

MINUTES

Present - CECAN Advisory Board

Elliot Stern, *Emeritus Professor of Evaluation Research, Lancaster University (Chairman of the Board)*

Jamie Saunders, *Strategy and Engagement Officer, City of Bradford District Council*

Phil Garnett *Operations Management and Business Analytics Lecturer, University of York*

Present - CECAN Team

Nigel Gilbert, *Professor of Sociology, University of Surrey (CECAN Director)*

Ben Shaw, *Deputy Director of CECAN, University of Surrey*

Helen Wilkinson, *Director of Risk Solutions*

Lisa Fletcher, *CECAN Centre Manager, University of Surrey (Secretary)*

Apologies were received from Siobhan Campbell, Rebekah Eden, Philp Garnett, Penny Hawkins, Liam Kelly, Jim Watson and Sarah Whatmore Julian Barr, Dave Stone, James Wilsdon and Philip Bradburn.

1. Welcome, matters arising from previous meeting 14th March 2019

Nigel Gilbert (NG) has received some suggestions from the Board for future CECAN webinars.

ACTION: James Wilsdon offered to share with NG some examples of other universities that have been more successful with commercialisation in the social sciences.

ACTION: Advisory Board members agreed to provide further reflections on the Systems Mapping activity to Alex Penn after the meeting.

Tim Chadburn will become the new President of the the UKES Evaluation Society. Nigel has invited Julian Barr to continue as a CECAN advisory Board member.

CECAN are currently working with the UKES to develop a training programme. Several 1 day method masterclasses are planned for 2020, which the UKES will promote and administer and also pay CECAN Ltd for CECAN staff time.

Helen Wilkinson confirmed that the [Magenta Book](#) Annex is currently being finalised **ACTION: Helen** will check whether the draft Annex can be circulated before its official publication in January 2019.

CECAN are planning a suite of engagement events to promote the Annex and complexity appropriate evaluation methods across government.

CECAN Advisory Board members noted the links and potential updates required to other Central Evaluation Guidance including the [Green Book Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation](#) and [MRC Framework for the Development and Evaluation of RCTs for Complex Interventions to Improve Health](#)

A subgroup of the International CECAN Participatory System Mapping Project have submitted a major bid to the US Templeton Foundation

Nigel explained that CECAN Ltd is the commercial arm of CECAN. The University of Surrey own 20% (minority shareholder), and has agreed a licence agreement for Intellectual Property that the University owns. CECAN Ltd pays for CECAN staff time to work on CECAN Ltd contracts. This funding is then used to extend CECAN staff contracts beyond the current ESRC funding (August 2020) .

Nigel reported that CECAN are currently considering whether or not to bid for a UK [Prevention Research Partnership project focusing on the links between air quality and cognitive health](#)

2. Update on CECAN Activities

Details are summarised in the [CECAN Activities Report March - October 2019](#), additional points to note include:

- CECAN are considering hosting a workshop on the Management of Complex Systems in 2020,
- Dr Alex Penn and Dr Pete Barbrook Johnson have also published [a step by step guide to Participatory Systems Mapping](#)
- CECAN are being more selective in responding to requests to undertake unpaid research and are restricting their activity to novel work or work that could lead to future funding.
- The CECAN Special Issue in the *Evaluation* journal will reflect an overall theme, contain several papers and will be submitted for publication by the end of December 2019.
- The *Evaluation* journal also has North American subscribers. **ACTION:** Elliott will provide details to CECAN .
- Jamie Saunders also suggested that CECAN should consider engaging with Non Academic and Trade publications. **ACTION:** Jamie will advise on appropriate publications for CECAN promotion.
- **ACTION:** CECAN will circulate a copy of the EPPN *What does complexity mean for nexus policy design, implementation and evaluation* (based on the early chapters of the Magenta Book Annex) to Advisory Board Members in due course.
- **ACTION:** Nigel will ask Brian Castellani (CECAN Team member, Professor of Sociology Durham) to explore potential links with the Kennedy School of Adaptive Management and World Bank.
- Liz Varga has taken up a new role at University College London as Professor of Complex Systems
- In January 2020 Professor Sue Hartley will move from the University of York to the University of Sheffield to become Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research. Sue and Adam Hejonwicz will continue as a member of the CECAN Team.
- Nigel explained that CECAN are struggling to find routes into Local Government. **ACTION:** Jamie will advise on appropriate routes to engage with Local Government.
- Nigel reported that he had been awarded £0.5 million from NERC for a 3year **ANTICIPATE** project. (*Actively anticipating the unintended consequences on air quality of future public policies*) . It will bring together policy analysts and policy makers from UK central government, local and regional government organisation business and civil society organisations, academics and researchers to review forthcoming policy initiatives for their consequences (intended or unintended, positive or negative) on air quality.
- Jamie observed that there were lots of consultants working to help local government to achieve air quality standards. but few are considering the impact of climate change or alternatives and should follow the examples of others in adhering to a sustainability charter.
- Jamie and Elliot suggested a potential CECAN workshop/EPPN to investigate the relationship between Evaluation and Policy. Evaluator and commissioners need to look

