

Session 3

Group discussions on SCAR Review: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats & next steps

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SCAR Conference 2017
Tallinn, Estonia, 4th December



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Agenda

- Introduction
- Programme for today
- Activity 1
- Activity 2

SWOT Tasks

- Assessment and SWOT analysis of the state of play of research and innovation policy in the broader Bioeconomy area
 - Report completed and available
- Assessment and SWOT analysis of the European Bioeconomy
- Revised focus of SWOT analysis: SCAR itself
- Desk research and executive 1:1 interviews conducted
- Sense checking and next steps

Programme for today

- ***Breakout Activity 1 – Sense Checking SWOT results (miscommunications, factual inaccuracies, missed opportunities etc.)***

Preliminary S, W, O, Ts identified

An important quality control check to increase trustworthiness of research and to help to ensure buy-in by stakeholders to any ensuing changes to SCAR.

An opportunity to disagree and to probe and clarify reasons for disagreement if such disagreement exists.

Programme for today (after coffee)

- ***Breakout Activity 2 - Next steps What a (more!) successful SCAR would look like and how we will get there?***

Moving beyond identification of S, W, O and Ts.

Prioritisation and development of a vision for the future.

Highlights of SWOT of R&I policy landscape

- Range of relevant bioeconomy R&I policies, programmes and practices nested within different DGs
- Many attempting to address structural innovation system failures:
 1. infrastructural failures, e.g. support for demo facilities and pilot plants
 2. Capabilities failures, e.g. boosting SME human and financial capacity
 3. Network failures, e.g. establishment of CSAs and ERA-NETs
 4. Institutional failures, e.g. Lead Market Initiative

Highlights of SWOT of R&I policy landscape (2)

- Transformational system failures
 - Policy coordination failures, e.g. persisting challenges in established R&I supports including JPIs, EIPs and ERA-NETs
 - Directionality failures, e.g. lack of a clear bioeconomy ambition within individual DGs
 - Demand articulation failures, e.g. balancing science push with market pull
 - Reflexivity failures, e.g. accurate monitoring mechanisms and targets

Highlights of SWOT of R&I policy landscape (3)

- Significant progress since 2012 strategy “Innovating for Sustainable Growth
- Plethora of policies, programmes and practices
- Reflexivity crucial at this stage: monitoring implementation and impact and reorienting supports to achieve the desired and required transformative changes (consider degrowth and reduced consumption)
- Policy coordination critical – EU bioeconomy strategy review, circular economy package, Food 2030, sharing-, green-.

