

## **Annex 1: Initial Assessment of Social Science in FSA**

Social science as a coordinated and integrated activity is relatively new for the FSA, so being a new venture, there is inevitably a long journey ahead to fully embed it across the Agency. However, social science research is not entirely new; parts of the Agency have already recognised the need for social science and have responded in different ways. Some policy teams have developed projects within their science research programmes (see below); commissioned ad hoc consumer research to explore attitudes (Annex 6); and organised expert seminars to find out how the social sciences can contribute to their areas.

In relation to the five elements for an FSA social science strategy, as set out in section four, the current position is:

### Research planning and prioritisation

The Agency has four strategic themes; Food Safety, Eating for Health, Choice and How We Deliver. There are over forty research programmes which are predominantly on evidence from the natural and physical sciences (Annex 3) to support these strategic themes. There have traditionally been no dedicated social science research programmes in FSA and social science evidence needs have tended to be considered outside of these programmes. This means that social science research requirements tend not to be considered in an integrated way within or across research programmes. This potentially leads to inefficiencies with narrowly focused pieces of work, duplication of effort and information gaps. There are some programmes that do have more of an emphasis on the social sciences and these are mainly in the Eating for Health and Choice policy areas.

### **Recent examples of social science research projects that fall within one of the Agency's research programmes**

- National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)
- Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (LIDNS)
- A 'smart' lunchbox template intervention
- Design and evaluation of peer-led community based food clubs: a means to improve the diet of older people from deprived social backgrounds
- Evaluation and review of national and local authority hygiene award schemes in the UK (Scores on the Doors)
- Survey of Salmonella contamination of raw shell eggs used in catering premises in the UK

See Research and Survey Programmes Annual Report 2007 for more details, pp 79-103

Each research programme typically runs for five years, is overseen by an independent research co-ordinator and is reviewed by an expert panel at least once during the five year period. Reviews consider how well programmes are delivering and whether there are any new evidence needs that need to be taken into account. There is no ring fenced budget for research. Each policy director bids for an overall budget for their area which is separately distributed between policy and research needs. Research priorities are set by policy directorates and are informed by advice from research co-ordinators, research review panels and any associated Scientific Advisory Committee. The Operational Research Unit recently devised a research prioritisation tool which was piloted across the Agency in 2007-08 to support the prioritisation process.

Social science research seems to have centred on gathering consumer attitudes to specific policy areas. Apart from the annual Consumer Attitudes Survey and quarterly tracker research that the Communications directorate commissions, requests for consumer research have been ad hoc and largely delivered through the government's Central Office of Information's (COI) social and market research roster. This means that the Agency's social science evidence base is sometimes reactive, uncoordinated and this may limit the insights it can bring to inform our policy making process. While the COI roster is a useful vehicle for commissioning some of our social science research projects it is not always suited to delivering complex projects.

**Recent examples of the Agency's consumer research that is carried out by the Central Office of Information (COI)**

- Consumer attitudes to animal cloning
- Parents understanding of advice on additives and children's diets
- Consumer understanding of labelling of minced meat and its fat content
- Consumer consumption of vitamin and mineral supplements
- Consumer attitudes and awareness towards meat safety controls
- Salt campaign – tracking research

Annex 6 provides a list of all projects commissioned in 2007-08 and those underway in 2008-09

Currently, social science questions are not always systematically considered within each research programme and there is limited scope for synergies between programmes to be identified. Requests for consumer research are not always planned and there is not always a process for effective challenge. As a result we cannot be confident that social science research needs are always being appropriately identified and resources being effectively used to fund key requirements. It is not yet clear what the role of the three new Agency Committees will be with regard to the research planning and prioritisation process – these are the General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS); the Social Science Research Committee (SSRC) and the Advisory Committee on Consumer Engagement (ACCE).

Professional standards

Science is fundamental to the FSA as it informs the actions Agency staff take every day to protect public health from food safety risks. The Agency has a good reputation for high quality scientific evidence and over the last few years the Agency has introduced a number of initiatives intended to make sure that it continues to get the science right:

- A Universal Ethical Code for Scientists (Annex 3) was launched by the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor in March 2007 which the Agency fully endorses and has incorporated it into its science governance framework
- The Agency's Chief Scientist sits at the FSA Board table to provide advice and assurance on scientific issues
- Chairs of the ten Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs), which advise the Agency also attend FSA Board meetings as appropriate providing Board Members with the opportunity to seek assurance directly and publicly from the Agency's independent experts
- The SACs have agreed a set of Good Practice Guidelines (Annex 3) to show the Board how they operate and serve as a self-assessment tool to enable the committees to judge their performance each year
- An overarching General Advisory Committee (GACS) has been set up to provide independent advice on the Agency's governance and use of science

