

ESPA Governance bodies – Terms of Reference

1. Programme Executive Board (PEB)

Purpose

1. Responsible for the delivery and strategic direction of the Programme, ensuring it achieves its stated objectives and meets the strategic needs of the funding partners.

Composition

Decision-making

2. **Funding Partners:** represent the interests of each of the funders NERC, ESRC and DfID and essentially act as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for their organisation. Each funding partner will nominate one member and one alternate. Only funding partners have decision-making authority, and the attending members must be senior staff with sufficient delegated authority to take the necessary decisions at meetings.

Non-decision making

3. **PEB Chair:** facilitates partners to steer ESPA's strategic direction with minimal conflict of interest.
4. **Senior User(s):** those who have an interest in using the final outputs of the programme but do not have a financial stake, e.g. Defra international policy and Chair of the programme's advisory committee and DfID policy; role would be providing advice, not decision making.
5. **Senior Supplier:** those who have responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the PEB, e.g.
 - *Director;* role would be reporting and advising, not decision making
 - *Business Assurance Manager:* NERC programme manager responsible for ensuring delivery; role would be reporting, not decision making

Operation

6. The PEB will agree frequency of meetings at its first meeting, bearing in mind more frequent meetings may be required during the establishment of ESPA and when funding calls are planned
7. Urgent matters arising between meetings may be dealt with on a "no-objection" basis by email within a specified period of time (to be agreed by PEB)
8. There will be an annual review meeting to monitor and evaluate progress
9. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) will advise the Chair on the agenda and provide necessary reports.
10. The Secretariat functions for the Programme Executive Board will be carried out by the ESPA Secretariat at NERC.
11. If the (lack of) availability of the chair would prevent a meeting being held to the required schedule, then a NERC, DFID or ESRC member of the board will chair the meeting

Functions and Powers

12. To direct the Programme Management Unit and oversee its performance
13. Agree method and operation of the PEB, including its own rules about frequency of meetings, when PEB will be considered in quorum, etc.

14. To provide the strategic direction of the Programme
15. Executive decision making
16. Agree and approve timing, type and scope of calls to deliver Programme's objectives
17. Based on advice given, approve funding of proposals/activities
18. Agree and approve composition and TOR of any Programme Advisory Committee (PAC)
19. Agree and approve TOR of Directorate and selection of its Director
20. Recruit and select Director
21. Oversee and appraise performance of the Director and Directorate
22. Agrees and monitors ESPA's work programme against programme memorandum, log frame, logic chart and Strategic Management Tool
23. Approve ESPA operational framework and procedures
24. Overall monitoring of ESPA budget and spend

Accountability

25. The PEB will be accountable to their respective funding bodies, through the respective Senior Executives

Terms and Conditions

26. All member organisations will hold the position for the duration of the programme, except ex-officio members, who may change depending on the needs of the programme.

Dispute Resolution

27. The PEB will seek to reach decisions by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached the issue will be escalated to the Senior Executives of the funding bodies.

Chairperson of the PEB

Purpose

To facilitate the working of the Programme Executive Board (PEB) in an independent and impartial manner in order to enable its members to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of ESPA

Main Functions

1. Chair PEB meetings, facilitating partners to reach the best consensus-based decisions to ensure ESPA fulfils its purpose and objectives
2. Ensure ESPA decisions are relevant, implementable, time-bound and acted upon/implemented in line with ESPA purpose and outputs
3. Chair meetings involving performance assessment of the Director
4. Facilitate funding partners to undertake urgent actions in between PEB meetings, as necessary

Other Responsibilities

5. Provide clarification of PEB decisions to the Director, if necessary
6. Agree the agenda for meetings in consultation with the PEB, the Directorate and the Secretariat
7. Ensure PEB members fulfil their responsibilities on the board
8. Act as first point of contact for the Funding Partners, and liaising with them, for resolving any issues of dispute
9. When requested, represent ESPA at functions, meetings and for corporate communication

Accountability

10. The Chair will be accountable to the three funding organisations

Programme Advisory Committee

Purpose

1. The Programme Advisory Committee will provide independent advice to the ESPA Programme via the Director and PEB as required, in relation to strategic and technical aspects of the programme.

