



**NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
CORE PARTICIPANT APPLICATION
MODULE 2A - GO SCIENCE**

Introduction

1. In my [Opening Statement](#) on 21 July 2022, I explained that Modules would be announced and opened in sequence, with those wishing to take a formal role in the Inquiry invited to apply to become Core Participants for each module. On 31 August 2022, the Inquiry opened Module 2A and invited anyone who wished to be considered as a Core Participant to that Module to submit an application in writing to the Solicitor to the Inquiry by 23 September 2022.
2. The [Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2A](#) provides that this module will examine the decision-making by the Scottish Government during the Coronavirus pandemic. Further modules will be announced and opened in due course, to address other aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
3. On 22 September 2022 the Inquiry received an application from GO Science for Core Participant status in Module 2A.
4. I made a provisional decision not to designate GO Science as a Core Participant in Module 2A, thereby declining GO Science's application ("the Provisional Decision"), on 13 October 2022. GO Science was provided with an opportunity to renew the application in writing by 12 noon on 20 October 2022.
5. The Applicant did not renew the application by the prescribed deadline. Accordingly, this Notice sets out my final decision on the application.

Application

6. Applications for Core Participant status are considered in accordance with Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, which provides:

5.—(1) The chairman may designate a person as a core participant at any time during the course of the inquiry, provided that person consents to being so designated.

(2) In deciding whether to designate a person as a core participant, the chairman must in particular consider whether—

- (a) the person played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the inquiry relates;*
- (b) the person has a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which the inquiry relates; or*
- (c) the person may be subject to explicit or significant criticism during the inquiry proceedings or in the report, or in any interim report.*

(3) A person ceases to be a core participant on—

- (a) the date specified by the chairman in writing; or*
- (b) the end of the inquiry.*

7. In accordance with the approach set out in my Opening Statement and the Inquiry's [Core Participant Protocol](#), I have considered whether the application fulfils the requirements set out in Rule 5(2) in relation to the issues set out in the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2A.
8. I have taken into account all of the information which the Applicant has relied upon. The fact that I have not, in making this determination, referred to every matter which is set out in the application does not mean that I have not considered it. The summary below is intended to capture what appear to be the most important points made in support of the application.

Summary of Application

9. GO Science is a directorate of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It is led by the UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser ("GCSA") who provides scientific advice to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. GO Science supports

the GCSA in the provision of scientific advice and acts as the secretariat for the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (“SAGE”).

10. The application states that the role of SAGE is to provide co-ordinated, timely scientific advice to support UK cross-government decisions, and that representatives of the Devolved Administrations attended SAGE meetings and reported on them to their respective science advisory groups, ministers and policy leads. The SAGE Secretariat liaised, met and shared information with officials from the Devolved Administrations. The publication of SAGE minutes allowed decision-makers and others in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to consider and utilise the advice and information disseminated by SAGE.

Decision for the Applicant

11. I have considered with great care everything that is said in GO Science’s application. Having done so, in my discretion, I consider that GO Science does not meet the criteria set out in Rule 5 for designation as a Core Participant in Module 2A and, therefore, I have decided not to designate GO Science as a Core Participant in Module 2A.
12. The focus of Module 2A is high-level decision-making by the Scottish Government in response to Covid-19. The application is made on the basis that GO Science acted as the secretariat for SAGE and for some (but not all) subgroups that fed into SAGE during the response to the pandemic and that it liaised, met and shared information with officials from Scotland. This included the publication of SAGE minutes. GO Science was not involved directly in decision-making in Scotland. I, therefore, do not consider that GO Science meets the criteria set out in Rule 5(2)(a) or 5(2)(b) for designation as a Core Participant in Module 2A.
13. In my Opening Statement, I said that I will publish more information about the issues intended to be covered by later modules in the coming months. Go Science may wish to consider applying for Core Participant status in relation to future modules which are of relevance to them.

14. It is also not necessary for an individual or organisation to be a Core Participant in order to provide evidence to the Inquiry. GO Science may have relevant information to give in relation to matters being examined in the Inquiry and the Inquiry will be reaching out in due course to a range of individuals, organisations and bodies to seek information, to gain their perspective on the issues raised in the modules and, where appropriate, to ask for witness statements and documents.

15. For all of those reasons, having considered all of the information provided by GO Science, in light of the Provisional Outline of Scope for Module 2A, I consider that GO Science did not play a direct and significant role in relation to the matters sought to be investigated in Module 2A, nor does GO Science have a significant interest in an important aspect of the matters to which Module 2A relates. I have therefore decided that GO Science should not be designated as a Core Participant in Module 2A and I confirm that this is my final decision.

16. I will keep the scope of Module 2A under review. My decision not to designate GO Science as Core Participants in Module 2A does not preclude it from making any further applications in respect of any later modules. GO Science may wish to consider applying for Core Participant status in relation to future modules likely to deal more directly with the matters which have been referred to in the application. I will consider any future applications GO Science may wish to make on their merits at the time they are made.

Rt Hon Baroness (Heather) Hallett DBE
Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry
26 October 2022