outside of the box and recognise the open systems. **ACTION: Nigel and Ben** will give this suggestion further consideration.

- Nigel reported that he had also been awarded a £750K from ESRC for an 18 months' project, LIPSIT (Local Institutions, Productivity, Sustainability and Inclusivity Trade-offs). The aim of the project is to identify institutional and organisational arrangements at regional level that lead to the 'good' management of policy trade-offs associated with increasing productivity, and to make recommendations based on this. **ACTION: Lisa** will ask Demos to invite Jamie to the Leeds Stakeholder workshop in 2020.

3. The Complexity Evaluation Framework (CEF)

Helen Wilkinson explained the role of CECAN Ltd role in helping Defra to develop a [Complexity Evaluation Framework](#) that provided Defra commissioners of evaluation with a [checklist of core considerations](#) to ensure that policy evaluations sufficiently considered the implications of complexity theory.

Defra was seeking to ensure that evaluations adequately account for uncertain contexts, behaviours, intersectionalities and adaptations which may affect implementation of policies across its remit (which includes the environment, food, farming, fishing and rural affairs).

The Complexity Evaluation Framework provides a toolkit for evaluation commissioners to deliver insights. This will lead to evaluations that both demonstrate the impact and value for money of new policies and also enable rapid feedback to allow for adaptive implementation of policy in changing and uncertain contexts.

The CEF will now be launched in January 2020 (currently subject to Purdah) and CECAN Ltd will also be submitting a bid to Defra for a contract to evaluate the CEF.

Jamie applauded the compact visual output and was keen to involve the Local Government Association (LGA) in the CEF. **ACTION: Jamie** will give some thought as to how best to involve the LGA in CEF.

4. Complexity Evaluation in the Third Sector

Ben Shaw is undertaking work for the Lankelly Chase to understand existing practices in the sector and challenges around complexity for evaluation and funding practice. An overview the finding of rapid literature and interviews with those working in the field and next steps can be found in his [presentation](#).

[Toby Lowe's recent CECAN webinar](#) also emphasised the importance of understanding human **variety**, using **empathy** to understand the lives of others, recognising people's **strengths**, and **trusting** those who do the work. Variety, Empathy, Strengths and Trust (VEST).

Jamie suggested some useful contacts including, Cassie Robinson, Honorary Research Fellow at UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP), James Goodman, Director Local Partnerships Trust, Cormack Russell (Managing Director of Nurture Development, Director of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Europe and the Institute at Northwestern University, Chicago).

5. Making more of an Impact

Nigel explained it was difficult to assess CECAN 2 impacts, as our evidence base is low and difficult to attribute solely to impact.

Elliot Stern suggested that CECAN 2 should focus on:-

- ★ Developing methods in more complex areas e.g. mental health
- ★ Articulating the value CECAN has added
- ★ Mapping out current and future alliances

Other suggestions for CECAN from Board Members include: -

- ★ Explaining what could have happened without CECAN involvement
- ★ Articulating what difference has CECAN made to real world thinking eg. defra & BEIS System mapping
- ★ Developing a CECAN playbook akin to [NESTAs playbook book for innovation learning](#)

- ★ Applying System mapping or CEF to the New Environment Bill.
- ★ Articulate the modus operandi of CECAN Ltd
- ★ Focus on Knowledge mobilisation.

6. AOB and date of next meeting

Given the low turnout of Advisory Board members at this and recent meetings, **ACTION: CECAN** will give some thought to the format of future Advisory Board meetings.