

Evaluation of a Public Dialogue on Openness in Animal Research

Final Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

This report sets out the key findings of the evaluation of a public dialogue on openness in animal research, conducted in summer 2013. The dialogue was commissioned by Understanding Animal Research (UAR), and funded predominantly by the Medical Research Council and Sciencewise¹. The dialogue was delivered by Ipsos MORI and evaluated by 3KQ.

Context and Aims. In October 2012, key players in the animal research sector committed to agree and publish a Concordat that set out commitments regarding openness and transparency in animal research. 72 institutions ultimately signed the Concordat. The dialogue was commissioned to ensure the evolving Concordat was informed directly by public views, and so would be aligned with public expectations. The dialogue therefore aimed to explore the public's expectation of openness in the animal research sector, with the intention that the findings would influence the Concordat drafting and implementation.

Activities and Content of Dialogue. The dialogue consisted of 6 public workshops, spanning 3 locations: London, Cardiff and Manchester. At each location, two events were held a fortnight apart with the same participants. The sessions covered basic facts about animal research, the diversity of views that exist about the use of animals, options for increased openness, as well as a range of stimulus material including some quite hard hitting video footage from the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) which had been taken undercover. 48 public participants followed the process through to the end, roughly equally split between the three locations.

Evaluation. A range of data was gathered via direct observation, telephone interviews, participant questionnaires (100% response rate) and document review throughout the project, including reviewing the final version of the Concordat and how it changed throughout the process.

Meeting the objectives. All the objectives of the dialogue were well met. A key contributing factor for this was the clarity and simplicity of the objectives, in particular the fact that the dialogue did not try to be over-ambitious in its scope and remit. The objectives were easy to understand, short, and did not contain jargon or ambiguous concepts.

Good practice standards. The Sciencewise guiding principles were well met. There was a wide range of contributing factors here. The clear objectives and clear route of impact brought clarity and purpose to the dialogue for everyone involved. In terms of delivery, the experience of the contractor with the subject matter helped them implement the dialogue rapidly and effectively, and the process design they chose worked well. The involvement of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in the dialogue Oversight Group and subsequent delivery of public events was seen as absolutely essential to the balance of stimulus materials, as well as the credibility of the dialogue more broadly. The one area that proved problematic was the timescales, which were always recognised as being very tight and which eventually had to be extended. Even after the original timescale was extended, the project had to operate at "full-speed" and put considerable strain on some individuals, as well as alienating some of the external NGOs who refused to participate in part because they felt it was being rushed.

¹ The Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre (Sciencewise) is the UK's national centre for public dialogue in policy making involving science and technology issues.

Satisfaction levels. The level of satisfaction overall was high. 98% of the public were “overall satisfied with the two events”. Oversight Group members were also satisfied with the dialogue, *“I’m pleased with the dialogue events overall”*. However, the intense workload involved for Oversight Group members tipped the balance for one member *“It was an interesting project but not worth the incredible amount of time that I and others had to spend on it”*. This was not a widely held view however.

Governance. The governance of the dialogue worked very well. Beyond contract and project management by UAR, the main mechanism for the governance of the project was the Oversight Group (OG). The diversity of the OG – in particular the inclusion of the RSPCA - was a real asset to the dialogue, ensuring balanced framing of the dialogue, and balanced materials. The chairing of the OG by a UAR staff member was conducted sensitively and with a firm commitment to ensuring consensus on all key points amongst the OG. This was an asset to the project, as was the delivery contractor’s efforts to support the drive towards consensus amongst the group. The credibility of the dialogue may have evaporated had decisions been forced through.

Impact. It is still early to judge, but impacts can be seen in the following areas:

- Public participants. 94% said their views had been affected, and 59% said they were likely to change something that they do as a result of the taking part.
- Concordat. The main impact regarding the Concordat is that the dialogue has provided solid reassurance that the Concordat is indeed in line with public views, *“The dialogue has backed up what we already had in the evolving Concordat: being more open, explaining what research is being done and why, and using images more.”* There have also been some small but real changes to the Concordat and the associated guidance document, mainly the citation of the dialogue and exploration of the specific things that public participants raised as being important. These included: advice on publishing how many animals are used and why, the use of images and films, and the need to demonstrate that efforts are made to ensure research is not duplicated. The dialogue findings were also used to defend against potential dilutions of Concordat commitments as they evolved, for example to use images in communications, and to allow access to laboratories.
- Practices. The dialogue findings are already being used in conversations with scientists about why the public want to see more openness, and what they want more information about, in particular how genetics technology is used in science, and what the motivations of researchers are.
- Other bodies. Key messages about regulation – which fall outside the Concordat signatories remit – were passed to the Home Office as the responsible authority.

Learning. There is a variety of learning to take from this dialogue, much of it positive and stemming from what worked well. Specific lessons include:

- Clear, simple and unambiguous objectives are essential to effective delivery.
- It takes around 6-8 weeks to develop stimulus materials on a contentious topic.
- Active participation from diverse interests is essential on the Oversight Group.
- Objective ways of capturing participant views would strengthen results.
- It is likely to take *well over* 12 months for public dialogue on a contentious topic to go from ‘concept to completion’.

Overall, this dialogue was a success. It met its objectives well, and fulfilled Sciencewise's guiding principles that set out good practice. There were some very effective efforts to include diverse interests both in the governance of the project and also the stimulus materials used with public participants. There have been some small but real changes to the Concordat document and supporting guidance document, as well as changes to the way in which those involved in improving openness are talking to stakeholders in the sector and using the dialogue findings.

The evaluators thank everyone who contributed their views and time to the evaluation: it would not be possible without their generous and honest participation.

1 - Introduction

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the public dialogue on the topic of 'openness in animal research', commissioned by Understanding Animal Research in 2013.

The report presents evaluation evidence on the quality of the public dialogue process, and its impacts. It also identifies lessons to help develop good practice in public dialogue on science and technology issues.

2 - Background

The use of animals in medical research has a long and controversial history dating back hundreds of years, if not over a thousand years. In recent decades animal research has been at the core of developing new clinical treatments, medicines and procedures, as well as building humankind's understanding of animal and human function. It has also been subject to significant controversy, and there are a number of campaign groups focussed against its actions and principles.

The animal research sector is regulated by law. The Animal Scientific Procedures Act (1986) was updated and came into force on 1 January 2013. This consolidated law, updated in line with EU Directive 2010/63, is now seen as the main vehicle for regulating procedures that are carried out on 'protected animals' for scientific research and testing that may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. The Home Office has also published guidance for licence holders on what the law means and how the UK Government is interpreting it.

Public opinion towards the use of animal research has been measured consistently for over 10 years. The figures² in 2012 indicated a 7-10% decline in public acceptance of animal research in medicine. This is a change in the trend seen in preceding years.

In response to the reported decline in support, key players in the life science sector decided to jointly develop an agreement or 'Concordat' that would set out how they would approach openness in animal research. This was in part based on the understanding that perceived transparency is linked to building trust in the sector, and therefore could potentially reverse the reported decline in support. The Concordat process was launched in October 2012, led by UAR as the trade body for organisations that fund or conduct animal research. The structure of the Concordat process included: around 60 members (see Appendix 1), a Steering Group (to oversee and steer the whole process), a Working Group (to develop and discuss detailed changes) and a secretariat provided by UAR.

A key aim of the Concordat is to build public trust in the sector by being open in ways better aligned with public expectations. On behalf of its members, UAR commissioned a public dialogue to ensure that public views were directly fed into the process of writing the Concordat. It is the public dialogue process that is the focus of this evaluation.

The public dialogue on openness in animal research was funded jointly by the Medical Research Council (£27,500), Sciencewise (£36,125), the British Pharmacological Society (£5,000) and the UAR (in kind) £5,000, with a small funding top-up towards the

² <http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/news/2012/10/david-willetts-press-conference-attitudes-to-animal-research/>

close of the dialogue by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (£850).

Understanding Animal Research (UAR) is a not-for-profit organisation based in London with around 10 staff. UAR's aim is to achieve broad understanding and acceptance of the humane use of animals in biomedical research in the UK, to advance science and medicine. UAR fulfils its aim in various ways, including: disseminating information, promoting education initiatives, publishing briefings, tracking Freedom of Information requests submitted to its members, and supporting members directly for example if they become the target of a campaign against their use of animals in research. The organisation has around 110 members from different sectors.

Sciencewise is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Sciencewise aims to improve policy making involving science and technology across Government by increasing the effectiveness with which public dialogue is used, and encouraging its wider use where appropriate to ensure public views are considered as part of the evidence base. It provides a wide range of information, advice, guidance and support services aimed at policy makers and all the different stakeholders involved in science and technology policy making, including the public. Sciencewise also provides co-funding to Government departments and agencies to develop and commission public dialogue activities³.

The phrase 'public dialogue' is used in this report to mean "A process during which members of the public interact with scientists, stakeholders, and policy makers to deliberate on issues relevant to future policy decisions", taken from the Sciencewise definition. The full Dialogue Report of the findings can be found online⁴.