SWOT of the SCAR Workshop

4th December 2017

SCAR 2017, Tallinn, Estonia

Dr Laura Devaney & Dr Maeve Henchion

CASA WP3



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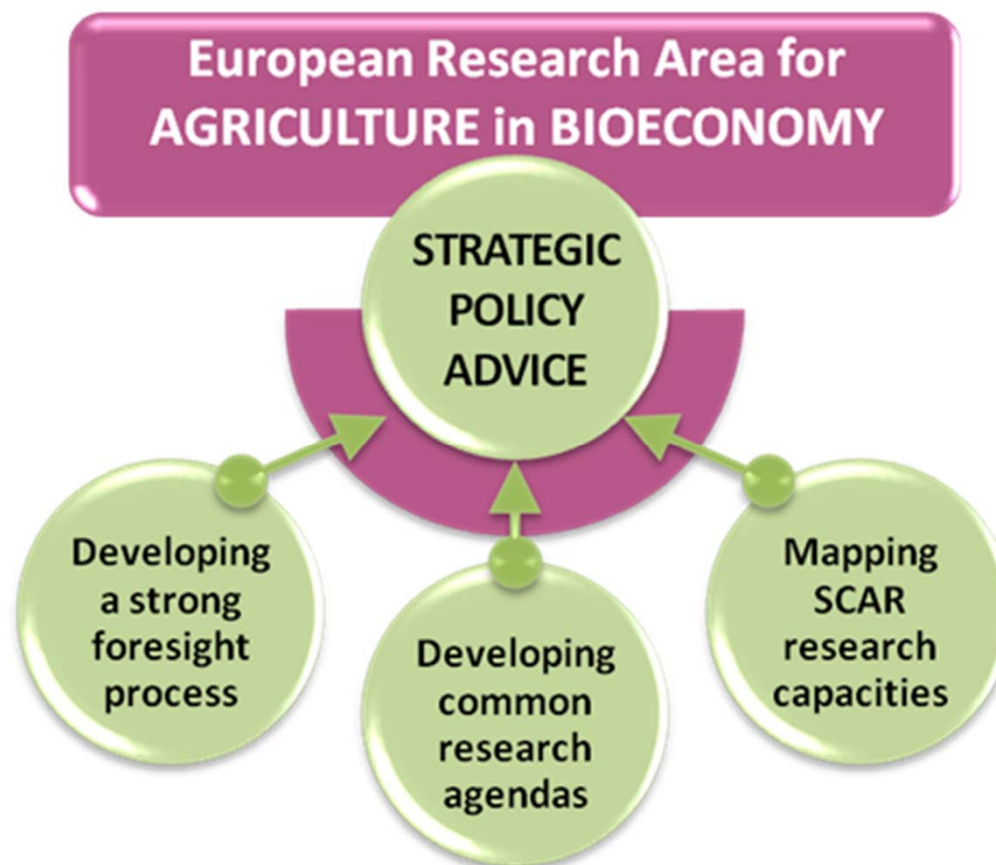
Standing Committee on Agricultural Research

- SCAR est 1974 for the coordination of agricultural research
 - Organising efforts; effective use of results; orientation towards CAP; pooling research facilities
 - A catalyst for the coordination of national research programmes, working towards an integrated *European Research Area*
 - Making provision for exchanges of information and reciprocal consultation on the programmes of agricultural research existing or envisaged in MS
- Re-launch in 2005, requested to advise the EC and Member States on the coordination of agricultural and bioeconomy research in Europe
 - Coupling research and innovation and facilitating public-public and public-private sectors to work together in delivering innovation to tackle bioeconomy challenges
- 2008 renewed mandate: broadening of the agricultural research field
 - 'Farm-to-fork' ; research for sustainable agriculture; non-food uses; KBBE
 - Strengthening the production and sharing of agricultural knowledge in Europe and consolidating joint research programming for better governance of the European agro-food system
 - Multi-actor integration

Standing Committee on Agricultural Research

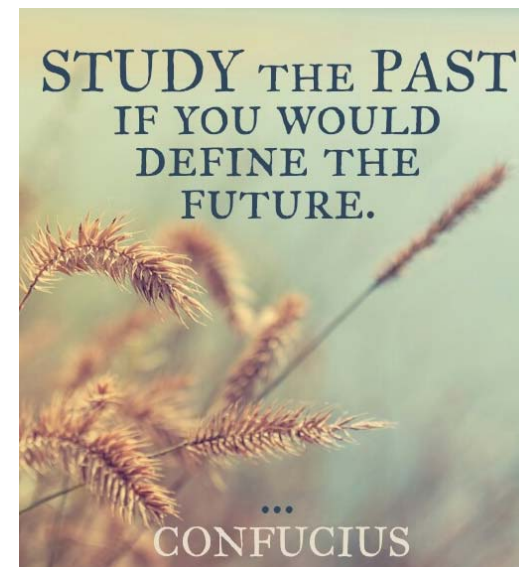
Today:

SCAR represents 37 different countries: members being ministries (or other organisations such as research councils) from all EU Member States, with Candidate and Associated Countries as observers