- FSA staff use a 'science checklist' as they develop policy papers on science related issues (Annex 3)
- A methodology which provides a means of prioritising the Agency's science spend is being piloted on a large scale
- The Chief Scientist approves individual projects carried out within each of the Agency's research programmes before they are commissioned
- The Agency's procurement processes have been reviewed so that there is a central point for initiating procurement procedures and ensuring research is commissioned in accordance with EU procurement laws
- The Chief Scientist acts as Head of Profession to the Agency's scientists, which comprise nearly half of the Agency's workforce

The Agency includes social science within its definition of science so social science can draw on and benefit from the Agency's existing governance framework, but will need to recognise the special circumstances of social science research. The Head of Social Science Research was recruited from the Government Social Research service and will need to ensure that the necessary measures are in place so that the Agency's social science research can be carried out in line with the professional code for Government Social Research (Annex 5).

#### Use of social science research

There are a number of ways in which the Agency supports the use of its science research:

##### *Dissemination*

Openness and transparency are core values of the FSA and the Agency is committed to sharing the evidence the Agency collects from its science activity. New research programme projects are listed on the Agency's website when they start. Agency research programmes have regular workshops and reviews to present the emerging and final results from Agency-funded projects and to stimulate wider discussion.

##### *Peer review*

Use of peer review is fundamental to the Agency's commitment to interpret reliably the scientific evidence it uses to inform its policies and advice. The Agency's goal is that all the science used by the Agency has undergone peer review. The Agency sometimes carries out a fast track peer review with the advisory committees when a more rapid assessment is required. Final reports emerging from the Agency's research programmes are peer reviewed before being placed in the Agency's information centre and published on the Agency's website.

##### *Publication*

Until 2007 an individual report on the Agency's research programmes has been published. In future this report will come together in a single publication to form the new Annual Report of the Chief Scientist. The report serves as a public account of the Agency's activities and also provides an opportunity to summarise in a single, coherent document, the many and varied ways in which the Agency uses and promotes science and contributes to the scientific progress.

To date there is no Agency research publication series and no system for storing outputs from research in an easily accessible way.

Overall, the focus of using evidence is on work carried out as part of one of the Agency's research programmes. As such the majority of social science research that

is 'badged' as consumer research is not communicated or authenticated in the same way.

### Communications

The FSA is a science based organisation so science is integral to the culture of the organisation. The Agency has a raft of ways in which we share scientific information internally and we have established and strong links with the external scientific community. Being relatively new, the Agency's social science evidence is not established or prolific enough to command the profile and respect of its other scientific research. Some ad hoc projects have attracted attention and the FSA does have some linkages with the external social science research community. Generally this is an area that will need strengthening the most.

### Resources, processes and structures

The Agency initially recruited a Head of Social Science Research from within the Government Social Research profession. The Head of the Social Science Research has subsequently been able to recruit two researchers (1.2 fte) in line with GSR's selection methods and one administrative member of staff (0.5 fte). The Head of Unit also acts as Head of Profession to social researchers in FSA.

The Social Science Research Unit is based in the Analytical and Research Division which reports to the Chief Scientist. The Unit works alongside the other three government analytical professions and provides a cross cutting service to the whole of the FSA.

The resources, processes and structures needed to support the development of social science in the Agency needs to be reviewed frequently to ensure that sufficient staffing levels, budgets and internal systems are in place to meet the Agency's commitment to strengthening access and use of social science and gradual implementation of the social science strategy once it has been adopted.

## Annex 2: The Agency's Research Programmes

The FSA has four strategic themes for 2005-2010 and each of the research programmes map on to these themes:

- **Food Safety** – chemical contaminants, chemical risk assessment including mixtures, food intolerance, microbiological safety, meat hygiene (inc. TSE), Radioactivity in Food, FSA Scotland research
- **Eating for Health** – diet and health, food acceptability and choice, dietary surveys and food composition, consumer awareness, FSA Scotland research
- **Choice** – food additives, Novel and GM foods, food authenticity, food labelling
- **How We Deliver** – economics, improved methods of analysis, food law enforcement

In 2006-07 we carried out research projects in the following programmes:

A01	Food Additives
A03	Chemical Contaminants from Food Contact Materials and Articles (Research)
A04	Chemical Contaminants from Food Contact Materials and Articles (Research)
A05	Food Irradiation
B12	Microbiological Risk Assessment
B13	Microbiological Risk Management
B14	Food borne Disease
B15	Eggs and Poultry
B16	Shellfish Hygiene
B17	Organic Wastes
B18	Microbiological Surveillance
C01	Chemical Contaminants from Food Production (Research)
C02	Chemical Contaminants from Food Production (Surveys)
C03	Mycotoxins and Process Contaminants (including nitrate) (Research)
C04	Mycotoxins and Process Contaminants (including nitrate) (Research)
D03	Economics
E01	Improved Methods of Analysis
E03	Food Law Enforcement
G03	Safety Assessment of Novel Foods ad GM Foods
I01	Imported Foods
M01	Meat Hygiene – Microbiological Safety (non TSE research)
M03	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)
N02	Diet and Cardiovascular Health
N05	Nutritional Status and Function Research
N08	Dietary Surveys and Food Consumption (Research)
N09	Food Acceptability and Choice
N10	Dietary Surveys and Food Consumption (Surveys)
N12	Diet and Colonic Health
N14	Food Choice Inequalities
Q01	Food Authenticity (Research)
Q02	Food Authenticity (Surveys)
R04	Radioactivity in Food
S01, S04, S14	FSA Scotland Research, Surveillance and Monitoring
T01	Risk Assessment
T05	Phytoestrogens in the Diet
T07	Food Intolerance
T10	Risk Assessment of Mixtures of Pesticides and Similar Substances

## **Annex 3: Science Governance in FSA**

### Universal Ethical Code for Scientists

Rigour, respect and responsibility: A universal ethical code for scientists. Contractors undertaking work for the Agency are expected to abide by the code which was launched by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser in March 2007.

[http://www.berr.gov.uk/dius/science/science-and-society/public\\_engagement/code/page28030.html](http://www.berr.gov.uk/dius/science/science-and-society/public_engagement/code/page28030.html)

Rigour, respect and responsibility

- Act with skill and care in all scientific work. Maintain up to date skills and assist their development in others.
- Take steps to prevent corrupt practices and professional misconduct. Declare conflicts of interest.
- Be alert to the ways in which research derives from and affects the work of other people, and respect the rights and reputations of others.

Respect for life, the law and the public good

- Ensure that your work is lawful and justified.
- Minimise and justify any adverse effect your work may have on people, animals and the natural environment.

Responsible communication: listening and informing

- Seek to discuss the issues that science raises for society. Listen to the aspirations and concerns of others.
- Do not knowingly mislead, or allow others to be misled, about scientific matters. Present and review scientific evidence, theory or interpretation honestly and accurately.

### SACs Good Practice Guidelines

#### **PREAMBLE**

*Guidelines 2000: Scientific Advice and Policy Making*<sup>1</sup> set out the basic principles which government departments should follow in assembling and using scientific advice, thus:

- think ahead, identifying the issues where scientific advice is needed at an early stage;
- get a wide range of advice from the best sources, particularly where there is scientific uncertainty; and

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines on Scientific Analysis in Policy Making, OST, October 2005. Guidelines 2000: Scientific advice and policy-making. OST July 2000

- publish the scientific advice they receive and all the relevant papers.

The *Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees*<sup>2</sup> (currently being updated) provided more detailed guidance specifically focused on the operation of scientific advisory committees (SACs). The Agency subsequently commissioned a *Report on the Review of Scientific Committees*<sup>3</sup> to ensure that the operation of its various advisory committees was consistent with the remit and values of the Agency, as well as the Code of Practice.

The Food Standards Agency's Board has adopted a **Science Checklist** (Board paper: FSA 06/02/07) to make explicit the points to be considered in the preparation of papers dealing with science-based issues which are either assembled by the Executive or which draw on advice from the Scientific Advisory Committees.

The Board welcomed a proposal from the Chairs of the independent SACs to draw up **Good Practice Guidelines** based on, and complementing, the **Science Checklist**.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees, OST December 2001

<sup>3</sup> Report on the Review of Scientific Committees, FSA, March 2002

## THE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

These Guidelines have been developed by 9 advisory committees:

Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs
Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Foods
Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes
Advisory Committee on Research
Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment <sup>4</sup>
Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment <sup>5</sup>
Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment <sup>6</sup>
Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition <sup>7</sup>
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee <sup>8</sup>

These committees share important characteristics. They:

- are independent;
- work in an open and transparent way; and
- are concerned with risk assessment not risk management.

The Guidelines relate primarily to the risk assessment process since this is the committees' purpose. However, the Agency may wish on occasion to ask the independent scientific advisory committees whether a particular risk management option is consistent with their risk assessment.

