

# Governing and managing national capability and research programmes

## Framework policy Process map and user guide

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1.0	June 2007	Project manager	Paragraph standardisation/numbering, contents page added.
2.0	Oct 2007	Project manager	Updated to include NCAG and remove reference to “FAB”
2.1	02 April 2008	Project Manager	Updated to reflect SO structure and post-training corrections
2.2	12 June 2008		Renamed Management Board to Programme Executive Board and updated document ownership
3.0	01 April 2009	Head of Delivery Processes	Reflected delegated authority of Head of Research
3.1	03 July 2009		Updated strategic business performance requirements
3.2	19 April 2010		Updated Annex A Examples of PEB membership

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## SCOPE OF POLICY

1. Research suppliers, whether they are directly owned or contracted, are responsible to NERC for managing and delivering NERC-funded investments, including research programmes (RP) and national capability (NC). The purpose of this framework policy is to clarify NERC's expectations as a funder. This will enable a clear accountability to NERC for the governance and management of NC and RP investments among all organisations and individuals who manage and deliver them.
2. Organisations must adhere closely to this and related policies (e.g. NERC project management policy). Contracted research organisations and grant-holders are expected to adhere to the principles of this framework policy, and to adopt compatible governance and management principles and practice.
3. Research suppliers are also responsible to their own management and host organisation or owner, through defined governance and delegation structures. This policy only addresses their accountability as a research supplier to NERC as a research funder. NERC recognises that research suppliers, as holistic organisations, must balance their accountabilities to their owner and to research funders or customers.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

4. The key principles of this framework policy are:
  - This policy assumes that all NC and RP investments are subject to project management principles<sup>1</sup>, where PRINCE2 is used as the model for NERC project management policy.
  - There is a framework governance, reporting and management structure (Figure 1).
  - There must be clear separation of executive (board) and advisory (e.g. moderating panel) functions.
  - Programme Executive Boards must be constituted in line with PRINCE2 principles, which define the following membership and roles:
    - Senior responsible officer (SRO) – normally the relevant director or representative from the business unit hosting the project. They have the appropriate delegated authority to be ultimately accountable for the project.
    - Senior supplier(s) – the leading researcher (or equivalent provider) on the NC or RP. Accountable for the quality of products delivered by the suppliers, and with the authority to commit or acquire supplier resources.
    - Senior user(s) – representative of those with interests in using the final products of the programme, such as policy-makers or industry. Responsible for providing user resources and ensuring that the products and outcomes meet user needs.

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<sup>1</sup> The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) defines projects as being output driven, whereas programmes are outcome driven (i.e. to deliver change). RP and NC are output driven, and therefore can be considered as 'projects' to which, under NERC policy, PRINCE2 principles will apply.

- Corporate user – a representative from Swindon Office (SO) who will represent NERC’s interests as executive and funder. This will usually be the SO superintending officer assigned to manage the contract/service level agreement for SO. (For NC or RP managed from Swindon Office the senior responsible officer may also be a representative from Swindon Office).

Example board memberships for different delivery models are given in [annex A](#).

- There would normally be one member in each of the above roles, however, if appropriate, there may be more than one member in each of the roles, except the senior responsible officer. An example could be when there are multiple institutions supplying the research, funding the programme, or with major interests as user.
- The SRO, advised by the Programme Executive Board, is accountable for the delivery of the NC or RP investment to NERC as the funder and customer. As such the SRO must report to the Director of Science Delivery (DSD) on performance<sup>2</sup>. The mechanism for reporting will be set out in the formal management agreement documents between the host organisation(s) and NERC (e.g. the contract, service level agreement (SLA), or science and implementation plan). The mechanism will be consistent with NERC’s policy of exception reporting within agreed tolerances and will utilise NERC’s existing performance management tools as much as possible.
- The Programme Executive Board must include a corporate user, as above.
- The Programme Executive Board should be scaled within delegated authority limits of the participating organisations, depending on the size and complexity of the investment. Further information on scalability is provided below.
- The membership of the Programme Executive Board must be approved by the DSD, or his delegated representative.
- NERC directors, theme leaders and the national capability advisory group (NCAG) have responsibilities for monitoring the delivery of NERC’s themes and strategy, and for integrating NC and RP within and across themes. Therefore, they may need to engage with the NC or RP and its progress as appropriate. This engagement will be agreed and managed through the DSD.
- This framework governance and management policy does not instruct suppliers how they should manage the NC or RP on a day-to-day basis. However, management should be consistent with existing NERC management standards and policies (see [annex B](#)).
- Formal management agreements between NERC and suppliers will reflect this framework policy (see [annex B](#)).