Task 3.2 and 3.3 - SWOT of the SCAR

- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
- Assessing current structure, organisation, processes and influence of the SCAR to provide an evidence-base for recommendations as to how the SCAR might adapt to improve its functions, impact and activities in the future
- **Purpose:** establishing the state of play 'plus' i.e. touching on next steps that Task 3.4 onwards can take forward for improved SCAR structure and activities
- Connecting and consolidating role across CASA



Task 3.2 Methodology

- The semi-structured interview: renowned social science methodology
- *“A conversation with a purpose”* (Berg, 2009, p101)
- *“Interviews are particularly well suited for studying people’s understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective”* (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p116)
- Key informants
 - Structure of SCAR, geography, mix of actor groups, multiple ‘hats’
 - 13 in total; anonymity guaranteed; diversity by affiliation and country profile
 - Not representative but a range of views



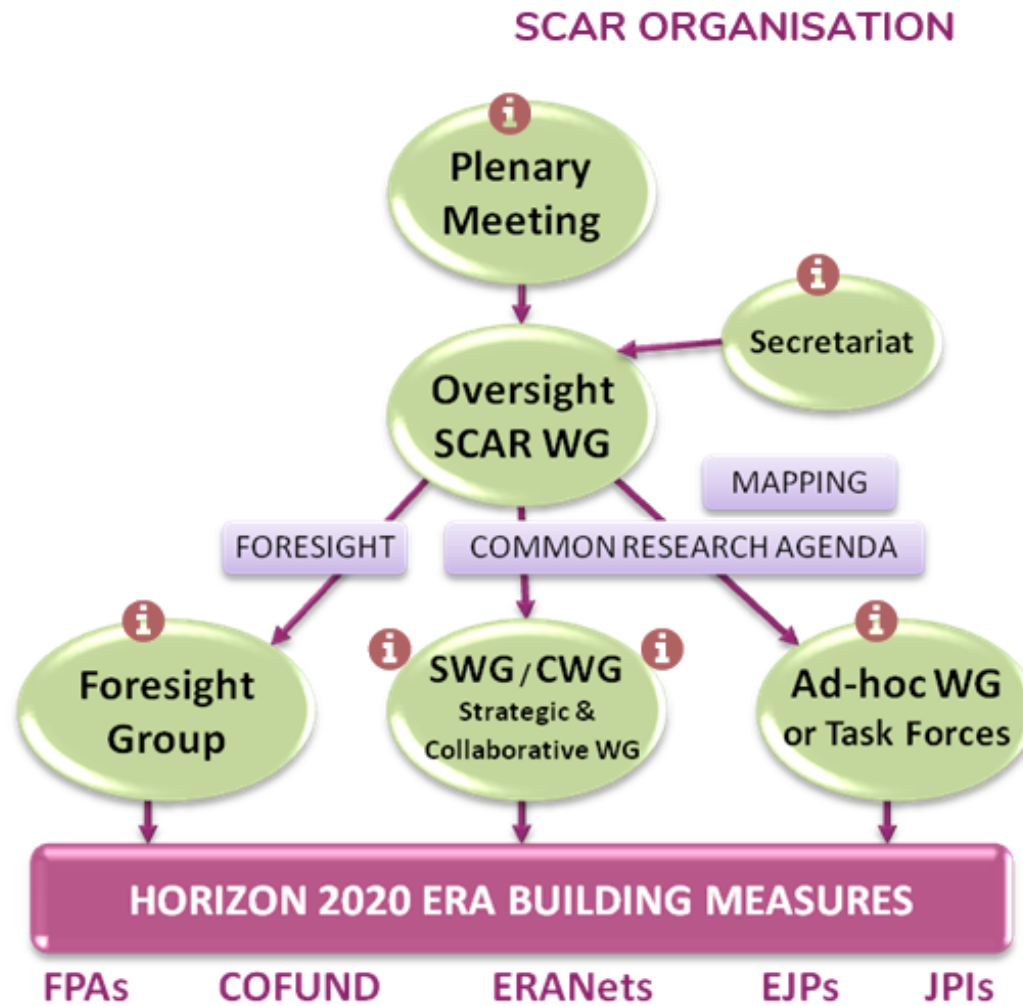
Interviewee Profiles

Primary Affiliations:

- 3 EC Delegates
- 2 SCAR Foresight
- 5 SCAR SG
- 1 (+2) CWG
- 1 (+2) SWG
- 1 (+2) JPI



Interviewee Profiles



DECISIONS

5

IMPLEMENTATION

4

OUTPUTS

1

+5

Interview Objectives

- 4 objectives of interviews:
 1. To improve the overall organisation, communication and dissemination of SCAR activities, outputs and outcomes for greater impact by conducting a SWOT analysis of the current SCAR structure, influence and coordination mechanisms
 2. Investigate the legitimacy, influence, relevance and political impact that arise as a result of the SCAR's internal structures and entities
 3. Acknowledge and horizon scan for threats and opportunities to SCAR in the future
 4. Consider the evolution of SCAR in the evolving agricultural and bioeconomy landscape – what changes to SCAR structure and organisation will be required to meet new demand
- Internal reflection (S, W) and external horizon scanning (O, T)



Preliminary Results....

SWOT of the SCAR

Preliminary SWOT Results

Strengths

1. Connecting force between Members States
2. Research coordination through output activities
3. Dedication of participants
4. Independence of SCAR
5. Evolving & flexible SCAR structure
6. Parent Structure under DG Research
7. Broad scope of SCAR



Weaknesses

1. Lessening impact on R&I policy
2. Inconsistencies in high level political commitment to SCAR
3. Difficulties in coordination: inefficiencies & overlap
4. Lack of visibility & awareness
5. Limited opportunities for new blood: transparency on recruitment
6. Limited ministerial involvement outside of Agriculture & Science
7. Representativeness: country participation

Opportunities

1. Change scope of SCAR: re-focus or extend
2. Global influence opportunities
3. Set clear SCAR mandates re national R&I policy influence
4. More contact with different DGs
5. Increased role of regional scale (sub-national)
6. Increased multi-actor framing: engage new players
7. Opportunities through new research agendas

