



Annex 1 – DCMS (ASD) Science

Introduction

1. This annex reviews the evidence for the quality and use of DCMS science against the ten key review criteria. Where appropriate, it also covers aspects of the interactions between DCMS and its NDPBs.

2. DCMS commissions and carries out social and economic research and no ‘hard’ science. In October 2001, DCMS social, economic and statistical expertise was centralised within an Analytical Services Division (ASD). From April 2003, responsibility for the DCMS research budget (~£400k per year) was transferred to ASD (although some activities, mostly gathering of data, are still paid for from DCMS policy divisions’ own programme budgets). Since completion of the OST review, in August 2004, ASD was subsumed within Strategy Policy and Delivery (SPD). It is not yet clear how this will affect the management and use of research in DCMS. DCMS believes that it will be a positive influence.

1. DCMS Science and Research Strategies

3. The DCMS Analytical Services Division (ASD) Research Strategy (see Box A) was drafted by the ASD Chief Economist and completed in consultation with the recently recruited Social Researcher. The stated aim of the DCMS Research Strategy is to cover the social and economic research of ‘the whole DCMS family’. It aims to cover the period to 2005/06 and is described as a ‘work in progress’, being subject to discussion within ASD.

4. Among DCMS policy staff, awareness of the existence of the DCMS ASD (social and economic) Research Strategy is high. Awareness of its contents is generally poor but is improving, with some acknowledgement that it is relevant to the needs of DCMS. Among NDPBs, the existence of the Research Strategy is fairly well-known. Few DCMS policy division or NDPB staff fed substantially into its development. Some of the NDPBs that have seen the research strategy have expressed concern that it does not address hard science but should do.

5. ASD has provided an up-date of progress against the seven main areas identified in the strategy (see Box B).

6. The DCMS Science and Innovation Strategy¹ was produced primarily to meet OST requirements for the annual ‘Forward Look’ overview of Government science. Until recently it was the responsibility of one member of staff within SPD. Following their departure, the role of SPD and its involvement with science is as yet unclear, as is the future status of the Science and Innovation strategy.

7. The Science and Innovation strategy document is mostly either unknown or seen as being of peripheral interest to DCMS policy divisions. NDPBs are in general unaware of its existence.

DCMS ASD Research priorities

8. Three of DCMS’s Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets relate to social / economic priorities.² To assist in moving towards these targets:

- most DCMS research relates to the social and economic impact of the DCMS sectors; and
- emphasis is placed on research in areas that do not readily fall within the remit of an NDPB and which are of cross-cutting interest (i.e. applicable to two or more policy areas: see 15 below).

¹ See link to:

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/e36nj3hb5i3etvemkyilmktvl7aglo3fqd52lfaaqcmp2nunlcpquafsdhp7wosrrhzsdokrujeaxlkjjs2dt4lwjfa/Scistratnov02.pdf>

² See link to DCMS web-site: http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2002/dcms_psda_03_06.htm

2. Horizon Scanning

9. Horizon scanning³ is the responsibility of SPD within DCMS and the responsibility of the NDPBs in their own areas of expertise. There is presently no formal approach to horizon scanning in DCMS, though SPD has recently recruited staff to cover this issue. ASD carries out various activities that could contribute to horizon scanning, for example: scoping or pilot studies⁴; and contacts with professional colleagues in other Government departments (OGDs), academia, industry via the web, networks⁵ and conferences.

10. Policy divisions do not generally have the resources or the expertise to fulfil this function in-house.

3. Reviewing and Harnessing existing Research and Identifying Gaps and Opportunities

Reviewing and Harnessing

11. Within DCMS, reviewing and harnessing existing (social and economic) research is mainly the responsibility of ASD. ASD is represented at meetings of the Government networks for social research, economics and statistics and has a project recently completed to review how OGDs operate on this aspect (see Box B, point 6). At present, there is no formal process for DCMS to review and harness existing research, with the exception of Tourism statistics. The Research Network (see Box C) has been created to help co-ordinate social and economic research between DCMS and its NDPBs and provides a means by which ASD can tap into NDPBs' research. DCMS policy divisions are not represented on the Network. One option set out in the ASD research strategy was to consider the establishment of a Research Centre but this is not at present being taken forward (see Box B, point 7).

12. With regard to the wider science community, DCMS is largely reliant on NDPBs and communication with them to identify relevant existing research. There are no formal mechanisms for passing on such information other than via the ASD Research Network (which is for social and economic research). Individual members of DCMS staff maintain informal contacts with academic and other sources. Policy divisions' awareness of OGDs' science activities is limited.

