
**The Food Standards Agency's
Science and Evidence Strategy 2010-15**

**This Strategy sets out how we will use science
and evidence to meet the challenges of
delivering safer food for the nation**



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Foreword

I am delighted to present our refreshed Science and Evidence Strategy 2010-15, setting out how we will use science and evidence to meet the challenges of delivering safer food for the nation.

This refreshed Strategy reflects the changes in our remit since the Strategy was launched in February 2010 and the Agency's refreshed Strategic Plan. It is satisfying to be able to include other updates that reflect real progress in a number of areas, including launching new partnerships and embedding strategic prioritisation for science across the Agency.



It is also important to underline what has not changed. Science remains at the heart of the Agency, as does our commitment to an open, science- and evidence-based approach and to independent scientific advice. These are reaffirmed at the core of our refreshed Strategic Plan, and reinforced by this Strategy. We must maintain this, and will need to work hard and more smartly to deliver the evidence we need to meet the science and policy challenges ahead. We have to do this at a time when resources are under pressure, but this only highlights the need for robust science, evidence and analysis: this is the only basis for good decisions on effective targeting of resources, managing risks, and measuring impacts.

This strategy sets out the science evidence and analysis we will need to meet our demanding goals for safer food and fair and effective enforcement of food law. We need to understand how to control foodborne illness, including the challenge of reducing levels of *Campylobacter* in chicken. We need better evidence on what works in practice to reduce adverse impacts and achieve long-lasting benefits. And there is a greater need than ever to develop risk-based and effective controls on food businesses, and understand the behaviours and cultures that contribute to this, so that we can deliver real improvements in compliance and public health.

These issues play out in a complex wider environment of policy, political, economic and social factors, and our own rich and varied personal experiences of food. We have to understand these issues and take them into account in our decisions. We will continue to prioritise multidisciplinary approaches, using a broad definition of evidence and a longer-term perspective. Above all we need to work with others on shared issues. This presents challenges, but we are making good progress – since the Strategy was first launched, we have agreed new partnerships on *Campylobacter*, on allergy, and in the Global Food Security programme. I look forward to broadening our partnerships in our work to improve enforcement and compliance, and by developing a framework for sharing data and funding with industry and stakeholder groups.

This refreshed Strategy gives us an excellent framework for the work ahead. I look forward to working with our science advisers, partners and stakeholders, and with colleagues across the Agency, to deliver this agenda - and to reporting progress in my annual reports.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Wadge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Wadge, Chief Scientist