3KQ was appointed as external evaluator of the public dialogue, via competitive tender.

³ <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk>

⁴ <http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/policy/concordat-on-openness-on-animal-research/public-dialogue-on-openness-in-animal-research/>

3 – The Public Dialogue

The aim of the public dialogue was broadly to understand what a selection of the public consider ‘openness’ to mean in animal research. Specific objectives⁵ of the public dialogue included:

- To understand public expectations of openness and transparency around the use of animals in research.
- To explore what information the public want to receive on the use of animals in research, and how it should be communicated to support greater openness and transparency, including, for example, information on how research is regulated.
- To identify aspects of current practice by the bioscience sector that are considered secretive or hidden, understanding why this is and what would need to change to be considered open and transparent.
- To consider what future work could be done to address openness and transparency issues for the life science sector in the future.

UAR established an external Oversight Group (OG) to help steer and oversee the public dialogue process. The OG comprised: the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Medical Research Council (MRC), the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), and UAR who chaired the group. The Sciencewise Dialogue and Engagement Specialist⁶ was included in communications with the OG, and actively advised the group throughout. The OG played an active role in agreeing the scope and objectives for the dialogue, signing off the design and materials used in the public sessions, and reviewing the findings.

The methodology used to deliver the public dialogue comprised the following key elements:

- A small stakeholder meeting⁷ to seek input on potential materials to use in the dialogue.
- A round of stakeholder comments and interviews to solicit feedback on materials.
- A first public event held in three different locations: London, Manchester, and Cardiff.
- A second public event held with the same locations and participants, 1-2 weeks later.
- A presentation of headline findings to the Oversight Group and also the Working Group and Steering Group, incorporating an invitation to a selection of public participants.
- A final report of findings.
- A series of working meetings with sub-groupings of the Concordat members to discuss and agree a series of changes to the evolving Concordat document.

These elements are illustrated in the timeline below, together with the dates and details of attendees.

⁵ Two other objectives existed at the start of the dialogue but were deprioritised upon agreement that they were probably outside the remit and scope of the dialogue. These were to a) explore possible causes for changes in public opinion in 2012, and b) explore whether views are connected to location or demographic.

⁶ Sciencewise provides support through a Dialogue Engagement Specialist - to offer advice and support to each public dialogue that it provides funding for.

⁷ Attendees at this workshop were representatives of the British Heart Foundation, Lilly, The Wellcome Trust, the National Institute of Medical Research, the RSPCA, the Home Office, Parkinson's UK and UAR. It was facilitated by Ipsos MORI.

Element	Date	Attendees
Stakeholder meeting	22 nd May	8
Event 1 - London	13 th July	18
- Cardiff	20 th July	18
- Manchester	27 th July	18
Event 2 - London	27 th July	18
- Cardiff	3 rd August	15
- Manchester	3 rd August	17
Presentation of headline findings to Oversight Group	22 nd August	OG members
Presentation of headline findings to wider Concordat members	29 th August	25 Concordat members + 1 public participant
Working Group discuss changes to Concordat in light of dialogue findings	4 th September	WG members
Final Dialogue Report published	4 th November	-
Working Group meet: discuss changes to Concordat in light of consultation and dialogue outputs	21 st January	WG members
Steering Group meet: sign off final changes to Concordat	26 th February 2014	SG members
Concordat members signing formally	May 2014	72

At the core of the methodology were the public events. 6 events were held in total, at three locations: London, Manchester and Cardiff. All events were held on a Saturday and were full day events. Event 1 was an introductory event to start participants thinking about animal research and what openness means in this context. Event 2 delved into more detail and showed participants different views on openness, as well as eliciting participant views on possible actions that the sector could take to be more open. More detail is below.

Participants were provided with a variety of information and materials in different formats. These materials were drafted by the delivery contractor on the basis of the input from a small stakeholder workshop and input from the Oversight Group. An initial draft was reviewed and developed several times with input from OG members and wider stakeholder organisations to ensure the diversity of views was included as far as possible. The materials were ultimately approved by the Oversight Group by consensus.

At event 1, participants were provided with:

- 5 written A4 hand-outs on the what, why and who of animal research.
- Quiz with facts and figures (via PowerPoint).
- Presentation by the facilitators (via pre-agreed slides) about the range of views that exist about the suffering and benefits of animal research. Participants discussed the issues in small groups and in plenary sessions.
- Additional specialist advice and information was provided by staff from the RSPCA's scientific welfare team. One specialist from RSPCA attended each 'event 1'.

At event 2, participants were provided with:

- Videos showing opinions on the challenges for openness and transparency in the sector; with views from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), and the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV).
- Training videos of some mild procedures⁸ and care and handling of animals.
- Video of undercover footage, provided by BUAV .
- The RSPCA did not provide specialist advice at 'event 2s', and questions were handled by the facilitators.

Between the two events, participants were asked to do a homework task to prompt further deliberation: either doing further reading online, or interviewing a family member about their views on openness in animal research.

Recruitment was conducted largely via on-street face-to-face recruitment in each local area, topped up via a market research database and informal contacts. Whilst the recruitment process did not claim to be representative of the wider population, the screening questionnaire and quotas for age, gender, socio-economic class and ethnicity did ensure a cross section of the population attended. 54 participants attended in total, with 48 participants completing the whole dialogue process. Participants were given a 'thank you payment' at the end of event 1 (£55) and event 2 (£75).

All the events were facilitated and recorded by the delivery contractor, Ipsos MORI. At the events, most discussions were conducted in 2 smaller groups of around 10 participants each. These small groups were facilitated by one facilitator per group, and notes were taken on a laptop by one note-taker per group, with occasional flipchart recording by the facilitator to emphasise key points or during particular sessions. A facilitation team of 4 therefore attended each event.

Also of note in the dialogue design was the inclusion of public participants at the presentation of the headline findings to wider Concordat members on 29th August 2013. Six public participants were invited to this presentation, of which 3 accepted. One ultimately attended. This is discussed later in section 6.

The dialogue report was published at the same time as the draft Concordat was published for public consultation in November 2013. Public participants were invited to participate, and the Dialogue Report publication was highlighted to them. Concordat members formally signed up to the document before it was published in May 2014.

During this period the Home Office also conducted a review of Section 24 of ASPA⁹, which "provides for the protection of confidential information provided in connection with Home Office regulatory activities under ASPA", including to "protect personal identities and intellectual property" (Home Office). Although structurally unconnected, some stakeholders understandably saw a strong link between the review of Section 24 and UAR's public dialogue on openness. The lack of linkage had to be explained a number of times for some stakeholders to understand how and why the two were indeed separate.

The public dialogue is a single part of the wider Concordat process, and is only one of the factors influencing the choices made within the Concordat document. This evaluation is focused on the public dialogue alone, not the wider Concordat process.

⁸ 'Mild procedures' as defined by ASPA (see footnote below).

⁹ Animal Scientific Procedures Act (1986), updated and came into force on 1 January 2013.

4 - Evaluation Aims and Methodology

The **aim** of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the public dialogue's credibility, and its effectiveness against its objectives, including an assessment of impacts.

The key questions asked in the evaluation are:

- Objectives: has the dialogue met its objectives?
- Good practice: has the dialogue met the Sciencewise principles of good practice?
- Satisfaction: have those involved been satisfied with the dialogue?
- Governance: how successful has the governance of the project been, including the role of advisory panels, stakeholder groups and the Sciencewise support role?
- Impact: what difference or impact has the dialogue made?
- Costs/Benefits: what was the balance overall of the costs and benefits of the dialogue?
- Credibility: was the dialogue process seen by Concordat stakeholders as suitable and sufficiently credible for them to use the results with confidence?
- Lessons: what are the lessons for the future (what worked well and less well, and more widely)?

This evaluation report is based on the following data collection and assessment methods, conducted between 10th May 2013 (the first Oversight Group meeting) and February 2014:

- **Observation.** The evaluators directly observed a variety of events and meetings: Oversight Group meetings (10th May, 21st June, 11th July, 22nd August), 3 public events (Manchester 1 and 2, and Cardiff 2), and the discussion by the Concordat members of the dialogue findings at their Working Group meeting on 4th September, as well as correspondence up to and including February 2014.
- **Interviews.** Stakeholder interviews were conducted at key points throughout the dialogue. A round of baseline interviews before any of the events had happened established the context for the dialogue events and allowed the OG time to reflect on their motivations, concerns and hopes for the process before the events began. Around 15 public participant interviews were carried out in the margins of the public events themselves. Additional interviews were carried out with members of the OG as specific issues arose that warranted exploration.
- **Questionnaires.** Written self-assessment questionnaire data was gathered from the stakeholder meeting on 22nd May, and all six of the public events. All the participants who stayed until the end of the event 2s completed an evaluation form (100% response rate). The data from these events is in Appendix 2.
- **Document review.** The evaluators reviewed all written correspondence (email traffic¹⁰ and letters) and documents that were circulated such as press and website statements, Terms of Reference, dialogue stimulus materials, and the Dialogue Report. Three versions of the Concordat have been reviewed: the version before the dialogue began, the version published for consultation in November 2013, and the version agreed by the Steering Group as the final version in February 2014.