Twenty seven principles of good practice have been developed. However, the different committees have different duties and discharge those duties in different ways. Therefore, not all of the principles set out below will be applicable to all of the committees, all of the time.

This list of principles will be reconsidered by each committee annually as part of the preparation of its Annual report, and will be attached as an Annex to it.

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<sup>4</sup> Joint FSA/HPA Secretariat, HPA lead

<sup>5</sup> Joint FSA/HPA Secretariat, HPA lead

<sup>6</sup> Joint FSA/HPA, FSA lead

<sup>7</sup> Joint FSA/DH Secretariat

<sup>8</sup> Joint Defra/FSA/DH Secretariat

## **Principles**

### **Defining the issue**

1. The FSA will ensure that the issue to be addressed is clearly defined and takes account of stakeholder expectations. The committee Chair will refer back to the Agency if discussion suggests that a re-definition is necessary.

### **Seeking input**

2. The Secretariat will ensure that stakeholders are consulted at appropriate points in the committee's considerations and, wherever possible, SAC discussions should be held in public.
3. The scope of literature searches made on behalf of the committee will be clearly set out.
4. Steps will be taken to ensure that all available and relevant scientific evidence is rigorously considered by the committee, including consulting external/additional scientific experts who may know of relevant unpublished or pre-publication data.
5. Data from stakeholders will be considered and weighted according to quality by the committee.
6. Consideration by the secretariat and the Chair will be given to whether expertise in other disciplines will be needed.
7. Consideration will be given by the Secretariat or by the committee to whether other scientific advisory committees need to be consulted.

### **Validation**

8. Study design, methods of measurement and the way that analysis of data has been carried out will be assessed by the committee.
9. If qualitative data have been used, they will be assessed by the committee in accordance with the principles of good practice, e.g. set out in guidance from the Government's Chief Social Researcher<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> There is of guidance issued under the auspices of the Government's Social Research Unit and the Chief Social Researcher's Office (Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A Framework for assessing

10. Formal statistical analyses will be included wherever possible. To support this, each committee will have access to advice on quantitative analysis and modelling as needed.
11. When considering what evidence needs to be collected for assessment, the following points will be considered:
  - the potential for the need for different data for different parts of the UK or the relevance to the UK situation for any data originating outside the UK; and
  - whether stakeholders can provide unpublished data.
12. The list of references will make it clear which references have either not been subject to peer review or where evaluation by the committee itself has conducted the peer review.

### **Uncertainty**

13. When reporting outcomes, committees will make explicit the level and type of uncertainty (both limitations on the quality of the available data and lack of knowledge) associated with their advice.
14. Any assumptions made by the committee will be clearly spelled out, and, in reviews, previous assumptions will be challenged.
15. Data gaps will be identified and their impact on uncertainty assessed by the committee.
16. An indication will be given by the committee about whether the database is changing or static.

### **Drawing conclusions**

17. The committee will be broad-minded, acknowledging where conflicting views exist and considering whether alternative hypotheses fit the same evidence.

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research evidence. August 2003. [www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/qual/downloads/qge-rep.pdf](http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/qual/downloads/qge-rep.pdf) and The Magenta Book. [www.gsr.gov.uk/professional\\_guidance/magenta\\_book/guidance.asp](http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional_guidance/magenta_book/guidance.asp)).

18. Where both risks and benefits have been considered, the committee will address each with the same rigour.
19. Committee decisions will include an explanation of where differences of opinion have arisen during discussions, specifically where there are unresolved issues and why conclusions have been reached.
20. The committee's interpretation of results, recommended actions or advice will be consistent with the quantitative and/or qualitative evidence and the degree of uncertainty associated with it.
21. Committees will make recommendations about general issues that may have relevance for other committees.

#### **Communicating committees' conclusions**

22. Conclusions will be expressed by the committee in clear, simple terms and use the minimum caveats consistent with accuracy.
23. It will be made clear by the committee where assessments have been based on the work of other bodies and where the committee has started afresh, and there will be a clear statement of how the current conclusions compare with previous assessments.
24. The conclusions will be supported by a statement about their robustness and the extent to which judgement has had to be used.
25. As standard practice, the committee secretariat will publish a full set of references (including the data used as the basis for risk assessment and other committee opinions) at as early a stage as possible to support openness and transparency of decision-making. Where this is not possible, reasons will be clearly set out, explained and a commitment made to future publication wherever possible.
26. The amount of material withheld by the committee or FSA as being confidential will be kept to a minimum. Where it is not possible to release material, the reasons will be clearly set out, explained and a commitment made to future publication wherever possible.

