



Net Zero Innovation Board – Terms of Reference

Vision

Government support for research and innovation relating to decarbonisation is provided through multiple public bodies. The Net Zero Innovation Board was established to ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to Research, Development & Demonstration (RD&D) funding across these bodies, and to enhance the alignment of the public and private sectors in support of the Government's wider strategy to achieve our net zero targets by 2050. The Board replaces and builds on the work of the Energy Innovation Board.

The Board

The Net Zero Innovation Board brings together senior representatives from government departments, non-departmental public bodies and non-ministerial departments with major climate mitigation, decarbonisation or energy-related RD&D budgets or related policy remits. In addition, up to three independent members will be invited to join the Board to bring external commercial, technical and international expertise.

Purpose of the Board

The Board has the following key functions:

- To provide strategic direction and influence spending decisions across departments and UKRI programmes;
- To help stimulate private sector RD&D and set out opportunities for leveraging business investment by setting a clear direction for public funding;
- To monitor and strengthen alignment of RD&D spending with the broader net zero strategy and policy objectives;
- To provide advice and constructive challenge on how the impact of RD&D research and innovation activity aligns with the delivery of the Government's net zero objectives both domestically and internationally (including our wider decarbonisation and energy objectives related to Official Development Assistance);
- Consider where the UK has current and future competitive advantages and how these should inform the focus of innovation activity and spend;
- Ensure systematic horizon scanning activities are undertaken to understand uncertainty and opportunity; and inform government of emerging and future innovation issues which should be considered in the Government's approach to domestic net zero strategy and its related international objectives.

Across all of these functions, the Board will reflect the views and priorities of all relevant government departments, through appropriate representation at meetings and in preparation of papers.

The Board will deliver this through the following core tasks:

- Providing clear recommendations to ministers and others across government (with ownership of the mechanisms) to address issues identified by the Board;
- Connecting budget holders with policy makers, to ensure system coordination for innovation spend and activities;
- Continuously review technology roadmaps to assess progress in research, development and deployment needs and act on this information to modify, amplify or reverse the trajectory of technological development;



- Reviewing relevant planned funding initiatives and activities, including individual and cross-Whitehall Spending Review bids;
- Periodically reviewing the progress of ongoing initiatives and providing steers on direction of travel and opportunities to co-ordinate better with other cross Whitehall initiatives and committees;
- Identifying emerging and future opportunities on which the UK could capitalise, through systematic horizon scanning;
- Developing advice on ways to further leverage private sector investment;
- Facilitating the exchange of information between the private and public sectors to develop alignment on energy innovation issues;
- Responding to other ad hoc requests for advice from ministers and other appropriate stakeholders.

Recognising the independent decision-making structures of public bodies, the Board does not have authority to direct decisions on the use of individual funds or policies. The Board provides advice and challenge to inform individual public body decisions and provide strategic oversight on cross-government coordination on energy innovation programmes.

Members

Members
Government Chief Scientific Adviser (Chair)
Chief Scientific Adviser, DESNZ (Deputy Chair)
Director, Science, Research and Innovation, DSIT (until Chief Scientific Adviser, DSIT is appointed)
Chief Scientific Adviser, DBT
Chief Scientific Adviser, DfT
Chief Scientific Adviser, FCDO
Chief Scientific Adviser, DEFRA
Chief Scientific Adviser, DLUHC
Chief Scientific Adviser, Met Office
Director General, Net Zero Strategy & International, DESNZ
Director, Science and Innovation for Climate and Energy, DESNZ
Executive Director, UKRI Innovate UK
Executive Chair, UKRI EPSRC
Executive Chair, UKRI NERC
Director of Network Price Controls, Ofgem
x3 Independent members
Devolved administrations (observers)
Welsh Government
Scottish Government
Northern Ireland
Other observers
HMT
Government Office for Science

Providing Advice

A forward look will be maintained to plan and monitor a schedule of agenda items for discussion by the Board and align its activity with other key committees with similar objectives. Meetings will discuss items of significant interest to ministers, and the relevant ministers will be sent short summary notes and recommendations from the Chair on behalf of the Board,



with the intention of a response being received. The Chair, having discussed with the rest of the Board, may escalate issues with the appropriate minister or other stakeholder from the organisations represented on the Board. Individual members will decide how best the work of the Board should fit within their organisations' existing governance structures.

Public Communications

The formation of the Board, its membership and remit are published on the Government website.

