



**Knowledge Exchange,
Communication
and
Impact Strategy**

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FOREWORD

The long-term aim for TSRC is to establish a permanent centre for academic research on the third sector in the UK. We want to be able to maintain our core data gathering and analysis as a sustainable resource for all research users. Over time we will also be able to develop analysis to address a wider range of research questions. This will also include securing funding for additional, and more applied, research which can draw on TSRC data and expertise to meet the needs of different policy and practice agencies and research communities.

We are also committed to promoting and supporting the building of capacity for research with, on and for the sector. In part this will be achieved by our joint work with the three Capacity Building Clusters and through our collaboration with related Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Office of the Third Sector (OTS) investments, notably the Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy (CGAP) and the Centre for Market and Public Organisation (CMPO). It will also be a feature of our activity within the Centre to promote and support the work of other researchers in both the academic and practice communities, for instance, through online advice, training courses, and honorary and visiting fellowship programmes.

Finally we are concerned to ensure that our research has a real impact on policy and practice. We will facilitate engagement and dissemination, in particular through the work of our Knowledge Exchange Team; but we will also use this engagement to develop evaluation of the impact of our research over time. We want to ensure that a sustainable research centre is also a valuable and influential one.

Pete Alcock
Director

Rationale

There has been a growing acknowledgement by researchers, practitioners, commissioners/funders and policy/decision makers that although there is much research on the third sector, the products of that research are not always robust, comprehensive, consistent, or systematic and are not always readily available for users to access. This has become important in recent years given the emphasis by policy makers on working in partnership with the third sector in relation to service delivery, and more widely with the growing opportunities for the sector to have a voice and influence in society. For this reason it was argued that there was a need for an independent academic research centre in order to ensure that the work of the sector is informed by research knowledge. In October 2008 The Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) was co-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Office of the Third Sector (OTS) of the Cabinet Office and Barrow Cadbury Foundation. The TSRC is a collaborative venture by the Universities of Birmingham and Southampton and also involves a dedicated team based in London to ensure knowledge exchange between researchers and third sector stakeholders.

This Knowledge Exchange, Communications and Impact Strategy document is for all those interested in the work of TSRC and how the TSRC plans to make an impact. This strategy will also inform the Knowledge Exchange Team's implementation and monitoring plans for the short, medium and long term, and these will be reported on an annual basis for the wider public. The guiding philosophy in all our work will be listening to the third sector and its stakeholders and ensuring that this informs the research of TSRC and that this research knowledge is of use to stakeholders.

The TSRC will have to play a balancing act between competing demands by the sector and other stakeholders and the need to ensure that the TSRC provides an authoritative, independent and robust knowledge base with high quality and cutting edge research. Expectations are already varied regarding what the TSRC can deliver for third sector stakeholders in the short and long term. Given the uniqueness of the TSRC there will be a steep learning curve for all, as these sometimes conflicting interests are negotiated. The key to success will be to ensure that decisions are open and transparent and in a space where all those interested can participate, reflect and find common ground.

It is important to ensure that policy, funding, decision making and practice are based on sound knowledge, so that informed choices are made in the development and delivery of interventions, and in supporting the third sector to thrive and maximise its impact. We acknowledge that the sector is diverse, and has multiple and conflicting interests and that knowledge is provisional, political and contested, but by offering robust methodology and systematic research approaches we hope to support the development of a concrete knowledge, research and evidence base for the sector. As this is a new and innovative initiative, we have developed this strategy specifically for the Third Sector Research Centre based on evidence of good practice that currently exists nationally and internationally on knowledge exchange and impact.¹

¹ For Background information on the TSRC please look at our website: www.tsrc.ac.uk. To see how we feed into the ESRC Strategy for Engagement with the Third Sector and their other funded initiatives including the Capacity Building Clusters see the Appendix to this paper.

Definitions

For the purposes of this strategy, knowledge transfer encompasses all the steps between the creation of new knowledge and its application to yield beneficial outcomes for society. It should be an interactive process underpinned by an effective exchange between researchers, practitioners and policy makers, co-creating new knowledge. Ultimately the knowledge exchange and communication mechanism is vital to ensure the TSRC has an impact in the application and co-production of knowledge with the third sector.

Knowledge exchange is an ongoing process not an act, it brings together different cultures, the academic researcher, the policy decision maker and the practitioner each with their own timeframes, languages of communication, priorities for knowledge and work environments.² This is a particularly important consideration for our work in bridging gaps between academic researchers, policy and decision makers and third sector practitioners. It will also build on the multiple roles and identities of stakeholders to further dissolve the boundaries between producers and users of knowledge offering a space for a more collaborative research process.

In many theories and models of knowledge transfer the interaction between different stakeholders is seen as key to moving knowledge between practitioners, policy makers and researchers (e.g. ESRC 'Knowledge Exchange: Addressing Stakeholder Needs'). The five basic principles developed to put theory of knowledge transfer into practice³ focus on: the message, the audience, the messenger, the transfer method, and the expected outcome.