¹⁰ Over 500 emails were read and reviewed as part of the evaluation.

5 – Objectives

“Has the dialogue met its objectives?”

The evaluation aims to address 8 main questions (section 4), of which the one above is the first, focussing on objectives.

There were four objectives for the public dialogue. Each is taken in turn with an assessment from the evaluators as to how well they have been met. Evidence underpinning our assessment is taken from direct observations, participant questionnaires, interviews and a review of the Dialogue Report amongst other documents.

The objectives, 1 and 2 in particular, refer to finding out what “the public” think or want. The Sciencewise Guiding Principles say that public dialogue should *“be of appropriate scale and be appropriately ‘representative’. The range of participants may need to reflect both the range of relevant interests, and pertinent socio-demographic characteristics, including geographical coverage”*. The principles also say that *“public dialogue does not claim to be fully representative, rather it is a group of the public, who, after adequate information, discussion, access to specialists and time to deliberate, form considered advice which gives strong indications of how the public at large feels about certain issues.”* There are therefore some limits to how robustly one can extrapolate from the dialogue findings to the public at large.

Whilst the Dialogue Report is clear on this (section 1.6), caution is needed in interpreting the findings and keeping them in context. The title of the Dialogue Report for example, may risk implying that the findings are representative: “The public’s views on openness and transparency in animal research” may be better titled “Public views...” **The evaluators urge readers not to overlook this methodological caveat.** It is within this context that the assessment of the objectives is made.

Objective 1: To understand public expectations of openness and transparency around the use of animals in research.

This objective was **very well met**. Note that a definition of ‘very well met’ is included in Appendix 3.

The public dialogue was explicitly and consistently designed with this objective in mind. Evidence of this was everywhere in the project: in the Oversight Group discussions with the delivery contractor about designing the dialogue, in the invitation and briefing materials, in the workshop facilitation plans used, in the questions asked and the facilitation style at the events, and in the structure of the Dialogue Report itself.

Understanding public expectations was clearly and firmly placed at the centre of the work, from start to finish.

The Dialogue Report (Chapters 2-6) gives a good breadth and depth of information on participant expectations of openness in animal research, directly and clearly meeting this objective.

“It reminded me just how little the public knows about animal research, for example believing that research is still done for cosmetics, even though it was banned years ago”. OG member

Objective 2: To explore what information the public want to receive on the use of animals in research, and how it should be communicated to support greater openness and transparency, including, for example, information on how research is regulated.

This objective was **very well met**.

The Dialogue Report (Chapter 3 in particular) describes in great detail the information that the participants expected to see in the public domain about animal research. Chapter 5 of the Dialogue Report also sets out suggestions on how information could be communicated in useful ways to aid openness, including:

- Explaining the limitations of animal research
- Wider education about how the sector reduces animal use
- Explaining the benefits of animal research
- Raising awareness of use of animals, potentially via a logo on medicines
- Public access to laboratories

The main factors that contributed to this objective being met included: the facilitation plans used in the public events which explicitly explored the question of information provision, and the lines of questioning used by the facilitators repeatedly elicited views on what information participants expected to see published on animal research. The fundamental question of ‘what should be published and communicated’ was returned to frequently by the facilitators throughout all the events. The Dialogue Report in turn reflected this in its structure: there are two clear sections addressing information needs and communication.

“Participants valued images and videos in understanding animal research: this was valuable to know as the Concordat was encouraging this too”. OG member

Objective 3: To identify aspects of current practice by the bioscience sector that are considered secretive or hidden, understanding why this is and what would need to change to be considered open and transparent.

This objective was **well met**.

The Dialogue Report (section 2.1.3) covers the ways in which participants considered the sector to be secretive, and sets out suggestions for improvements more broadly (sections 4, 5, 6). Public views on secretive practices were predominantly inferred from participant conversations and comments, rather than an explicit session or question in the public events that explored participant views on secretive practices. It is hard to know whether participant responses would have elaborated on perceptions of secretive practices if the question had been directly asked, rather than the views inferred. Whilst the views reported in the Dialogue Report do match the observations of the evaluators, it is probably fair to say that the reader could be more confident in the views reported if the question had been explicitly asked of participants. Nevertheless, the criterion was well met.

Objective 4: To consider what future work could be done to address openness and transparency issues for the life science sector in the future.

This objective was **very well met**.

The Dialogue Report explicitly contains three sections on possible future actions that the sector could take to address openness, within the categories of external scrutiny (section 4), communication (section 5) and the channels that are used for communication (section 6). All three sections offer good detail on specific suggestions for future work, and therefore the objective is very well met.

The main factor that contributed to this objective being met was that the facilitation plans used in the public events explicitly explored what future actions are possible and how participants felt about each one. To assist with this session, the delivery team had developed a list of around 10 possible actions in advance to prompt debate. This pre-prepared list seemed helpful and gave participants a useful starting point that they both responded to and added to in a constructive way. However, some stakeholders felt the suggestions would 'over-lead' participants, especially as the possible actions were discussed soon after the controversial video from BUAV. At this point in the event, time was also tight so limited discussions somewhat (see below under section 6, Delivery principle).

In summary, **all four objectives were either very well met, or well met**. Overall, a key contributing factor for this was the clarity and simplicity of the objectives, in particular the fact that the dialogue did not try to be over-ambitious in its scope and remit. They were easy to understand, short, and did not contain jargon or ambiguous concepts.

6 – Good Practice

“Has the dialogue met the Sciencewise principles of good practice?”

Sciencewise principles of good practice¹¹ combine theoretical understandings and practical experience to frame the essential elements of good public dialogue on policy involving science and technology. There are five broad principles:

- **Context:** The conditions leading to the dialogue process are conducive to the best outcomes.
- **Scope:** The range of issues and policy options covered in the dialogue reflects the participants’ interests.
- **Delivery:** The dialogue process itself represents best practice in design and execution.
- **Impact:** The dialogue can deliver the desired outcomes.
- **Evaluation:** The process is shown to be robust and contributes to learning.

Each principle is taken in turn below. We provide an assessment of how well the principle has been met, what evidence this assessment relies on, and what contributed to the principle being met or otherwise.

Context Principle: The conditions leading to the dialogue process are conducive to the best outcomes.
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This principle was **well met**.

Purpose. The purpose and objectives of the dialogue were clear and appropriate from the outset. This was evident in the invitations to tender for the delivery contract, where the objectives and wider context were clearly written and well explained. These objectives were held consistent throughout the project and appeared to be well understood by all involved. They only changed slightly as the planning of the dialogue progressed, when the OG and evaluators agreed that two objectives were outside the scope of the dialogue¹². This change was made clearly and on the agreement of the OG.

Policy route. There was a clear route for the dialogue outputs to feed into policy, specifically the writing of the Concordat that has now been signed up to by 72 members of the bioscience sector. In turn, the Concordat is aimed to create a set of consistent commitments that signatories will work towards and achieve regarding their policies and practices of openness. This expectation was clearly set out at the start, and did not change throughout the project.

Governance. The governance of the project was very clear and transparent including

¹¹ Sciencewise (2013). *The Government’s approach to public dialogue on science and technology*. <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/guiding-principles/>

¹² The two other objectives that were deprioritised because they were outside the scope of the dialogue were to: a) explore possible causes for changes in public opinion in 2012, and b) explore whether views are connected to location or demographic.

the Oversight Group, and is explored later in this report in section 8.

Timing. The dialogue was initiated at a well-timed point in relation to public and political concerns, namely the release of the 2012 public opinion data that showed a 7-10% decline in public acceptance of animal research in medicine. The suggestion for a dialogue was first made at the first Concordat stakeholder meeting in November 2012, and on initial impressions this fitted well with the intention to issue a Concordat in October 2013.

It was always recognised that the timescale would be very tight, and it was eventually agreed that the initial timing had become an unhelpful and artificial time constraint, as experience unfolded to illustrate just how much there was to do within that timescale:

- Agree the dialogue in principle with key Concordat members
- Find and secure funding via Sciencewise
- Form an Oversight Group
- Write and agree an Invitation to Tender for the delivery contract and evaluation
- Let and run the competitive procurement process for the delivery contractors and evaluators
- Initiate the project, agree the objectives, scope and delivery elements
- Agree stimulus materials for the dialogue events
- Recruit for, and run, all six public events
- Analyse all public input from six events
- Present headline findings
- Report full findings and sign off the Dialogue Report
- Consider how the dialogue should affect the Concordat

Experience showed that this just wasn't possible. The realities of busy diaries, necessary funding and procurement procedures, and the ever-present need to seek consensus on key decisions from the Oversight Group, meant that things simply took longer than envisaged. For example, the first public event had to be delayed because it was not possible to reach agreement amongst the Oversight Group on the content of the draft stimulus materials. This was a wise choice to delay, but it was always going to be difficult for materials to be written and agreed consensually in a period of two weeks, on an issue that was so controversial. Several members of the Oversight Group expressed this in hindsight:

"I'd never expect materials developed in such a short timescale again!" OG member

"A more realistic timeframe was necessary from the start". OG member

"We had a better product because we delayed things". OG member

The effects of this tight timescale were varied, but included the real compression of workload for OG members when materials were being developed, a fairly low turnout at the early stakeholder workshop (although only a fairly small group was invited), and some scepticism by the NGOs that the process was 'genuine' if it was being done in such a tight timescale.