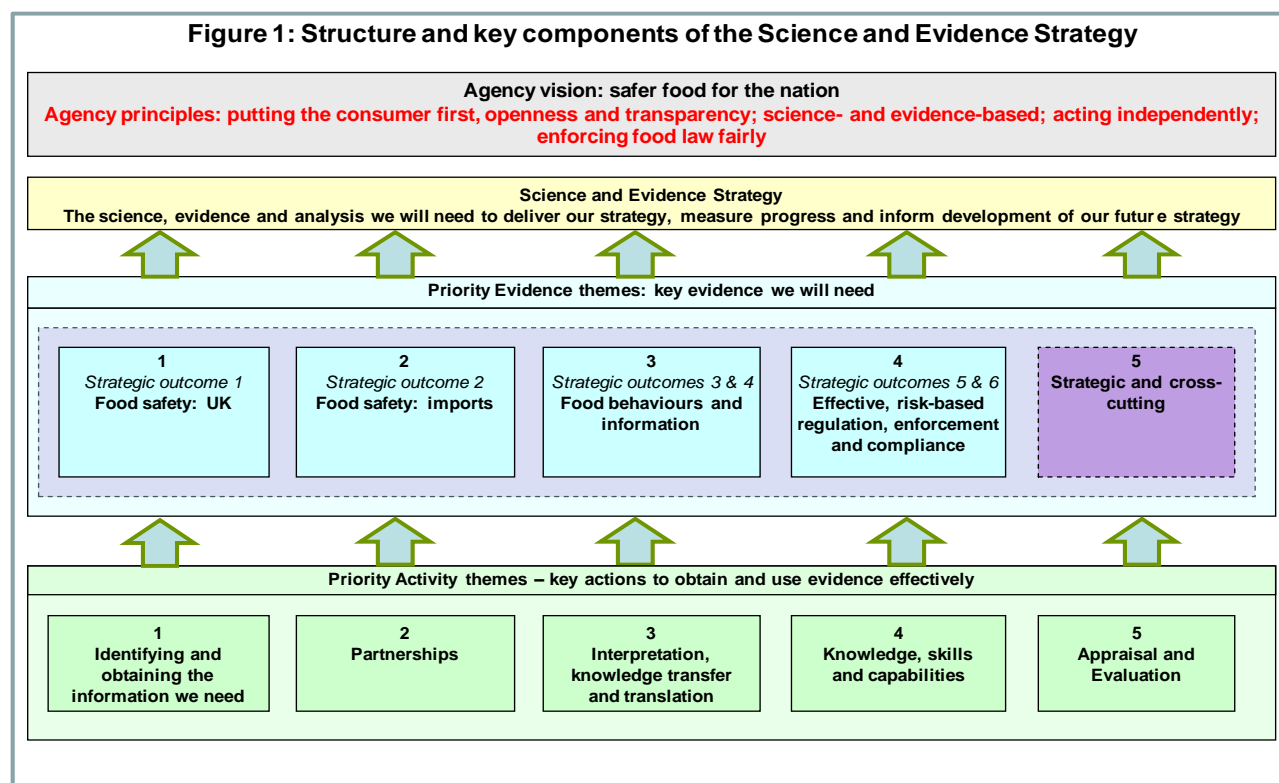
The strategy in summary: what the strategy is for and what it does

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 for the nation. 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 2010-15,¹ 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.

The Strategy has been refreshed in 2011 to reflect the refreshed Agency Strategic Plan, and to pick up progress and developments since the Strategy was first published.