It is acknowledged that a key factor in knowledge take-up is the user organisation's culture and leadership in making use of research knowledge. Organisations need to develop a framework for knowledge translation⁴ – they need to consider context, structure, decision-making processes, information use and resources allocated for knowledge translation. This may be through direct interaction with the TSRC or from the development of cascading models of knowledge transfer through media, umbrella bodies and other fora.

From reflecting on the information gathered to date (see TSRC Knowledge Exchange Research Paper) we will emphasise the importance of the following:

- Ongoing dialogue between the researchers and other communities of learning (policy and practitioners): a participatory process will support knowledge exchange, uptake of research findings, implementation strategies and feedback to ensure research is relevant to the sector – this offers a wider net of engagement as well as user involvement at all stages of the research process.
- Knowledge creation is not viewed from only a research perspective, but as a process of synthesising existing knowledge and adapting it to reality so as to improve the work of the sector. This could incorporate a deliberative process of presenting research findings and developing strategies to interpret and implement changes.

² This is highlighted in Lewig et al. (2006) 'Closing the research policy and research practice gaps', *Australian Institute of Family Studies*, Family Matters No.74.

³ Reardon et al. (2006) *From research to practice: A knowledge Transfer planning guide*, Institute for work and health, Toronto, Canada.

⁴ Jacobson et al. (2003) 'Development of a framework for knowledge translation: Understanding user context', *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*, 8(2).

- Although resources are insufficient to focus on post research implementation we will in the medium and long term support training opportunities in partnership with other third sector organisations, e.g. to create research implementation plans, interventions based on the research and the adaptation of recommendations of research findings. This will include considering the action cycle and the resource implications to organisations for using the research outcomes or in removing the barriers to their use. We will explore additional funding in partnership with other organisations to achieve this.
- We are establishing a TSRC Advisory Board, Reference Groups for each research stream and for devolved administrations and a Critical Circle of Friends for KET: they will act as knowledge sharing communities offering a space to bring together individuals from different disciplines. They will inform the work of TSRC, KET and the research process and also explore the findings and implications for the sector.

Not all research produced will have a direct impact on the sector even though it will add to the evidence base on the sector. There are four types of research impact suggested in literature and by the ESRC: conceptual (which informs thinking), instrumental (which informs action), capacity building (which develops skills) and process (which has an impact as part of the process of undertaking the research). Research impact is seen to contribute to five main areas:⁵ advancing knowledge, building research capacity, informing decision making, improving systems and creating broad social and economic benefits. Much current research in the third sector has an ‘instrumental impact’ in that it is primarily designed to inform decisions, policy and practice. However, there is a need for research which also has a ‘conceptual impact’, i.e. more abstract and theoretically-informed research, deploying robust and sound methodologies to ensure that research undertaken on the sector is of high quality. In the long term this will provide a more secure basis for ‘instrumental impact’ research. TSRC plans through the unique approach of the research process to have ‘process impact’ and through its Capacity Building Clusters and action research activities.

The approach of TSRC will be to develop strong partnerships between the research, policy and practice communities, and a commitment to incorporating knowledge exchange to support research impact throughout the research process. The intention is to achieve the long-term vision of TSRC as a sustainable research centre which is also valuable and influential in the UK and abroad.

⁵ See for example Canadian Health Service Research Foundations *Insight and Action*, Issues 46 (Oct 2008) & 52 (April 2009)

Introduction

This strategy is based on our vision of TSRC's ambitions, and the expectations of different stakeholder and partners who want to ensure that this investment increases our understanding of how to effect change to improve the role and impact of the sector in the UK. It is informed by our teams' experiences of working in the third and public sectors, and in academia.

The investment, design and delivery mechanism of the Third Sector Research Centre is innovative and unique in that it integrates capacity building and stakeholder engagement throughout the Centre's approach and includes staff teams based within the user community. The Centre will have process impact through the methods used to undertake research by engaging stakeholders and action research. It will have instrumental impact on policy makers, decision makers and practitioners as well as conceptual impacts on thinkers and academics interested in the third sector. The TSRC is not just establishing itself as a national centre of research on the third sector but ensuring that through its capacity building clusters and knowledge exchange team, working collaboratively with other ESRC Centres and developing an international academic reputation, it has a major impact on policy and practice.

The establishment of a high level Advisory Board made up of key partners in the third sector, academia and Government and individual specialist reference groups for each research stream, provides a unique opportunity in the co-production of knowledge and its application in the wider sector. This is complemented by the Knowledge Exchange Team's work with sector partners as well as an interactive stakeholder website. TSRC's knowledge transfer strategy and communications strategy support this by using a blended approach of creating an off- and online presence within third sector communities and includes a TSRC website with videos, podcasts, discussion boards and blogs, as well as partnership seminars, workshops and events to explore the implications of the research and its implementation.