Composition

2. The Programme Advisory Committee is likely to comprise eight expert members, to include a mix of leading, world-class scientists, researchers and experts and will comprise of representative(s) from, for example, academia, research institutions, governments, UN agency(ies), private sector and civil society. At least 50% of the members should be from the South; with at least one member representing each of the ESPA regions.
3. Members of the Programme Advisory Committee will be proposed by the Director and the PEB. Final selection and appointment will be made by the Programme Executive Board.
4. The Funding Partners of the Programme Executive Board will sit on the Programme Advisory Committee as observers.
5. The Programme Advisory Committee may be co-chaired by a developed country representative and a developing country representative, nominated and appointed by Programme Executive Board.
6. As far as possible, the member's expertise must cover the interdisciplinarity required by the ESPA Programme, including economic, political, natural and social sciences and with experience of interdisciplinarity in the key fields of ecosystem services, natural resources, environmental management and experience of development issues.
7. Members will serve in a personal capacity and represent their personal perspectives (and those of the constituencies of which they are part, where appropriate).

Operation

8. The Committee will normally meet annually, but more frequent meetings may be required during the first year of implementation of the ESPA programme.
9. By exception, Committee members may also be approached individually or collectively for advice outside meetings
10. The Secretariat function for the Programme Advisory Committee will be carried out by the Directorate.
11. PAC meeting agendas will be set by the Director, in consultation with the PEB and PAC Co-Chair(s).

Functions

12. The functions of the Programme Advisory Committee will be to advise the Director and the Programme Executive Board in the following ways:
 - i. provide strategic oversight by reviewing the relevance, quality and strategic coherence of the programme;
 - ii. review and provide advice on the programme's research strategy and ensure it responds to needs and demand of developing countries as well as those of the Funding Partners;
 - iii. provide advice on the content of calls for proposals;

- iv. provide quality assurance of ESPA's outputs, including review of ESPA's annual report;
- v. provide advice on knowledge exchange opportunities, research into use dimensions and research communications;
- vi. provide advice on other knowledge needs that could be commissioned via smaller scale reviews, studies, consultation processes or investigations in consultation with the Programme Executive Board, as it may determine are needed;
- vii. provide advice on useful links between ESPA other relevant initiatives and processes;
- viii. facilitate contact with other initiatives or individuals where appropriate;
- ix. other matters that the Programme Executive Board may request or delegate.

Accountability

13. The members of the Programme Advisory Committee will be accountable to the Programme Executive Board, through the Director

Terms and Conditions

- 14. Members of the Committee will be appointed for two years, with the possibility of renewal.
- 15. Estimated time requirements: 5 – 6 days per year for the Chair and 5 days per year for members (perhaps more in first year).
- 16. Travel expenses and accommodation for the Committee will be covered and a reasonable honorarium will be paid, where appropriate, per day of work.
- 17. Each member will be subject to "a conflict of interest" review by the Programme Executive Board, and each member must provide a declaration of any potential, real or perceived conflicts of interest. Final determination of suitability to be a member will rest with the Programme Executive Board.

3. Programme Management Unit

Purpose

1. Responsible for the overall management, coordination and delivery of the Programme. The PMU consists of the Programme Management Group, the Secretariat, a business assurance role and the Directorate.

3a. Programme Management Group (PMG)

Composition

2. three members – one representative from the three funding partners, with the authority to make decisions at the level of operation of the PMG.

Operation

3. The PMG will meet approximately every six weeks. This may be adjusted to more/less frequent, as per the business needs.
4. The PMG will be chaired on rotating basis between the three funding partners.