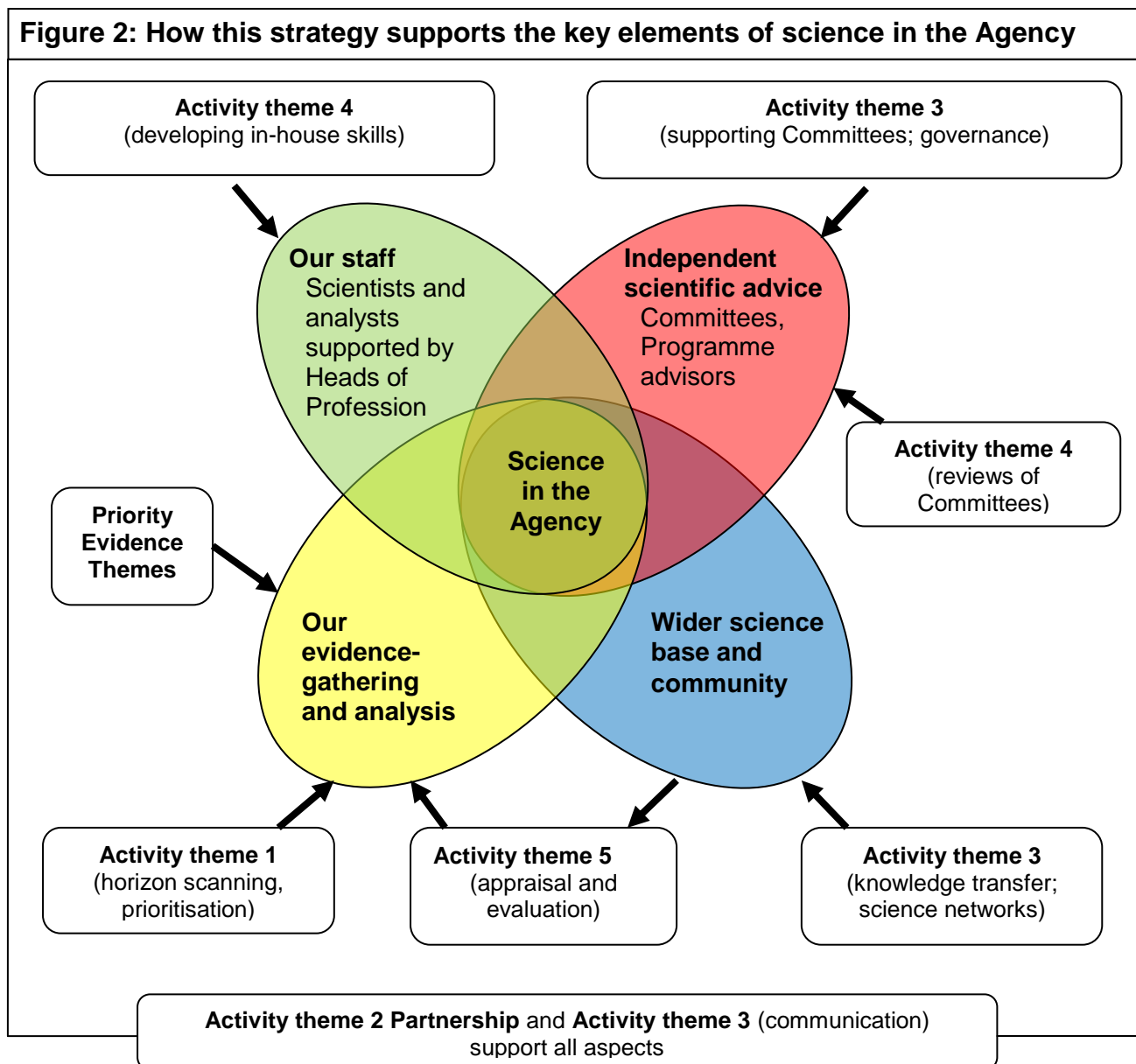
Our strategy focuses on high-level priorities. It does not list everything we will do. We will report regularly on the detail of our science work, including in our Chief Scientist's annual reports. The priorities in this strategy will help us deliver our strategic plan over the next five years. Much 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 www.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 - many 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 £25m to £30m each year on commissioned science and evidence, including some £10m on statutory monitoring. Even excluding this statutory work, this represents around 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 site Foodbase³, so that others can use and benefit from our work.

² These figures reflect the wider definition of evidence set in this strategy and the transfer of some work on nutrition and on food labelling to other Departments following changes in the Agency's remit in 2010. They are not directly comparable to previous reported figures for our spend, but for comparison, our total spend in 2010/11 on evidence work on a like-for-like basis was about £28m.

³ <http://foodbase.org.uk/>

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 Like other Departments, we must work efficiently and find savings within our budgets, but we will maintain our evidence spend to at least the same proportion of our total expenditure.

What science and evidence do we need?

The challenges we face require multidisciplinary 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, and with 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), including to identify gaps
- reviewing and synthesising knowledge from existing research, stakeholder consultation and expert knowledge, including advice from independent expert advisors
- evaluation of previous, current or prospective new policies

How do we use evidence?

- to develop and improve our risk assessment, policies 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, and how we can improve these
- to track developments in the evidence base and evaluate their implications for policies

Setting and reviewing priorities

We introduced two key innovations in this Strategy:

- i. we have moved 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
- ii. we 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.

