

# NATIONAL FORUM FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN STEM

## MEETING / ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

2014

May 2014

The first meeting of the National Forum was focused on:

- Member introductions;
- Reviewing and approving the Terms of Reference;
- The role of the chair;
- A proposal to contract a secretariat for the Forum;
- Future agenda setting;
- Contributing to the survey of Factors Affecting Public Engagement by Researchers.

Summary of Discussions:

- The role of the secretariat was discussed and confirmed. It was agreed that the restrictions on membership entail that there should be effective engagement between the Forum and a wider group of stakeholders who are not members and the Forum should be an active group, and not become a 'talking shop'. The key functions a secretariat should provide were:
  - Administrating and coordinating meetings;
  - Conducting research and generating insight;
  - Providing thought leadership and effective facilitation;
  - Overseeing engagement between the Forum and wider stakeholders.
- Members reflected on their own organisation's priorities and how the National Forum could support them. Key themes that were outlined included:
  - Engaging with under-served audiences, particularly the under 5s and young people from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds, such that they feel inspired by and engaged with STEM.
  - Identifying gaps in engagement and seeking to fill those gaps.
  - Sharing/working more collaboratively as funders, moving away from being competitive and helping to avoid duplication; likewise encouraging more sharing between practitioners: overall establishing a more coherent sector and funding more wisely.
  - Providing sustainable funding opportunities so that both established, good activities are supported and there is support for riskier new approaches.
  - Strengthening the evidence base for public engagement activities, including more systematic approaches towards evaluation and sharing results, such that we know we are funding the right things, can be accountable and can demonstrate impact, including long-term.

## October 2014

The second meeting of the National Forum was focused on:

- Signing off the Terms of Reference and membership;
- Survey of factors affecting public engagement by UK researchers;
- Confirming the appointment of the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) to act as secretariat;
- Refining the communications strategy and developing a logic model for the Forum.

Summary of Discussion:

- It was agreed that the British Science Association and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs should be invited to become Forum members;
- The overall funding landscape was discussed. Members felt that it was quite a complex landscape and as a result it was agreed to map the current scheme funding opportunities for PE with STEM, (i.e. looking at budgets, discipline areas, and audience focus etc.).
- It was noted that there could be opportunities for Members to work in partnership on specific events and PE 'moments'. As a result, the secretariat was tasked to pull together a list of future key events and anniversaries that members are currently aligning their PE activities to (i.e. Tim Peake Space Mission, International years etc.).
- Discussions took place on the engagement between the Forum and the wider PE community. These informed the Forum Communications Strategy. A sector wide Networking Event was agreed for twelve months' time.

## Forum Activity and Outputs - 2014

### Key activity

- National Forum established
- Secretariat appointed
- Survey of Factors Affecting Public Engagement by UK Researchers

### Key outputs

- Terms of reference
- Invitation to tender for secretariat