



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Infrastructure
and Projects
Authority

To: Joanne Bradshaw, Senior Responsible Owner for the Defra Biosecurity, Borders and Trade Programme

From: Tamara Finkelstein, Permanent Secretary of Defra; and Nick Smallwood, Chief Executive Officer of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority

15 August 2023

Dear Joanne,

Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the Defra Biosecurity, Borders and Trade Programme (BBTP)

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Defra Biosecurity, Borders and Trade Programme (BBTP) with effect from 1 March 2021. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from your department and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

As SRO you are directly accountable to Sarah Homer, Director General for Portfolio Delivery Group, under the oversight of the Permanent Secretary, as accounting officer for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Minister Rt Hon Lord Benyon and Secretary of State, Therese Coffey.

Your programme forms part of the Defra portfolio, under the oversight of the chair of the Defra Executive Committee and is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You have personal responsibility for delivery of the programme and will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives with policy intent and outcomes expected.

This encompasses securing and protecting its vision, ensuring it is governed responsibly, reported on honestly, escalated appropriately and for influencing constructively the context, culture and operating environment of the programme.

You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the programme and recommending its pause or termination if appropriate. Where issues arise, which you

are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to the Executive Committee.

You remain accountable to Ministers, as set out in the Civil Service Code, and should deliver the project in accordance with the objectives and policy intent as set by ministers.

In addition to your internal accountabilities, SROs for GMPP projects and programmes are personally accountable to parliamentary select committees.

This means that, from the date of this letter you will be held personally accountable to and could be called by select committees to account for and explain the decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the programme.

It is important to be clear that your accountability relates only to implementation, within the terms agreed in this letter. It will remain for the minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development.

More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants](#), sometimes known as the Osmotherly Rules. Information on the SRO roles and responsibilities are detailed in the Infrastructure and Project Authority's (IPA's) [guidance on the role of the senior responsible owner](#).

You should also make yourself familiar with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework, and the guidance and requirements for project delivery as set by Defra Portfolio Directorate.

Time commitment and tenure

This will be a full-time role to enable effective delivery of the role and execute your responsibilities in full.

You are required to undertake this role until programme completion on or by 31 March 2025. Progress towards this will be reflected in your personal objectives.

Any changes to the agreed time commitment or tenure of the role, as set out above, will require both departmental and Infrastructure and Projects Authority consent.

Objectives and performance criteria

The policy intent supported by this programme is to help ensure the UK has a world class border, and to increase UK prosperity and security through enhanced biosecurity controls for trade in animals, plants and their products (sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulations).

Any proposed changes to scope which impact on this intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by Defra Biosecurity, Borders & Trade Programme Board and may be subject to further levels of approval.

The vision of the programme is to deliver biosecurity capability which protects health, encourages prosperity and enables security for a global United Kingdom. The programme will deliver a world class biosecure border that is global, simplified, proportionate and digitalised. There are three strategic objectives in delivering this aim:

- Developing a regime for imports and exports which protects the biosecurity of the United Kingdom.
- Transforming physical & digital infrastructure underpinning and facilitating the operation of an effective border.
- Delivering an operational border which enables a productive and competitive food industry to trade products of high standards.

Your personal objectives and performance criteria which relate to the programme are to:

- Develop, maintain and communicate the vision of the programme to all key stakeholders. You are to ensure, through leading and guiding the programme, that it delivers capability and the realisation of benefits in line with approved business cases.
- Deliver the new SPS Borders Target Operating model in line with the agreed implementation schedule and support longer term integration with the Single Trade Window Programme as part of the Government Border 2025 strategy
- Secure the resources necessary for the success of the programme and ensure related implementation and transition activities realise the agreed objectives and benefits. The stakeholder landscape is complex, and this role will also require you to lead and oversee partnership working with delivery agencies and local authorities.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the governance, assurance and project management arrangements and maintain them throughout the life of the programme. You should adopt best practice and be prepared to justify any deviation from it, in line with guidance published by the IPA. This must include:
 - a) Appointing, chairing and setting priorities for the Programme Board.
 - b) Ensuring the effectiveness and performance of the programme.
 - c) Ensuring appropriate assurance is in place including the commissioning of assurance and audit reviews.
- Ensure value for money of the programme, both by bearing down on costs and improving benefits, where possible. This assessment of value for money should consider both upfront investment cost and whole life cost.

You are expected to run your project in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the other [Functional Standards](#) as applicable to this programme, and the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework.

Extent and limit of accountability

Finance and Controls

HM Treasury spending controls will apply on the basis set out within the department's delegated authority letter. Where the Defra Biosecurity, Borders and Trade Programme (BBTP) exceeds the delegated authority set by HM Treasury, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply, and the details of each approval process must be agreed with your HM Treasury spending team. You should consult your departments finance colleagues on how to go about this.

You should note that where expenditure is considered novel, contentious, repercussive, or likely to result in costs to other parts of the public sector, HM Treasury approval will be required, regardless of whether the programme expenditure exceeds the delegated authority set by HM Treasury.

If in doubt about whether approval is required you should, in the first instance, consult departmental finance colleagues before raising with the relevant HM Treasury spending team.

The overall estimated budget, resourcing requirements, and tolerances for your project or programme will be agreed as part of the approval process. You will be expected to deliver within these tolerances and report quarterly on these as part of GMPP reporting.