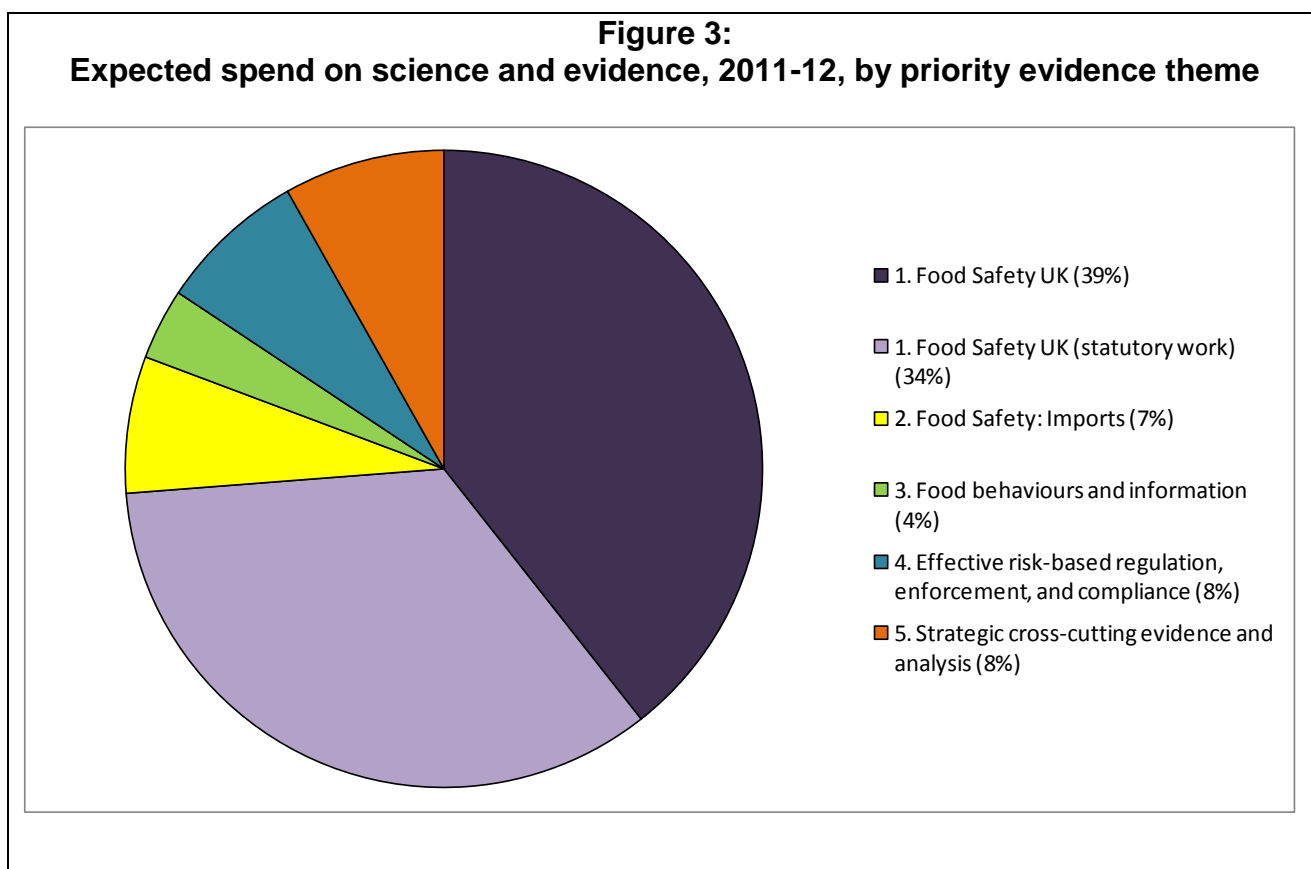
The framework we use to prioritise our evidence needs is outlined in Annexe A.

⁴ <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/board/boardmins090714.pdf>

This results in an **evidence plan** of the main work we wish to commission for the next one to two years, which we publish, and refresh annually. We publish the evidence plans 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 refreshed Strategy, 2011-12, is approximately £30m (see footnote 2), split across the five priority evidence themes as shown below.



