



Growing and Protecting New Zealand

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR

Mycoplasma bovis

Strategic Science Advisory Group

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Terms of reference for *Mycoplasma bovis* Strategic Science Advisory Group (SSAG)

1 Background and context

Science is a critical component of our response to *Mycoplasma bovis* and requires strong coordination and leadership to ensure there is a focus on high impact research that aligns with, and builds on, research to date internationally. There is a need for independent high-level advice on the strategic direction of *Mycoplasma bovis* research nationally, to ensure the eradication programme is best placed to deliver approaches for eradicating *Mycoplasma bovis*.

The Strategic Science Advisory Group (SSAG) will play a key part in ensuring a high impact and well-aligned science programme. The SSAG will provide high-level recommendations to the *Mycoplasma bovis* Governance Group on the requirements for strategic science prioritisation and aid in the coordination of research programmes on *Mycoplasma bovis* in New Zealand.

The SSAG and associated specialised science groups will work across Government agencies, Crown research institutes, and other research institutes, to maintain oversight and ensure any *Mycoplasma bovis*-related research is cohesive and complementary, and that funding of priority research provides real-life tools and outcomes that result in the eradication of *Mycoplasma bovis* in New Zealand.

The SSAG will report to the *Mycoplasma bovis* Governance Board, as necessary, to ensure higher-level decisions are informed by the best available strategic scientific advice.

2 Expected benefits

The benefits we expect from a SSAG include:

- a. Aligning efforts to achieve clearly stated goals/outcomes.
- b. National prioritisation of *Mycoplasma bovis* research questions and effort, to provide the best pathway to disease eradication.
- c. Better coordination of collaborative science initiatives in New Zealand relating to *Mycoplasma bovis*.
- d. Awareness and oversight of emergent technologies and approaches that may help eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis*.
- e. Better alignment of research effort across the eradication programme;
- f. Ensuring effective linkages are forged internationally.
- g. Oversight of opportunities to learn from similar research programmes within New Zealand and internationally (e.g., on other high impact diseases).
- h. Ensuring identification of critical knowledge gaps and ways to address these.
- i. Assurance to governance, senior leaders, ministers, councillors, iwi, stakeholders, and the general public that the research effort to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis* is fit for purpose.

3 Definition of terms

SSAG means **Strategic Science Advisory Group** established under these terms of reference.

MPI means the **Ministry for Primary Industries**.

4 Purpose and functions of the SSAG

4.1 Purpose of the SSAG

The purpose of the SSAG is to:

- a. Provide strategic science advice to the *Mycoplasma bovis* Governance Group.
- b. Support the development of a prioritised research programme for the eradication of *Mycoplasma bovis* in New Zealand.
- c. Maximise delivery of tools appropriate for eradicating *Mycoplasma bovis*.
- d. Streamline and prioritise high-level questions that need to be explored now, and that arise over time, through a national science programme.
- e. Provide a coordination point for key *Mycoplasma bovis* science interests – providers, funders, and users of the science.
- f. Identify critical opportunities and barriers for the science programme, including opportunities to better structure our collective research approach for national delivery of the science.
- g. Ensure strong and effective alignment between the *Mycoplasma bovis* science programme and the eradication programme.
- h. Ensure the best information available domestically and internationally is being considered in developing and implementing the science programme.
- i. Identify opportunities for using Kaupapa Māori in the science programme.
- j. Any other high-level strategic science issues, risks and opportunities.

4.2 Functions of the SSAG

The SSAG has the following functions:

Provide strategic recommendations to the *Mycoplasma bovis* Governance Group on:

- a. The current state of *Mycoplasma bovis* science.
- b. Priority science needs for the eradication of *Mycoplasma bovis* in New Zealand, considering potential impacts on environmental, economic, social and cultural values.
- c. Development of a *Mycoplasma bovis* science plan including consideration of value for money and appropriate costings.
- d. Appropriate roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the delivery of research goals for the eradication programme.
- e. Appropriate and strategic reprioritisation of existing funding towards *Mycoplasma bovis* science.
- f. Coordination with relevant science initiatives within New Zealand science organisations and internationally.
- g. Identify strategic scientific risks, issues, knowledge gaps and emerging scientific opportunities as and when they arise, and provide recommendations for their

mitigation/investigation to the *Mycoplasma bovis* Governance Group or other bodies as appropriate.