You should operate at all times within the rules set out in [Managing Public Money](#). In addition, you must be mindful of, and act in line with, the specific HM Treasury delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to the Defra Biosecurity, Borders and Trade Programme (BBTP). Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

Delegated authority

You are authorised to:

1. approve expenditure of £10 million in pound sterling
2. agree project rescheduling within 10 days period of agreed Level 1 milestones, but rescheduling beyond that must be agreed via the Bio Security, Borders and Trade Programme Board and as appropriate the Executive Committee
3. recommend to the Bio Security, Borders and Trade Programme Board the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner

These authority limits are subject to change and other conditions, or tolerances may be set as part of the business case approval and ongoing monitoring processes which you should then operate within.

Where issues arise, which take you outside of these authority limits which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to David Kennedy, the Permanent Secretary and the Executive Committee.

Appointments

You should retain a full-time programme manager to support you in the management of this programme and make other appointments as required for the control and delivery of your programme within your delegated authority.

Governance and assurance

You should pay attention to ensuring effective governance for your or programme, including the establishment of a project or programme board with appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner, you must ensure that the programme secures business case approval from Defra Investment Committee, Executive Committee including Cabinet Office and HM Treasury (HMT). You should also ensure that the programme remains aligned to the strategic outcomes, costs, timescales, and benefits in line with the approved business case as well as monitoring the context within which the programme is being delivered to ensure it remains valid.

Where a change impacts the scope, costs, benefits, or planned delivery milestones agreed as part of an agreed business case, you are responsible for following the agreed change request approval process and setting a new, approved, business case baseline.

You should ensure that an accounting officer assessment is completed alongside the approval of the outline business case and that this is published on GOV.UK as part of the government's transparency requirements on major projects.

You are responsible for bringing to the attention of the accounting officer any material changes in the programme which could require a new accounting officer assessment to be completed and published. [Guidance on completing accounting officer assessments](#) for major projects is available from HM Treasury.

Although you are directly accountable for this programme, you are also expected to support delivery of the department's overall strategic objectives.

This means that you are expected to work collaboratively with other SROs and project directors in adjacent projects and programmes and with the Defra portfolio management office and portfolio director to manage dependencies, resources, schedules, and funding to support delivery of the overall change the department needs to achieve its strategic objectives.

You should ensure that appropriate and proportionate assurance is in place and agree on the level and frequency of assurance reviews through the maintenance of

an integrated assurance and approvals plan. You should develop this plan and its maintenance in collaboration with the departmental assurance coordinator and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

Programme Status, reporting and transparency requirements

The programme status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the programme to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and is the agreed position as you assume formal ownership of the programme.

You are responsible for ensuring the honest and timely reporting on the position of the programme to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority while it remains on the GMPP and for providing reports and information to the Defra portfolio management office as required.

Reporting should include carbon measurement, and other sustainable development goals demonstrating evidence that the project contributes to an overarching environmental strategy and is aligned with defined Net Zero pathways.

Information on the programme will be published annually by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

As part of the government's commitment to transparency on major infrastructure projects, you are responsible for publishing on GOV.UK:

- a summary of the accounting officer assessment completed in line with the approval of the outline business case and summaries of any subsequent assessments should they be required
- a close out report after the project or programme has completed.

Development and support

Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA)

As a graduate of the Major Projects Leadership Academy, you are expected to maintain your continuing professional development as a project leader, including your status as an accredited assurance reviewer. To maintain your accreditation, you will be required to participate in a review at least once every 12 months.

The department will assist you in securing the necessary resources to support the programme, and will set clear guidance, requirements and standards, which align to the [Government Functional Standard on Project Delivery](#), to enable good governance and effective delivery.

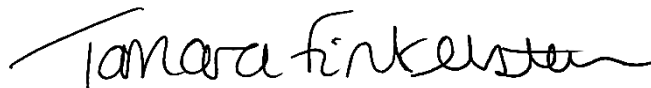
You will be part of the department's cohort of major project leaders who will be expected to support each other, share good practice and lessons learned and to collectively develop solutions. You should liaise with the department's head of profession for project delivery to discuss the maintenance and development of your delivery and leadership skills.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority will be available to you for support, advice, and assurance throughout the project's or programme's time on the GMPP.

The Executive Committee will provide ongoing oversight and support and will take steps to help resolve and escalate risks, issues or constraints that are acting as a blocker to successful delivery.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your role as SRO.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Tamara Finkelstein' in a cursive style.

Tamara Finkelstein,

Permanent Secretary, Defra

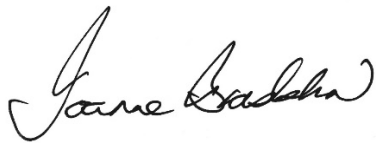
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Nick Smallwood' in a cursive style.

Nick Smallwood,

Chief Executive, IPA

Confirmation of acceptance of appointment

I confirm that I accept the appointment as Senior Responsible Officer for the Defra Biosecurity, Borders and Trade Programme (BBTP) including my personal accountability for implementation of the project, as set out in the letter above.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Joanne Bradshaw'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Joanne Bradshaw
Senior Responsible Owner – Defra Biosecurity, Borders and Trade
Programme (BBTP)