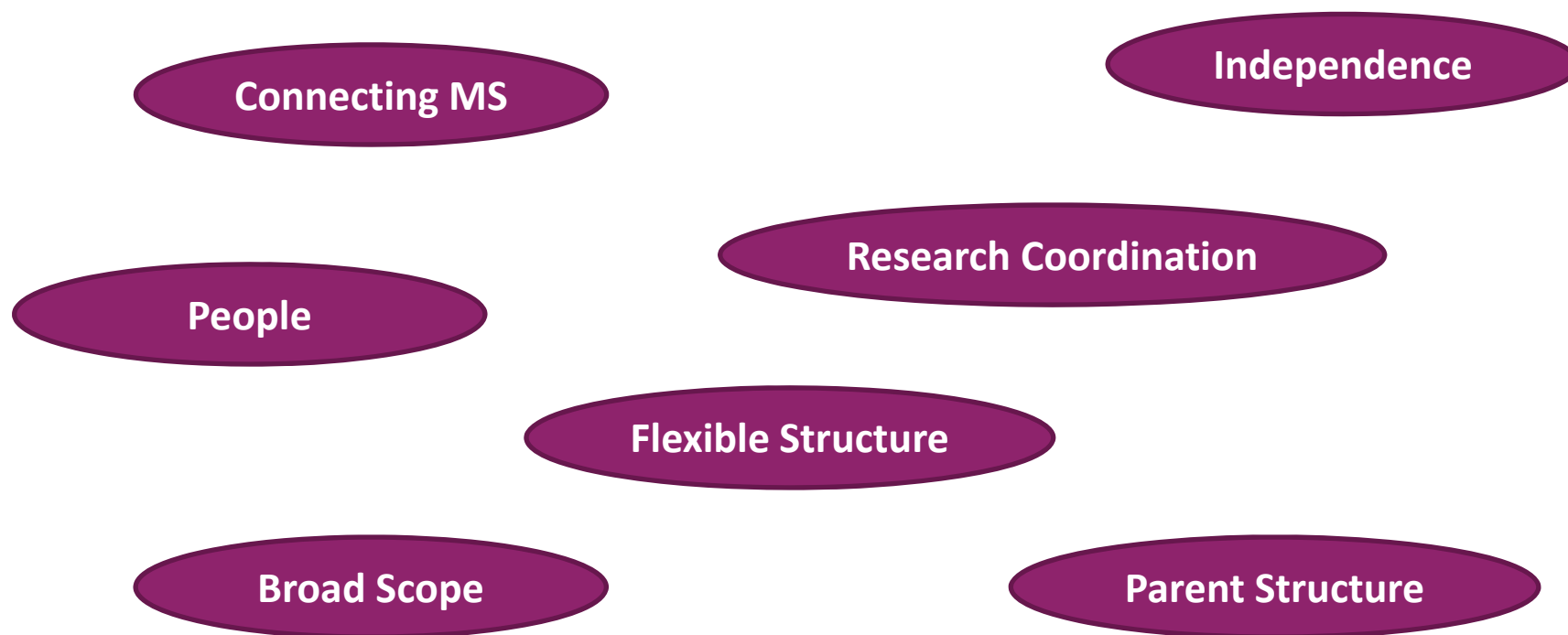


Threats

1. Geopolitical tensions
2. Growing complexity of bioeconomy R&I actors
3. Staff mobility, turnover, cutbacks, retirements & dedication
4. Sustainability of supports after CASA
5. Challenge of multi-disciplinarity
6. Differing definition of bioeconomy
7. Continued differences in research systems across EU

Preliminary Results: Strengths

To be explored in each group....



Preliminary Results: Strengths



- **Connecting force, knowledge exchange, networking and collaboration between Members States**
 - Successfully brings MS together (rare); valuable lessons from one another; knowledge transfer at policy/programme level; Vast information & knowledge
- **Research coordination through output activities (e.g. JPIs, ERA-Nets etc)**
 - For many where SCAR's true impact lies - towards European Research Area
- **Dedication of participants**
 - Committed & enthusiastic individuals (majority); People power; connections
- **Independence of SCAR**
 - Crucial in political landscape to fulfil think-tank duties – not as embedded in EC which gives it freedom

Preliminary Results: Strengths



- **Evolving and flexible SCAR structure**
 - Evolved as such but serves its purpose and considered well organised by many
 - Inner Framework of SCAR thought to work well: sense that structure of SCAR is flexible so can adapt to any new role in the future – ability to add more WGs or remove as needs be
 - Steering Group as the effective ‘engine’ of SCAR
- **Parent Structure under DG Research** (with support from DG Agri)
 - Appropriate to nest under DG Research – dormancy under full ownership of DG Agri but continued support and coordination
- **Broad scope of SCAR**
 - Increasingly wide remit of SCAR – evolving as agriculture evolves

Preliminary Results: Weaknesses

To be explored in each group....

Lessening Impact

Political Commitment

New Blood

Visibility

Representativeness

Ministry Involvement

Structural Inefficiencies

Preliminary Results: Weaknesses



- **Lessening impact on R&I policy and programmes at EU and national levels**
 - Implementation deficit: knowledge exchange needs follow up implementation to action SCAR results across scales
- **Inconsistencies in high level political commitment to SCAR (national & EC)**
 - Lack of politician engagement: governmental hierarchies often not willing to invest in a knowledge exchange, discussion platform like SCAR; lessening resources
- **Difficulties in coordination vertically and horizontally within structure: inefficiencies and overlap**
 - Perceived inefficiencies in Steering Group meetings
 - Duplication & overlap between SWGs, CWGs & ERA-building measures (ERA-Net, JPIs etc.): often the same people; duplicating work programmes; weak cooperation
- **Lack of SCAR visibility and awareness**
 - Limited awareness of SCAR outside of those involved
 - Limited online presence; persisting traditional communications; limited outreach