Functions and Powers

5. Oversee the ESPA operational framework, including managing the operations of the PMU.
6. Decision making authority on operational and non-strategic matters.
7. Provide advice and guidance to the Secretariat and Directorate on operational and day-to-day management issues.
8. Make recommendations to the PEB on strategic matters and others as arising.
9. Provide direction on amendments to solicited research proposals, based on expert advice received via external reviews, expert groups, assessment panels, and/or the Programme's Advisory Committee
10. Agree and approve composition of any expert panels convened

Accountability

11. The PMG will be accountable to the PEB.

Terms and Conditions

12. Members will hold their position on the PMG for the duration of the programme.

3b. ESPA Secretariat

Composition

13. Senior Science Programmes Officer(s)
14. Science Programmes Officer(s)

Operation

15. The Senior Science Programmes Officer(s) and Science Programmes Officer(s) will be part-time.

16. The Secretariat will be supported by the following service teams within NERC and the Shared Services Centre Ltd.
- Finance – financial management and reporting and including audit functions
 - Contracting and Procurement – responsible for the procurement of goods and services for all the Research Councils
 - Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System – electronic system used to create proposals to be sent to the RC's, peer review proposals, project reporting
 - Research Grants Team – processing and issuing of grants received through Je-S
 - Admin support – as and when needed for meetings, travel and accommodation bookings
 - Communications – assistance with Programme launch and finale meetings, and publicising NERC-funded activities

Functions and Powers

6. liaison and information sharing (on grants, budget etc) with Director and his/her staff
7. liaison with NERC internal service teams (finance, grants, Je-S, procurement, communications, admin, etc)
8. provide Secretariat for PEB meetings (instigate and work with Director to formulate agenda and agree authorship of meeting papers, compiling, quality control and distributing papers, logistics, taking minutes, monitoring progress on actions)
9. provide Secretariat for PMG meetings.
10. provide advice on administrative and legal procedures for calls (to Director and community)
11. following agreement by PEB on call content and process, coordinate publication of calls and peer review process (checking eligibility, broad remit check, assignment of peer reviewers and proposing moderating panel members in consultation with the PMG and Director, logistics for peer review, sending out feedback drafted by Director, coordinating award of funds on advice of PEB)
12. contact for post-award queries and admin from researchers and NERC internal teams (extensions, virement of funds, staff changes, budget profiling etc. i.e. will consult with Director on issues affecting the research)
13. Coordinate annual reporting of output and performance monitoring of awards using NERC's Research Outputs Database (an electronic system) – Role of the secretariat is to remind the PIs to submit their returns and send passwords to Director to enable them to extract the data and write the programme annual report. The annual report is used to capture highlights, publications, policy interactions etc.
14. coordinate award final reporting through Je-S (as above, ensuring director gets the right info)
15. day-to-day management of ESPA budget
16. records management of key documents

Accountability

16. The Senior Science Programmes Officer(s) and Science Programmes Officer(s) will be responsible to the Business Assurance Manager.

Terms and Conditions

17. The Secretariat will be hosted by NERC.
18. The fulfilment of individual roles within the Secretariat will be the responsibility of the host organisation.

19. The Secretariat will be employed on the project for the duration.

These Terms of Reference will form the basis of a Service Level Agreement between the Secretariat and Director, to be appended to the Director contract, to ensure clarity in responsibility and level of service the Director may request from the Secretariat.

3c. Business Assurance Manager:

Composition

1. A senior member from the organisation responsible for delivering the programme. For NERC this would be a Science and Innovation Manager (SIM), or delegated representative.

Operation

2. The Business Assurance Manager will be part-time, accounting for ~0.2 FTE.

Functions and Powers

3. manage the Director's contract and terms and conditions of service on behalf of the PEB
4. manage Secretariat staff and ensure delivery of PEB instructions to Secretariat
5. accountable for ensuring effective and good management of the ESPA budget
6. provide written/verbal updates on specific items at PEB meetings (i.e. relating to the above) in collaboration with the Director at the PEB's request

Accountability

7. The Business Assurance Manager will be responsible to the Programme Executive Board.

Terms and Conditions

8. The Business Assurance Manager will be hosted by NERC.
9. The fulfilment of the role will be the responsibility of the host organisation.
10. The Business Assurance Manager will be employed on the project for the duration.
11. The Business Assurance manager will be the NERC's representative on the PMG.