27. Where proposals or papers being considered by the Board rest on scientific evidence, the Chair of the relevant scientific advisory committee (or a nominated expert member) will be invited to the table at Open Board meetings to provide this assurance and to answer Members' questions on the science. To maintain appropriate separation of risk assessment and risk management processes, the role of the Chairs will be limited to providing an independent view on how their committee's advice has been reflected in the relevant policy proposals. The Chairs may also, where appropriate, be invited to provide factual briefing to Board members about particular issues within their committees' remits, in advance of discussion at open Board meetings.

### The Science Checklist

#### **Introduction**

The FSA has defined the governance of science as the methods by which the Board assures itself that scientific evidence is being sought, obtained, interpreted used and communicated appropriately and effectively by the Food Standards Agency. The attached checklist is one of the tools that has been developed to support the governance of science. It will be used to guide the Executive and Scientific Advisory Committees.

In this context, 'science' includes:

- the natural, physical, earth and social sciences, and may also cover other types of evidence (eg market research) where this is felt to be appropriate; and
- science from all sources, not just that commissioned by the Agency.

#### **Aim**

The aim of the checklist is to make explicit the points to be considered in the preparation of papers dealing with science-based issues which are either assembled by the Executive or which draw on advice from the Scientific Advisory Committees. It addresses:

- the processes to be followed and whether these are comprehensive;
- what the science says and what its limitations are;
- whether there are controversies and what weight to give to alternative views; and

- whether those providing the risk assessment have clearly set out their conclusions.

The checklist relates primarily to the risk assessment process. It has been developed from the 'Post Phillips Framework' which the FSA published in 2002. It is important to maintain the formal separation of responsibility for risk assessment and risk management in line with Lord Phillips' recommendation but the Agency may wish on occasion to ask the scientific advisory committees whether a particular risk management option is consistent with their risk assessment.

### **Criteria of Success**

Further work with the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Committees will be needed to develop appropriate means of demonstrating how the points set out in the checklist have been addressed, but success criteria for the checklist are that:

- the Board is assured that the specified work has been done, and to an acceptable standard;
- the Board has the confidence that the science-base is comprehensive and has been interpreted correctly; and
- trust is built up within the Board about the Agency's collection and interpretation of scientific evidence.

## **SCIENCE CHECKLIST**

### **Defining the problem**

1. Has the problem been clearly defined?
2. Does the problem require a scientific answer?
3. Have different stakeholder views been taken into account when framing the issues and questions to be addressed?

### **Gathering and assessing the evidence**

4. What steps have been taken to ensure that all available and relevant scientific evidence has been considered by the committee?
  - Has a comprehensive literature survey been undertaken? Have external scientific experts been consulted who may know of relevant unpublished data? What steps have been taken to ensure that these data are reliable? Has evidence been sought from stakeholders, and has this been assessed?

- Is further research required?
  - Is there a need for different data sets for different regions of the UK?
5. Has the appropriate methodology been used?
  6. What is the strength of the quantitative scientific evidence, e.g. is it relatively weak such as anecdotal or from a single case study or relatively strong as from a double-blind controlled study?
  7. Is qualitative evidence robust\*?
  8. Has the quantitative evidence base (if relevant) been reviewed by a statistician either within the Agency or externally?
  9. If evidence was collected outside the UK, has the relevance to the UK situation been assessed?
  10. Are the conclusions of the paper consistent with the quantitative and/or qualitative evidence, both in character and emphasis?
  11. Is the scientific evidence base transparent to stakeholders, and is it clear which evidence has been peer-reviewed?

### **Risk Assessment**

12. What are the facts underpinning the risk assessment? What are the assumptions?
13. Has an assessment been made of the likely impact and probability of occurrence?
14. Are all key scientific uncertainties highlighted? Has any indication been given about the degree of uncertainty or consensus involved?
15. Are significant gaps in the current evidence base noted?
16. How have the areas of uncertainty been handled when reaching final conclusions and how do they impact on the advice?
17. Did the risk assessment consider the views of experts in all relevant disciplines, either as members of the committee or additional invited experts?
18. Is it clear how the conclusion is reached, based on the evidence presented to the committee? In particular, is the extent to which judgement has been used clear?

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\* We are aware of guidance issued under the auspices of the Government's Social Research Unit and the Chief Social Researcher's Office (Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A Framework for assessing research evidence. August 2003. [www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/qual/ex\\_summary.htm](http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/qual/ex_summary.htm) and The Magenta Book. [www.gsr.gov.uk/professional\\_guidance/magenta\\_book/guidance.asp](http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional_guidance/magenta_book/guidance.asp)). In the longer term, we will consider how to adapt this material for use in the Science Checklist.

