

Positions & Messages

Trustees are asked to approve the paper which describes the process through which LowCVP's positions are developed and key messages to be used with media.

1. Background

This paper responds to a request from Trustees for the Secretariat to bring forward a paper on positions adopted by LowCVP and messages communicated by the Partnership. The paper is a final draft having been considered at the March meeting and subsequently by Members Council. The paper is now being resubmitted for approval and to provide further input.

2. Consensus

LowCVP establishes positions based upon a consensus view of members – general (not complete) agreement in which there is solidarity of sentiments. Since it is not always possible to obtain a complete consensus, particularly on points of detail, the views of a minority of members may be highlighted in any LowCVP Position. As a general rule:

- If more than one stakeholder group is opposed to a particular view, or a single stakeholder group views are strongly opposed, the Secretariat would not usually consider a consensus to be reached.
- If one stakeholder group is broadly opposed to a particular view (which is supported by all others) the minority view will be clearly stated.
- If a small number of individual members express reservations this will usually be reflected in the language used in order to make clear there is not unanimity.

2.1. The process of consensus building

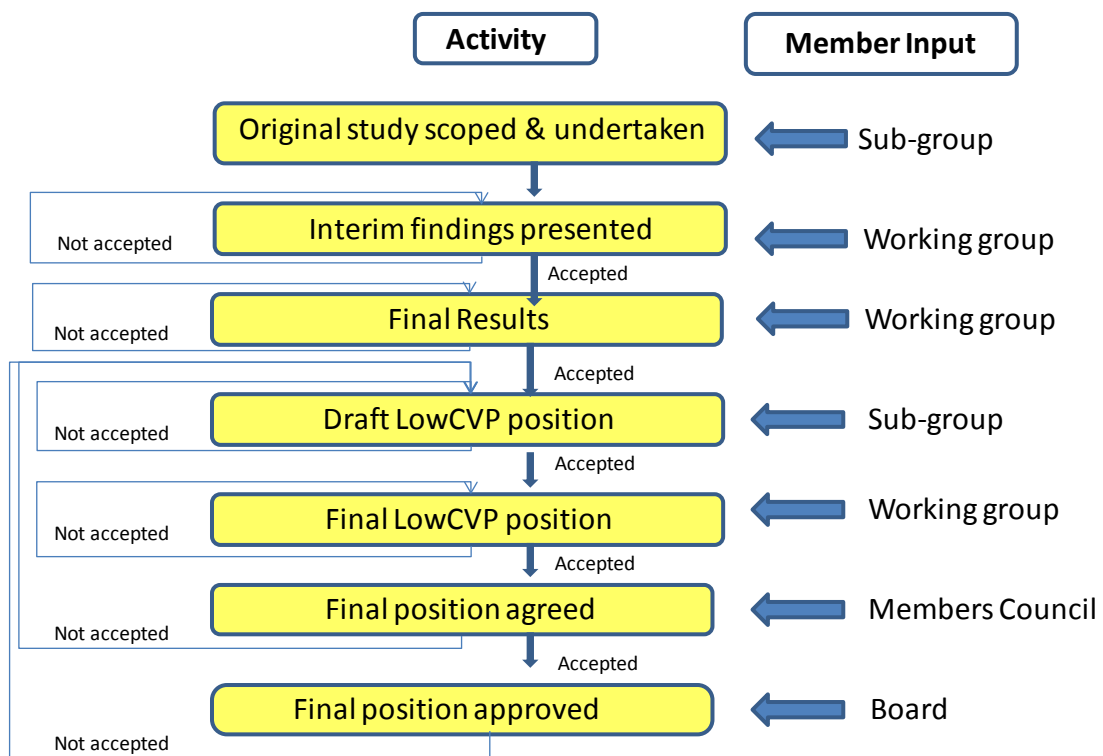
The process of consensus building involves multiple stages involving different bodies within the organisations structures. The flow diagram (over page) illustrates the process through which most Partnership positions are reached.

Positions originate from the work programme which is delivered through project groups (or by consultants reporting to these) who lead individual work programme projects. Project groups report to a working group (or occasionally directly to the Members Council). Interim findings are usually discussed in full working group meetings to inform members and encourage buy-in to emerging findings. This process also ensures a range of informed stakeholders views are incorporated and ensures that the work is technically robust.

Once the project-group is satisfied that the project is complete the findings will be presented to the working group along with a Draft Position Paper (of a few pages length) summarising the views of the Partnership. LowCVP does not adopt the work of sub-groups

or consultants as its agreed positions. The Draft Position Paper is usually prepared by the Secretariat with the involvement of the project-group. This draft position is discussed by the working group and iterated until it presents the consensus view of members. This is usually the most demanding step in the process in reaching a consensus. In the event a project cuts across two working groups direct activities the agreement of both must be obtained.