3d. ESPA Directorate¹

Purpose

1. To plan, organise, lead and coordinate the ESPA implementation process, through coordinating ESPA research activities and undertaking activities that will add value to the Programme.

Composition

2. The Director will oversee the Directorate and provide overall scientific leadership of the programme.
3. The Director will have a number of support staff as required. These may include:
 - one or more **research associates/fellows** who lead and participate in cross-programme integrative activities;

¹ The Directorate including the Director

- a **policy officer**, or similar, with specific responsibility for engaging users to get the ESPA research into practice and inform research about use;
- a **project manager** and assistant responsible for implementing management plans, reporting and communication strategies and financial planning for the directorate budget.
- clerical support, web support, technical support for modelling as necessary

Operation

4. The Director, and the function of the Directorate, will be under contract to the organisation managing the funds on behalf of the partners.
5. Any other staff employed within the Directorate will be contracted by the Directorate host organisation.

Functions and Powers

The Director:

6. The Director will operate as the *de facto* head of ESPA, albeit under the authority of the PEB - The exception being in the area of direct financial management, which rests with NERC.
7. The Director will provide overall intellectual leadership of the programme, maintaining an oversight of the range of research and activities funded by ESPA, including ESPA's research into use and capacity building activities, and ensuring progress against delivery of the programme's purpose and objectives.
8. The Director will submit to the PEB a programme management plan including the objectives, milestones and deliverable for the Directorate. This will be updated on an annual basis.
9. The Director will be responsible for providing a 'bigger picture' view of the research being undertaken on ecosystems services and linkages to poverty alleviation (ESPA research and beyond ESPA), and to identify ongoing and emerging gaps and continuing research challenges, with a view to advising on the scope of future ESPA funding calls.
10. The Director will maintain an international profile and contacts with relevant international partners, fora, networks and processes, and to work with these contacts to promote synergies with related international activities, including those in developing countries.
11. The Director will maintain a strong international publication profile for ESPA in the field of science and development covered by ESPA, based principally on ESPA Directorate's activities.
12. The Director will represent ESPA, where required, in a wide variety of national, regional and international research, policy and public for a.
13. The Director will be responsible for ensuring that there is routine liaison between the Directorate and award holders (including visiting project leaders for Research Consortium awards at least once a year) to provide reassurance to the PEB that individual projects are on schedule and meeting objectives, and maintain a high level oversight of scientific and financial management of projects (particularly for those projects not experienced in the project management requirements and expectations of the UK funders).
14. The Director will be responsible for appropriately staffing the Directorate and maintaining overall responsibility and management of the Directorate budget and personnel, to ensure that it can deliver on its responsibilities and effectively manage the ESPA Programme to the satisfaction of the PEB;

15. The Director will attend PEB Meetings as required, reporting on the progress of ESPA, and providing further information and reporting as requested by the PEB.

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The Directorate:

The Directorate will be responsible for:

Management and Governance.