19. Are there any other hypotheses which fit the same evidence? Have they been considered? Why were they rejected?
20. How has the committee taken account of any conflicting views? Have any risk assessments carried out by others been cited? To what extent are there consensus/differing views?
21. Has the committee or Agency consulted on the draft conclusions?
22. Are the Committee's conclusions/advice expressed in clear, simple terms, and can it 'stand alone' ie is the meaning changed if supporting caveats and explanations are omitted?

### **Interpretation**

23. Is the committee's advice correctly presented and represented in the Board paper?
24. Are any significant limitations clearly explained?
25. If this is a review, have external influences changed since the last consideration such that assumptions should have been challenged?
26. Would it be helpful to have the advisory committee's view on whether (any of) the risk management options are consistent with the risk assessment?
27. If the issue falls between scientific advisory committees or to more than one, has a satisfactory mechanism been put in place to ensure that all players have been involved and that each committee is aware of the views of the others?
28. If both risks and benefits were considered, are both addressed with the same rigour?
29. Has the committee indicated whether the evidence base is changing or static, and when it may need to be reviewed?
30. Has a picture of the external environment been given so that the Board knows whether it needs to understand the context or educate consumers?

## **Annex 4: Social Science Research Unit**

### SSRU Research projects

#### **Projects Underway**

##### 1. British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey 2008

The FSA is sponsoring a module on the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, the leading social attitudes survey in Britain. BSA has been running since the 1980's and is carried out by the National Centre for Social Research. On behalf of the Novel Foods, Additives and Supplements division we have developed a module (approximately 40 questions) on public attitudes to innovative food technology. Fieldwork takes place in summer 2008 and data is publicly available in January 2010. We plan to run a module on a different topic in 2009 and repeat the innovative food technologies module in two to three years time.

##### 2. Government Social Research Behaviour Change project – phase 1

The FSA is contributing to this project that is being led by the Government Social Research (GSR) Unit – GSR is the professional body for social scientist researchers working in UK central government. A number of government departments are contributing to this project which will result in a number of useful outputs to government analysts and policy makers involved with behaviour change. The Agency has already contributed to the first phase which is a synthesis of the key features of a range of theories; practical and theoretical limitations of behaviour change models and guidance on how to select and apply the models. This will be launched in July 2008.

#### **Unstarted projects**

##### 3. Government Social Research Behaviour Change project – phase 2

The second phase will provide a more case study insight about how the various behaviour change models have been used across the public sector, how they have been evaluated and with what success. The study will appraise what works with respect to behaviour change theories and initiatives and provide guidance on how best to evaluate behaviour change projects. It will take around 12-15 months and the plan is to commission this work in early autumn.

##### 4. Exploratory study into meal planning, purchasing and consumption

This study aims to gain a better, and up to date, handle about how people plan for, shop for and consume food e.g. the study will provide a holistic understanding about attitudes and behaviours to food. We will be considering whether to use the four 'segments' based on analysis of our Consumer Attitudes Survey to inform the design of the study e.g. to include a qualitative and longitudinal element in the programme of work. The ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) have indicated that they would be willing to collaborate with the FSA.

##### 5. Evidence review/s

We will be commissioning an evidence to review to look at theories and applications of organisational behaviour change models to help inform the Agency's work on incident prevention. The Agency is keen to learn what interventions might effect improved partnership working between the food industry and the industry and the Agency.

## 6. Expert seminars

We plan to host an expert social science seminar in collaboration with the ESRC e.g. food habits in times of economic change. The ESRC would approach key academics that together would provide an authoritative assessment of the evidence, gaps and policy implications on this theme. The written output would provide a review of the key literature as well as a write up of the proceedings.

We also plan to arrange a seminar on policy evaluation to provide an overview of the different types of evaluation designs and when to use them.

## 7. BSA 2009

We will run a module on the BSA in 2009 – topic not yet agreed.

## **Key projects we advise on/manage on behalf of policy customers**

### 8. Consumer Attitudes Survey 2008

We are currently reviewing how we proceed with our annual Consumer Attitudes (CAS) and quarterly tracking surveys in 2008. CAS and our Tracker have been running since 2000 and 2001 respectively. In 2008 we plan to include some different topics on the CAS and to move some previous questions to the Tracker.