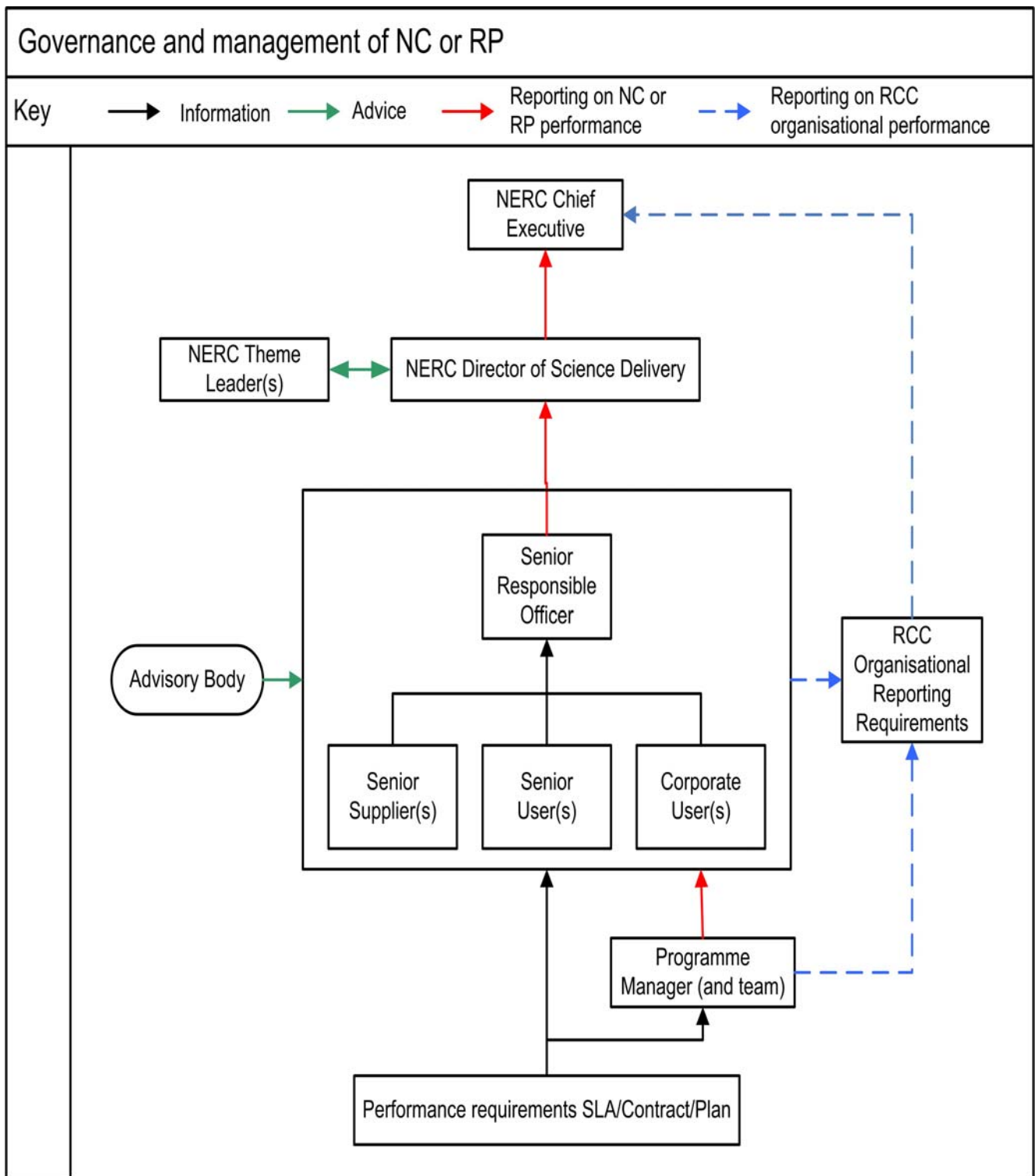
## SCALABILITY

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<sup>2</sup> DSD has explicit delegated responsibility from the NERC chief executive for receiving RP/NC performance reports and taking action to address science delivery issues that arise.

5. The Programme Executive Board membership should be delegated within the participating organisations' authority limits as appropriate for the size and complexity for the NC or RP.
6. Existing organisational (e.g. research centre) or programme (e.g. services review group) boards may act as Programme Executive Boards for the RP and NC investments, as long as they meet the above structural and reporting requirements and are approved as such by DSD.
7. Where more than one institution plays a lead role in delivering the NC or RP, the relevant parties should be represented appropriately on the board. Where a lead organisation is identified in the contract, NERC would normally expect a representative from that organisation to be the SRO, with the other partners represented as senior suppliers. Where partners are more equal, placement of the SRO role may need to be negotiated, in consultation with NERC.
8. Where an NC or RP has multiple funders, their interests can be represented by multiple corporate users.
9. For efficiency, board reporting mechanisms will utilise existing NERC reporting requirements wherever possible such as Strategic Management Tool scorecard, annual contract reports, Director's Annual Statement of Internal Controls (DASICs), etc
10. For smaller or lower risk investments, the corporate user may not attend meetings but would expect to receive copies of board reports and have the opportunity to participate by correspondence.
11. For smaller or lower risk investments, DSD may delegate responsibilities for some tasks, for example, approving membership of Programme Executive Boards.

Figure 1. Framework governance, reporting and management structure



ANNEX A – Examples of Programme Executive Board membership for different delivery mechanisms

Host organisation	Funder	Executive board roles (The positions listed are illustrative and may be delegated as appropriate within each organisations delegation framework).			