16. Adhering to the principles of the NERC Governing and Managing Investments Policy (<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/about/delivery/processes/investments.asp>), or acceptable equivalent, and adopting appropriate practices.
17. Developing a clear and effective Programme Impact plan, for approval by the PEB, and managing the implementation of this. The impact plan must define the beneficiaries and stakeholders for this programme, and provide a plan for engagement with all appropriate organisations and demonstrate how user needs will be met.
18. In conjunction with the PEB and Secretariat, producing and maintaining a risk assessment and management regime and work to manage/mitigate programme risks.
19. Providing effective project and financial management of all Directorate activities.
20. Working with the PEB to appoint an international Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) composed of scientists and experts of high standing in the relevant fields. [NB: The PAC membership will be approved by the ESPA PEB and the Programme Secretariat will oversee the administration of the peer review process for applications to ESPA].
21. Liaising with the PAC in order to provide strategic and independent, high quality advice on the implementation of ESPA.
22. Organising PAC meetings, as required, and engaging this group as needed to help in the process of evaluating proposals and progress.
23. Supporting the Director in necessary preparation for his / her attendance at PEB, PAC or other relevant meetings.
24. Coordinating the portfolio of ESPA's activities, seeking synergies and added-value opportunities.
25. Developing and facilitating UK, regional and international programme links and collaborations.
26. Planning and delivering programme events, such as annual science meetings, workshops training courses, etc.
27. Working to minimise the Directorate's environmental impact [NB: While it is recognised that an international programme like ESPA will require international travel and other activities with associated environmental impacts, it is expected that the Directorate will work to minimise these impacts; for example, through the development and use of new communication mechanisms.]
28. Working with the Secretariat and Directorate in maintaining a high-level oversight of the financial management of projects led by southern organisations, advising the Secretariat on any issues they become aware of, in relation to the proper management and disbursement of funds.

Data Management:

29. Developing a clear and effective data management plan, in collaboration with the appropriate designated data centres, which ensures the establishment of mechanisms for

PROTECT CONTRACT

quality assurance of data and for the timely dissemination of data sets and models produced or compiled by ESPA activities; the plan will be reviewed and approved by the PEB.

30. Managing the implementation of the Programme Data Management plan and review and revise as appropriate.
31. Monitoring project adherence to the Programme Data Management Plan and ensuring that Principal Investigators submit data in a timely manner.

Reporting:

32. Ensuring that the key contacts within the Programme Management Unit and Secretariat are briefed and consulted about ESPA developments at frequent intervals; this includes responsibility for the provision of annual, mid-term and final programme reports.
33. Attending meetings of the Programme Executive Board and Programme Advisory Committee and providing reports, as requested.
34. Preparing and submitting programme progress reports and case studies to the PEB following required template and schedule.
35. Assessing project final reports and determining whether they are satisfactory, providing comments to the Programme Secretariat and the PEB as required.
36. Preparing and submitting to the PEB an end of programme report, following required template and schedule.
37. With assistance from the Programme Secretariat, ensuring that all projects meet their reporting requirements, including submitting to NERC an annual Output and Performance Report, using electronic submission via the Research Outputs Database (ROD).

Monitoring and Evaluation:

38. Leading on developing and maintaining a monitoring framework (based on the logical framework² and logchart), in conjunction with the Secretariat and based on ESPA PEB oversight and agreement.
39. Contributing to and facilitating any programme evaluations or audits required.
40. Monitoring progress of individual projects against agreed milestones and deliverables and facilitating collaboration.
41. Participating as required in the mid-term and final independent evaluations of ESPA.

Liaison:

42. Maintain contact with members of the Programme Secretariat, Programme Executive Board and Programme Advisory Committee.
43. Maintain regular contact with all programme participants (visit each research consortium project at least once a year) and act as main contact point, providing direction to the research community on matters related to ESPA's science, capacity building, uptake and impact-related activities.
44. Liaise with the LWEC Directorate team as required.

² <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/documents/espa-programme-plan.pdf>

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45. Work with the PEB and PAC, to identify and help secure potential sources of co-funding for individual research projects.
46. Advise on the development of Announcements of Opportunity / Invitations to Tender for Programme research activities for approval by the PEB and subsequent issuance by the Programme Secretariat; contribute to the review of applications by suggesting peer reviewers and moderating panel members for PEB final selection, assist in providing synopses of panel recommendations as feedback to successful and unsuccessful applicants and, if required, work with successful applicants to modify proposals as recommended by the moderating panels and by the PEB.

Promotion and Communication:

47. Developing the Programme Communication plan for approval by the PEB; implementing and periodically reviewing the plan.
48. Developing and maintaining an ESPA website that facilitates communication with and between the ESPA communities and other interested parties.
49. Publicising the Programme outputs and outcomes in the most appropriate manner (with support from funders' Press Office teams).
50. Undertaking public engagement activities (with support from the funders' Communications teams) as appropriate.
51. Producing appropriate Programme publications in various media, including user focused summaries/publications.
52. Working with the Programme Secretariat, PEB and funders' Communications teams to plan and deliver appropriate end-of-programme activities (event, publications, etc), highlighting the key findings and achievements of the programme.

