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Dear Bruce

PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY OF COMMON FRAMEWORKS

I am writing to provide a further update following [my letter on the parliamentary scrutiny of common frameworks of 11 November 2020](#) and [my letter on common frameworks delivery of 8 February 2021](#).

An agreed process for parliamentary engagement

As mentioned in my letter of 8 February 2021, discussions between Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government officials on an agreed approach to the scrutiny of common frameworks have been ongoing. The basis for these discussions has been the process set out in my letter of 11 November 2020. I am pleased to confirm that officials have agreed a process at officials-level, which is set out in a guidance note. The guidance is attached in Annex 1. The Scottish Government considers this guidance note to be a living document and recognises that it may have to be revisited following the Scottish Parliament election later this year.

The agreed process emphasises the need for a flexible approach to formal scrutiny, reflecting the differences between frameworks, the relevant committee's work programme and whether relevant UK and Scottish primary and secondary legislation has already been scrutinised. Concerns raised by the Scottish Parliament regarding a 28-day period as a suggested timeframe for consideration of provisional frameworks, which had been referred to in previous correspondence from the Scottish Government to some committees, have been taken on board. The agreed process, hence, reflects a more bespoke and considered approach in relation to the length of time that formal parliamentary scrutiny may take.

The process also includes a commitment from the Scottish Government to provide a written initial response to the feedback received from committees following formal scrutiny of a framework.

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This initial response will be issued within two months of receiving the relevant committee's comments. In addition, a final response to the committee's feedback, along with the finalised full framework, will be sent to the committee once the framework has been agreed by all four administrations and JMC (EN) Ministerial approval has been achieved.

Parliamentary scrutiny and further development of frameworks

As outlined in my letter of 8 February 2021, the Scottish Government anticipates that the majority of provisional frameworks will be scrutinised by Scottish Parliament committees from September 2021 onwards. This reflects the requirement for further development of some provisional frameworks, and the need for all four governments to agree that provisional frameworks are sufficiently developed before scrutiny by legislatures can commence. It also reflects the limited time left before the pre-election period commences and that committees' capacity to undertake detailed scrutiny of any frameworks within their remit may be significantly constrained before the pre-election period. We also recognise that there will be a substantial period of time during the pre- and post-election periods, during which committees will not be sitting and frameworks will not be scrutinised.

Summaries of a large majority of provisional frameworks have now been shared with the relevant scrutiny committees. As the discussions between Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament officials were ongoing at the time, some information, which the new guidance mentions should be included in the summary documents, will not have been included. Policy leads are working with clerks to ensure that any such information is provided. This, for example, may include information on stakeholder engagement.

As set out in the attached guidance, it is vital that lead Scottish Government officials engage directly with the clerks of lead scrutiny committees to discuss the timeline for scrutiny of individual frameworks. This will also allow clerks to raise any questions and concerns that they may have. I understand that such engagement is already taken place in relation to a number of individual frameworks.

I again want to reassure all committees that provisional frameworks will not be finalised as full frameworks until the necessary further development has taken place and until all four legislatures have had the opportunity to fully scrutinise each framework.

Next steps and further discussions

As outlined above, the attached guidance has been agreed at officials-level by Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government officials. It is due to be shared with Scottish Government policy leads, who are working on individual frameworks.

Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government officials remain in regular contact regarding the common frameworks delivery and scrutiny process. As part of this engagement, further discussions will focus on a process to ensure that future amendments and revisions to frameworks can be appropriately scrutinised and on the process for post-implementation scrutiny, monitoring and reporting. It is our intention to provide guidance on this in due course.

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My officials will also work together with Scottish Parliament officials to ensure that, following the election, relevant subject committees receive the introduction and information on common frameworks that they need in order to effectively scrutinise the frameworks within their committee's remit.

I hope that this letter and guidance is useful and reflects your expectations regarding the outcome of the discussions, which have been taking place between Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government officials over the last few months. I look forward to receiving your confirmation that you and your colleagues are content with the terms of the new process set out in the attached guidance.