³ Defined as the systematic examination of potential threats, opportunities and likely future developments, which are at the margins of current thinking and planning. Horizon scanning may explore novel and unexpected issues, as well as persistent problems or trends.

⁴ Reportedly used for the Participation Survey and Regional Cultural Data Framework projects.

⁵ Including sectoral research groups, e.g. in the tourism and historic environment areas.

Identifying Gaps and Opportunities

13. Work to identify gaps in knowledge and opportunities for future research requires input from ASD, policy divisions and NDPBs. There are no formal mechanisms to identify gaps and opportunities, although there are examples where this has happened:

- DCMS Sport division, the Cabinet Office and the sports NDPBs collaborated to produce *Game Plan*, which included a review of existing knowledge and gaps in evidence (: see Sport sector, Annex 3).
- Tourism division, with input from Visit Britain and ASD, commissioned a study to map existing knowledge and identify gaps in tourism statistics. The resulting National Statistics Review of Tourism Statistics was published in June 2004 (: see Tourism sector, Annex 4).
- A database of evidence has reportedly been established as part of the work for the 2004 Spending Review (: details of this were not available at the time of the review).

4. Commissioning and managing new research

14. ASD currently has responsibility for the DCMS research budget for social and economic research and statistics. The size of the research budget is decided by the Secretary of State on the basis of advice from DCMS Finance and Planning Division, taking into account the outcome of the Spending Review. The Finance and Planning sub-committee of DCMS's management board decides on the bidding process and allocations, the latter on the basis of recommendations made by ASD. The annual research budget is about £400k and all of the research is contracted out. Previously, funding for research was allocated from a residual fund for 'research and other activities' but, for business planning purposes, DCMS's guidance document⁶ identifies three broad types of work that are eligible, namely: research for policy development, monitoring of DCMS targets and 'context setting and development / improvement of data across our sectors'.

15. Divisions wishing to commission research now have to bid into ASD's budget during the business planning process and the bids for 2003-04 were more than double the available budget. There is a guidance note and template for submission of project proposals and ASD acts as a central source of advice on research issues for policy divisions, including assisting with the formulation of research questions. ASD's appraisal of bids is based on a scoring template which assesses bids against the extent to which the proposed projects will: be aimed at contributing to PSA targets; provide value for money; add value to what the NDPBs are already doing (and not duplicate it); and be cross-cutting, i.e. be of value to several policy divisions. ASD's recommendations are considered by the Finance and Planning sub-committee, which is responsible for resolving any problems, e.g. about conflicting priorities, before a decision by the Management Board and Ministers. The Finance and Planning sub-committee also reviews the expenditure mid-year to consider the possible re-allocation of funding from delayed projects to others.

⁶ 'Business Planning and Risk Assessment Guidance' Annex D; DCMS Finance & Planning Division, January 2003.

16. Policy divisions tend to retain some funding from contingencies in project funding albeit mostly for surveys and monitoring.⁷

17. One of ASD's main roles is to assist policy divisions in the commissioning and management (including monitoring) of research and consultancy work, whether from the ASD or divisional budgets. DCMS policy divisions are becoming accustomed to bidding into the centralised ASD research budget and are reportedly making increased use of the expertise in ASD for advice on setting up new projects, e.g. in formulating research questions, appraising bids, etc. and ASD is also increasingly involved in advising on other consultancy projects.

18. There are formal internal processes for the commissioning, management and monitoring of research projects. The tendering process is a fairly standard one: identification of up to 7-8 possible contractors (: for larger contracts such as the Participation study, fewer for smaller ones) and inviting them to tender; setting up a joint tender board with ASD and the policy division(s); sifting the paper bids and interviewing 3-4 candidates; assessing bids with a marking sheet appraising bids against cost, value for money and technical strength.

19. There are examples of the use of scoping projects to minimise the risk of wasting resources on unproductive lines of research but decisions on which projects should have a scoping phase are ad hoc.

DCMS Joint Research with Others

20. DCMS aims to mobilise external funding sources. There are examples where DCMS has recently undertaken joint commissioning of research with other organisations (e.g. ESRC: see Box D). There are also examples where DCMS has ensured other organisations' research projects address DCMS's own research needs, e.g. Sport with DH, ONS for the General Household Survey and DTI for Broadcasting.

⁷ Since completion of the review, DCMS has reported that: research spend going through the formal appraisal process described above has risen to about £900k for 2004-05. This reflects: i) increased requirements for research and evaluation in support of legislation (Licensing and Gambling) and the BBC Charter Renewal; and ii) a greater proportion of what used to be policy divisions' contingency funding being allocated to the central research budget.

