



## Government Chemist Programme Expert Group Meeting

Tuesday 15 July 2025

MYO, 123 Victoria Street, SW1E 6DE

### Attendees:

<u>DSIT</u> David Burns Ian Belcher Steph Foster	<u>LGC</u> Amber Meredith Caroline Pritchard Christopher McElroy Dorota Bartczak Gavin Nixon Harry Barraza Heidi Goenaga-Infante John Black Julian Braybrook Kirstin Gray Malcolm Burns Martina Uroye Paul Hancock Reeya Ravji Selvarani Elahi
<u>PEG</u> Bhavna Parmar Brenda McRory Chelvi Leonard Declan Naughton Diane Turner Gillian McEneff John Collins Jonathon Griffin Kasia Kazimierczak Paul Berryman Simon Branch Sophie Rollinson	

Apologies: Jessica Merryfield

### 1. **Welcome & minutes of the last meeting:**

- 1.1 A PEG member opened with welcoming attendees and PEG members and reminded all those present of the usual housekeeping.
- 1.2 Minutes from the previous GC PEG meeting (December 2024) were approved.

### 2. **Review of completed actions and matters arising from previous meetings:**

- 2.1 **Action 1:** (11.6 LGC to circulate attributive and non-attributive minutes of the meeting). **Action Completed.**
- 2.2 **Action 2:** (11.7 LGC to circulate a poll for the Spring 2025 meeting). **Action Completed.**

### 3. **DSIT Update**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 3.1 DSIT reiterated that by the end of the current Spending Review, DSIT will be responsible for about two-thirds of total R&D spending.
- 3.2 No comments/questions from PEG members.

#### **4. Government Chemist Update**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 4.1 A PEG member commented that the move to Guildford had been really well planned with no impact on the projects that LGC were delivering to Defra. The PEG member asked to pass on their positive feedback to the teams. A GC staff member replied that contingency had been built in as part of a staggered move plan.
- 4.2 A PEG member asked how the move has worked in terms of accreditation and how it has affected the GC enforcement function. A GC staff member replied that it was agreed to run accreditation across both sites and that the commercial use of accreditation for measurement services is currently suspended, prior to a forthcoming UKAS visit. The GC staff member further commented that no new Referee Cases came in during the move. An ongoing Referee Case was not affected by the move as was not lab-based.
- 4.3 A PEG member commented that the GC team had kept the FSA updated on the timelines of the move.

#### **5. Programme Update**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 5.1 DSIT/LGC were actioned to check if a PEG member had completed the relevant PEG paperwork (**ACTION 1**).
- 5.2 A PEG member asked if the Nutrition Research Registry developed under project CB10 has been published. A GC staff member replied that they would send the link and flyer for the Research Registry to the PEG member, who will disseminate to the Health Food Manufacturers Association (**ACTION 2**).
- 5.3 A PEG member congratulated the GC on the quality of the publications published so far under the current Programme.
- 5.4 A PEG member asked if there is a follow-on CBD ring trial planned. A GC staff member replied that a follow-on ring trial is planned for the next GC Programme.
- 5.5 A PEG member commented that there was a concern raised by an FSA policy team of PBOs being mentioned in project CB4, given this is no longer a UK government position and the sensitivities involved. A GC staff member replied that the GC is aware of the current guidance around PBOs and that there is no work planned in the current Programme. It was agreed that the GC team would remove the term 'PBO' from one of the deliverables in the project for clarity (**ACTION 3**).
- 5.6 A discussion was held on formulation activities for the next GC Programme. PEG members agreed with the GC teams' proposal that with the uncertainty around levels of additional funding for the next GC Programme to postpone the stakeholder workshop, currently planned for September. Several PEG members supported fewer, larger projects in the next GC Programme.

#### **6. High-Throughput to High-Trust: NGS Applications in Food authenticity**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 6.1 A PEG member praised the great work delivered and the quality of the presentation.
- 6.2 A PEG member asked a question on how to disseminate the findings and standardised approaches of the NGS work presented. A GC staff member replied that the GC is currently exploring ways to disseminate the findings and standardised approaches of the NGS work, including potential contributions to international standards. Another GC staff member further commented that the GC is working to define the minimum performance criteria for NGS akin to the MIQE guidelines.
- 6.3 A PEG member further noted that NGS technologies are crucial for future applications, particularly around adulteration of lab-grown meat.

## **7. CB6: Measurement methods for microplastics in food**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 7.1 A PEG member commented on the good progress made and asked if there any particular particles of concern. A GC staff member replied that this is a complex area which also overlaps with the measurement of nanoparticles. Another GC staff member further commented on the need to consider the chemical composition of microplastics in future studies to understand their potential toxicity.
- 7.2 A PEG member commented that it would be interesting to repeat the microplastics analysis on a different salt samples, such as sea salt, to compare results.
- 7.3 A PEG member also asked a question on the applicability of the methods developed to other samples. A GC staff member replied that solid samples such as fish and seaweed present a challenge to the methods developed.

## **8. Referee Cases Update**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 8.1 A PEG member asked if there was any follow up to OL's in cases where their results differ. A GC staff member replied that the GC can provide support as required.
- 8.2 A PEG member asked if there were any learnings from the Pesticides in Rice Referee Case in terms of sample preparation. A GC staff member replied that the sample was possibly taken as a one-part sample, but it is recommended that it should be taken as a three-part sample. The GC staff member also commented that some pesticides break down in water. A PEG member further commented that some laboratories will generally get aggregated samples and then prepare samples for analysis.
- 8.3 A PEG member further commented that it is hard to determine which food category bubble tea falls into in the current additives regulations and a conversation between the Public Analysts, Local Authorities and the FSA is required to decide on the best approach to take.
- 8.4 A PEG member further commented that some Bubble Tea could contain starch, so its classification is key. There is the potential that all Bubble Tea products could, in theory, fail any future testing.

## **9. CB9: Novel contaminants from recycled and novel food packaging materials**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 9.1 A PEG member asked if the water samples analysed sourced from different supermarkets. A GC staff member replied that both a range of branded and non-branded water samples were sourced from different supermarkets.

## **10. Partnerships update**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 10.1 A PEG member asked if there was a mechanism for Universities to contact LGC. A GC staff member replied that contact can be made directly.

## **11. Engineering Biology: pioneering solutions for a changing world**

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 11.1 A PEG member highlighted the need to develop a comprehensive public engagement strategy to communicate the benefits and safety of engineering biology to the public.
- 11.2 The PEG member was also supportive of the use of NGS, particularly for applications in Cell Cultivated products as a form of traceability and to potentially detect residual DNA which may be present in the media.

## **12. Feedback and questions**

- 12.1 A PEG member thanked all the presenters for their presentations and asked for comments and questions from other PEG members.
- 12.2 A PEG member praised the team on the great work presented.
- 12.3 A PEG member commented that the GC Programme requires more funding.
- 12.4 LGC to circulate attributive and non-attributive minutes of the meeting (**ACTION 4**).
- 12.5 LGC to circulate a poll for the Autumn 2025 meeting (**ACTION 5**).