I am copying this letter to Edward Mountain MSP, Gillian Martin MSP, James Dornan MSP, Lewis Macdonald MSP and Gordon Lindhurst MSP.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL RUSSELL

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Annex 1: Process for scrutiny of UK Common Frameworks by the Scottish Parliament

The purpose of this process document is to inform Scottish Government (SG) policy leads and Scottish Parliament (SP) officials about the parliamentary scrutiny process for common frameworks. This guidance note has been agreed by SG and SP officials.

SG officials should be aware of previously published documents on UK Common Frameworks and briefings provided to committees, some of which are set out in Annex B.

Planning parliamentary scrutiny

Throughout the scrutiny process, the UK and devolved administrations share the same information, and at around the same time (as much as possible), with their respective legislatures. However, provisional frameworks may be shared with and scrutinised by legislatures at different times, for example due to the impact of the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru elections. The central frameworks teams in the four administrations and relevant policy leads will work together to ensure a coordinated approach, where possible.

When planning and discussing parliamentary scrutiny of individual frameworks, it is important to keep the **SP's recess dates** in mind: these can be found on the Parliament's website at <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/recess-dates.aspx>.

Planning parliamentary scrutiny across the four administrations also needs to consider the impact of the **SP elections** and the Senedd Cymru elections in May 2021. We anticipate the Scottish Parliament's pre-election period to begin on 25 March 2021 and **we, therefore, expect that parliamentary scrutiny will not be possible between March 2021 and September 2021** (after the summer recess which typically takes place over July and August).

Policy leads should engage with the central Frameworks Team, SG's Parliament and Legislation Unit (PLU) and Scottish Government Legal Directorate (SGLD) on relevant issues and ensure that they are kept updated on relevant developments and are included in communication to committees as appropriate.

Summary of parliamentary scrutiny process

The process for parliamentary scrutiny is set out below, with the actions required by the policy leads responsible for each framework highlighted in bold. A summary illustration of this process is available in Annex A.

1. During detailed framework policy development (Phase 2)

Following the initial phase of policy development (phase 1), policy leads responsible for the relevant framework will **prepare a summary of the framework**, to be jointly written by all four administrations. This document will be used to inform stakeholder

engagement and to allow the planning of scrutiny by the UK and devolved legislatures.

2. During further policy development and stakeholder engagement (Phase 3)

This section covers the ‘pre-scrutiny’ phase and should be used by Government officials and SP committee clerks to inform discussions about committees’ approaches to scrutiny at phase 4.

Around the same time as technical engagement with stakeholders is commenced, policy leads should engage with the relevant SP committee clerks. The expected lead committees have been identified for all frameworks – the **list of lead committees by frameworks is included in Annex C**. This list is based on matching frameworks with the committee, which scrutinises the responsible minister’s remit during Session 5.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to share **summaries of provisional frameworks on a private basis with the respective SP committee(s)** for their information. **A template letter from the portfolio Minister along with a template summary cover page are provided in Annex D**. As part of the summary cover page, **policy leads should also highlight any relevant UK and Scottish primary and/or secondary legislation that are linked to or underpin the relevant framework**. The technical stakeholder summary, or a revised/updated version of it, should be attached when the letter from the portfolio Minister and the completed summary cover page are sent to the relevant SP committee(s). This information should be provided alongside an offer of a technical briefing to the clerk and relevant SP officials or the relevant committee(s) directly, depending on their preference, by the policy leads to answer any questions Committee Members/clerks and SP officials might have at this stage.

This will help inform preparation for future parliamentary scrutiny when the policy content of the agreement is more comprehensively developed. The letters, cover pages and summaries are not to be published or shared widely, as the content is likely to change. The principal purpose is to enable committees to consider their approach to scrutiny of the proposed framework rather than start the actual scrutiny process.

When policy leads send their submission and the draft letter to the relevant Minister, **they should also include the central Frameworks Team, PLU and the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans**.

When sending the summary of the provisional framework, the cover page and Ministerial letter to committee(s), **policy leads should copy in the central Frameworks Team, PLU and SGLD contacts and Emma Johnston**, Brexit Co-ordinator at the SP (Emma.Johnston@parliament.scot).