- h. Provide oversight, monitoring and evaluation of the *Mycoplasma bovis* science programme once established.

The following functions are out of scope for the SSAG:

- a. Final decisions on research funding allocation required to achieve the agreed eradication objectives for *Mycoplasma bovis* in New Zealand, funded through the *Mycoplasma bovis* programme.
- b. Decisions on wider research funding not related to *Mycoplasma bovis*, or not funded through the *Mycoplasma bovis* programme.

5 Membership and participation

5.1 Composition of the SSAG

The SSAG will consist of the following members:

- a. Departmental Science Adviser, MPI (Chairperson).
- b. Director, Diagnostics and Surveillance Services, MPI.
- c. A senior manager in the science investments area from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).
- d. One senior mātauranga Māori expert.
- e. Up to five senior science experts from New Zealand science organisations (covering key science areas; e.g., epidemiology, immunology, econometrics, complex network analysis, and social science).
- f. Two to three international *Mycoplasma bovis* science experts.
- g. One practicing veterinarian.

5.2 Addition of members

- a. Members may be added as agreed by the SSAG.

5.3 Attendance and substitutions

- a. Members are expected to treat meetings of the SSAG as a high priority and attend as often as possible.
- b. Members who are not able to attend a meeting may be represented by a substitute or proxy, but should notify the Chairperson in advance of the meeting.
- c. Members are responsible for fully briefing any substitute or proxy prior to the meeting.

5.4 Change of members

- a. If an organisation has a member on the SSAG, the organisation may replace the person who represents it by notifying the Chairperson of the SSAG in writing of the change (this does not apply to the science roles that are not organisational roles).

- b. A member may resign from the SSAG by notifying the Chairperson of the member's resignation in advance of any meeting.
- c. A member who is appointed as a representative of an organisation will cease to be a member of the SSAG if they leave the organisation or if the organisation notifies the Chairperson of the SSAG in writing that the person no longer represents the organisation on the SSAG.

5.5 Membership rights and obligations

- a. Any person appointed as a member of the SSAG representing an organisation must ensure that he or she is duly authorised by the organisation to make representations on behalf of the organisation.
- b. Each party shall remain independent of any obligations that do not appear in this agreement.

5.6 Observers

- a. The Chairperson may, with the agreement of the SSAG, permit observers or advisors to participate in meetings of the SSAG.
- b. The role of observers will be determined by the SSAG, including whether observers may participate in discussions, make presentations to the SSAG or participate in decisions of the SSAG.
- c. Observers are required to comply with these terms of reference, including the requirements for confidentiality and management of conflicts of interest.
- d. The Chairperson may at any time ask observers to withdraw from a meeting of the SSAG.

6 Chairperson and Secretariat

6.1 Chairperson

- a. The Chairperson will be appointed by MPI.
- b. The Chairperson may delegate responsibility to another member of the *Mycoplasma bovis* SSAG if they are unable to attend a meeting.

6.2 Secretariat

- a. MPI will provide secretariat services to the SSAG, including circulation of the agenda and papers, preparation and circulation of meeting minutes, and some project management support.

7 How the SSAG operates

7.1 Meeting times and frequency

- a. The SSAG is expected, at a minimum, to meet four times per annum in person or via video or teleconference, at a time and place determined by the Chairperson in consultation with the members. There may also be a need to participate in further discussions via teleconference or review and comment on documents outside of meetings. This frequency will be kept under review.

7.2 Consensus

- a. The SSAG will operate on the basis of consensus and, where it is not possible to achieve a consensus, on the basis of majority vote. Where consensus cannot be reached, this will be noted in the meeting minutes.

7.3 Quorum

- a. Quorum will be achieved in the presence of two thirds of the members of the SSAG.

7.4 Standards of conduct

- a. Members and observers are expected to comply with the standards of conduct set out in Appendix I.

