



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
T: +44 (0) 3459 335577
E: correspondence.section@defra.gov.uk
W: gov.uk/defra

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Dear Dame Glenys,

We share an ambition to protect and improve the environment. The work of the OEP helps the pursuit of my own priorities such as cleaning up rivers, lakes and seas, and ensuring nature's recovery.

I am also committed to reforming the environmental regulatory system to make it more proportionate, outcome-focussed and easier to navigate. I welcome the OEP's engagement to date with Dan Corry's recent review of Defra's regulatory landscape and, as we move into implementation, I think that OEP visibly taking an outcome-focussed approach to its work is critical to encouraging other bodies to do likewise.

I recognise my statutory duty to have regard to the need to protect the OEP's independence. That being understood, I trust that, as the OEP carries out its statutory functions, it will support regulators in trialling new, innovative approaches. This space to innovate will be vital to delivering the more agile, effective regulatory system we are seeking to build to deliver better outcomes for nature recovery, alongside growth.

Defra has a responsibility to provide oversight of the OEP regarding performance of its functions and the management of public funds and resources. In that context, I expect OEP to maintain budgetary control, ensuring resources are directed to the most impactful interventions and that Defra funding is spent on activities in England and matters reserved to the Government.

In Annex B I have set out expectations related to the OEP's involvement with Defra Group Corporate Services, along with Functional Standards responsibilities.

I also support the ongoing work to improve ways of working that strengthens governance and efficiency and fosters a positive culture of no surprises. Minister Creagh will meet you regularly to build a constructive working relationship.

Finally, thank you for writing regarding the end of your term. I am very grateful for your expertise and dedication in steering this body from its inception, and all the work that you have put into building the organisation from the ground up. As I told the Environmental Audit Committee earlier this year, I believe that the OEP is a very important organisation, both in holding the Government to account and as a very useful source of advice. I know that Minister Creagh has already conveyed Defra's gratitude for your public service, and I would echo that. I look forward to continuing to work constructively with you while your term runs. Thank you again.

Yours sincerely,

THE RT HON STEVE REED OBE MP

List of Annexes

- a) ***Delegated Authority Document (separate attachment)***
- b) ***Group Corporate Services Functional Standards***

Annex A - Delegated Authority Document



Annex A - OEP
Delegated Authority

Annex B – Group Corporate Services and Functional Standards

Provision of Corporate Services

- The GCS model works on a collaborative, partnership approach and it is expected that your organisation adheres to this way of operating. You should designate a senior officer who acts as the key coordination and escalation point into GCS and to champion the model and services back into your organisation.
- The Group Chief Operating Officer holds the centralised group corporate services budgets and is accountable for the delivery of required services as set out in the GCS Partnership Agreement and outlined in the [GCS Service Catalogue](#). This responsibility for service provision extends to demonstrating value for money for the services provided. Your organisation is a member of the GCS Board which is a sub-committee of ExCo.
- At year end a corporate service cost (the notional recharge) will be allocated, so that your Annual Report and Accounts show the cost of corporate services received by your organisation, where applicable. In cases of growth taking place during an SR period, cost recovery will be applied in accordance with an agreed formula, as part of the standard departmental business planning.
- We expect Defra bodies to focus on efficiency and excellent user experience, including service improvement and automation. I expect you to have a senior leader accountable for this agenda within your organisation, to work with Defra GCS to develop a service transformation and automation efficiency plan.
- To assure compliance with security and digital standards, you are required to ensure that any spend on technology goes through the appropriate DDTS team and that all projects containing a digital component are subject to approval by the DDTS Portfolio Approvals Board.

Functional Standards

- Where you receive a service from GCS, the relevant Head of Function in Defra is ultimately accountable for the implementation of Functional Standards. Where you do not receive services related to a Functional Standard the CEO of your organisation is accountable for meeting the key requirements and the relevant Head of Function may provide support and advice for developing an approach to implementing the standards in your organisation.

Technology Spend

- You should engage with the Assurance team in Defra's Digital, Data and Technology Services to ensure that any spend on technology complies with Cabinet Office Spend Controls, and that all projects containing a digital component are subject to appropriate controls as described in the spend control policy: [Digital and technology spend control version 6 - GOV.UK](#).