

## Finance and Central Services Department Research Programme 2004-05

### Introduction

Social researchers in the Finance and Central Services Department's Analytical Services Division (FCSD ASD) manage and undertake research and analysis in the following areas:

- Local Government and Public Bodies
- 21st Century Government
- External Relations and Promotion of Scotland
- Fresh Talent
- Europe

The research is intended to inform policy development and implementation and evaluate the impact of policy. Much of the Department's research is commissioned by way of selective competitive tender. Most often this occurs through the issue of invitations to a selected number of contractors to bid for a contract on the basis of a specification setting out the particular requirement for the work.

The 2004-05 Research Programme sets out those areas that may require externally commissioned research. The exact focus and timing of research is influenced by policy requirements and will be determined in consultation with policy colleagues. New priorities may emerge in the course of the year and, as a result, the Department may withdraw projects and/or include new projects in the Research Programme.

### NEW PROJECTS FOR 2004-05

#### Promotion of Scotland

##### Monitoring and evaluation of the Pilot Relocation Advisory Service

This research will assess the extent to which the services offered by the pilot RAS have helped those who wish to relocate to Scotland and provide insight into how the service could be improved. The project will monitor the extent of services used, experience of users and public and private sector partners and assess value for money.

**Status:** Not yet commissioned

**FCSD Project Manager:** Irene Coll ([Irene.Coll@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Irene.Coll@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

##### Experience of people who relocate to Scotland

The research will aim to explore the factors that have helped people who have moved to Scotland, to access employment opportunities and otherwise settle into Scottish life, including understanding the positive experiences and/or barriers encountered in getting work and settling.

**Status:** Not yet commissioned

**FCSD Project Manager:** Irene Coll ([Irene.Coll@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Irene.Coll@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

##### Evaluation of Scotland in the Netherlands

This evaluation of the two-month programme will run from September 2004 until January 2005. It will report in March 2005. The evaluation will establish how well the campaign was planned, and the effectiveness of each event in terms of event-specific objectives as well as partnership working, accessing target audiences and media impact. The sustainable outcomes of the programme will also be evaluated in the follow-up phase, including any change in profile, perceptions, considerations of cost-

effectiveness, exchange of practice, co-operative links and collaborations in relation to trade, knowledge economy, tourism, culture and public policy. The study aims to inform the systematic development of future overseas events within the Promotion of Scotland Unit's two main goals, positioning Scotland as a leading small nation and bringing influence to bear on international policy issues affecting Scotland.

**Status:** Commissioned

**FCSD Project Manager:** Kesi Mahendran ([Kesini.Mahendran@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Kesini.Mahendran@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

## 21ST Century Government

### Assessment of Dialogue Youth Programme

The research will assist in the assessment of the extent to which agreed outcomes for the Dialogue Youth programme have been achieved. In particular it will focus on the difference that the programme is making to service delivery as perceived by the customer and will aim to identify lessons learned.

**Status:** Not yet commissioned

**FCSD Project Manager:** Irene Coll ([Irene.Coll@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Irene.Coll@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

### Broadband take up in non-Pathfinder Areas

This two phase study designed to report in April 2005 will update and review what we know about factors affecting Broadband take-up and usage in the public sector e.g. schools and council offices. The first phase will consist of a desk-based review of the existing literature on factors affecting Broadband connectivity in the public sector. On the basis of these findings and any identified gaps, a second phase may be commissioned which will focus on infrastructure considerations in non-Pathfinder areas such as readiness, availability, access issues and cost of different forms of connectivity as well as forms of procurement, perceived value and current forms of usage.

**Status:** Not yet commissioned

**FCSD Project Manager:** Kesi Mahendran ([Kesini.Mahendran@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Kesini.Mahendran@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

## Cities

### Comparative Analysis of Cities

Extension of the recent ODPM English Core Cities Report – “Competitive European Cities: Where do the Cities Stand?” – to include Scotland's cities, and to ensure that comparative analysis and key messages are drawn out.

**Status:** Commissioned

**FCSD Project Manager:** Iain MacAllister ([Iain.MacAllister@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Iain.MacAllister@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

## Local Government and Public Bodies

### Evaluation of LG improvement measures

This project involves a holistic evaluation of both the processes involved in operating and the cumulative impacts of the initiatives introduced and/or made statutory by the Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003; i.e. Best Value, Community Planning, and the Power to Advance well-Being.

**Status:** Not yet commissioned

**FCSD Project Manager:** Stephen Sinclair ([Stephen.Sinclair@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.Sinclair@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

### Local Authority Improvement Services: Knowledge Management Scoping Study

The Local Government and Public Bodies Research Branch are managing this project on behalf of the new Improvement Service established to support local government in Scotland. It involves an analysis and assessment of the operational and IT needs of the Service, and developing recommendations for an appropriate Knowledge Management strategy.