Once the summary has been shared, the policy leads responsible for the framework will also **consult with the respective committee clerks to discuss anticipated timings** for the scrutiny process at phase 4. It is important that committees have sufficient time to conduct their scrutiny and that the delivery timeline for the framework is met. Clerks should be able to discuss the committee’s future work programme and anticipated timescales to scrutinise the framework. In order to

inform this discussion, clerks will be interested in having information about any stakeholder engagement already underway, any planned stakeholder engagement and whether there are any factors, which the SG considers will require the framework to be agreed at phase 4 by a certain date. Recess times, as noted above, should be considered when discussing scrutiny timings. It is important to note that timings might vary significantly between different frameworks and may depend on the nature of the framework, the relevant committee’s work programme and whether relevant UK and Scottish primary and secondary legislation has already been scrutinised. **Policy leads should highlight these matters to committee clerks.** These discussions should also cover any potential impact of the Scottish Parliament election on the scrutiny process of individual frameworks.

Clerks will then indicate what approach the Committee may wish to take to the scrutiny of the framework, including whether it is likely that it will wish to take evidence from portfolio Ministers, officials or stakeholders. **Policy leads and the relevant clerk should agree a provisional deadline** for a committee’s response to be received by portfolio Ministers. It should be noted that this provisional timescale for committee scrutiny may change, especially for those frameworks, which have not been consulted on yet or for which scrutiny will likely take place after the election.

Policy leads should also have a conversation with the committee clerks regarding other committees which may have an interest in the particular framework.

When within the delivery timeline:	End of detailed framework policy development.
What policy leads will share:	Summary outline of the framework to be shared with relevant SP committee(s) by the policy leads responsible for the framework.
Purpose of sharing:	To provide each committee with more information on the content of each framework policy area. This enables committees to assess the degree of scrutiny that each framework might receive and discuss a provisional timeline for scrutiny with the policy leads responsible for the framework.

3. During preparation and implementation of the framework (Phase 4)

This section covers the scrutiny phase undertaken by parliamentary committees.

After a provisional framework has received sign-off from the Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations) (JMC(EN)) and a provisional framework is deemed ready for formal scrutiny, the policy leads responsible for the framework in each of the administrations will **send the provisional framework to their**

legislatures, together with any related implementation products such as any concordat associated with the framework.

This should be done by a letter from the relevant portfolio Minister to the Convener of the relevant committee(s) that includes a cover page and with the provisional framework (the Framework Outline Agreement) and, where relevant, the Concordat attached as annexes. Templates for this are included in Annex E.

When sending the provisional framework, cover page and Ministerial letter to the committee(s), **policy leads should copy in the central Frameworks Team, PLU and SGLD contacts and Emma Johnston**, Brexit Co-ordinator at the SP (Emma.Johnston@parliament.scot).

Where there has been significant further work between the summary being sent to the Parliament and the provisional framework being agreed and finalised for formal scrutiny – for example, as stakeholder engagement has been concluded – the cover page of the framework should provide a reasonable level of detail about further work, such as which stakeholders were engaged and key issues which arose as part of the consultation.

Once the provisional framework is ready to be sent to the committee(s) for formal scrutiny, **policy leads and clerks should discuss whether the provisional scrutiny approach and timescale that were discussed previously during the initial engagement (phase 3) remains achievable and, if not, discuss a revised approach.**

Provisional frameworks can be shared with the Parliament over the pre-election recess and period up to the establishment of committees, but scrutiny cannot commence until committee business commences. **If a provisional framework is shared with the relevant committee(s) during this time period, and any information on the cover page is no longer up-to-date or the committee(s) should be aware of further information, such as recommendations made by other legislatures, by the time the approach to scrutiny is being agreed, policy leads should send an updated cover page to the committee(s).** Committees should also be made aware of subsequent developments before formal scrutiny commences and as the framework undergoes formal scrutiny. SG policy officials and SP clerks should stay in touch as committees begin forming after the election to confirm when formal scrutiny of an individual framework might begin.

Following committee scrutiny, the committee will set out its views on the provisional framework in either a letter to the Minister or a report, highlighting any issues, concerns or recommendations it might have.

Please ensure that the central Frameworks Team is sent a copy of all committee correspondence or reports in relation to their scrutiny.