5. Ensuring quality and relevance of science

DCMS Research

Quality Assurance

21. Quality assurance (QA) of DCMS's commissioned research is the responsibility of ASD staff and is reportedly achieved by:

- circulation of papers in-house or to NDPBs for comment;
- the use of (primarily internal) steering groups for some projects;⁸ and
- application of professional standards, such as ensuring that statistics gathered directly by DCMS meet the National Statistics Code of Practice protocols.

22. Formal peer-review has not generally been implemented, although there are exceptions, for example for larger joint projects with OGDs.⁹ The rationale presented by ASD against using formal QA as a matter of course centres on: resource constraints (especially in relation to the generally small project size: typically in the range £5k to £50k); and the difficulty in identifying people who are both independent and sufficiently knowledgeable.

Relevance

23. For DCMS's (social and economic) research commissioned from the ASD budget, relevance to strategic objectives and policy needs is ensured primarily via the formal appraisal process at the outset (see 15 above), whereby the main selection criterion is that ASD's research, surveys etc. are aimed at contributing towards one or more DCMS PSA targets. Larger projects are commonly preceded by a scoping phase to avoid wasting resources on projects which do not meet expectations. At a senior level, DCMS PSA project boards meet quarterly to discuss progress and this includes research.

Evaluation

24. The evaluation of research (i.e. after completion) is not done as a matter of course but some (generally larger) projects are subject to review.¹⁰

DCMS's Role in the QA of NDPBs' Research

25. For science carried out by or for the NDPBs, QA is left to the NDPBs who (for social / economic research) may seek advice from ASD.

26. Evaluation of science / research is very sparse but there is awareness of this in ASD and among the NDPBs and, for social research, an ASD Research Network seminar addressed the issue of 'evaluation of impact' (: no details available at present on the outcomes of the seminar).

⁸ The Regional Cultural Data Framework project has an external steering group.

⁹ £75k project with DTI on digital broadcasting was formally peer-reviewed by Prof. Cheshire from UCL.

¹⁰ For example, the Creative Partnerships initiative was evaluated in-house by ASD; and the 2012 Olympics bid cost-benefit analysis was reviewed by DCMS and consultants Price Waterhouse Coopers.

6. Using research and scientific advice

27. DCMS has in-house expertise in social and economic research. There is no in-house expertise in other areas of science.

Using Science / Research

28. DCMS uses science / research commissioned by the Department and other sources to:

- formulate new policies and to inform, monitor and evaluate existing policies;
- support regulatory activity;
- measure progress against departmental targets (including PSAs); and
- highlight changes within its business sectors, with a view to influencing others to take appropriate action.

29. ASD has been responsible for the (social and economic) research budget since April 2003, so there are few examples of the results of work being implemented since then.¹¹ However, greater emphasis is being placed throughout DCMS on the use of evidence-based policy-making (EBPM), including the use of research to inform DCMS policy objectives.

Using Scientific Advice

30. A major part of ASD's role is to provide expert advice on the use and interpretation of results. ASD has the expertise to provide advice on social science, economics and statistical results and ensure that results are not mis-interpreted. Policy divisions increasingly use advice from ASD. ASD also plays a role in advising policy divisions on the establishment of performance indicators for NDPBs.

31. DCMS sponsoring divisions have not always effectively shared results / knowledge coming in from their NDPBs with other parts of DCMS that could benefit. As a result, there are instances of relevant expertise in NDPBs not being harnessed by the corresponding policy divisions.¹² For NDPBs' social and economic research (in-house or contracted out), ASD's role and the Research Network should help to ensure that this no longer happens.

32. For NDPBs' hard science, DCMS policy divisions make no claim to be 'intelligent customers' and ASD does not have the expertise to assist them. Interest in the results of science depends on whether such work clearly feeds into DCMS objectives.¹³

¹¹ See Tourism Annex 4, for example the Tourism Statistics Improvement Initiative.

¹² E.g. UK Sport's knowledge of major sporting events has not to-date been used by the Olympic bid team; and see the Architecture & Historic Environment Annex example of English Heritage's knowledge not being used or understood by the DCMS working group on human remains.

¹³ E.g. in the recent Foot and Mouth outbreak, DCMS officials reportedly held meetings with DEFRA, including its veterinary scientists.

7. Publishing results and debating their implications

33. As is the case for all Government-funded research, in line with the Freedom of Information Act, DCMS has a Publication Scheme.¹⁴ There is an expectation that ASD-funded research is published unless constrained by considerations of confidentiality, privacy or commercial sensitivity. For the publication of statistical data, the National Statistics Code of Practice protocols (see section 5 on QA above) are applied.
34. Science and research findings are usually published on the DCMS web-site and typically presented either as a paper at an international conference or a contractor may be encouraged to produce an academic paper.
35. Prior to publication, papers and reports are typically circulated in-house and sometimes to NDPBs for comment but formal, external peer-review is reportedly unusual.
36. DCMS usually plays no part in the publication of its NDPBs' science or research findings.

