government departments and funders**, to make sure that:

- Our work is co-ordinated with relevant work by others, reflecting the vision for safe, healthy, sustainable food set out in Food 2030⁸, and the cross-government Food Research Partnership and Joint Food Research and Innovation Strategy⁹. Key areas include: food security and sustainability, in the face of climate change; diet, lifestyle and health; and wider work on public health, behaviour change and education.
- Relevant long-term, underpinning science and skills are supported in key areas, including:
 - the underlying nature, mechanisms and development of risks from pathogens, chemicals and allergens in foods, and to underpin effective risk assessment. We aim to develop a strategic, cross-funder approach to control of campylobacter with Defra, the BBSRC and other partners
 - understanding the relationships between diet and health and the underlying mechanisms and factors that influence them
 - biomarkers in relation to diet and cancer, and other food-related risks
 - understanding food behaviours in the context of wider behavioural and social science research, including descriptive and theoretical work on potential barriers to behaviour change, to complement the Agency's work on testing interventions. In particular we will continue to develop research with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) on why people eat what they eat
 - better understanding from the economic and social sciences of what influences effective regulation and safe or unsafe behaviours by operators, regulators and consumers; and on the underlying nature, mechanisms and development of risks from pathogens, chemicals and allergens in foods, and to inform effective risk assessment, including through strategic partnership with the ESRC

With **enforcement, monitoring and industry partners**, to:

- make sure that informal and enforcement data, as well as qualitative information, are gathered and used effectively to inform our work, and that the results of analysis are translated effectively to inform planning and future enforcement and control activities
- make sure monitoring data collected by ourselves or by partners provide maximum value to the Agency as well as to others
- build a common understanding and evidence base for new controls, and translate results effectively to deliver reductions in food-related ill-health

With **EU and international funders, regulators and risk assessors**, including the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and the EU Framework Programmes for research.

With **government professional networks** in economics, social research, operational research, and developing partnerships with the learned and professional societies.

With **charitable, not-for-profit and industry partners**, to make sure we co-ordinate and share data and resources effectively where this help us deliver better evidence and outcomes.

With **consumers and consumer groups** to make sure our policies reflect their needs and interests.

⁸ Food 2030: defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/strategy/

⁹ Food Research Partnership and Joint Food Research and Innovation Strategy: dius.gov.uk/~media/publications/GO-Science/UK-Cross-Government-Food-Research-Strategy

Activity theme 3 – Interpretation, knowledge transfer and translation

This theme focuses on how we make sure evidence is analysed and used effectively and properly across all our work, and communicated effectively to everyone who may need or want to use it – not just the science community but consumers, producers, retailers and enforcement partners.

The General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS) will continue to provide independent expert advice and challenge on all of these activities.

We need to:

- make sure scientific evidence is analysed and interpreted to rigorous scientific and governance standards
- translate evidence effectively into actions to deliver policy and organisational objectives and make these linkages clear to stakeholders
- communicate with and transfer knowledge to those who need to use it – including food business operators and other stakeholders

Priority activities:

- **The Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs)** will remain the cornerstone of our independent, expert risk assessment.
- **Governance:** We will apply good governance to ensure robust good practice in the development and use of scientific evidence and advice¹⁰. We will review and strengthen these measures, with the advice of GACS.
- We will improve our access to and use of external expert advice by establishing a **science discussion community** to allow us to engage with a wider network expert commentary and opinion of science topics, and a **peer review register** to simplify, broaden and make more consistent our use of independent expertise for peer review.
- The **wider definition of evidence** and **prioritisation** and **end-to-end review of commissioning** (see Activity theme 1) will make sure proper consideration is given in prioritising and commissioning new work on analysis, interpretation and translating evidence into actions.
- We will develop innovative ways to **support knowledge transfer** to those who need to use and apply the results in practice to help deliver safer food and healthier diets, for example by reformulating products or improving safety controls. This will build on experience with successful resources such as Combase¹¹. We will support this by ensuring all new work has a clear plan for knowledge transfer and communication before it is commissioned.

¹⁰ These include: The Agency Good Practice Guidelines for SACs and Science Checklist, Recommendations of the Agency's 2002 Review of SACs and the Cross-Government Code of Practice for SACs (COPSAC).

¹¹ Combase is a collaborative initiative that makes data and predictive tools on microbial responses to food environments, it is freely available via web-based software. See <http://www.combase.cc/>

Activity theme 4 – Knowledge, skills and capacities

We need to:

Maintain and develop the knowledge, skills and capacities we need to deliver our science and evidence objectives, within the Agency and externally.

Priority activities:

Within the Agency

- We will maintain and develop our knowledge, skills and capabilities by developing our in-house capabilities in core areas (including toxicology, nutrition, microbiology, environmental health, veterinary science, economics, social science, operational research and statistics), supported by internal Heads of Profession, wider professional groups, and continuing professional development for all relevant professions in the Agency.

We will develop and support external knowledge, skills and capacities by:

- Commissioning reviews of the **Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs)** that advise the Agency. Together with advice from the GACS these will help make sure that:
 - the SACs operate effectively and properly in advising the Agency
 - individually and collectively the SACs deliver rigorous, independent expert advice across all areas where such advice is needed by the Agency
 - the SACs are supported effectively and appropriately by the Agency.
- Reviewing the Agency's needs and options to support external skills training, to examine and prioritise the most appropriate and effective approaches.
- Engage with and seek to influence other expert bodies that carry out or help shape scientific assessment and regulation, including EFSA and other international bodies.