### 9. Nutrition labelling

We are providing advice to the independent **comprehension and use of UK nutrition signpost labelling schemes** study which aims to establish which front of pack labelling scheme(s), or which combination of elements of schemes, best facilitate the accurate interpretation of key nutritional information by consumers such that they are enabled to make informed choices about the foods they purchase. The research will involve a comparative analysis of the impact of the three main front of pack nutrition signpost labelling approaches used in the UK:

- monochrome schemes providing information on percentage of Guideline Daily Amount (GDA);
- traffic light colour coded schemes indicating nutrient level; and
- schemes which provide both a traffic light colour code and percentage of GDA.

The research will be addressed using an integrated programme of qualitative and quantitative research.

### 10. General food labelling

We are also advising on a methodological project looking at the **role of eye tracking technology** as a technique for observation research - the report will be finalised in June 2008. We are also supporting taking forward this pilot study as a wider food labelling behaviour research project to explore whether and how shoppers look at **mandatory labelling information**.

We will also facilitate and advise on a range of projects that arise during the year which we will commission largely via COI (a central resource that provides procurement facilities through a series of Framework Agreements (see Annex 6).

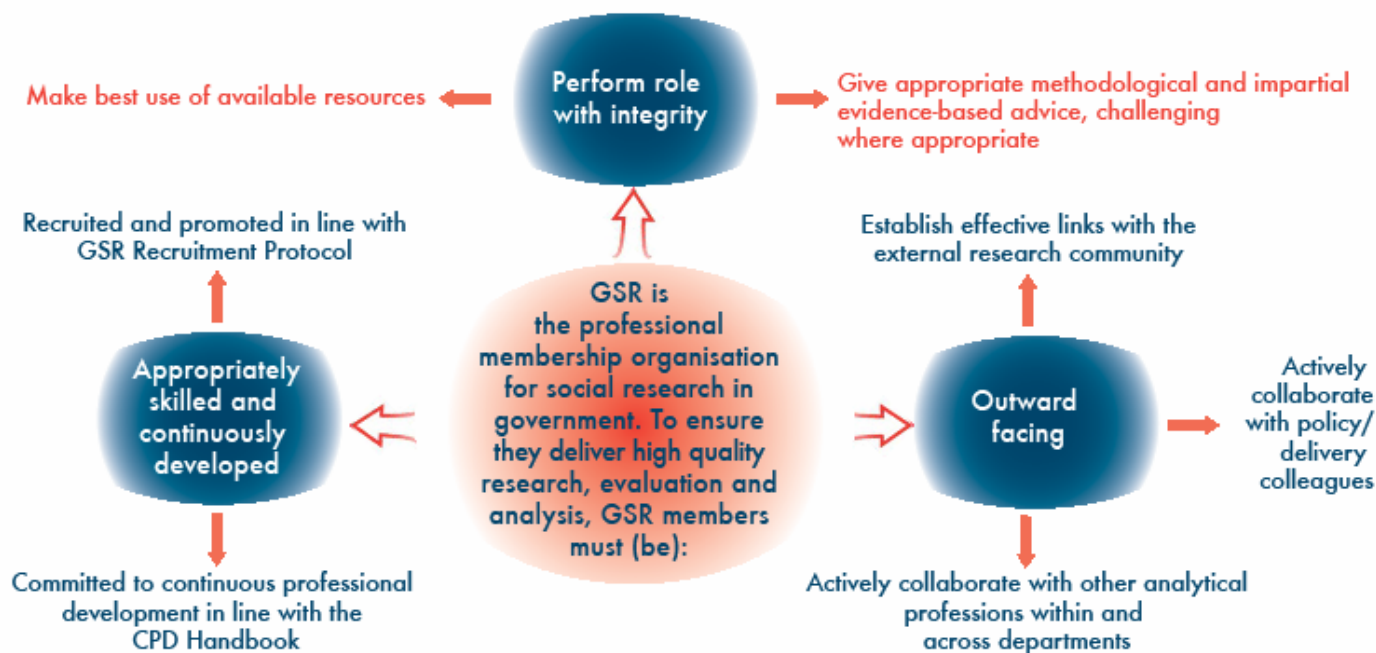
### Other activities

In 2008-09 we plan to undertake some non-research project activities such as a series of methodological advice sheets, literature reviews, developing links with external researchers and giving a lunchtime seminar to Agency staff about the role and work of the Unit.