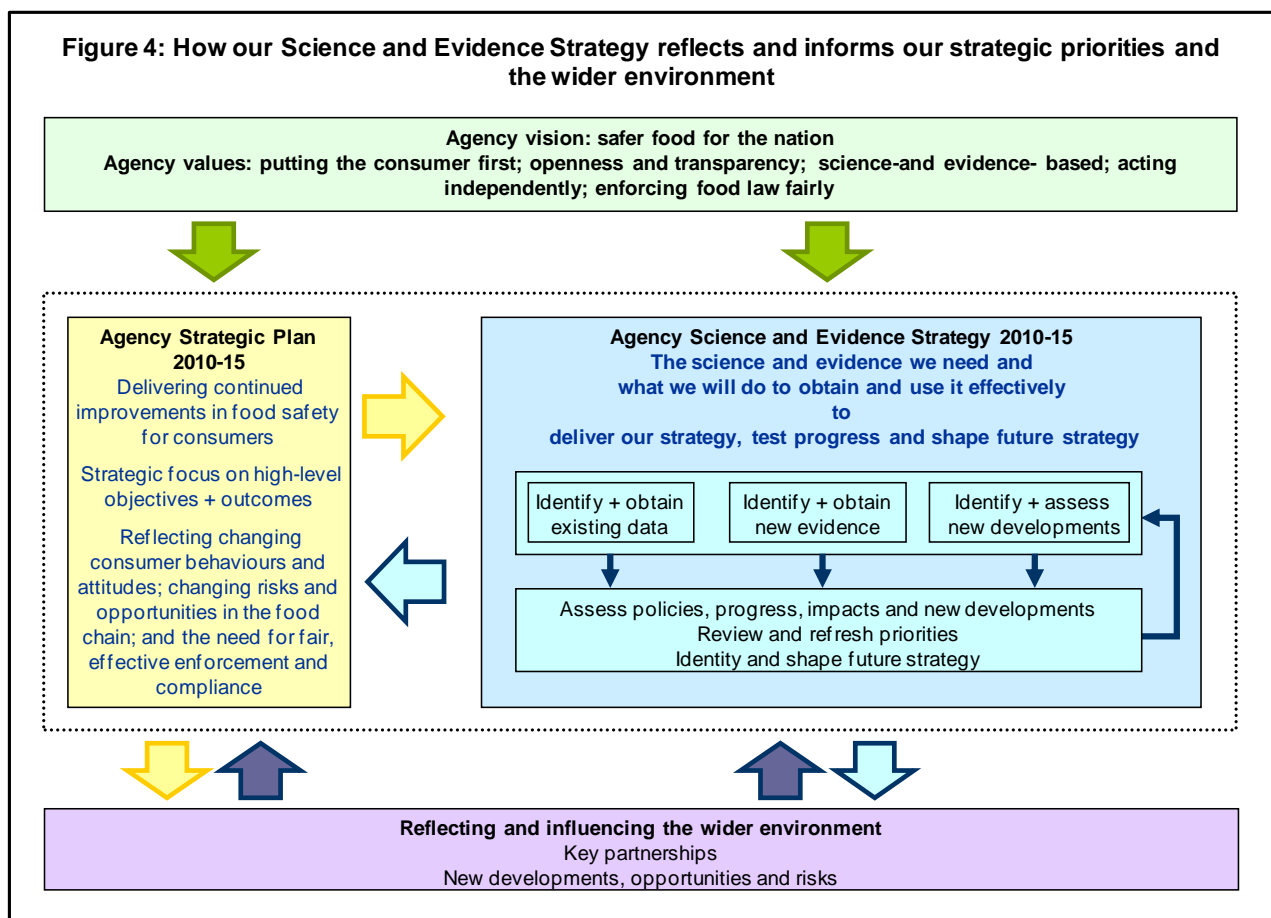
Note: The allocation of spend to themes reflects the primary purpose and use of the evidence and analysis generated by each piece of work. Often, work will also inform and support other themes. This is particularly true of work in priority theme 1 (food safety: UK), which represents the largest proportion of our spend, and which generates evidence that also helps to inform work on imports (theme 2) and enforcement (theme 4) as well as providing the underpinning knowledge that informs work on information and behaviours (theme 3).