Resources. Resources allocated at the start of the process were almost - but not quite – adequate for the demands of the project. Extra funds were required in particular for the extra work the delivery contractor undertook in engaging external stakeholders in the materials development and producing a ‘talking heads’ video of different stakeholder views. This was a comprehensive and well-managed process, and simply took longer than anticipated due to the highly sensitive nature of the topic. Extra resources were also needed to allow the delivery contractor to present the findings to the Steering Group and Working Group meeting on 29th August 2013.

There is separate comment on resources for the evaluation later in the report.

Scope Principle: The range of issues and policy options covered in the dialogue reflects the participants’ interests.

This principle was **very well met**. Factors for this are explained below.

Framing. As explained above, the dialogue objectives were very clear, and provided a useful framing for the whole dialogue including what key questions it should ask of participants. These objectives linked directly to the wider driver of ensuring the Concordat was in line with public expectations.

It is fair to say that not all stakeholders felt comfortable with the framing of the dialogue: some anti-vivisection NGOs for example refused to participate in the dialogue because of how it was framed in that they saw it as a ‘PR exercise’. One other NGO, the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) clearly felt uncomfortable with many aspects of the dialogue but did ultimately participate by providing some video footage, a statement to be read out, and also suggestions for the sector to improve openness that were fed into the events.

Participants. There was a good return rate for participants, in that out of 54 people who attended event 1, 50 of them returned and 48 of these stayed to the end of the event 2 full day session. If one accepts a high return rate as a proxy indicator for participants’ interest, then this implies they were interested in the topic. From the evaluators’ observations, participants were also largely very engaged in the events, albeit with ‘low energy patches’ which are not uncommon or unreasonable. When asked which three words best described their experience of the events, participants clearly found the dialogue interesting, informative, eye-opening and enlightening (see graphic below¹³).

Additionally, most participants (73%) felt confident that the events would make a difference to openness on animal research.

¹³ This graphic is compiled at www.wordle.net The size of the word is proportional to the frequency it was used by participants.

a couple disagreed. This was perhaps due to the fact that the invitation material and recruitment script were deliberately slightly vague as to what would be discussed so as to minimise non-response bias in the sample recruited. Invitation materials did however make it clear that UAR wanted to understand what people thought about “information on animal research”, so participants did have enough of an idea to inform their choice of whether or not to attend. Specific objectives, agreed with the OG and listed above, were presented and briefed by facilitators at the events.

Involvement of external stakeholders. There was a variety of external stakeholder interests that were on the OG, including the RSPCA. The RSPCA in particular provided a valuable ‘external’ perspective, as it was specifically external to the bioscience sector and the structures of funding and research that the other OG members were inextricably connected to. It is entirely possible that the credibility of the dialogue would have evaporated had the RSPCA not played such an active and influential role, and if the other OG members had not respected the RSPCA’s input so consistently. This is maintained by the OG members and the evaluators’ observations.

In addition to an active and diverse OG, strenuous efforts were made over several weeks by the delivery contractor to involve a wider set of stakeholder interests in developing the stimulus materials for the events. This was a frenetic period of a few weeks (May/June 2013) during which the delivery contractor spent much time and effort interviewing, meeting with, and liaising with a range of groups including anti-vivisection NGOs to ensure the stimulus materials were as comprehensive and balanced as possible. The efforts of the delivery contractor were impressive, but to some extent hampered by the fact that so little time was available before the first dialogue event was planned, and this led to a real sense of ‘rush’ about the process. This was not well received by some NGOs, who naturally did not sympathise with the need to rush the process and felt bumped into a compromised position with little time to consider whether to get involved, and if so how. The credibility of the dialogue from their perspective suffered significantly as a result, as evidenced by the correspondence between them and the delivery contractor and UAR.

Non-biased. The design and facilitation of the events seemed balanced and non-biased to the evaluators, in so far as a judgement about balance is inherently primarily subjective. Evidence for this was the clear efforts that the facilitators made to include diverse stakeholder input and make real changes to the materials, the inclusion of a video from the British Union Against Vivisection (BUAV) showing undercover footage of animal research procedures, and the inclusion of suggestions from BUAV on possible future actions that the sector could take to improve their openness (which was one of the sessions in the public events). During the events, facilitators treated participants equally regardless of their viewpoints, and did not appear to give more ‘air time’ to one side than another.

Participants perceived the information provided as being fair and balanced, with 92% agreeing (see Appendix 2 for full data set). Participants also felt that the facilitation was independent and professional (98% agreed).

“Well-facilitated, thank you” Public participant, London event 2

Range of perspectives. The stimulus materials included quotes and materials from different stakeholder groups, and the second event explicitly included a range of ‘talking head’ videos, including the BUAV undercover footage mentioned above. This created a sense of balance that participants found useful, although could no doubt be challenged from either side as again this is inherently a subjective judgement. To the evaluators it seemed appropriate and the best semblance of balance that could be achieved on such

a contested topic, within such a short timescale.

The inclusion of the BUAV video was subject to much discussion amongst the OG at the time, with simultaneous concerns that it was necessary to provide balance, but also that it shouldn't skew participants' views into thinking that *all* animal research was undertaken as depicted. The participants' views are interesting in that the BUAV video was highlighted by them as one of the 'best aspects of the events' precisely because it provided another side to the story. Some of *the same* participants said that it was also the 'worst aspects of the events' because it was so shocking and illustrated what they saw as the extreme end of bad practice.

It was noticeable that some participants tended to generalise in their discussions after the BUAV video that *all* the practices used were bad practice or in breach of regulations (and also in their evaluation questionnaire comments). This was not the case though, as many procedures seen in the video were perfectly legal although potentially shocking to the viewer if they were previously unaware e.g. the live decapitation of mice. The BUAV statement that was read out before the video was shown said that many of the procedures were "quite legal", which was not always understood by participants particularly in the Manchester event. There was scope therefore to further clarify this with participants, to reduce the possibility of participants rejecting the video as simply a collection of illegal practices that were all exceptions to the rule, and therefore not really relevant to the wider discussion on openness.

Specialist input. Each of the first events were attended by one staff member from the RSPCA, to help answer factual questions about the animal research sector, and also explain how openness is handled currently. There were no other specialists that were invited to speak or contribute, although some other stakeholders did observe the workshops (such as members of the OG). This was a difficult choice by the delivery contractor and the OG, as it meant that there was not a diversity of specialist viewpoint in the room to share their views and answer questions from different perspectives. However, the reality was that the single RSPCA specialist was seen as 'middle of the road' by participants as the RSPCA neither supports animal research nor campaigns to abolish it. The specialists from the RSPCA contributed helpfully and diplomatically, appearing to be honest and open about different viewpoints that existed in the wider stakeholder field. All participants (except one who didn't know) agreed that they had been able to ask questions easily and get appropriate answers during the public events. It is possible that the attendance of the specialist at the event 2s as well would have benefitted the process, in that the facilitators would have not had to answer as many questions on the subject matter themselves.

The evaluators' view is that although this was a challenging decision to only have one specialist perspective in the room, it was appropriate and effective given the alternatives available and the fact that the stimulus materials did show the diversity of viewpoints. The obvious alternative of having an industry representative and an abolitionist representative in the room would have almost certainly escalated rapidly into an uncontrollable argument between stakeholder views, rather than an exploratory discussion with the public towards the dialogue's objectives.

Be deliberative. 98% of participants felt they had enough time to discuss the issues, with most agreeing strongly that this was the case. The objectives were not overly ambitious, the length of the events was appropriate, and the facilitation plans explicitly allowed time for ample discussion. Given that different participants deliberate at different speeds, there is always a trade-off between allowing enough time for everyone to deliberate without some participants finding discussions a little slow or repetitive.

Some participants did find the discussions repetitive, in part because the fundamental questions being asked were simple (what information should be put into the public domain?), and there was time to explore and ask them in a variety of ways over the two days. Many found the pace just right.

"I learned a lot." Public participant, Cardiff event 2

"I am more informed about the detail of the subject." Public participant, Cardiff event 2

Mapping out views vs developing consensus. The dialogue design prioritised mapping out the divergent views of participants. It spent very little time attempting to form any degree of consensus during the events, except perhaps briefly during one of the closing sessions in event 2 when discussing the possible future actions towards openness. Whilst this was not necessarily a problem, the Dialogue Report focuses much attention on these suggestions, so the process of eliciting participant views warrants some comment.