Once the scrutiny process for a particular framework is completed in all four legislatures, portfolio Ministers and officials from each administration will **consider the response from their legislature and decide whether any adjustments should be taken forward.**

Any changes to a provisional framework would need to be jointly agreed by each administration. If any administration decides to adopt any committee recommendations and, therefore, changes its position on any aspect of a framework,

it will need to **represent its revised view to the other administrations' respective portfolio Ministers**.

The relevant policy team will then **revise the provisional framework** to take account of any jointly agreed adjustments.

UK Government and devolved administration portfolio Ministers will then review and approve the revised framework agreement, which will then be referred back to JMC(EN) for endorsement and approval for implementation.

In the meantime, and in accordance with [the agreed protocol between SG and SP](#), **SG will send an initial response to the relevant committee within two months of receiving the committee's feedback**. Officials have agreed the two-month response period applies regardless of whether the committee provides its views via a letter or parliamentary report. This response will address the issues, concerns and recommendations made by the committee, setting out, where possible, the Scottish Government's approach to address these and the reasons for this approach. Policy leads may want to exercise some flexibility around this point where discussions between the four administrations progress within the two-month period to ensure committees are kept updated.

UK Government and devolved administration portfolio Ministers will then **provide their respective legislatures with a final version of the framework agreement together with a written response** to the committee's views, which will detail the outcome of the joint revision process and how recommendations and comments from the committee(s) were addressed.

When within the delivery timeline:	Following JMC(EN) approval of provisional framework
What will be shared:	The provisional framework to be shared with relevant SP committee(s) by the relevant policy leads. This will take the form of a letter from the relevant portfolio Minister, with a cover page attached and the Framework Outline Agreement and Concordat included as annexes.
Purpose of sharing:	This will allow for formal committee scrutiny to begin.

4. Subsequent framework updates

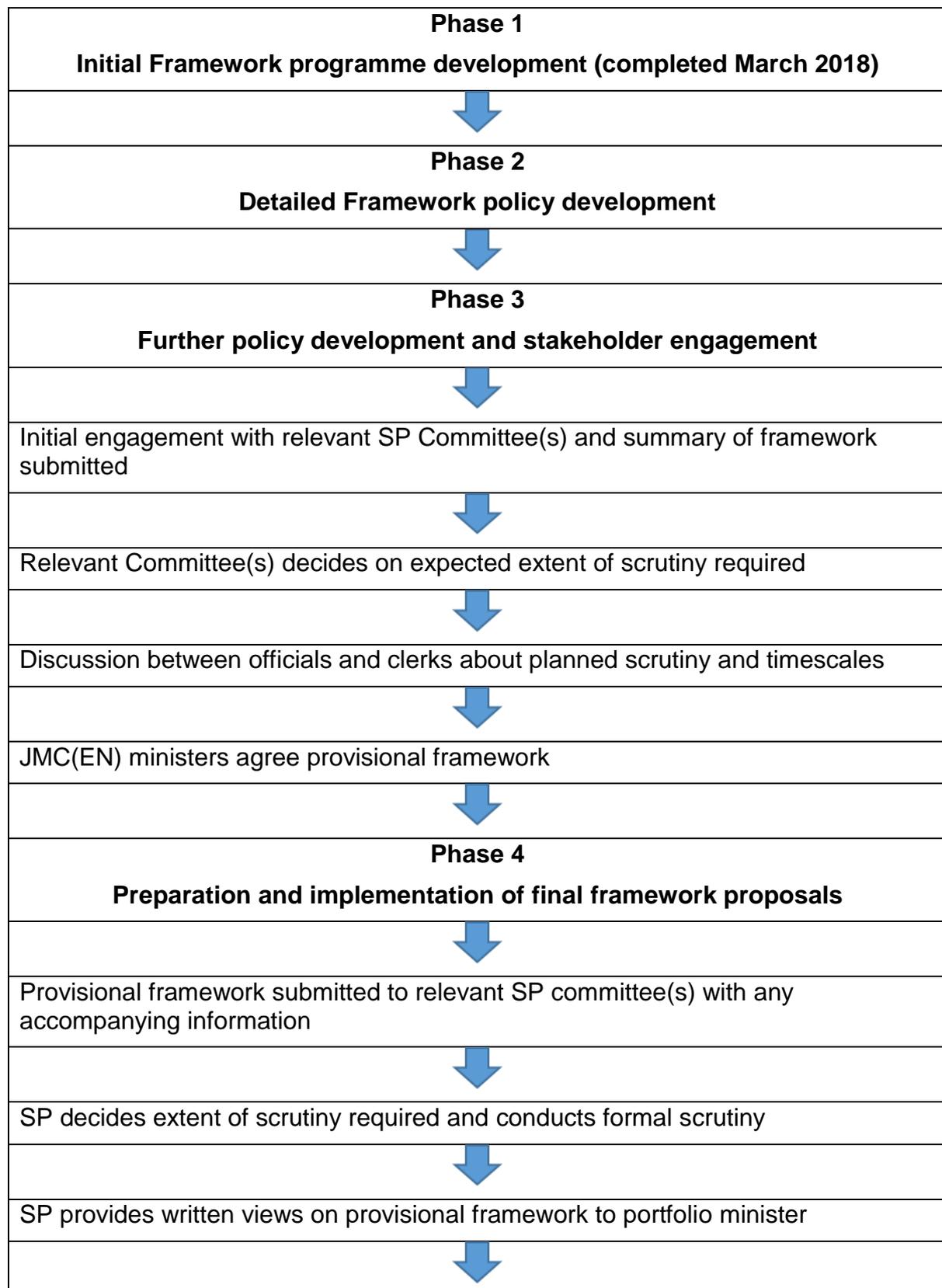
There may be some instances where further concordats which have not been finalised by the time the framework outline agreement is sent to legislatures will be shared with committees at a later date. Policy leads should keep committee clerks updated on progress to ensure these can be considered by committees as timeously