		Senior responsible officer	Senior supplier	Senior user	Corporate user
<b>External Route</b>					
Single organisation (e.g. research centre, collaborative centre, higher education institute)	NERC	Director from host organisation	Lead researcher or manager	Leader from user community, e.g. policy or industry	Swindon Office Science and Innovation manager
Multi-institutional – with prime contract, funded by NERC	NERC	Director from host organisation	Directors or lead Researchers from main supplier organisations	Leader from user community, e.g. policy or industry	Swindon Office Science and Innovation manager
Multi-institutional -with multiple contracts, funded by NERC	NERC	Director from leading organisation, agreed by other host organisations and NERC.	Directors or lead researchers from main supplier organisations	Leader from user community, e.g. policy or industry	Swindon Office Science and Innovation manager
Any of above models	Multiple funding agencies	As above	As above	As above	Directors or managers from main funders
<b>Internal Route</b>					
SO managed	NERC	SO SIM	Science Coordinator or member of Programme Management Team (SPO if no Science Coordinator) will update PEB of progress of projects awarded by programme	As above	Not needed

SO managed	Multiple funding (NERC main funder)	SO SIM	As above	As above	Directors or managers from other funders
SO managed with support from external programme management team	Multiple funding (NERC minor funder)	SO SIM; Chair of PEB meetings may be rotated among funders as agreed.	Programme Management Team	As above	Directors or managers from other funders

## **ANNEX B - Existing NERC governance and management and policy documents**

### **Example formal management agreements**

- Management statement for research centre directors
- Agreements between NERC and directors of collaborative centres
- Service level agreements and contracts between NERC and suppliers
- Terms of reference for executive or senior management boards
- Terms of reference for steering committees or advisory boards

### **Example NERC management policies and standards**

- Project management
- Risk management
- Data management
- Financial management
- Records management
- Procurement
- Performance management
- Evaluation
- Communication
- Knowledge exchange
- Vested interests