Reviewing and refreshing our Strategy

This is the first revision of this strategy, to reflect the refresh of our Strategic Plan in 2011 in light of the changes to our remit in 2010, and progress and developments since the strategy was first launched. We will continue to 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 four priority evidence themes address the outcomes in the Agency's Strategic Plan 2010-15, while the fifth 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 or 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
 - understanding the incidence, development of and thresholds for allergic reactions to underpin effective, targeted controls and advice.
- Scanning and intelligence to identify current and future technologies, trends and new and re-emerging risks – taking a global food chain approach - and research and analysis to understand how to reduce risks.
- Better access and use of data from other sources, particularly from the food and feed industries 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 and feed safety threats, including CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) threats.

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 2 - Food safety: imports

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

The **overall objectives** for this priority are to:

- identify and capture current data on imported food and feed
- 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:

- Analysis of 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.

Evidence theme 3 - Food behaviours and information

Supports strategic plan outcomes 3: Food producers and caterers give priority to consumer interests in relation to food and 4: Consumers have the information and understanding they need to make informed choices about where and what they eat.

Overall objectives for this theme are to:

- understand which interventions work best to help people achieve safer and 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 which contribute to good food hygiene practices, 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
 - behaviour and culture in food businesses and enforcement
 - where and how to refine messages for specific groups
 - how food safety interacts with other factors to influence food behaviour (such as healthy eating, 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 effective, evidence-based information and advice on food allergy and intolerance, and innovative ways to deliver food information, for example the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and the Food Hygiene Information Scheme, and information in catering and food service contexts.
- Research, surveys and analysis to underpin delivery of effective information and interventions to improve diets in Scotland and Northern Ireland including:
 - understanding patterns and trends in food composition and consumption in Scotland and Northern Ireland
 - understanding which measures work best to promote availability and uptake of healthier products and diets – focusing on saturated fat, salt and calories – and evaluating their impact on diet and health.

Evidence theme 4: Effective, risk-based regulation, enforcement and compliance

Supports strategic plan outcomes 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 and 6: Enforcement is effective, consistent, risk-based and proportionate and is focused on improving public health.

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

The overall objectives are to:

- underpin our response to the Pennington Report⁶
- develop a consistent, evidence-based view of proportionate, effective regulation and enforcement across the food chain
- develop new approaches and evaluate which are most effective in practice in reducing risks and impacts on public health, including to support a review of Official Controls Delivery in the UK

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, reflecting international perspectives
 - gaps in coverage/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 including to support the review of Official Controls Delivery in the UK.
- Monitoring, analysis and research on critical gaps on protecting consumers from risks to public health from food and feed fraud and misleading practices.

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 5 - 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:

- Systematic gathering, analysis and reporting of data on food composition and consumption by consumers in the UK, through the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (which we co-fund with the Department of Health). 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.
- A 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 climate change impacts on food and feed safety, 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
 - a Strategic Challenge – an open call for innovative ideas to tackle strategic challenges for the Agency.
- Data, analysis and research on critical gaps to develop a more consistent understanding of risks and benefits across the food chain and people's views about these. 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 and processes.
- Continuing to improve how we identify, collect, use and disseminate social science evidence with guidance from the Social Science Research Committee (SSRC), including:
 - delivery of the Food and You survey, a robust and extensive survey on food issues, conducted biennially
 - further development of a Strategic Partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) including collaborative work on behaviour change and the Understanding Society longitudinal study.

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:

- **Applying 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.
- **Making better use of existing data** by increasing our awareness of data, by systematic analysis and review, and by agreeing a framework setting out our principles and approach to sharing data and research funding with industry and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) partners
- **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 1-2 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 refresh and publish our evidence plan annually on a rolling basis.
- **An end-to-end review of evidence commissioning** will be completed in 2011 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 and management is effective and fit for purpose for us and for our contractors.