Activity theme 5 – Appraisal and evaluation

We need to use data, tools and analysis to:

- **appraise** our work before it is commissioned to inform priorities and define specifications
- **evaluate** completed science projects and implemented policies to determine quality, success and impact.¹²

This covers:

- individual science and evidence projects, programmes and bodies of work
- Agency policies and initiatives as they are developed, and their effects in practice
- progress and impacts of the Science and Evidence Strategy itself

Appraisal tells us the potential impact of different options and helps us decide what to do, and how.

Evaluation tells us how things work in practice and what impacts they have.

Priority activities:

For science and evidence projects and bodies of work

- consistent, fit-for-purpose peer review and external commentary on new evidence requirements, research proposals and completed work.

For Agency policies and initiatives

- a new cross-Agency project will develop tools and guidance to embed and support evaluation across the Agency's work. Its aim will be to deliver common understanding, approaches, tools and supporting data, and identify critical evidence and skills gaps.

For the Agency's Science and Evidence Strategy

- assessing and reporting against the performance indicators for Agency science, developed by the GACS and developing the systems and data for this assessment.
- implementing and monitoring progress for the actions we have agreed in our response to the recommendations of the Science Review of the Agency.
- independent assessment and challenge by the GACS including through its annual report and the GACS Chair's annual report in person to the Agency Board.
- overarching assessment and reporting by the Agency's Chief Scientist including in his annual report, assessing progress, key achievements, problems and proposed revisions and future plans in delivering the Science and Evidence Strategy.

¹² Further details and guidance on these processes are set out in the cross-Government guides known as the Green Book and the Magenta Book. See:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_greenbook_index.htm
www.nationalschool.gov.uk/policyhub/magenta_book/

Contacts for further information and comments on the strategy.

If you would like further information on the Agency's Science and Evidence Strategy and our science work, or have any questions or comments, please visit our website at food.gov.uk or contact us at:

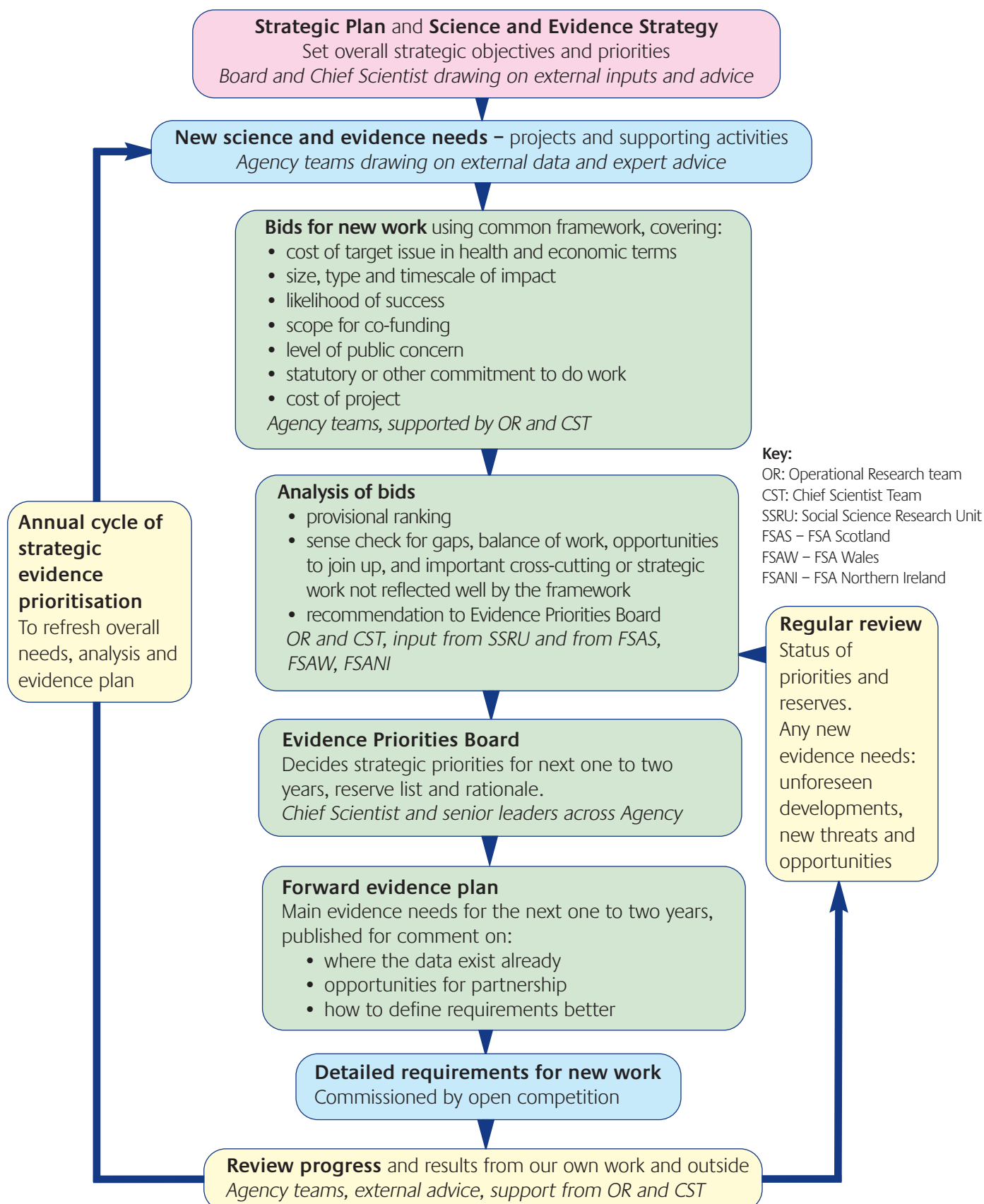
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Annexe A: The evidence prioritisation process

The aim of the evidence prioritisation process is to provide an open, structured and evidence-based framework for deciding priorities across our strategic needs.



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