as possible. We expect this is to be the exception and concordats should generally be sent alongside the framework outline agreement.

5. Future amendments and revisions to frameworks

A process where future amendments and revisions to frameworks can be appropriately scrutinised is currently under consideration and the intention is to provide guidance on this in due course.

Annex A: SP parliamentary scrutiny process flowchart - mapped against phases of framework development



UK Government and devolved administrations consider views received from all four legislatures

SG to provide an initial response to the SP committee's feedback within two months of receiving SP's views



Portfolio Ministers agree response to respective legislatures



Final Framework endorsed by JMC(EN) ministers

Final Framework is shared with legislatures and a detailed response to the legislature's feedback is provided



Phase 5

Implementation (and post-implementation review)

Annex B: Previously published documents on UK Common Frameworks and briefings provided to committees as at 16 February 2021

SG officials should be aware of the following previously published documents on UK Common Frameworks and briefings provided to SP committees:

- [Quarterly Reports](#) (most recent was the 9th report published December 2020, covering the period 26 June to 25 September 2020)
- [Initial Frameworks Analysis \(March 2018\)](#), [Revised Frameworks Analysis \(April 2019\)](#) and the [Second Revised Frameworks Analysis \(September 2020\)](#)
- [Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs to the Finance and Constitution Committee](#) on SG's response to the UKG's Internal Market White Paper (11 August 2020), which included an update on frameworks
- The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs sent [an update on the frameworks delivery process, which included an updated list of full and provisional frameworks, to the Finance and Constitution Committee on 23 November 2020](#).
- The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform responded to [a letter from the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee](#), answering questions about common frameworks and the delivery and parliamentary scrutiny processes, on 3 December 2020.
- The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs sent a [further update on the frameworks delivery process to the Finance and Constitution Committee on 8 February 2021](#).

Please note that the list will likely be outdated within a short period of time after 16 February 2021. SG policy officials should contact the central Frameworks Team if they require an update on the most recent published documents and briefings provided to SP.

Annex C: Framework areas and lead scrutiny committee

Below is the list of framework areas by lead scrutiny committee. This list is based on matching frameworks with the committee, which scrutinises the responsible minister's remit during Session 5.

Please note that the remit of committees may change after the election, the lead scrutiny committee for each framework area may, therefore, not be the same in Session 6 as during Session 5.