8. Sharing and transferring knowledge

37. The ASD Research Network is the main mechanism for sharing information among social researchers and economists in ASD and the DCMS NDPBs. Following the arrival of a social researcher in ASD, the Network was re-launched in 2003 (having been originally started in ~2000) and there is now a more frequent programme of seminars and workshops. There are presently 18 members of the Network, representing 15 organisations (DCMS ASD, 13 NDPBs and the NMDC on behalf of the National Museums, Galleries and Libraries sector, see Box C) with sub-groups on particular topics.
38. NDPBs' awareness of the ASD Research Network is high among social researchers and the preliminary views expressed to us were mostly positive. Policy divisions are not formally included as members of the Network, although it is intended that they will be invited to some of the seminars. There is no DCMS equivalent to the ASD Research Network for hard sciences. Some NDPB staff have expressed an interest in such a forum being established.
39. ASD staff also participate in other networks: of Government economists, statisticians and social researchers; as well as via academic and other conferences. ASD staff expressed some dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the Government professional networks, in particular their failure to interact with each other.
40. DCMS is planning to establish an extra-net: 'Agora' to enable better communications between DCMS and its NDPBs. The ASD Research Network is being used to pilot Agora's development.
41. ASD staff represent DCMS in some sectoral research groups and networks, e.g. in the Tourism and Historic Environment areas and contacts with ESRC and AHRB researchers are being established (see Box D).

¹⁴ See: http://www.culture.gov.uk/publication_scheme/default.htm

9. Implementing Guidelines 2000 and the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees

42. DCMS has no formal scientific advisory committees.

10. Use, maintenance and development of scientific expertise

43. Social science, economics and statistics expertise is centralised within ASD, although most policy divisions have an understanding of the issues, at least in their own areas. ASD has recently added a social researcher to its existing expertise on economics and statistics but has no hard science expertise.

44. ASD staff maintain their professional expertise by networking with academia, industry and Government colleagues (GSR, GES, GSS) and attendance at conferences, etc.

45. There are plans for DCMS staff to be trained in EBPM and project management but there are reportedly insufficient staff resources in ASD to cover the EBPM training.

Box A

Analytical Services Division (ASD) Research Strategy

ASD Research Objective

“To increase relevant socio-economic policy research and embed evidence in DCMS’s work and thinking at all levels and stages in the policy process so as to ensure that the policies developed have maximum impact on key priorities and delivery targets.”

To be achieved by:

- developing a comprehensive policy research service drawing on all available resources;
- supporting policy makers in acquiring focussed, timely and accessible research of the highest possible technical quality;
- and improving the effective and efficient use of limited resources by agreeing a focussed policy research programme to avoid duplication and maximise collaboration.

DCMS is committed to building evidence-based policy (EBP) and policy research will underpin this. Such research will be focussed on the DCMS’s “big 4 priorities”:

- children and young people;
- building communities;
- maximising our contribution to the economy; and
- modernising delivery.

Monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes form a key element in EBP development and form one means of identifying significant gaps in our knowledge.

The strategy to 2005-06 develops seven distinct strands:

1. Mobilising External Funding Sources
– leveraging additional resources from a number of different sources into a programme of policy research relevant to DCMS’s interests.
2. Accessing the Best Available External Research Results and Techniques
– network across the wider research community in order to access “free” research, data and techniques developed and funded elsewhere.
3. Fully Mobilising and Integrating Research Across the DCMS Family
Consolidate the progress made to date in establishing the NDPB research network
4. Improving DCMS’s own Internal Research Capacity
– improve the range and quality of the data that the Department has access to; and
– develop the analytical capacity within the Department to exploit more fully the information available from existing surveys and analyses e.g. the Time Use Survey, the Family Expenditure Survey and the General Household Survey.
5. Improve DCMS’s commissioning of research work.
DCMS should take a proactive role in broadening the range of research organisations engaging with our sectors.
6. Putting Research and Policy Together within DCMS
– make policy staff more aware of the importance of research, specific research developments and the contribution research can make to their work.
7. Explore the feasibility of establishing a DCMS Research Centre.

Box B

Research Strategy Implementation

Reported progress against the seven steps identified in the ASD Research Strategy (November 2003):

1. Mobilising External Funding Sources

Discussions are taking place with the ESRC-funded Research Centre on Cultural Capital regarding DCMS involvement in a possible programme of work for the Centre.