Activity theme 2: Partnership

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 multidisciplinary 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
 - establishing a Science Leads Group of senior scientists in the Agency to advise and support the Chief Scientist on strategic science issues.
- 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 15 for key examples).

Key partnerships

With other departments and funders, to make sure that:

- Our work is co-ordinated with relevant work by agriculture and health departments, health protection bodies and others, reflecting the vision for safe, sustainable food set out in the cross-government Food Research Partnership and Joint Food Research and Innovation Strategy, and the Global Food Security programme.* Key areas include: food security and sustainability; food in the wider context of lifestyle, 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 will build on experience with the joint strategy on control of *Campylobacter* agreed in 2010 with Defra, BBSRC and other partners, and our joint call on allergy with the Medical Research Council in 2011
 - understanding the relationships between diet and health and the underlying mechanisms and the factors that influence them; and 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
 - 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 ESRC
 - better understanding from the economic and social sciences of what influences effective regulation and compliance, 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 ESRC.

With enforcement, monitoring and industry partners, including 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 improvements in compliance and reductions in food-related ill-health.

With EU and international funders, regulators and risk assessors, including the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), safefood 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 helps us deliver better evidence and outcomes.

And, not least, with **consumers and consumer groups** to make our policies reflect their needs and interests

*See: www.bis.gov.uk/go-science/science-in-government/global-issues/food and www.foodsecurity.ac.uk

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 to 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 advice⁷. We will review and strengthen these measures, with the advice of GACS, including updating our Science Checklist to ensure it reflects the breadth of science we use, including social sciences.
- We will improve our access to and use of external expert advice by establishing a **peer review register** to simplify, broaden and make more consistent our use of independent expertise for peer review, and a **science discussion community** to allow us to engage with a wider network for expert commentary and opinion on science topics.
- 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– for example by improving safety controls. We will support this by ensuring all new work has a clear plan for knowledge transfer and communication before it is commissioned.

⁷ These include the Agency's Good Practice Guidelines for SACs, Science Checklist and Recommendations of the Agency's 2002 Review of SACs (www.food.gov.uk/science/researchpolicy/commswork/) and the cross-Government Code of Practice for SACs (COPSAC) and Principles for Scientific Advice to Government (www.bis.gov.uk/go-science/science-in-government/independent-scientific-advice)

Activity theme 4: Knowledge, skills and capabilities

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, microbiology and virology, food allergy, animal feed science, environmental health, veterinary science, economics, social science, operational research and statistics), supported by internal Heads of Profession, the Science Leads Group, wider professional groups, and Continuous 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 GACS these will help ensure that:
 - SACs operate effectively and properly in advising the Agency
 - individually and collectively SACs deliver rigorous, independent expert advice across all areas where such advice is needed by the Agency
 - SACs are supported effectively and appropriately by the Agency
- reviewing critical external skills and capabilities and working with others to ensure they are supported and used effectively. 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.⁸

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

- Agency analysts working with colleagues to embed and support evaluation across the Agency's work. This helps 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 performance and progress with reference to the cross-government criteria for science in government, developed by the Government Office for Science (GOS), and the Performance Indicators for Agency science developed by the GACS, and developing the systems and data for this assessment
- implementing and monitoring progress on the actions we have agreed in response to the recommendations of the Science Review of the Agency. We expect to complete actions against all recommendations by 2011
- 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.