The session towards the end of event 2 considered a list of possible actions that the sector could use to improve openness in animal research, such as live CCTV of laboratories or publication of animal research licences. This list was added to by participants, and then participants discussed each action in turn in smaller groups of about 10 participants. A final view was then elicited by facilitators on which actions had most support from participants, with the 'most supported actions' being boxed or starred on flipcharts by the facilitators. A lack of time prevented much discussion about the pros and cons of each possible action, or the practical implications of each action. It was noticeable that this discussion was rapid, with no formal process for participants to express their preference or calibrate it in any way. The facilitation style used at this point often relied on participants taking a firm responsibility for speaking up and making sure their view was heard proportionally in the group. At such an important point in the process, and arguably underpinning one of the most useful parts of the dialogue Report (sections 4 and 5 in particular), it would have made the process more robust if a more formal and quantifiable way of eliciting participants' support for the measures had been used, for example a show of hands, dots placed against the actions to show support, or electronic voting. The method is less important than the fact that each participant shares his or her view, and this is captured in an objective or calibrated way.

Appropriate scale and diversity. The issue of scale is discussed above at the start of section 5. The Sciencewise Guiding Principles say that public dialogue should *"be of appropriate scale and be appropriately 'representative'. The range of participants may need to reflect both the range of relevant interests, and pertinent socio-demographic characteristics, including geographical coverage"*. The principles also say that *"public dialogue does not claim to be fully representative, rather it is a group of the public, who, after adequate information, discussion, access to specialists and time to deliberate, form considered advice which gives strong indications of how the public at large feels about certain issues."*

The dialogue engaged 48 people through to the end of the process, across three locations. Whilst it is impossible to say in objective terms that this is 'appropriately representative', the absence of significant differences in the findings between the three locations does give some reassurance that the findings indicate the views of the public at large. The OG members that were interviewed did see the numbers as credible, and were open about the limitations of the process as not being a statistically representative sample.

In the absence of a widely agreed number of participants above which a dialogue becomes credible, numbers were driven by a combination of what OG members saw as credible during the design stage, and practical factors. The budget available could only go so far, a facilitator can only manage a certain number of people at once, and there are only so many specialists willing to give up Saturdays to spend in dialogue workshops around the country. The budget constrained more participants attending, the relatively small numbers of people at each event allowed a good quality of facilitated discussion, and willing specialists who would have been appropriate to assist were indeed limited.

Involve participants in reporting. The main way in which public participants were involved in reporting was via the invitation of six of the keener participants to attend the presentation of headline findings to the joint Working Group and Steering Group meeting on 29th August 2013. In the end only one public participant attended, but this was seen as valuable by some OG members because it made the dialogue more real for the wider Concordat members who were being exposed to the findings for the first time.

“It brought the dialogue to life”. OG member

“It made the findings harder to ignore for some of the more sceptical members”.
OG member

The risk of discussions being less open in the presence of the public participant was not seen as significant by the OG members the evaluators interviewed.

All public participants were informed of the publication of the Dialogue Report as well as the consultation on the draft Concordat in November 2013. Public participants were also invited to participate in the public consultation.

Impact Principle: The dialogue can deliver the desired outcomes.

This is covered under section 9.

Evaluation Principle: The process is shown to be robust and contributes to learning.

The principle appears to be **very well met**. Others are invited to judge this from their perspective too, and feedback to the evaluators is welcome.

Factors addressing this principle include:

- There was an independent evaluation.
- The evaluation was adequately resourced, approximately 10% of the delivery project budget.
- The evaluation was commissioned by competitive tender.
- The evaluation started early: at the same time as detailed design and delivery started.
- The evaluation addressed the objectives and expectations of stakeholders including the UAR, as well as standards of good practice set by Sciencewise.

- The evaluation gathered both qualitative and quantitative data so that conclusions could be evidence-based.
- The dialogue process ended with an open discussion of learning at a ‘wash-up’ meeting, as well as planned publication of a case study to share learning more widely.

A note on procurement management and timescales

Similar to the delivery of the dialogue, the evaluation underwent several evolutions as it progressed. Often, each change in the delivery of the dialogue had the effect of increasing the workload involved in the evaluation, albeit by a small degree each time¹⁴. The budget did not increase to accommodate these extensions, in particular the significant extension of the duration of the project.

Additionally, the extension of the evaluation beyond the point at which the Dialogue Report was published (November 2013) meant that the impacts of the public dialogue became increasingly entangled with the impacts of the public consultation, which started in November 2013. During final evaluation interviews in March 2014, interviewees at times found it hard to separate the impacts of the dialogue and the consultation. Completing the evaluation at the point that the public consultation began i.e. in November 2013, would have maintained clarity about what the dialogue had impacted, as well as assessed the impact while it was still fresh in peoples’ memory. On the other hand, it would not have been possible to assess the extent to which the public input was reflected in the final Concordat document.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is our view that the evaluation could helpfully have drawn its conclusions in November 2013 alongside the completion of the dialogue. This would have had two positive effects, firstly that the activity would have been more aligned with the budget available, and secondly the impacts of the dialogue would have been clearer and more easily isolated from other factors.

¹⁴ Practical extensions to the scope of the evaluation included: The inclusion of a stakeholder workshop on 27th May (evaluated via questionnaire); the delay around materials development increased the volume of materials and correspondence to track, assess and report on; an extra OG meeting was held and attendance required by the evaluators on 22nd August; an interim evaluation report was requested alongside the Dialogue Report, which was not specified in the initial scope; the inclusion of a public consultation meant a significant extension to the evaluation in terms of duration; and a third version of the Concordat was reviewed and evaluated for impacts of the public dialogue.

7 - Satisfaction Levels

“Satisfaction: have those involved been satisfied with the dialogue?”

Satisfaction levels appear **high**.

The public participants were certainly satisfied with the dialogue, with 98% of 48 public participants saying that they were “overall satisfied with the two events”. The majority of these agreed strongly, which does indicate high satisfaction levels. The only substantive area which a few public participants suggested could have improved the dialogue were “to make discussions less repetitive” (public participant, Manchester event 2).

OG members were also satisfied with the dialogue, as judged by the debrief conversation held on 22nd August 2013 and subsequent communications:

“I’m pleased with the dialogue events overall”. OG member

“We got there in the end! I’m relieved that the events went well and we have the findings”. OG member

However, the high time commitment required tipped the balance for at least one OG member:

“It was an interesting project but not worth the incredible amount of time that I and others had to spend on it”. OG member

Specifically, the **value** to stakeholders involved included:

“The dialogue has provided hard evidence to back up what we were saying already about the need for openness”. Working Group member

“The dialogue is helping to ensure that the Concordat is aligned with public views, and it also adds credibility too”. Working Group member

“It helps us when we talk to our members, so we have more robust evidence about what the public think”. OG member

“It reminded me just how little the public know about animal research, and how myths about testing cosmetics are still prominent”. Working Group member

8 - Governance

“How successful has the governance of the project been, including the role of advisory panels, stakeholder groups and the Sciencewise support role?”

The governance of the dialogue was **very successful**.

A summary of the groups involved in the governance of the project is below:

- Oversight Group – Remit was to oversee the public dialogue. Chaired by UAR. Sciencewise sat on this group and inputted their advice. Delivery contractors and evaluators attended all meetings and conference calls.
- Working Group – Not involved with the delivery of the public dialogue. Remit was to tackle detailed drafting of the evolving Concordat, and make recommendations to the Steering Group.
- Steering Group – Not involved with the delivery of the public dialogue. Remit was to act as an executive group, taking decisions about the Concordat for example prior to going to public consultation, and prior to final sign off for publication.

Factors contributing to the success of the governance are set out below, mainly focussing around the role of the Oversight Group as the key governance structure in place directly related to the project.

Governance clarity. The role of the external Oversight Group was clear, and the group agreed and published Terms of Reference early on. The group focussed on the dialogue process, and only referred decisions to the Steering Group when the dialogue had implications for the wider Concordat process, for example when the delay in the dialogue meant a likely delay in the public consultation on the Concordat.

Governance commitment. Whilst the clarity to governance structures is generally a tangible factor (e.g. are there Terms of Reference?), just as important in this project were the personal attitudes that OG members brought to the implementation of the project.

Observation throughout the project made it clear that the OG members were all putting in a tremendous amount of time and effort to ensure that they were up to speed with developments and inputting actively. For the first eight weeks after inception, it is fair to say that this reached an unforeseen level of activity for all involved, and put real strain on OG members' workloads.

“There were busy times, but from experience on other dialogues I guessed it might be like that”. OG member

“It required much more input than anyone thought and I would think very carefully before getting involved in anything like this again”. OG member

“I would have appreciated knowing more before committing to joining the OG: full Terms of Reference and an estimate of time commitment would have been useful. I think we would have resourced the dialogue differently if we had known”. OG member

Despite this though, all OG members – in particular the RSPCA who had a particularly important role in approving materials – worked tirelessly towards consensus where

possible. It was noticeable that at various points, OG members would make suggestions to change the materials in ways that would make the materials more likely to achieve consensus, even if the changes were not always directly in line with their own organisation's views.