Framework area	(Expected) Lead Committee (based on Session 5 Committee remits)
Nutrition labelling, Composition and Standards	Health and Sport Committee
Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene	Health and Sport Committee
Food labelling and composition standards	Health and Sport Committee
Health protection and health security (previously referred to as 'public health (serious cross-border threats to health)')	Health and Sport Committee
Blood safety and quality	Health and Sport Committee
Organs, tissues and cells safety and quality (previously referred to as 'Organs, tissues and cells')	Health and Sport Committee
Hazardous Substances Planning	Local Government and Communities Committee
Agricultural support	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Animal health and welfare	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Zootechnics	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Plant health	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Plant varieties and seeds	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Fisheries management support**	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Fertiliser regulations	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Organic farming	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee
Chemicals and pesticides	Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee and Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Emissions Trading Scheme	Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

Radioactive Substances	Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Resources and waste	Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Ozone-depleting substances and F-gases	Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Air quality	Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Industrial emissions – Best Available Techniques	Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Public Procurement	Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee
Late payment (commercial transactions)	Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee
Services Directive	Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee
Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications	Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee

***The Fisheries framework is in three parts, including a short administrative arrangement building on existing working arrangements (e.g. the UK Fisheries Monitoring Centre agreement) and a provisional approach. The main part of the framework to ensure delivery of international obligations and joint management of a common resource is the Joint Fisheries Statement and further detailed in Fisheries Management Plans, as set out in the UK Fisheries Act. This has a statutory consultation and legislative scrutiny process as set out in Schedule 1 of the Act. Relevant officials will continue to work with the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee to ensure they are aware of the timetable and any possible changes.*

Annex D: Phase 3 initial engagement: Template letter from portfolio Minister and summary cover page to use during initial engagement with SP committees

Policy leads should share drafts of their Ministerial letter and cover page with the central Frameworks Team for review before these are sent to the relevant Minister's Private Office for sign-off and ensure that contacts in PLU and SGLD are copied into this, where relevant.

Ministerial letter to share framework summary with relevant SP committee(s)

Committee Convener

Address

Date

[Personal salutation will be added by Minister],

I am writing to share a summary of **X framework** with you.

My officials, together with their counterparts in the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive have been working jointly to develop **X framework**. I am sharing a summary of this framework for your Committee to review, to assist with Committee preparations for parliamentary scrutiny of the provisional framework. The provisional framework is due to be shared with your committee **in X/the coming weeks/months**. In the meantime my officials will contact your Committee Clerks to discuss possible timing for and the likely length of the scrutiny process and any other matters.

Please find attached summary prepared by my officials. I understand my counterparts across the other three administrations will be taking similar steps to engage with their respective legislatures. These summaries are not to be published or shared widely, as the content is likely to change. The principal purpose is to allow **the X Committee** to prepare for scrutiny rather than start the actual scrutiny process.

I am copying this letter, and all attachments to **[Conveners of any other relevant subject Committees and to]** Bruce Crawford MSP, Convener of the Finance and Constitution Committee due to the Committee's interest in the overall UK Common Framework programme.

Portfolio Minister

Summary cover page template:

The technical engagement summary (or an updated version of this) may be useful as a basis for this and should be attached as an annex.

1. Framework ownership

- Framework name
- Responsible portfolio Minister
- Framework lead policy team (incl. contact details)
- Committees that the framework is being actively shared with – this should clearly identify the lead Committee, as well as further committees that may have an interest in the relevant framework

2. Points for the Parliamentary committees to note

a. Procedural

- Date of expected/confirmed JMC(EN) agreement of provisional framework.
- Expected/confirmed date to share provisional framework for formal scrutiny to commence

b. Content

- Purpose of the framework
- If relevant: particular issues to flag, incl. matters linked to cross-cutting issues, including the NI Protocol
- Relevant legislation – this should highlight any links to relevant primary legislation, SIs and SSIs that underpin the framework and that the Committee or other Committees have already scrutinised or are yet to be scrutinised
- Summary of stakeholder engagement. This should include information on:
 - Which stakeholders were consulted at what points in the process
 - Information on the responses received and the key issues raised
 - SG response and the outcome of the consultation (including whether changes were made to the framework and, if not, the reason why no changes were deemed necessary)
 - Policy leads should also provide committees with a copy of the

document(s) that stakeholders were consulted on and/or the questions that stakeholders were asked.