Preliminary Results: Weaknesses



- **Limited opportunities for new blood with lack of transparency in “recruitment” process**
 - Lack of clarity regarding plenary /SG delegations and selection process for WG experts beyond personal contacts and connections
 - Desire for inclusion of newer generations: for improved outreach & continue breaking language barrier
- **Limited ministerial involvement outside of Agriculture and Science limiting bioeconomy potential**
 - Legacy of DG Agri parental structure resulting in primarily Agricultural representatives attending SG
 - Problematic in holistic bioeconomy (e.g. conservative forestry and marine discussions) and national R&I policy often created by Ministries of Science
- **Representativeness limitations regarding country participation**
 - Frustrations re inclusiveness - issue of ‘high potential’ (low participating) MS

Preliminary Results: Opportunities

To be explored in each group....

Changed Scope

Global Influence

2-way DG Contact

Set Mandates

Regional Role

New Research Agendas

Multi-actor Framing

Preliminary Results: Opportunities



- **Change the scope of the SCAR: to re-focus or extend**
 - Option to re- focus on original SCAR remit (establish ERA) & coordinate agricultural research
 - OR To fully extend, bridging land and sea divide, aligning all biomass resources and production & consumption considerations for European bioeconomy development
- **Global influence opportunities**
 - Potential to influence global bioeconomy agendas (e.g. SDGs) - belief that strong foundation in SCAR and structure to work off – science that is open to the world
 - Potential SCAR role in International Bioeconomy Forum
- **Set clear SCAR mandates regarding national R&I policy influence**
 - Need for measurable targets and deliverables to improve knowledge transfer efficiencies
- **More direct contact with different DGs: two way interactions**
 - Wider opportunities to work with other policies and DGs more closely (fisheries, environment, climate change, circular economy etc.), not just R&I policy to build ERA - beyond Horizon 2020
 - 2 way communications e.g. SCAR representatives out to ministries and DG Mare, DG Env, DG Grow etc attend SCAR meetings and present latest DG thinking, strategies and developments

Preliminary Results: Opportunities



- **Increased role of regional scale in SCAR (sub-national)**
 - Potential for regional representatives in SCAR SG rather than just national
 - Particularly re bioeconomy focus – for regional representatives to then bring back SCAR thinking for regional R&I funding policy and developments (policy & practice)
- **Increased multi-actor framing**
 - Potential to engage new players with increasing influence in research arena – MNCs, NGOs, cities, regions and researchers
 - HOW to engage them in transparent way and how SCAR structure would need to change to accommodate this (if desirable)
 - Opportunity for new fora for engagement and truly open up European science
 - Increased connections with other bioeconomy organisations e.g. BBI
- **Opportunities through new research agendas: Food 2030, FP9 mission-orientations and social value-added research**
 - Changing research landscape and how SCAR (and its structure) might adapt to this

Preliminary Results: Threats

To be explored in each group....

Maintaining Relevance

Geopolitical

Human Capital

Bioeconomy Definition

Sustainability of Supports

Diversity across EU

Multi-disciplinarity

Preliminary Results: Threats



- **Geopolitical tensions**
 - e.g impact of Brexit; threat of other countries follow
- **Growing complexity of bioeconomy R&I actors: maintaining relevance**
 - Danger of SCAR becoming redundant or irrelevant: risk for SCAR to become one of many players in the field vs JPIs etc with research agendas
 - Established in different time -needs to evolve and has done but more required
- **Staff mobility, turnover, cutbacks, retirements and dedication**
 - Vulnerability of human capital reliance for SCAR success – including budget constraints at MS level impacting on core membership of SCAR
 - Reliance on enthusiasm/dedication of chairs and members for WG success
 - Importance of identifying right people internally and externally for greater impact
- **Sustainability of supports induced by CASA**
 - Worry of over reliance on CASA for support of WGs in particular; concern for sustainability when project finishes