2. Accessing the Best Available External Research Results and Techniques

ASD staff continue to develop links with: other experts at conferences and seminars, ESRC and the GSR network. The DCMS 'Evidence Toolkit' (formerly known as the Regional Cultural Data Framework) is being developed as a resource for accessing robust data and techniques.

3. Fully Mobilising and Integrating Research Across the DCMS Family

The Research Network has been re-established (see Box C).

4. Improving DCMS's own Internal Research Capacity

Studies have been commissioned for the scoping phase of the Participation survey; and the productivity of the tourism and gambling sectors. A study of the productivity of the creative industries sector is being planned.

5. Improve DCMS's commissioning of research work.

ASD has taken over responsibility for the DCMS research budget and a framework has been established for publishing reports through the DCMS web-site.

6. Putting Research and Policy Together within DCMS

ASD has started a project to explore best practice across Whitehall on integration of analytical work into policy development.

7. Explore the feasibility of establishing a DCMS Research Centre

The value and resource implications of this are still under review.

Box C

ASD Research Network: Remit and Membership

The Creative Research Network has been established to allow the better co-ordination of research and analytical activity across the DCMS family of NDPBs. This will lead to a more integrated programme of research, and a stronger evidence base for our sectors.

The key tasks for the Network are to:

- co-ordinate research planning across the DCMS family, with particular relevance to common drivers such as Public Service Agreement and Funding Agreement targets;
- identify areas where joint funding and commissioning of projects is beneficial and commission such work when and where appropriate;
- work together to discuss and resolve common research and analytical issues; and issues in support of improved policy development; and
- share information on key activities across all represented organisations.

Meetings

The meetings will be split between those primarily for research programme planning and programme update, and meetings themed around specific research issues identified by attendees as useful for joint discussion. Planning and update meetings will take place twice a year. Themed meetings (or seminars), will take place throughout the year. The general principle is to organise at least three of these a year, with themes to be decided by Network members.

Membership

Arts Council England
CABE
Community Fund
DCMS
English Heritage
Heritage Lottery Fund
National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
National Lottery Commission
National Museums
New Opportunities Fund
Resource
Sport England
UK Film Council
UK Sport Council
Visit Britain

Box D

DCMS ASD Joint Working

DCMS ASD staff have been involved in a number of Research Council projects in the past and are in the process of establishing closer working relationships with two of the Research Councils: ESRC and AHRB.

ESRC

DCMS has been involved in work which the council is currently funding around DCMS's sectors, including informal advice on one project and the creation of a new research centre. The two main projects at the moment are:

- i) Research on cultural capital and social exclusion, lead by the Open University, which has brought together academics, Arts Council England (plus representatives from the Arts Council offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland offices), Office for National Statistics, and analysts from within DCMS.
- ii) A series of seminars exploring the social and economic impact of arts, culture and sport / leisure, being lead by Loughborough University and Leeds Metropolitan University. These seminars have brought together academics working across the DCMS sectors, policy makers and other representatives from both DCMS and NDPBs, and the ONS.

ESRC has recently announced funding for a research centre on cultural capital to be established in 2004, and DCMS intends to work closely with those involved on the development of research themes. This will involve a more detailed understanding by those running the centre of the range of: research work which DCMS NDPBs currently fund; and the gaps in DCMS's knowledge which ESRC funded work might usefully address.

The idea of a concordat with ESRC has been raised.

AHRB

DCMS's Chief Economist now sits on AHRB's Strategic Advisory Group though, in the past, the most frequent contacts have been direct with other Divisions, e.g. Creative Industries, Arts and Museums Divisions and these continue to make contact on specific issues.

Most work has been done with Creative Industries with which both the previous and current Chief Executives of AHRB have been closely involved, e.g. via the Creative Industries Higher & Further Education Forum that brings together key representatives of Higher and Further Education, creative industries and Government departments, under the chairmanship of the Minister for the Arts, to consider the issues that impact on the creative industries, education and research. A small working group on research and knowledge transfer, to be chaired by AHRB, was in the process of being set up in April 2004. The work plan of this Group is to build upon the findings of the Lambert Review, but in a creative industries context. This will involve DCMS and AHRB sharing the cost of a dedicated post for 2 years to support the working group in terms of research, building networks, and identifying good practice and opportunities. The Minister made a Creative Industries speech at a design research event in March 2004, backed jointly by AHRB & EPSRC.

ASD will be in close contact with the work AHRB is now doing in joint funding with ACE for an AHRB research post to focus specifically on social and economic research.

AHRB has expressed an interest in having a concordat with DCMS.