⁸ 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

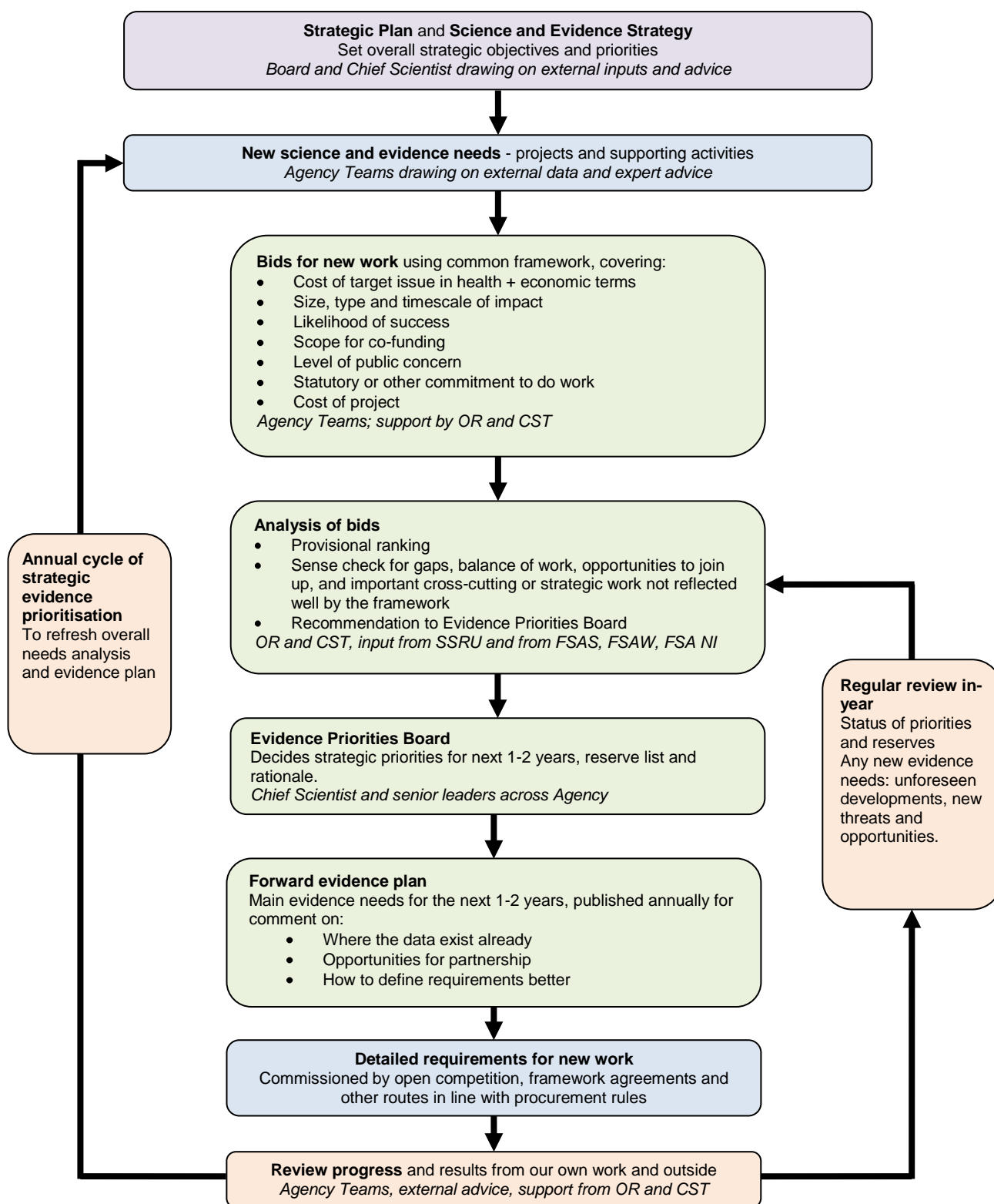
If you would like further information on the Agency's Science and Evidence Strategy and our science work, or have any questions or comments, please visit our website at www.food.gov.uk or contact us at:

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Annexe A Outline of 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.



Key: OR: Operational Research team; CST: Chief Scientist Team; SSRU: Social Science Research Unit; FSAS – FSA in Scotland; FSAW – FSA in Wales; FSANI- FSA in Northern Ireland