Attendance

Board members are expected represent the views of their organisations as a whole and to prioritise attendance at meetings. A minimum of five members are required to be present at meetings. Nominated and agreed deputies are permitted in exceptional circumstances. In the absence of the Chair, the meeting will be chaired by the Deputy Chair or another board member nominated by the Chair under unavoidable circumstances. Apologies for absence should be made to the Secretariat at the earliest opportunity. In cases where a member or a deputy is unable to attend, they are encouraged to provide views on papers in advance of the meeting to the Secretariat particularly where a decision is requested.

Frequency, Timings, and Location of Meetings

The Board will meet quarterly, although the Chair reserves the right to call additional meetings where necessary. Items may also be shared and agreed in correspondence where these need to be addressed ahead of the next Board.

Role of the Secretariat

The DESNZ Science and Innovation for Climate and Energy Directorate will provide the Secretariat. The Secretariat will provide active and managed support to the Board, the Chair, and its members, to enable the Board to conduct its business focussing on the right issues at the right time. It is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating a comprehensive forward look of meeting plans, including identifying and ensuring there are willing customers (the relevant minister and spending team) to receive the Board's advice from each meeting;
- Liaising with relevant policy teams to ensure departmental priorities are represented at meetings and inviting representatives to meetings as required;
- Liaising with board members on suitable meeting arrangements;
- Securing and informing the chair of the views of any absent board members submitted in advance;
- Ensuring papers are of sufficient quality and delivered on time;
- Maintaining a log of actions agreed at the Board and a forward look for future board meetings;
- Ensuring high quality and accurate minutes are submitted within a week to the chair for approval;
- Working with the chair to regularly assess how successfully the Board is delivering on its responsibilities (see 'evaluation').

The Chair, in consultation with members and with advice and support from the Secretariat, provides oversight of and direction for the Board's business.



Papers

Each paper will have a lead owner (usually the relevant member). The owner briefly introduces the item at the meeting summarising the objective and key issues for discussion. The Chair will hold the Secretariat and members to account on quality and timeliness of papers. The Secretariat will ensure that board papers are of the required quality and are issued at least one week prior to a meeting. The Chair will see draft papers three weeks prior to meetings. Papers for the Board should include a summary of the issues and recommendation (including next steps); questions for the Board to answer; and supporting background and arguments.

Minutes

The Secretariat will ensure high quality, accurate minutes are taken, and will prepare draft minutes within a week of each meeting. Comments or amendments to minutes should be sent to the Secretariat. Minutes will be cleared with the chair and endorsed by the Board at its next meeting.

Actions

The Secretariat will report progress on actions and raise any outstanding actions at the beginning of each meeting.

Role of the Sub-committee

The Board has a sub-committee, made up of people from the public bodies represented on the main board with working-level expertise of UK innovation activity. The sub-committee, which is also supported by the Secretariat, is responsible for:

- Discussing issues due to go to the next board, and providing advice to help the Board reach its conclusions;
- Responding to ad hoc requests from the Board;
- Proposing topics for the Board to discuss and identifying the intended customers for the Board's advice. Relevant advice from the sub-committee will be shared with the Board in writing or via the Secretariat at the Board meeting, as appropriate.

Role of the Innovation Delivery Board

The Innovation Delivery Board (IDB) was established in 2022 as a sub-group to NZIB. The IDB is chaired by the Director General for Net Zero Nuclear and International, DESNZ, and is supported by the NZIB Secretariat. It is attended by SROs for relevant net zero R&D programmes.

The role of the IDB is to:

- **Review programme delivery**, drawn from the programmes existing governance and reporting processes, to increase visibility of those programmes and to share progress on key Net Zero Strategy commitments and agree reporting to NZIB.
- **Enhance collaboration** between SROs of the net zero R&D programmes, increasing transparency and information-sharing to avoid duplication, share best-practice and consider collaborative work.
- **Capture and communicate successful outcomes and breakthroughs** within the net zero R&D programmes, ensuring these are incorporated into government's narrative on the importance of net zero innovation



Evaluation

The Board will review its effectiveness on a regular basis. Members will be given the opportunity to assess effectiveness during meetings, and the Chair will lead an annual review of the Board's effectiveness in consultation with the members. The success of the Board will be measured by:

- Feedback provided to the Chair (on the value of the Board's activities from the DESNZ SoS, ministers and senior officials in other departments), to assess the impact of the Board's discussions and advice on individual public body decisions; whether it is delivering on all the core tasks and responsibilities described in the terms of reference;
- The success of the Board in aligning and maximising the impact of members' financial bids (e.g. at the Spending Review);
- The advice that is provided to ministers and SCS and the responses received on that advice;
- Whether papers and minutes are delivered on time, and the Board's action log and forward look are properly maintained;
- As part of the annual review, a vision for the Board's activities in the upcoming year will be delivered by the Chair in consultation with the members.