Facilitating and promoting Research into Use:

53. Providing necessary advice and support to the ESPA programme on research into use.
54. Consolidating and expanding links with users of ESPA research, to help to put 'research into use', and to 'inform research about use'.
55. Actively communicating the latest ESPA research developments to users and policy makers.
56. Acting as a focus to develop potential collaborations and co-ordinating activities to take advantage of other funding opportunities to promote further research and knowledge exchange activities.
57. In collaboration with the ESPA, PEB providing guidelines on the protection of intellectual property.
58. Inputting to public policy debates in order to highlight the contribution of a major research investment to important issues of public interest.

Supporting Capacity Building Processes:

59. Providing advice and support on relevant capacity building activities.
60. Developing a capacity building plan for ESPA, building on capacity building carried out in individual research projects and providing additional value added activities to maximise ESPAs capacity building objectives.

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61. Developing a call (to be approved by the PEB) for an ESPA fellowships programme, and ensuring the full engagement of the successful fellows with the ESPA programme.
62. Providing direction to grant holders on, and engaging in, the fulfillment of ESPAs objectives on capacity building and research uptake and impact, through the identification and engagement with relevant policy makers, practitioners and decision makers.

Integrative Research and Synthesis:

63. Contributing to the on-going development of the programme by identifying and proposing activities to the PEB that will fill significant research gaps and skills shortages, e.g. timely interdisciplinary analysis and modelling activities that add value to the programme's other activities; brainstorming sessions that facilitate the development of interdisciplinary working and research and/or activities that promote more effective information exchange between disciplines.
64. Identifying and addressing emerging research priorities, and engaging relevant sections of the community in collaborations.
65. Undertaking a series of international activities, such as policy and academic seminars, workshops, and hosted web debates, designed to convene people from different ESPA regions, with different ecosystem interests and perspectives, in pursuit of well-defined goals and ensuring follow-up activities are undertaken as needed to fully realize the workshops' aims.
66. Subject to intellectual property considerations and in consultation with the Programme Advisory Committee, promoting and coordinating the exchange of ideas and information between project participants, other research based in UK, European, international and developing country programmes, and the user community to foster partnerships and to encourage a strong and integrated ESPA research community.
67. Organising regular (annual/biennial) science meetings that engage the principal investigators, co-investigators, postdoctoral research associates and students funded through ESPA projects in order to promote the exchange of information and ideas among different projects and activities.
68. As part of delivering these activities, the Directorate will be expected to establish and maintain an ESPA Forum which will be used to facilitate the development of interdisciplinary collaborative working, promoting a more effective exchange between the ESPA disciplines and relevant stakeholders.

Accountability

69. The Director's contract will be held by NERC and the Business Assurance Manager will manage the Director's contract and terms and conditions of service on behalf of the PEB.
70. The Director will ultimately be responsible to the PEB for delivery of his/her purpose and objectives.
71. Any other Directorate staff will be responsible to the Director.
72. The Directorate contract and performance will be appraised annually against the Programme Management plan, by a special meeting of the PEB, augmented by academic advisors.

Terms and Conditions

73. There will be an open call for this function, and the final decision for this role will be made by an Evaluation panel (in consultation with the PEB).

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74. The Director can be a full- or part-time position, but must be 0.8FTE at a minimum.
75. The Directorate will be staffed at an appropriate level for the tasks involved and will be detailed in the tender by the Director/host institution.
76. The Directorate function will be contracted for the duration of the Programme.
77. If at any time the Director is unable to continue in the role, the host institution will be responsible for putting forward a suitable replacement candidate to the PEB.
78. If the host institution is unable to provide a suitable candidate to take over this role, the contract for the Directorate function may be terminated with the host institution.