

NATIONAL FORUM FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN STEM

MEETING / ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

2015

Forum Activity and Outputs - 2015

Key activity	Key outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic options for Forum activity agreed• Communications plan finalised• Mapping the PE Funding System• Launching a review into evaluation support and practice• Mapping ongoing and planned activities against the six emerging areas of Science and Technology, to identify gaps and opportunities• Initiating four working groups to look at engagement with underserved audiences, evaluation, genomics/gene editing and machine learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheme Funding Reviewⁱ• STEM PE Fundingⁱⁱ• National Forum Website• Logic model• Communications plan• Paper on the different traditions of Public Engagementⁱⁱⁱ• Overview of planned PE activities against six emerging areas of science and technology^{iv}

March 2015

The third meeting of the National Forum focused on:

- Key dates and anniversaries for joint event planning;
- Review of scheme funding;
- Finalising communications plan;
- Development of a logic model for the Forum;
- Agreeing future priority areas.

Summary of Discussion:

- The review of scheme funding was discussed outlining the priority areas for funds, key audiences and average spends. It highlighted that only a quarter of funds mentioned engagement with underserved audiences within assessment criteria, and that support for evaluation of grants was highly variable across the sector. A summary paper is [available here](#). A fuller study was commissioned of the back at these findings, to look at funding flows across the sector. This is [available here](#).

- Three main groups were identified within the Forum Membership: (i) Funders, (ii) Devolved nations and (iii) Engagers, which reflect the different priorities across the membership. Members noted that there was value in sharing across the membership and this would in turn lead to better investments and strategic activity.
- A paper was prepared by the Secretariat presenting six strategic options derived through desk research and interviews with Members. From these six, members agreed to pursue:
 - Reviewing approaches to evaluation;
 - Reviewing how PE/STEM is funded;
 - Bridging the gap between the theory and practice of Public Engagement.

The three options that were not taken forward at this point were – provoking a national debate on the value of PE, developing a shared national campaign, and developing ‘rapid response’ capability to respond to Scientific issues as they arrive (i.e. Ebola outbreak).

- It was agreed to hold a National Networking Event to launch the Forum and promote conversation between the Forum and wider stakeholders around the Forum priorities and issues that the Forum should be considering.

June 2015

The forth meeting of the National Forum focused on:

- Six areas of emerging science and technology identified at a round table on Public Engagement convened by Sir Mark Walport;
- Review of the STEM PE Funding system;
- Scoping a proposal for an investigation into support and practice of evaluation;
- Considering how the National Forum could improve/support approaches to working with underserved audiences.

Summary of Discussion:

- It was agreed that the Forum would develop map ongoing and planned activities against the six emerging areas of Science and Technology, to identify gaps and opportunities.
- The parameters and process of the PE Funding System review were agreed upon.
- A proposal to explore evaluation support and practice was discussed. The proposal looked at existing activity amongst forum members and will look to provide recommendations for future policy and practice.
- A [traditions of Public Engagement paper was developed and discussed](#). The paper was intended to help guide conversations around approaches to working with underserved audiences and what worked. A working group was established to take the paper forward and illustrate with case studies.

The fifth meeting of the National Forum focused on:

- Review of Forum activity and ways of working;
- Key updates on Factors Affecting PE by Researchers and the BBC's flagship New Age of Wonder initiative;
- Response to the Government Chief Scientist's roundtable on public engagement;
- Review of the STEM PE Funding system.

Summary of Discussion:

- The review of the PE funding system provided some high-level insight into the current focus of spending. It raised questions about what the right balance of investment would be. For example, investment in research vs activities vs people.
- Four working groups were established to focus on different areas:
 - Underserved Audiences;
 - Evaluation support and practice;
 - PE with Genomics and Gene Editing
 - PE with Machine Learning.
- It was agreed that the National Forum Networking event would focus on three key areas of Forum activity (i) Funding review, (ii) Evaluation and (iii) Engaging underserved audiences. There would also be ample opportunity to feed into future Forum priorities, and contribute to the mapping exercise looking at PE with emerging areas of science and technology.

ⁱhttps://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/national_forum_scheme_funding_summary.pdf

ⁱⁱhttps://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/pe_funding_review_2016.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱhttps://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/engaging_underserved_audiences_paradigms.pdf

^{iv}https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/national_forum_networking_event_report_march_2016.pdf