Chairing by UAR. As well as commissioning the delivery contractors and evaluators, UAR provided an essential secretariat role to the dialogue, and also chaired the OG meetings, providing the link between the OG meetings and the Steering Group. There was clear potential for this to cause problems, because traditionally being a chair is an influential position and open to abuse in obvious ways. However, UAR recognised this and chaired the OG meetings in a 'light touch' and sensitive manner, and stayed away from steering the OG's discussions unduly or taking decisions against the OG's wishes (which the Terms of Reference did strictly allow them to do). Whilst UAR's role at times created some discomfort for some OG members as they felt it could undermine *external credibility* of the process, OG members were unanimous in their support for how UAR *actually* chaired the OG, by operating the group by consensus and continually striving to ensure that all OG views were factored into decisions.

Sciencewise. The OG members were strongly supportive of the Sciencewise Dialogue and Engagement Specialist's (DES) input. The DES was effectively treated by OG members as a fellow member of the OG. This appeared helpful from the evaluators' viewpoint, especially given the tight timescales and sensitive nature of the project. It is important to note that the DES operated as an *active* commissioned consultant to help the OG design and deliver the dialogue, rather than a *passive* advisor simply on hand if a problem arose. The DES clearly felt she had a responsibility to ensure the project was successful via direct interventions, and this seemed important to the success of the project.

9 - Impact

“What difference or impact has the dialogue made?”

Some **subtle but real impacts** have occurred.

Below we identify impacts on the participants, impacts on the Concordat document, and impacts on those working more broadly in the sector.

Participants said their views had been affected on the topic (94%), that they had learned something new (100%), and that they were likely to change something that they do as a result of taking part (59%). Whilst impacting the thinking and actions of participants was not an objective of this dialogue, it is useful to understand that this kind of dialogue process does indeed alter participants' thinking and potentially their behaviour.

“I had strong views before the first session which changed and after 2nd session changed again”. Public participant, Cardiff event 2

*“I’ve learned that make up [cosmetics] is not tested on animals”.
Public participant, London event 2*

“There are two sides to arguments on animal testing. Things aren't always as they seem”. Public participant, Manchester event 2

Concordat. The main focus of the project was feeding the dialogue findings in to the drafting of the Concordat, to make sure the Concordat was aligned with public expectations.

In addition to conducting final interviews with UAR to explore where impacts have occurred, the evaluators observed the Working Group meeting on 4th September 2013 during which the dialogue findings were discussed alongside the draft Concordat, and possible changes explored. The outputs of this meeting have been followed up through a review of three versions of the Concordat:

- Pre-dialogue. Version going into the 4th September Working Group alongside outputs of the public dialogue, plus accompanying guidance for Concordat signatories.
- Post-dialogue and Pre-consultation. Version going to public consultation in November 2013.
- Final. Final version from March 2014, plus accompanying guidance for Concordat signatories.

Undoubtedly the main impact is an increase in the levels of confidence of those involved that the Concordat *does* reflect public expectations:

*“The dialogue has backed up what we already had in the evolving Concordat: being more open, explaining what research is being done and why, and using images more.”
Working Group member*

“The dialogue has given more weight to the argument that openness is needed. It has convinced some of the more sceptical members and individuals”. Working Group member

Additionally, there are some specific impacts on the Concordat and associated guidance document:

- **How many animals, which animals, and why.** Dialogue citation added to the guidance document. The following text was added: *“The participants in the public dialogue expressed a desire to know how many animals were used by individual organisations, the types of animals used and the areas of research they were used for. Examples of websites that provide this sort of information can be found here: (Links to Home Office statistics and UAR website)”.* This is in relation to Commitment 2 in the Concordat, regarding enhancing communications with the media and public.
- **Use of images and film.** Alterations to the strength of commitments. Before the public dialogue, the Concordat said explanatory materials “could” include images. After the dialogue, the version that went out to consultation had been altered to “explanations will where appropriate include images” as a result of the dialogue. However, respondents to the public consultation were not comfortable with this and it was changed back to “could”. The changes show the ways in which the dialogue were being used through the process. Even though this specific change was altered back in the final version, the dialogue findings were used to defend a further dilution of this message. Also on this point, the following text was added to the guidance document: *“The participants in the public dialogue said that they wanted to see more information about what actually happens in animal research. They mentioned video and images in particular.*
- **Avoiding duplication in research.** No change was made to the Concordat, but the guidance document now contains the following text: *“Participants in the public dialogue wanted to know that everything possible is done to avoid unnecessary duplication of animal research, minimise the number of animals used and develop alternatives. They recognised that they would probably not be able to monitor this themselves, but they wanted to know that information was available for organisations that did want to do this. So, while this point might not appear to be primarily about openness with the public, progress in this direction will help to alleviate some of the public’s concerns about animal research. Where appropriate, the NC3Rs will be able to support organisations that want to publicise their work in this area.”* This is in relation to Commitment 2 in the Concordat, regarding enhancing communications with the media and public.
- **Regulation.** After the dialogue, a section was added (and has been retained) on UK regulation, helping to explain the context of animal research in the UK and of the Concordat and to clarify where responsibility for scrutiny lies (as a separate point to openness). While not necessarily an additional commitment as such, it does provide more clarity to the reader. The key findings from the dialogue regarding regulation have also been passed to the Home Office, as the responsible authority.
- **Development of Concordat.** There is also an additional section (appearing in both the consultation and final versions) entitled *how the draft Concordat was developed.* This contains significant reference to the public dialogue as part of the formative process: *“...included public dialogue events in three UK locations... The public dialogue was conducted by Ipsos MORI, and a full report*

of the findings can be viewed here”.

The public dialogue appears therefore to have had a number of subtle but nevertheless real impacts on the Concordat and in particular the guidance that accompanies it. It is also likely that the findings of the public dialogue enabled proactive members to ‘hold their ground’ more when it came to others wanting to negotiate dilutions to the wording of commitments, for example on access to laboratories or use of imagery in communications.

Stakeholders working towards openness. As well as specific changes to the Concordat, the dialogue has also had other impacts that are valuable. Specifically, OG and Working Group members cited the existence of the dialogue findings as:

“Hard evidence that sets out in detail what the public want regarding openness”. WG member

This has already helped those who work to improve openness in the sector as a tool to discuss openness with institutions that conduct animal research, and articulate more convincingly what the public’s view is. Previously, these stakeholders relied on either quantitative research (which tends not to offer the depth of detail), or qualitative data that was collected for different purposes. Either way, previous research data has not been in place to enable these stakeholders to always make a convincing case to sceptical institutions. To this extent, the findings from the dialogue are already being used as a tool for improving openness in the sector, and becoming embedded within their work.

“I refer to the public dialogue findings a lot when talking to scientists”. OG member

Specific areas that have proved useful already are the areas the public identified as wanting to know more about, including: how genetics technology is used in science, and what the motivations of researchers are.

Dissemination of Dialogue Report. As well as the presentations of the findings to the Oversight Group, a joint meeting of the Working Group and Steering Group, the link to the published Dialogue Report was highlighted during the public consultation in November 2013. Public participants were also sent this link. The report was passed to the Home Office so that they were aware of the findings that related to regulation. The Dialogue Report is available on the UAR and Sciencewise websites.

10 - Costs and Benefits

“What was the balance overall of the costs and benefits of the dialogue?”

Judging the cost/benefit trade-off of public dialogue is notoriously difficult. This is for various reasons, including:

- Intangible impacts. Benefits are often intangible and so hard to quantify in a meaningful way, for example where decision makers say that their views were confirmed, or challenged, or that they have become more open to public involvement in policy making.
- Delayed impacts. Benefits arise down the track instead of at the close of the dialogue, so risk being left out of a traditional cost/benefit analysis.
- Attribution. Benefits are often difficult to attribute in isolation to the public dialogue alone. For example, “The dialogue was one part of the evidence that led us to X”.
- Lack of counterfactual. There is no counterfactual to assess against. One can only speculate as to what “might have happened without the dialogue”.

We have discussed a number of impacts that appear to have arisen from the dialogue, in section 9 above, although we do not attempt to quantify or monetise them.

The costs of public dialogue on the other hand are easier to quantify. Invoices are paid and recorded, and people’s time can be tracked or at least fairly easily and accurately estimated. Below we list the costs of the dialogue so that a full picture is on record:

Medical Research Council	27,500
British Pharmacological Society	5,000
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council	850
Sciencewise	36,125
Time of OG members and UAR ¹⁵	18,309
Time and expenses of Sciencewise personnel ¹⁶	23,224
Total	£ 111,008

Overall, perhaps the best indicator of relative value of a dialogue process is the view of the funders upon closure:

“Overall I’m really pleased with the dialogue”. OG member, and one of the funders

¹⁵ Time to October 2013. Estimated hours provided by UAR and OG members. Assumes average day rate of £500 per day, and an 8 hour day. This includes the £5,000 ‘in kind’ contribution from UAR shown on page 3.

¹⁶ Costs up to 31st March 2014, plus an estimate of future costs up to publication of the evaluation report.

11 - Credibility

“Was the dialogue process seen by Concordat stakeholders as suitable and sufficiently credible for them to use the results with confidence?”