Annex 5: GSR Code

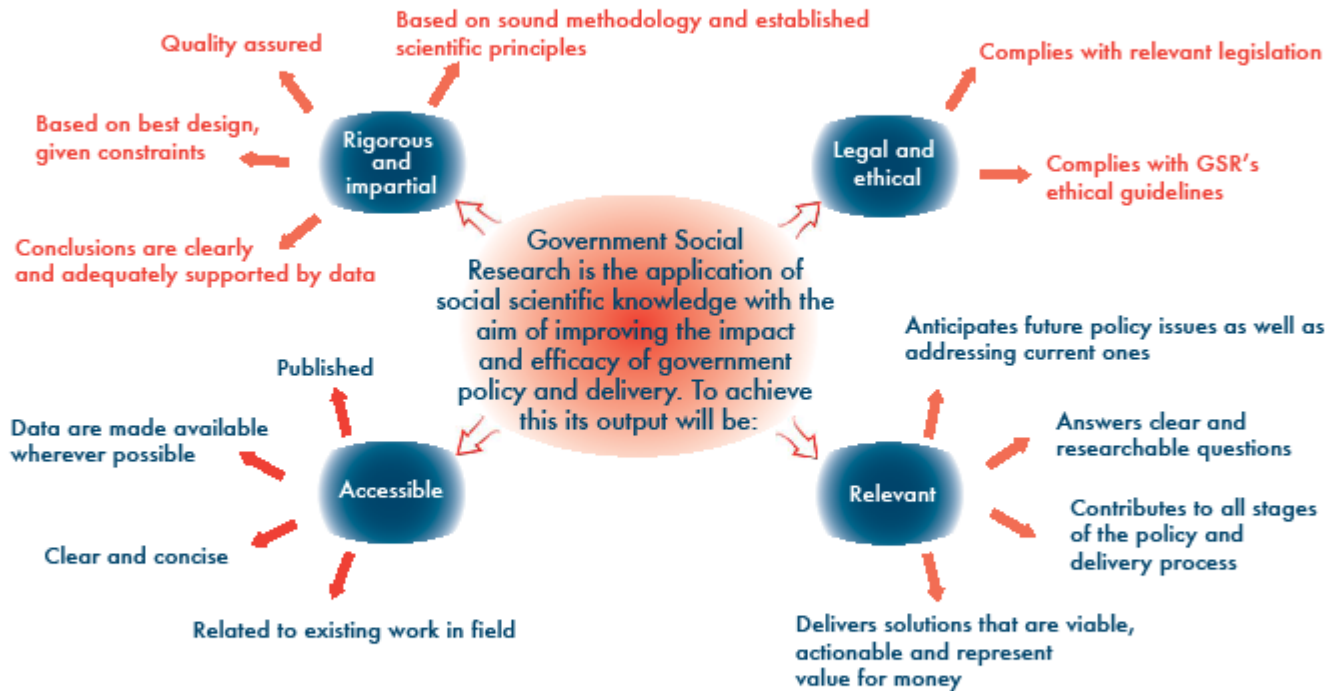
The GSR Code: People

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The Government Social Research Service (GSR) exists to serve the public through providing the government of the day with high quality, objective, reliable, relevant and timely social science research to inform policy making and delivery. The GSR Code sets out seven key principles that all GSR members must adhere to in order to ensure research and analysis that is scientifically rigorous, relevant and valued.





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## Annex 6: List of COI Research Projects 2007-08 and 2008-09

In order of commissioning during 2007-08:

- Cook it Cookery Clubs evaluation
- 'Scores on the Doors' consumer research
- Quarterly tracking
- 'Cookits' evaluation
- Food safety management evaluation
- Consumer attitudes and awareness towards meat safety controls
- Salt campaign – post wave tracking
- Labelling of meat products – qualitative research
- Consumer Attitudes Survey
- Country of origin omnibus survey
- Development of 'fresher food' for young people catering for themselves
- Food hygiene information scheme – wave 2 consumer research
- Food safety management research in Scotland
- Labelling behaviour research - scoping work
- Eatwell Plate – omnibus research
- Saturated Fat – omnibus research
- Fats message testing research
- Food hygiene campaign – umbrella brand research
- 'The Good Life'
- Consumer attitudes to animal cloning
- Consumer Attitudes Survey – Scotland report
- Parents understanding of labelling of advice on additives and children's diets
- Consumer understanding of labelling of minced meat and its fat content
- Evaluation of food policy in schools document
- Consumer priorities for sustainable development
- Consumer consumption of vitamin and mineral supplements
- Pre and post signpost tracking food hygiene message testing
- Perceptions of risk survey
- Eye tracking pilot

Total cost – approximately £1 million

In 2008-09 we have started:

- Water bottle messaging pilot – 2012 Olympics initiative
- Food safety week – campaign evaluation
- 'Dish it up' – schools initiative
- Stakeholder Reputation Audit – tracking stakeholder views
- Allergens guidance – assessment of uptake and effectiveness