If stakeholder engagement has not yet been completed, relevant information about the planned/ongoing stakeholder engagement and the expected completion date should be included.

- Any Scotland specific policy considerations or interests.

3. Questions and considerations for committees, to be confirmed prior to scrutiny

- Clerks and policy leads should discuss options for the committee's scrutiny approach. As part of this discussion, there are a number of factors that may be considered, including the committee's work programme, nature of the relevant framework and the overall framework delivery timeline. Clerks and policy leads should keep in touch, especially if any factors on the scrutiny approach should change.

To note for committees and policy leads:

This summary is not in the public domain, although it has been shared with relevant stakeholders.

The purpose of sharing with committees at this early stage is to assist committees with their preparations for conducting scrutiny.

A summary of this framework will be laid in each legislature by its administration. If any administration wishes to adopt a committee recommendation, this will need to be agreed jointly by all four administrations.

Annex E: Phase 4 parliamentary scrutiny: Template letter from portfolio Minister and cover page for provisional framework to use when sharing the provisional framework with SP committees

Policy leads should share drafts of their Ministerial letter and cover page with the central Frameworks Team for review before these are sent to the relevant Minister's Private Office for sign-off and ensure that contacts in PLU and SGLD are copied into this, where relevant.

Ministerial letter to share framework summary with relevant SP committee(s)

Committee Convener

Address

Date

[Personal salutation will be added by Minister]

I wrote to you on [insert date] with a summary of the proposed common framework on [insert name]. I am now writing to share the text of the provisional **X framework** with your Committee.

My officials, together with their counterparts in the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive have been working jointly to develop **X framework**. The provisional framework has been confirmed by the Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations) (JMC(EN)) on **Date**. I am sharing this provisional framework for your Committee to scrutinise.

The provisional framework consists of a Framework Outline Agreement and Concordat. Please find an updated summary of the framework attached, with the Framework Outline Agreement and Concordat included as annexes. My officials are happy to provide any further information if that would be helpful.

I am copying this letter and all attachments to **Conveners of [specify other relevant Committees]** and Bruce Crawford MSP, Convener of the Finance and Constitution Committee due to the Committee's interest in the overall UK Common Framework programme.

Portfolio Minister

Cover page template:

1. Framework ownership

- Framework name
- Responsible portfolio Minister
- Framework lead policy team (incl. contact details)
- Committees that the framework is being actively shared with – this should clearly identify the lead Committee, as well as further committees that may have an interest in the relevant framework

2. Points for the Parliamentary committees to note

a. Procedural

- Date of JMC(EN) sign-off of the provisional framework

b. Content

- Purpose of the framework
- If relevant: particular issues to flag, including matters linked to cross-cutting issues, such as the NI Protocol
- Relevant legislation – this should highlight any links to relevant primary legislation, SIs and SSIs that underpin the framework and that the Committee or other Committees have already scrutinised or are yet to be scrutinised
- Significant differences between the provisional framework and phase 3 summary.
- Stakeholder engagement. This should include information on:
 - Which stakeholders were consulted at what points in the process
 - Information on the responses received and the key issues raised
 - SG response and the outcome of the consultation (including whether changes were made to the framework and, if not, the reason why no changes were deemed necessary)
 - Policy leads should also provide committees with a copy of the document(s) that stakeholders were consulted on and/or the

questions that stakeholders were asked.

- Any plans for future stakeholder consultation should also be highlighted.
- Any Scotland specific policy considerations or interests.
- If relevant: information about any significant points of difference between administrations over the course of agreement of the framework and how these have been addressed.
- If relevant, information on and links to any recommendations or comments on the framework provided by other legislatures (this will be particularly relevant when sending an updated cover page to committee(s) for provisional frameworks that were shared over the pre-election recess and the period up to the establishment of committees).
- If relevant, information on any relevant developments that the committee(s) should be aware of (this will be particularly relevant if policy leads are sending an updated cover page shortly before scrutiny is due to commence).

To note (for policy leads):

The Framework Outline Agreement and, where relevant, Concordat should be attached as annexes to this letter and cover page.