This criterion is **hard to evaluate robustly** within the timescales and budget constraints of the evaluation.

Ideally, evidence to support an assessment of this criterion would be gathered from a full survey of all 60 members of the Concordat, after they have all read and discussed the final Dialogue Report. Due to the project extending (see section 6), the fixed budget for evaluation had to be reorganised and this survey was deprioritised.

There are some indications of how Concordat stakeholders view the dialogue in terms of credibility. In the OG meeting on 22nd August 2013 when the headline dialogue results were presented, the OG members in attendance clearly viewed the process and outputs as credible and useful. This correlated with the evaluation data gathered from participant questionnaires that did not highlight any reason to doubt the dialogue’s credibility. The evaluation interim report (Appendix 4) agreed with this assessment, stating that the evaluators’ view was that the process was *“a credible dialogue that the participants really enjoyed”*.

Subsequent interviews have explored the credibility of the dialogue and, within the limits of those interviewed, shown that the dialogue is indeed seen as a credible process, and to have provided a valid source of knowledge about public opinion. The limitation of the dialogue process compared to a statistically representative survey is identified as one concern:

“It is as credible as other public dialogues out there i.e. within the constraints of not being a statistical survey”. Working Group member

The involvement of RSPCA and BUAV was cited specifically as adding strength, balance and credibility to the dialogue:

“The balance achieved via the involvement of NGOs really enhanced it”. OG member

This is consistent with the views of the evaluators.

“What are the lessons for the future (what worked well and less well, and more widely)?”

There is a variety of learning to take from this dialogue, much of it positive.

Clear, simple and unambiguous objectives are essential to effective delivery

All four of the objectives of this dialogue were either very well met, or well met. The evaluators attribute this in part due to the clarity, simplicity and ‘understandability’ of all four objectives. The objectives avoid using jargon or conceptual language, and are very specific. For example, one could read them to a 10-year-old child and probably be understood accurately. The evaluators observed a notable absence of disagreement over what the objectives meant and why they were needed, which greatly aided implementation of the dialogue.

It takes around 6-8 weeks to develop stimulus materials on a contentious topic

This dialogue followed a very robust and effective process to develop the stimulus materials, led by the delivery contractor. A stakeholder workshop was held to solicit feedback on materials and discuss potential information sources, a first draft of materials was developed by the facilitators, and various stages of commenting by the OG and wider stakeholder group were undergone before the OG finally signed off the materials consensually. This process was initially planned to be around 2-3 weeks long, but ultimately took around six weeks. This caused the delay of the public events and an extension to the project duration. It is important to note though that even this extended period of six weeks was characterised by meetings organised at short notice, commenting deadlines of 24-48 hours long, and OG members commenting ‘on the hoof’ in between other meetings and commitments. It was not comfortable for anyone involved, with some regretting that they hadn’t foreseen it earlier and promising that “they’d never do that again”. Hence the lesson is that 6-8 weeks is a *minimum* on a contentious topic where the balance and ownership of the materials is essential.

Active participation from diverse interests is essential on the Oversight Group

The Oversight Group functioned effectively as the executive body for the dialogue, taking major decisions on the go-ahead for locations of workshops, numbers of participants, dialogue design, and dialogue materials. Its composition was therefore critical. It was formed of the commissioning body (UAR) and five other organisations (RSPCA, MRC, BBSRC, BIS and Sciencewise¹⁷). Of particular importance here is the role of the RSPCA, because they were only organisation representing the perspective of animal welfare specifically. The RSPCA therefore had a great responsibility in the dialogue, that of providing ‘balance’ on the OG. From all accounts, the RSPCA took this responsibility very seriously and was very effective in influencing the dialogue. It is entirely possible that the credibility of the dialogue would have evaporated had the RSPCA not played such an active and influential role, and if the other OG members had not respected their input so consistently.

¹⁷ Sciencewise operated as an effective member although formally speaking they were an advisor/supporter to the Oversight Group.

Objective ways of calibrating key participant views would strengthen results

The majority of a dialogue event is rightly about building participants' knowledge and exploring viewpoints in an organic and qualitative way. However, there are times when capturing participants' views in objective and calibrated ways could make the dialogue outputs more robust. For example, if it appears that an idea (say, support for CCTV in animal research laboratories) has support because a few participants have voiced it, others have nodded, and the other participants have not disagreed, how confident can you be that the idea is supported? Are the quiet participants agreeing, or disagreeing? How strongly do even the vocal participants agree or disagree? Whilst the facilitated conversation may bring some of these points out, it would give greater confidence to the results if views were captured in a more objective way, for example by a show of hands, dots on Lickert scales, or by electronic voting. The method is not as important as the fact that every participant's view is elicited, and those views are calibrated in at least a simple way. This would reduce the risk of over-representation of the articulate participants' views and the bias that may emerge as a result, as well as reducing the risk of results becoming over-simplified during the reporting process.

It is likely to take *well over* 12 months for public dialogue on a contentious topic to go from 'concept to completion'

The idea for the public dialogue on openness in animal research was first mooted in November 2012. It concluded in November 2013 with the publication of the Dialogue Report, 12 months later. At nearly all times the project was operating at full speed, with various measures employed to accelerate funding procedures and speed up procurement. Although the tight timescale was recognised from the start, it was not expected that it would take a full year from concept to completion. In part the amount of time was a function of the administrative hurdles that needed to be jumped through (funding, procurement), and secondly the sensitivity of the topic meant that consensus within the OG simply took a long time to reach on most decisions (although it was absolutely essential). Although the dialogue was completed in 12 months, it is fair to say that it did run significant risks and significantly strained the individuals involved at times.

13 - Conclusions

Overall, this dialogue was a success. It met its objectives well, and fulfilled Sciencewise's guiding principles that set out good practice. There were some very effective efforts to include diverse interests both in the governance of the project and also the stimulus materials used with public participants. There have been some small but real changes to the Concordat document and supporting guidance document, as well as changes to the way in which those involved in improving openness are talking to stakeholders in the sector and using the dialogue findings. There are some key lessons emerging about:

- Clear, simple and unambiguous objectives are essential to effective delivery
- It takes around 6-8 weeks to develop stimulus materials on a contentious topic
- Active participation from diverse interests is essential on the Oversight Group
- Objective ways of calibrating key participant views would strengthen results
- It is likely to take *well over* 12 months for public dialogue on a contentious topic to go from 'concept to completion'

The evaluators thank everyone who contributed their views and time to the evaluation: it would not be possible without their generous and honest participation.

Appendix 1 – List of organisations signed up to the Concordat (at 14 May 2014)

Alzheimer's Research UK
Arthritis Research UK
British Heart Foundation
Cancer Research UK
Cystic Fibrosis Trust
Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research
Motor Neurone Disease Association
Parkinson's UK
Agenda Resource Management
AstraZeneca
Charles River Preclinical Services
Covance
GlaxoSmithKline
Harlan Laboratories
Huntingdon Life Sciences
Lilly UK
Pfizer
Sequani
UCB
Biochemical Society
British Association for Psychopharmacology
British Neuroscience Association
British Pharmacological Society
Society for Endocrinology
The Physiological Society
The Royal Society
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
Medical Research Council
National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research
The Babraham Institute
John Innes Centre
Rothamsted Research
The Pirbright Institute
The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
Academy of Medical Sciences
Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries
Association of Medical Research Charities
Bio Industry Association
Institute of Animal Technology
Laboratory Animal Breeders Association
Laboratory Animal Science Association
Laboratory Animal Veterinary Association
Society of Biology
The Wellcome Trust
Understanding Animal Research
Universities UK
Aberystwyth University
Brunel University

Cardiff University
Imperial College London
King's College London
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Newcastle University
Plymouth University
Queen Mary, University of London
Royal Veterinary College
St. George's, University of London
The Open University
University College London
University of Aberdeen
University of Bath
University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
University of Dundee
University of Edinburgh
University of Leicester
University of Manchester
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
University of Portsmouth
University of Stirling
University of Strathclyde

Appendix 2 – Evaluation data from event 2s across all 3 locations

(Overleaf)

UAR Public Dialogue

Aggregated data report and observations from all 3 event locations





Attended: 48 participants
Response rate: 100%











1 What three words would you use to describe your experience of these events?






The 'wordle' below illustrates the words participants used most frequently when answering this question, across both events in all three locations.



			Strongly Disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither	Tend to agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Evaluator's Observations
2	I understand how these public events fit with the wider framework/concordat project		0%	2%	2%	59%	37%	0%	Very good agreement that people understood how the events fit with the wider concordat/framework process. It is noticeable that most of the agreement is tentative and not strong, perhaps implying that the majority of participants did not fully understand the connections between the events and the concordat. This context was provided briefly in both event 1 and event 2. However, it is probably not necessary for participants to understand this context in order to contribute constructively.
3	Overall the information presented was fair and balanced (including the short videos shown)		0%	6%	2%	44%	48%	0%	Very good agreement that the the information was fair and balanced. A few participants felt they wished to see a video of animal research being 'done properly' to create even better balance. Given the contention around achieving balance, this is a real achievement in the compilation of materials between delivery contractor, OG members and wider stakeholder inputs.
4	I could ask questions easily and get appropriate answers		0%	0%	0%	40%	58%	2%	All participants agreed that they could ask questions easily and get appropriate answers (except one who didn't know). This is a solid result given the potential for over-technical responses, or becoming daunted by the complexity of the topic. The RSPCA input was a key element of this and was very well received by all but one participant.