8 Confidentiality and information

8.1 General confidentiality requirements

- a. The SSAG operates on an open basis, and members should assume that all key messages agreed by the SSAG are non-confidential and may be made public, unless otherwise specified. The Chairperson will be the spokesperson, unless otherwise agreed.
- b. Discussions within meetings should be treated In-Confidence.
- c. Any person presenting information to the SSAG, whether written or oral, may request that that information be treated as confidential by the members and observers.
- d. If there is a desire to release the information, the Chairperson will seek agreement from anyone who supplied confidential information for confidentiality to be waived.
- e. Where information is already in the public domain (through no fault of a member or observer), the confidentiality requirements do not apply to that information.

8.2 Privacy Act

- a. Members and observers must at all times comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993 and keep information about identifiable individuals confidential.

8.3 Official Information Act and Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

- a. All information provided to the SSAG will be treated as official information under the Official Information Act 1982 and, subject to the requirements of that Act, may be released to the public if there are no grounds for withholding it. Local Government have similar requirements under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.
- b. If information is required to be released under the Official Information Act 1982 it will only be released to the extent necessary.

- c. If MPI is considering releasing information under the Official Information Act 1982, MPI will attempt to consult with the person who provided the information before making a final decision on release.

8.4 Media and public forums

- a. The Chairperson will speak on behalf of the SSAG for any official communication.
- b. Members and observers may identify themselves as members of the SSAG but, unless prior agreement is received from the Chairperson and MPI, must refrain from representing the SSAG to the media and at public forums.
- c. The Chairperson may seek agreement from MPI for the SSAG to release a media statement on any matter related to these terms of reference.
- d. A member may comment on the business of the SSAG, consistent with agreed key messages, but must notify the Chairperson and/or the secretariat ideally before or, if not possible, after the event.

9 Conflicts of Interest

9.1 Definition of a conflict of interest

- a. A conflict of interest occurs when a member's or observer's private interest or professional obligation interferes, or appears to interfere with an issue that is before the SSAG.
- b. A conflict of interest may be real or perceived.

9.2 Declaration of conflict

- a. Members and observers are responsible for declaring any real or potential conflict of interest to the Chairperson, as soon as the conflict arises.

9.3 Management of conflict of interest

- a. At the discretion of the Chairperson, members and observers may participate in discussions about issues in which they have declared a conflict of interest.
- b. Members and observers may not participate in any vote or decision on an issue in which they have a conflict of interest, whether it has been declared or not.
- c. Conflict with funding opportunities must be declared, and if the expertise on offer is unique and required for a research project, transparency in decision making and open declaration of the conflict is required.

10 Review of terms of reference

- a. Terms of reference will be subject to annual review to ensure they remain fit for purpose, including when a SSAG termination clause should be added.

Appendix I

Expected standards of conduct

All members and observers are expected to adhere to the following principles:

1. **Diligence** – Members will use their best endeavours to attend meetings and to prepare thoroughly. Members are expected to participate fully, frankly and constructively to discussions and to bring the benefit of their particular knowledge, industry perspective and skills to the table.
2. **Conflicts of Interest** – A conflict of interest will occur when a members' private interest interferes, or appears to interfere with an issue that faces the SSAG. A conflict of interest may also occur when there is a possibility that a benefit may apply to the sector, industry or organisation that they represent. Any situation that involves or may be expected to involve a conflict of interest must be declared immediately to the Chairperson.
3. **Corporate opportunities** – Each member must not exploit any opportunity that is discovered through access to information within the SSAG for their own personal gain or that of the industry, sector or organisation that they represent.
4. **Transparency** – All information should be provided in a manner that is timely, precise and easily understandable.
5. **Fair Dealing** – Members shall deal fairly with each other and shall not take unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other unfair dealing practices.
6. **Advocacy** – Members should avoid actively promoting a standpoint or cause of their industry and should rather participate in meetings with the aim of reaching an outcome that is acceptable to all members.
7. **State Services Standards of Integrity and Conduct** – MPI staff have statutory demands under the State Services Standards of Integrity and Conduct. In the case of any conflict between the obligations outlined there and the ones in this document, those of the Standards and Integrity of Conduct shall preside.
8. **Alternative obligations** – Any alternative rules or statutes that govern members standards of conduct shall continue to do so, however in any case of conflicting duties the Chairperson must be notified as soon as reasonably possible.