



# Cefas Quinquennial Science Review 2018



## Review Panel Report Conclusions

## Conclusions

***To comment and make specific recommendations for the future development of Cefas science programmes, as appropriate, and to draw an overall conclusion on the sustainability, relevance, quality, and impact of its evidence activities***

1. Our overall impression was of a dynamic and vibrant research community that, over the past five years, has addressed and embraced a range of challenges, and continues to do so. In a changing funding environment, a changing political environment, a changing scientific environment and a changing physical environment there is now a clear articulation within Cefas of movement from a national and legacy approach to forecasting and advice on the international stage.
2. **Sustainability:** Cefas has developed over the last few years a successful working model that centres on government and government-to-government research, advisory tasks and monitoring needs. Staff numbers have increased, Seedcorn investment is highly effective and research infrastructure is effectively maintained and developed. At the heart of this model lies a healthy relationship with core Defra, which needs to be widely appreciated. All the indications are that the demands on Cefas by Defra and other governmental organisations will increase after EU exit. For example, fisheries management will likely demand more input from Cefas in terms of the negotiations with the EU, EU member states and other coastal states of the North Atlantic. Contributions to international organisations such as ICES and RFMO's are also likely to increase, rather than decrease, in importance. Similarly, the demand for science and monitoring underpinning national environmental and health directives aligned to international standards will likely increase. We recognise the uncertainties over EU exit and potential future uncertainties over funding in the international arena and commend the Cefas Management Board in its continuing attempts to minimise the risks to the organisation.
3. **Capabilities:** Cefas continues to have the capabilities to meet the needs of its core customers, whilst expanding its co-operation and capabilities, especially in the areas of environmental monitoring technology, eDNA and data. Whilst having made substantial amounts of data available, substantially more could be done in this increasingly data driven world to exploit those data, deploy risk assessments and improve forecasting techniques. Cefas needs to consider how international it wants to become in terms of its remit and to develop a more strategic approach to international investment.
4. **Quality Assurance:** Cefas' science activities reflect current science thinking with international leadership in several areas. Feedback indicates that these activities are appropriate to meeting the needs of business and especially government. The quantity and quality of Cefas science outputs is good, but more needs to be done to encourage science outputs through more flexible time management, and more to encourage quality through mentoring and narrative development.

5. Use and Impact: The Review Panel identified a range of science highlights and welcomed the case studies and presentations on the site visits, which provide clear evidence of impact of Cefas' science in a range of areas. There is a clear impact of Cefas science on policy development and implementation, which is becoming increasingly global in its context. However, in the context of EU exit, a continued national focus is required as well, and this was encouragingly apparent from the case studies and the site visits. Cefas' collaboration with other organisations is well received.

The developing university partnerships should, with careful stewardship, significantly enhance the quality and quantity of Cefas science. Recommendations are made into how Cefas might further improve its science, surveillance and monitoring, use of data, reporting and publications.

6. The Review Panel welcomed the positive and constructive responses Cefas had made to the recommendations from the 2012 Science Review, outlining where further developments of the responses are still needed in relation to the constantly changing funding, policy and science environments.

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