5	I had enough time to discuss the issues		0%	0%	2%	38%	60%	0%	Almost all participants felt they had enough time to discuss the issues, most strongly agreeing. There were a few comments about the possibility of compressing the time and the discussions being a little repetitive at times, but not too many for it to be a real issue: rather something to consider in future workshop designs to try and reduce the potential repetitiveness of the questioning and discussion.
6	I was able to contribute my views and have my say		0%	0%	2%	26%	72%	0%	Almost all participants felt they could contribute their views and have their say, with most strongly agreeing. Key factors contributing to this were the facilitators' style and approachability, as well as the structure and format of the day, combined with relatively low numbers of participants at each event.
7	The facilitation was independent and professional		0%	0%	2%	23%	75%	0%	Almost all participants agreed that the facilitation was independent and professional, with the clear majority strongly agreeing. Indeed, the one person who answered 'neither' was also the person answering the same in Q5 and Q6.
8	I felt comfortable with the presence of observers (those watching but not participating)		0%	0%	0%	23%	75%	2%	All participants except one (who didn't know) said they felt comfortable with the presence of observers. This appears to point towards there not being an issue with observers in public dialogue, as long as numbers are sensible, and they are introduced properly with purpose. However, it would probably not be sensible to draw a firm conclusion on this until the question is tested again in other public dialogues.

9	I am confident that these events will make a difference to openness on animal research		0%	2%	10%	44%	29%	15%	Fairly good agreement that participants were confident that the events would affect openness in animal research. The picture is nuanced though, with a range of levels of confidence. Whilst this is one of the least positive results of the evaluation, it is not altogether unusual or unexpected due to the inability of the participants to have any visibility on impacts or even the route of impact. It puts significant emphasis on the process of translating dialogue outputs to the concordat, as well as perhaps considering how any impacts of the dialogue get fed back to participants.
10	I found the time/energy to do the follow-up work between the two events		0%	2%	0%	33%	63%	2%	Almost everyone found the time/energy to do the followup work between events, most strongly agreeing. Whilst we might expect a little 'optimism' in their responses given they were encouraged strongly and repeatedly to do the homework by the facilitators, it is clear in the data and also in direct observation that homework was done well by the majority of participants. Key factors in the success of this were the way in which the facilitators briefed the task, in conjunction with the homework task sheet being a 'takehome guide'.
11	Overall I am satisfied with the two events I attended		0%	0%	2%	17%	81%	0%	Almost all participants were satisfied with the events overall, most strongly agreeing. In a sense this is the overarching proxy for participant satisfaction and therefore success of delivery from their perspective.
13	Taking part in these events has affected my views on the topic of animal research		0%	2%	4%	26%	68%	0%	94% of participants said the events had affected their views, with most strongly agreeing.

14	I learned something new as a result of taking part		0%	0%	0%	21%	79%	0%	All participants agreed that they had learned something new as a result of taking part, most strongly agreed.
15	I am likely to change something that I do as a result of taking part		2%	9%	9%	43%	26%	13%	Most participants felt that they are likely to change something they do as a result of taking part, but there was a significant spread of other views, including disagreeing or not knowing. The mix of 'agree' and 'disagree' here isn't a concern given the main function of the dialogue is to affect the concordat, not participants actions.
16	I am more convinced of the value of public participation in these sorts of topics		0%	0%	4%	43%	49%	4%	Almost all participants left feeling more convinced of the value of public participation, although much of the agreement was tentative. Although it is impossible to make an evidenced link to Q9, it may reflect the fact that many participants weren't yet fully convinced that the dialogue will affect things significantly.
17	I am more likely to get involved in these kinds of events in future		0%	0%	2%	23%	70%	4%	Almost all participants said they are more likely to get involved in these kinds of events in future.
18	I am more likely to recommend participation of this kind to others		0%	0%	0%	35%	63%	2%	Almost all participants are more likely to recommend participation of this kind to others.

ATTENDEE COMMENTS

12 Please add comments to explain any of your answers, especially ones where you have disagreed:

Overall people said they enjoyed the events, finding them interesting and informative. No single issue was raised frequently: one expressing doubt as to the impact of the research, one suggestion to publish a list of changes to transparency in animal research, and two people saying some of the conversations felt a bit repetitive.

19 If there's one new thing I've learned from the events it's...

A huge range of learning is raised by participants, with very little 'trend' emerging. People cite the factual information they have learned: the nature and scale of testing, the rules in place. People mention learning about the nature of the issue: its complexity, the need to ask questions and have debate in order to build understanding, and there being two sides to the story. Finally, others said that more research is needed, and more transparency is needed within the research.

20 The best aspect of the events was...

On the best aspects of the events, participants frequently cited: the information provided and therefore the learning they got, the debates and discussions with people of different backgrounds and views, the video - in particular being able to see different sides of the issue i.e. explicitly including the BUAV video.

21 The worst aspect of the events was...

Almost half of all participants either actively said they had no 'worst aspect', or chose not to answer this question - from which one might assume they had no particular issue they wished to raise. For the remainder, the worst aspects of the events listed in order of frequency were: watching the video (from BUAV) as it was distressing and shocking and demonstrated bad practice, the unhelpful way in which some people chose to participate in discussions and how some discussions felt repetitive, environmental factors like it being hot, the food, or air conditioning.

22 Any other comments?

No particular observations here: largely positive feedback about having enjoyed the events and how they appreciated how they were run.

Appendix 3 - Calibration and Definitions of Assessments

Very well met	Met to the greatest degree that could be expected. No improvements are identified that could realistically have been implemented.
Well met	Met, with only one or a few relatively small improvements identified, but without any substantive impact on the output of the dialogue.
Fairly well met	Met, but with a series of improvements identified that could have substantively improved the process and/or impact of the dialogue.
Not very well met	Falls short of expectations in a substantive or significant way.
Not met	Effectively not met at all.

Appendix 4 – Interim Evaluation Report, published November 2013

This interim report provides high-level observations about the delivery of the public dialogue on openness in animal research conducted between April and October 2013, as well as a readout of all participant views on the process. A full and more detailed Evaluation Report with an additional focus on dialogue impacts will follow, once the following are complete:

- A Review of the Dialogue Report and the draft Concordat, once published
- A brief survey of Concordat members
- A round of interviews to consider impacts of the public dialogue

Overall, the evaluators believe the process was *a credible dialogue that participants really enjoyed*. The evidence for this comes from direct observation (of email traffic, Oversight Group meetings, materials review, and 3 public dialogue events) and analysis of participant questionnaires. This will be built upon with the remaining evaluation activities over the coming weeks.

At a high level, the evaluators make three key observations regarding delivery:

Oversight Group. This group was critical to the success and credibility of the dialogue. It was fully bought in to the dialogue from the start, including the dialogue's scope and objectives. The group was functional and attentive, meeting regularly, and understanding of the need to work consensually if the dialogue was to be effective. It was well chaired by UAR, operating consensually rather than UAR 'steering' the work unduly. All members effectively had a veto, although it was never referred to in such terms. Members of the Group participated fully and with great commitment. They also displayed thoughtful sensitivity to their relationships with other group members in order to achieve an agreed dialogue process with agreed materials.

Balance. A huge amount of effort was put into getting the process and materials balanced. This manifested itself in two main ways. Firstly by the delivery contractor's persistent efforts to involve anti-vivisection viewpoints, and their willingness to repeatedly develop materials until everyone on the Oversight Group was happy with them (despite a very tight budget). Secondly, the Oversight Group's close attention to the nature and balance of materials alongside the delivery contractor. Materials - both written and audio-visual - were open about a wide range of views existing, and gave a flavour of what those views were. Participants largely agreed that the information provided was balanced (see Q3 overleaf), and some specifically highlighted the anti-vivisection video as being useful, as it showed a different point of view that was important for the deliberation.

Time. A significant time constraint existed from the start of the public dialogue. This was driven by a public commitment to release the signed Concordat in October 2013, a driver that was understandable but ultimately not particularly helpful. As well as creating extra work and extra tension, it created an unnecessary sense of cynicism towards the dialogue from some parties. The stakeholder workshop for example was organised with less than two weeks' notice, which in turn made some NGOs perhaps understandably feel 'bumped' into the process: from their point of view, what was the rush? Ultimately, the Concordat process was delayed in any case. The learning point here is that public dialogue on a contentious topic takes longer than everybody expects, and that a tight time constraint has real practical downsides and impacts that can't be 'managed away'.

Overleaf we reproduce the compiled analysis from all 48 participant questionnaires. *[Provided in Appendix 2 of main report]*.

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