Preliminary Results: Threats



- **Challenge of multi-disciplinarity**
 - Challenge of retaining depth of expertise (and quality) vs breadth and broad brush stroke required of multi-disciplinarity to connect the dots and see the bigger picture
 - Challenges too for SCAR members to remain updated of all developments in era of information overload
- **Differing definition of bioeconomy may pull SCAR in different directions**
 - E.g. biotechnology vs bioresource pathways
 - New and different communities of experts, policies and policy frame – needs space for discussion but increasingly complex number of elements involved and alters according to definition chosen
- **Continued differences in research systems and associated supports across the EU**
 - Diversity highlighting a need to invest more to support SCAR participation



Elaborating Results....

Workshop Activities

Workshop Aims

1. Sense-check SWOT results

- Clarify any factual inaccuracies
- Discuss areas of disagreement
- Identify any missing elements
- Eradicated miscommunications

2. SWOT Prioritisation

- Priority Strengths; Principal Weaknesses
- Emergent Opportunities; Fundamental Threats

3. Next steps for SCAR....

Activities/Time Schedule

- Activity 1 – Sense-check SWOT Results
- *15.00-15.30: Coffee break*
- Activity 2 – Ranking Prioritisation & Future
- Activity 3 Group Feedback – table hosts
- Workshop summary/conclusions (c.16.45)
- Tallinn tour..... 😊



Logistics

- Volunteer Table Hosts
 - To keep discussion on point (table prompts available)
 - Ensuring everybody has their say
 - Time-keeping
 - Table Feedback
 - any volunteers??
- Additional commentary:
 - laura.devaney@teagasc.ie
 - maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie



Breakout Activity 1

- ***Breakout Activity 1 – Sense Checking SWOT results (miscommunications, factual inaccuracies, missed opportunities etc.)***

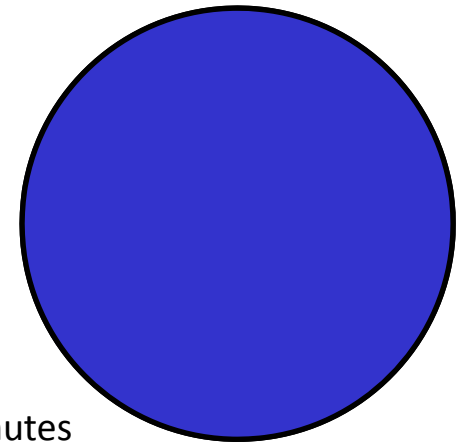
Objectives & Rationale: Confirm preliminary S, W, O and T derived from key informant interviews to ensure agreed by all. This is an important *quality control check* to increase *trustworthiness* of the previous data collection phase and to help to ensure *buy-in* by stakeholders to any ensuing changes to SCAR. Allowing time to discuss areas of disagreement in particular will help to probe and clarify reasons for disagreement if such disagreement exists.

Breakout Activity 1



Activity 1 (45-55 mins) – Sense Check

- 1 A3 poster in middle of table with S, W, O, T
 - 10 mins on each poster
- **Work in pairs** with printed A4 to discuss/sense check each S, W, O, T element listed
- Discuss **agreement** and **disagreement** on each
- As a pair, decide to assign a ✓ (agree), X (disagree) or ? (unsure) depending on level of agreement with element.
 - Use a post-it to elaborate areas of disagreement
- Put this ✓ / X / ? and post-it **on the A3** poster
- Any other S, W, O, T you would like to add?
 - Add it with a post-it