**Status:** Commissioned.

**FCSD Project Manager:** Stephen Sinclair ([Stephen.Sinclair@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.Sinclair@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

### Public Private Partnerships in Scotland: Evaluation of Performance

This research has two key aims:

- To provide an initial assessment of the relative costs and benefits of PPP procurement in comparison to conventional procurement, and of the underlying causes of good/bad performance;
- To assess the potential merits of centrally collecting additional performance monitoring information and other data in order to inform future PPP performance evaluations, and to provide recommendations on what data should be collected.

Given that PPPs are long-term contracts, it is recognised that the overall performance of projects can only be assessed over much longer timescales. However, it is anticipated that the initial research will begin to enhance our understanding of, in particular, the operational performance of live projects. In addition, it is hoped that the central collection of appropriate monitoring information and performance indicators could facilitate well-informed PPP performance evaluations in the future.

**Status:** Out to tender

**FCSD Project Manager:** Peter Conlong ([Peter.Conlong@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Conlong@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

## Update on 2003/04 Research Programme

### Thinkpiece on approaches to the evaluation of local government improvement programmes and initiatives

Examination of approaches to evaluating improvement programmes and initiatives aimed at local government in Scotland, including recommendations about the best way forward.

**Status:** Completed

**FCSD Project Manager:** Stephen Sinclair ([Stephen.Sinclair@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.Sinclair@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

### Survey of Candidates and Elected Members 2003

Assessment of how representative local government candidates are of the wider community and whether there are significant differences between councillors and successful/unsuccessful candidates. The research informed work being taken forward on making council membership more attractive to a wider cross-section of the community.

**Status:** Completed

**FCSD Project Manager:** Iain MacAllister ([Iain.MacAllister@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Iain.MacAllister@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

### Small Business Rates Relief Scheme

Evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme. The research included desk based analysis of council returns and the valuation roll, as well as a literature review and a limited stakeholder consultation. The consultants also considered whether there was a need for further in-depth assessment through more detailed primary research.

**Status:** Completed

**FCSD Project Manager:** James McGowan ([James.McGowan@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:James.McGowan@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

## Dissemination from 2003/04 Research Programme

**National Survey of Local Government Candidates, 2003** ([www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/localgov/nslg-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/localgov/nslg-00.asp))

## GUIDANCE FOR POTENTIAL CONTRACTORS

### Expressions of Interest

Contractors who wish to be considered for inclusion on tender lists for any of the new projects outlined in this report are invited to complete and submit either the attached "Expression of Interest" hard copy form for each project or an electronic version of the form. Expressions of Interest should not be submitted for projects that are identified as out to tender, or that have already been awarded.

Expressions of interest will be considered in the process of drawing up a short list, usually of between 3 and 6 names depending on the nature of the project and the extent of expertise amongst potential contractors. Further information is not gathered from potential contractors for the process of drawing up a short list.

As the number of expressions of interest may exceed the number of contractors who will be invited to tender, an expression of interest should not be taken as a guarantee of inclusion in the list. The Department will not inform the contractors who are not invited to tender for a specific project.

## Invitations to Tender

An invitation to tender will be accompanied by a specification of the proposed research. The specification will usually set out the background to the requirement, the aims, what contractors are expected to provide in the tender and a date for receipt of tenders. The standard conditions governing the contract are also provided.

## Assessment of Tenders

Tenders will be assessed by research managers and policy representatives. Overall assessment will be concerned with value for money taking account of the quality and cost of contractor's proposals. In particular assessment will focus on:

- the contractor's understanding of the Department's requirements and the research brief;
- experience, knowledge and skills in this and related fields;
- capability in all necessary technical aspects of the work;
- the appropriateness of the proposed methodology, output and timetable;
- arrangements for managing the research including quality control mechanisms;
- the proposed costs and distribution of resources.

## Awarding of Contracts

The assessment of tenders normally results in the selection of a preferred tender, although the Department is not bound to accept any tender. On occasion, some researchers are invited to make a presentation on their proposals to the Department to assist in the assessment. The successful tenderer then finalises a formal contract with the Department. All tenderers are informed of the outcome in writing.

## Publication

An important part of the work associated with the research programme is the dissemination of research findings both internally and externally. Internally, this work is carried out by researchers within the Department who seek to make sure policy colleagues are fully aware of the implications of the research and how it can inform the development of policy and ultimately improve the quality and delivery of services.

While external publication of research is subject to Ministerial decision, there is a presumption that research commissioned by the Scottish Executive will be published with due regard to ethical issues including confidentiality and data protection. The Department seeks to ensure that research results are published in a clear and accessible style and are made available to organisations and individuals outwith the Scottish Executive for whom they may have important policy and practice lessons and more generally to inform the debate on public policy issues related to the work of the Department. Most commissioned research is published in summary and full report formats in the Scottish Executive's Social Research series. These publications are available in paper versions and are freely available in electronic format on the Scottish Executive Social Research website at [www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch).

## Contact Point

Enquiries about the broad scope of the research programme, aspects of commissioning, contract conditions and publications should be addressed to:

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