LowCVP Consensus Building Process



Once there is consensus on the text of a Position Paper within a working group (or working groups) the paper will be presented for consideration by Members Council. The role of the Council is to ensure the views expressed are broadly accepted by other stakeholders within the Partnership and are not solely those of an individual working group (which have no formal status within LowCVP). Once Members Council has approved the Position it will be relayed to the Board for formal approval. Once approved position papers are made public on the LowCVP website. It should be noted that Members Council believes the final step of Board Approval is unnecessary, but this has been retained at the express request of the Board. At any stage in the process the absence of consensus requires the paper to be reviewed and reconsidered.

The process of consensus building is a lengthy one usually taking 3-6 months from the completion of a study to final approval (partly due to the quarterly meeting cycle of LowCVP groups). For LowCVP studies to be influential it is not possible to await completion of the process before outcomes and emerging views are shared with key decision makers. The Secretariat therefore uses its judgement in the way in which the outcomes of the work programme are shared before final approval is reached. In practice, we will try to share

emerging findings with key decision makers as these develop, since this tends to produce a more influential process.

Communicating the views of the Partnership relies on considerable judgement by the Secretariat that always seeks to ensure public statements are evidence based, constructive, balanced and consistent with the overall mission to accelerate progress sustainably. With the highly experienced team it is rare for individual stakeholder groups or members to take major issue with specific statements – it is also unrealistic for individual members to agree entirely with every comment made.

The outcomes of individual work programme items are often highly nuanced in the language used (in order to achieve the consensus) and are therefore not conducive as simple messages for political decision makers (Ministers, MPs etc), the public or media. Consensus positions are also transitory as the views of stakeholders change rapidly particularly as regulations or incentives evolve). The Secretariat is therefore careful to ensure it remains up-to-date with the emerging views of members.

3. Key messages

Excepting detailed position papers on specific topics the Partnership has not previously documented its key messages. This is since producing succinct, easily understandable messages for policy or media purposes whilst maintaining multi-stakeholder consensus is very challenging. The following bullets present high-level key messages on which there is growing and broad consensus within the Partnership:

- Lower carbon vehicle technologies, fuels and driving techniques play a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from road transport - but technology can only be part of the solution.
- There are no technology silver bullets. Government should support a portfolio of promising solutions to improve the efficiency of vehicles and lower carbon fuels. This includes: efficient ICEs, electric and hybrid variants, biofuels, biomethane and hydrogen.
 - Vehicles using internal combustion engines will predominate for the medium term. Improving the efficiency of conventional vehicles is the priority for delivering carbon savings over this period and will help to maintain the UK's strong engine manufacturing capability.
 - Sustainably sourced, low carbon intensity biofuels will make an important contribution to reducing GHG-emissions. However, policies and regulations supporting biofuels must reward the level of greenhouse gas savings and ensure an acceptable level of feedstock sustainability.
 - Electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles can make an important contribution to reducing road transport GHG-emissions - but will require significant initial incentives to encourage their adoption.
 - Biomethane used in articulated heavy duty vehicles, refuse trucks and buses represents a market-ready solution to decarbonise these vehicles but

requires existing market barriers to deployment of gas-vehicles and supply of biomethane to be simultaneously addressed.

- Renewable hydrogen, used in combination with fuel-cells offers a promising long-term solution for low carbon transport and should be supported within a portfolio of promising solutions.
- Schemes to incentivise low carbon vehicles should be technology neutral and reward incremental improvements in performance:
 - Where appropriate, incentives should be based upon the full life-cycle carbon emissions of the vehicle
 - Significant short-term incentives to encourage early market adoption are essential to support emerging solutions but should not lead to significant market distortions
 - Long-term commitments to support alternative fuels and low carbon technologies are necessary to provide market confidence
- Improved consumer information is an important enabler to change consumer attitudes but strengthened incentives are needed to significantly alter buying behaviour.
 - Marketing of lower carbon options is a key element of increasing their uptake - but green claims should be communicated responsibly to inform but not mislead consumers.
- Supporting UK producers and suppliers of low carbon vehicle and fuel technologies provide significant green business opportunities for the UK
 - Support to UK business should be equitably balanced between established businesses and new entrant cleantech SMEs
 - Most public funds for research, development and demonstration of lower carbon vehicles and fuels should be targeted at the portfolio of promising solutions and there is the greatest potential to develop value for UK plc.
- A portfolio of solutions are needed to complement vehicle and fuel technologies and reduce the environmental impacts of transport including:
 - Improving the efficiency with which vehicles are driven
 - Increasing the efficiency of the road network and way it is used
 - Encouraging walking and cycling to reduce local emissions and improve quality of life
 - Improving public transport including, buses, coaches and trains to provide low carbon alternatives
 - Car-sharing initiatives, including car-clubs to facilitate responsible vehicle use and provide an alternative lower carbon model to vehicle use.