10 minutes

Breakout Activity 2

- ***Breakout Activity 2 - Next steps, what a (more!) successful SCAR would look like and how we will get there?***
 - ***Activity 2a (20mins) - Ranking Prioritisation***
 - ***Activity 2b (10mins) - Postcard of Future***

Objectives & Rationale: Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is step 1 of any SWOT exercise. The next steps requires prioritisation of these and developing a vision for the future

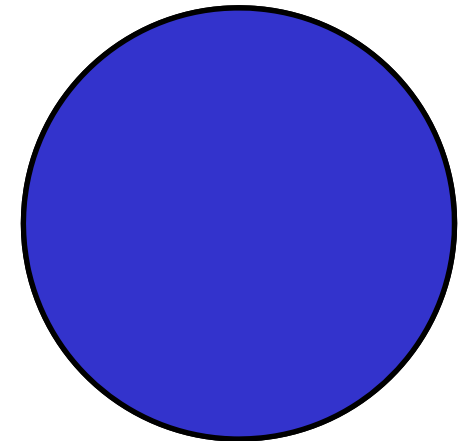
Activity 2a: Priority Ranking



Priority Ranking Activity (20 mins)

- Each table assigned one quadrant (i.e. S W O or T)
- Each element from each quadrant separately laminated (i.e. if there are 7 strengths there are 7 laminated elements for the table dealing with strengths)
- ❖ **Quantitative Ranking:** asking for **group consensus** as to **relative importance** of each element in relation to one another (e.g. strongest & most important strength, most prominent and important weakness to consider, probability and importance of opportunities & threats etc.)
- ❖ **Group Discussion** e.g. this is a key strength of SCAR, is it important that SCAR is good at this? Importance and probability of opportunity/threat occurrence?
 - ❖ Discussion around prioritisation to allow table host to feed back ranking agreed by table and key sentiments behind it (top 2 elements, rationale for bottom 2)

20 minutes

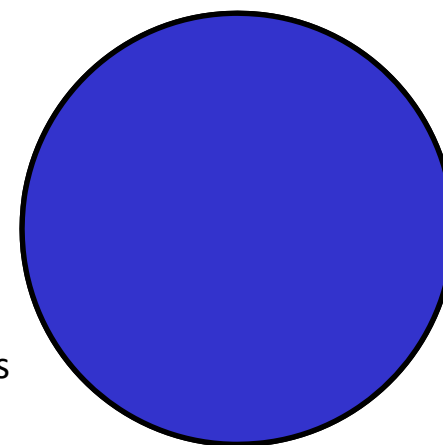


Breakout Activity 2b: Postcard from the Future

What does a (more!) successful SCAR look like?
(10mins)



- Writing to SCAR in 10 years....
 1. What would you congratulate SCAR on? What changes have occurred?
 2. What was a crucial step in achieving this change?
 3. What is the measure of success?
- Sign off from your country



10 minutes

Activity 3: Group Feedback and Discussion

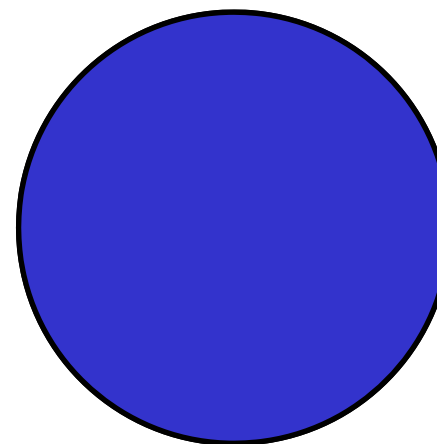
Feedback from Group Discussions (c.30 mins)

- Table host to explain results of priority ranking exercise
 - c. 4-5 mins per table host
 - Host to explain the top 2 elements of relevance to the group
 - Equally, outline the rationale behind the bottom 1-2 elements that were deemed of least importance
- Workshop Conclusion (16.45)

Priority Feedback: Top 2, Bottom 2



4 minutes



THANK YOU

Any Additional Commentary:

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