



**British
Geological Survey**
Expert Impartial Innovative

BGS BOARD
First meeting
Friday 27 April 2018

Present

Sir Keith O’Nions (Chair), Sir Mike Dixon, Paul Fox, Dr Donna Kirkwood, Professor John Ludden, Dr Mike Patterson, Olivier Peyret, Joanne Wilson, David Simpson, Neil McCarthy (Secretary)

Apologies

Professor Richard Williams

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared relevant to the agenda, but the following wider interests were declared :

- Professor Richard Williams had notified the Chair that there is an ongoing operational relationship between Heriot-Watt University and the BGS.
- Sir Mike Dixon declared an ongoing contractual relationship between BGS and the Natural History Museum.

BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

The board reviewed the draft ToR. A number of suggestions were made to clarify them and small changes will be made. A preface will be included to state that the Memorandum of Understanding between BGS and NERC defines the overarching responsibility of the board. It was also noted that the ToR will be reviewed from time to time.

BGS HEALTH & SAFETY

The board received a presentation from the BGS Chief Operating Officer on accident data and trends. It was agreed that the board need to be kept informed of accident statistics and health and safety data and issues more generally. The board was informed that as UKRI is now the legal entity, the ultimate legal responsibility for health and safety rests with it, although it was agreed that the board’s responsibility is to ensure the appropriate oversight of health and safety within BGS is in place.

BGS GOVERNANCE : PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

The board received an overview from the BGS CEO on the BGS governance position and how it has progressed to its current stage. The ensuing discussion identified that a major focus for the board will be to consider how BGS’s governance can be progressed.

In the discussion of governance models, the funding of science and research in the UK was clarified. UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), Innovate UK, and Research England account for approximately

£6.5bn of the budget of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Science Budget within this total has been ringfenced by government for many years. The healthiest balance of income streams for BGS is something the board will need to determine.

BGS STRATEGY : SCIENCE AND RESOURCES

The board received a presentation from the BGS CEO which gave a general overview of the BGS, including science priorities and key strategic partnerships. The board agreed that one of its key roles is to validate the strategy and to challenge the BGS Executive on this. How this is best done needs to be determined. Performance measures to allow the board to measure progress against plan will need to be determined in due course.

BGS FINANCES

The board received a summary of the overall BGS financial position. It was explained that BGS has requested the ability to carry forward end of year surpluses into the next financial year. In 2017-18, BGS agreed with NERC that the final £900k surplus would be removed from the BGS Science Budget allocation in 2017-18, and that it will be returned in 2019-20. It was clarified why a surplus is returned to NERC rather than retained by BGS.

The board agreed that understanding the different funding lines and the associated risks, is a priority, so it will receive further briefing on the funding lines.

AUDIT & RISK

The board viewed the extensive audit schedule which BGS is subject to, and concurred that a priority is to understand the key business risks. It was proposed that there be 5-10 key risks for the board to review, some of which are generic, some which may be business specific. The board agreed its role is to help the Executive think through the risks in public good science, scientific research, and commercial services. To do this, the board needs to understand these three areas and what the business risks are.

BOARD INDUCTION

There was discussion of the board induction requirements. It was felt that what had emerged from the discussion during the meeting highlighted a range of areas where the board needs to develop its knowledge and understanding, such as the funding system, key business risks, and BGS science priorities and delivery. Further consideration will be given to what information the board should be provided with to help them fulfil their role. This is expected to include visits to BGS sites in due course.

OTHER BUSINESS

It was proposed that for the next meeting consider governance options, measuring and monitoring BGS performance against plan, how to better understand the main funding lines and the risks associated with these, and what form a board level risk register could take. The final agenda will be agreed in due course.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates of future meetings have been set for Tuesday 10 July 2018, Thursday 11 October 2018, Friday 25 January 2019, and Friday 12 April 2019.

SIR KEITH O'NIONS
Chair of the BGS board
July 2018