



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: PROFESSOR SIR IAN BOYD FRSE FRSB

The Committee have been asked to consider an application from Professor Sir Ian Boyd, former Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), in relation to taking up an appointment with the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), a registered charity.

Appointment details

Professor Sir Ian is seeking the Committee's advice on taking up an appointment as a Non-Executive Trustee at UKRIO. He described his role within the charity as having oversight of business and strategy of the Trust. He informed the Committee this is a part-time, unpaid role requiring a work commitment of 2 days per month; and that he obtained this role following an open competition.

Professor Sir Ian said that whilst the board of trustees provides formal governance to the charity, members of the board sit as individuals, not on behalf of any organisation.

According to its website, the UKRIO is an independent charity, offering support to the public, researchers and organisations to further good practice in academic, scientific and medical research. It promotes good governance, management and conduct of academic, scientific and medical research.

The website indicates UKRIO was initially funded as a pilot project by a broad stakeholder group, including the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, the UK Departments of Health, the Research Councils, the Royal Society, research charities and a variety of other organisations. In line with the original proposal for UKRIO, it is expanding its pool of funders, and seeking support from universities, NHS organisations, the Department of Health and Social Care, other Government departments and research organisations such as public and private sector research institutes and industry.

Professor Sir Ian advised the Committee UKRIO have responsibility for supporting research integrity at a UK level; and Defra is a research sponsor and provider. As such, he noted the UKRIO will have some contact with Defra as one of the many organisations across the UK they are likely to deal with during the course of business. However, he thought it unlikely he will have direct contact with his former departments as this will be dealt with at executive level within the organisation.

Professor Sir Ian informed the Committee in his last two years in post he had no contractual dealings with UKRIO; and was not responsible for anyone who did. Further he had no official contact with UKRIO or access to relevant sensitive information.

The Permanent Secretary at Defra confirmed the details of Professor Sir Ian's application are accurate and Defra has no concerns about this appointment. Defra confirmed it has no relationship with UKRIO and Professor Sir Ian had no dealings with UKRIO while in office. It also confirmed he had no involvement in official dealings with UKRIO and has not had access to policy or other information that could confer unfair advantage. In addition, he did not make any decisions while in office that could be seen to benefit UKRIO while in post.

The Committee's consideration

The Committee¹ considered the risk of reward here is low. This is an unpaid role, working for a charitable organisation Professor Sir Ian obtained following an open competition. The Committee also took into consideration Defra's confirmation that he did not make any decisions while in office that could be seen to benefit UKRIO while in post.

The Committee took into account Professor Sir Ian's role with Defra, which focused on providing advice to ministers, senior management and external outreach; though the department have confirmed he had no access to information which would be of particular advantage to UKRIO. In addition, his description of his role within UKRIO suggests he will be drawing on generic skills gained during his time in office rather than specific information to which he was privy.

The Committee did consider there is a risk Professor Sir Ian may be seen to offer an unfair advantage to UKRIO, should he become involved in future bids for funding as UKRIO are a charity who may seek to obtain government funding in the future. The Committee has therefore imposed a ban on Professor Sir Ian advising UKRIO on bids and contracts.

The Committee has also taken into account that as Defra is one of the many organisations across the UK which UKRIO are likely to deal with during the course of business. As such, while the Committee noted such contact is unlikely to be via his role on the Council of Trustees, it would be prudent to draw his attention to the lobbying ban below.

¹ This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Baroness Angela Browning; Lord Michael German; Terence Jagger; Dr Susan Liataud; Baroness Helen Liddell; Richard Thomas and John Wood.

Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules the Permanent Secretary has accepted the Committee's advice that this appointment be subject to the following conditions:

- he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO), its partners or clients, nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in Government and/or Crown service to influence policy or secure funding on UKRIO's behalf; and
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice on the terms, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid or contract with, or relating directly to the work of, the UK Government

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act, the Civil Service Code or otherwise.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "*should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office.*"

I should be grateful if you would let us know whether the Permanent Secretary is content to with the Committee's recommendation and copy us into the final decision. I should also be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Professor Sir Ian takes up this role, or if it is announced that he will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether Professor Sir Ian complied with the rules.

Please also ensure that UK Research Integrity Office are made aware of the Committee's advice in this case, in line with the Department's responsibilities under the Business Appointment Rules.

Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Yours sincerely

Tiffany Amusu
Committee Secretariat

