

Health and Safety Executive Board Paper		HSE/07/93	
Meeting Date:	5 September 2007	FOI Status:	Fully Open
Type of Paper:	Below the Line	Paper File Ref:	2007/198758
Exemptions:	None		

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

Fine Tuning Review - progress on evaluation

A Paper by John Ewins, Head of Analytical Services

Advisor(s): Ulrike Hotopp, Paul Buckley

Cleared by Patrick McDonald on 22 August 2007

Issue

1. Progress on implementing the Fine Tuning Review recommendations on evaluation, incorporating progress on similar recommendations made in HSE/07/053, "Knowing our knowns and unknowns".

Timing

2. Maintaining momentum on the Review recommendations is important.

Recommendation

3. That the Board notes the progress made to date and the anticipated timetable for completing the various actions.

Background

4. In December 2006, as a result of concern that evaluation in HSE was uncoordinated and sometimes poorly designed, the Board agreed that the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) should sign-off all evaluation proposals and that small-scale evaluations should be stopped. The CSA wrote to Board members in January 2007 with interim arrangements for putting this into effect. Then in May, the Board discussed HSE's approach to analysing and using evidence (HSE/07/053 "Knowing our knowns and unknowns" refers). They endorsed the proposal for CoSAS to continue with arrangements for: co-ordinating evaluation; the drafting of simpler guidance; for a series of seminars on using evidence; and for making evaluation evidence more readily available via the intranet.
5. The Fine Tuning Review recommended a proportionate approach to feedback and evaluation based on common sense, benefit and resource, with independent quantitative evaluation reserved for larger or higher risk projects. The Board asked CoSAS to dovetail the work already in hand on improving evaluation with the recommendations in the report.

Argument

6. Our approach to promoting a proportionate approach to evaluation and to improving the analysis and use of evaluation and other evidence across HSE is four-fold:

- a) Improve and simplify HSE guidance so that it supports fit-for-purpose evidence gathering whether it is for local feedback or more formal evaluation;
 - b) Raise awareness, and so use, of the analytical support that CoSAS can provide, for example to advise, at one end of the scale, when impact evaluation is appropriate and, at the other, to help design simple and cost-effective mechanisms for gathering feedback;
 - c) Develop a seminar series for operational and policy staff to inform them about the above and about the interpretation and use of evidence; and
 - d) Argue for appropriate 'gateways' in the policy (including operational policy) development and implementation cycle that encourage adoption of the above approach.
7. Progress so far and the plan for completing implementation on each of these is set out below.

Improving evaluation guidance

- 8. Overarching guidance giving a straightforward explanation of each type of evaluation, including feedback, and when they should be used has been developed in consultation with users and is now being placed on the intranet.
- 9. The detailed guidance on impact evaluation (currently in GAP 6) has been reviewed and revised to improve its relevance to, and usability by, HSE staff. This is currently with key customers in HSE for comment and should be complete and ready for placing on the intranet by October.
- 10. Simple guidance on process evaluation and gathering feedback, intended for the general HSE user, is under development. We will consult with a wider group of customers on this guidance and aim to complete it for posting on the intranet in November/December.

Raising awareness

- 11. Awareness of the service CoSAS can provide is already fairly good in Policy Group and particularly the Fit3 programme teams. Various seminars/training sessions are run regularly (mainly for policy staff) aimed at maintaining and improving this awareness. These include the Scientists & Policy-makers workshops and the Better Regulation team's workshops on better policy-making.
- 12. Direct improvements to our analytical support for operational directorates are also being made and these provide another opportunity for awareness raising. The improvements include a 'desk officer' in CoSAS for each region to ease access to our services. We are part way through a round of visits to the regions to launch this new service and to listen to and discuss operational needs for analytical support.

Seminar series

- 13. We are currently developing the seminar series on interpretation and use of evidence as proposed in HSE/07/053. This will be aimed at both policy and operational staff and will initially run in London and Bootle. We also intend to take a potted version of this to regional offices. Timing of the first series depends on completion of the improvements to evaluation guidance as we need this in

place a month or so beforehand. We are therefore likely to run the series for the first time between January and April 2008. In order to maintain levels of awareness and because of the periodic movement of staff into relevant jobs, we plan to repeat the series say every 12-18 months.

Gateways

14. Some gateways have already been introduced by the Board. These include:

- a. Chief Scientist sign-off for all evaluation proposals;
- b. Chief Executive sign-off (as advised by the Chief Economist) of impact assessments for major policy decisions;

15. Other significant developments under consideration include an 'evidence' section in Board papers, requiring clearance by the Chief Scientist along the lines of the existing Finance and Communications clearance arrangements.

Consultation

16. None specifically for this update.

Presentation

17. No presentational implications.

Costs and Benefits

18. None specifically related to this update.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

19. None specifically related to this update. The financial/resource implications of the various proposals were addressed in the earlier Board paper, HSE/07/053.

Environmental Implications

20. None.

Other Implications

21. None.

Action

22. The Board is asked to note progress on the Fine Tuning recommendations related to evaluation.