During the five years of its contract The Third Centre Research Centre will:

- Establish a sustainable resource of robust databases on the sector, and key subsectors, in the UK
- Establish longitudinal analysis of the sector and organisational dynamics to secure a base for ongoing analysis into the future
- Undertake robust analysis of the impact and value of the sector
- Develop models which can be used by policy makers and practitioners
- Establish a framework of action research which engages all key stakeholders in the development and dissemination of the activity of the Centre
- Enhance considerably the capacity for research on the sector and work closely with sector agencies to ensure a sustainable programme of knowledge exchange
- Extend theoretical and conceptual analysis of the sector to broaden and deepen understanding of its scope and diversity, and the differing impact of policy interventions across these dimensions.

Ultimately we want to establish an infrastructure and network of reciprocal knowledge flows between the third sector stakeholders and academia to inform future research, policy and decision making and practice.

Knowledge Exchange

The overall vision of the Knowledge Exchange Team (KET) is to demonstrate the value of robust and relevant research by creating a platform and infrastructure for knowledge interactions between third sector organisations, policy makers and researchers. TSRC will ensure the production of high quality academic research, while KET will ensure through stakeholder interactions that the research is relevant to the third sector, and can be readily used to inform policy and action to have an impact. This strategy outlines how we will use external communications and knowledge exchange in the short, medium and long term, in order to achieve this, by engaging stakeholders on the local, regional devolved, national and international level. The Knowledge Exchange Team will work in partnership with the devolved administrations,⁶ other ESRC Research Centres⁷ and the Capacity Building Clusters⁸ to ensure maximum impact over the next 5 years and beyond. We recognise the importance placed by the centre's funding partners on dissemination of findings to a wide range of potential users, using a wide range of means and opportunities and as part of our reflective learning we will develop mechanisms to achieve this.

Vision

High quality, cutting-edge research on the third sector along with a portfolio of resources to make the findings of our research more accessible to practitioners, funders/commissioners, and decision makers. We will ensure the exchange of knowledge through sustained and ongoing interactions for the benefit of the third sector and their communities.

Aim

The overall aim of the KET is to ensure the centre's research is fully accessible to those for whom it is relevant, both in terms of reach and understanding, and to ensure that policy-makers and practitioners are fully engaged in the research process. This will involve creating and maintaining the TSRC brand as an authoritative source of knowledge on the third sector, a resource for accessing research and an active communication platform for discussion around and involvement in third sector research.

Objectives

1. Build **awareness** of TSRC, its projects and aims
2. Ensure research evidence and learning **reaches** third sector organisations, policy makers and other academics
3. Encourage **use** of research by third sector organisations and policy makers in action/decision-making
4. Highlight **relevance** of research to current issues of public and political interest, and current academic debates.

⁶ Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England

⁷ In particular NCRM (National Centre for Research Methods), PSP (Public Services Program), CCGAP (Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy), CMPO (Centre for Market and Public Organisation), LARCI (Local Government Research Council Initiative) and build on the work of CASE (Centre Analysis Social Exclusion), NGPA (Non Government Public Action Program, LSE)

⁸ Social Enterprise (Middlesex University), Community Engagement and Empowerment (University of Lincoln) and Economic Impact (Bristol University)

5. Encourage and facilitate third sector **input** into research, in order to identify areas of research need, research questions and possible use, and to encourage feelings of relevance and shared ownership by stakeholders.
6. Facilitate **spread and exchange** of information within and between audiences.

Goals

A To bridge gaps and build on understandings between research and practice

Through the process of knowledge exchange of skills, expertise and understanding among researchers, policy and decision makers, funders/commissioners, service providers and practitioners of the Third Sector. (Delivery on ESRC: 3.3, 3.4.2 & 3.4.4, See Appendix B)

B To make knowledge available in meaningful ways

Encourage stakeholders to work together and share in the creation of new knowledge and its uptake to improve their actions through a diverse range of activities. (Delivery on ESRC: 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3 & 3.4.4, See Appendix B)

C To ensure we reach those isolated from existing research knowledge flows

Target those isolated from knowledge networks and ensure that research is transferred and knowledge exchanged where it will have most impact by acknowledging the segmentation and diversity of the sector and ensuring that we engage 'below the radar' groups. (Delivery on ESRC: 3.4.5, and as prioritised in ESRC Strategy for Engagement, See Appendix B)

SECTION 3: IDENTITY, ACTIVITIES and RISK ASSESSMENT

TSRC should be a recognisable entity, identifiable as an authoritative voice in third sector research.

In order to achieve this, we will establish a logo, colours and font that are standardised across all publications and publicity materials produced by TSRC. This is especially important given the range and spread of partners involved in the Centre.

A short distinct message about who we are and our purposes will be regularly used in written and in face-to-face communications, in order to create a coherent and understandable message.

Our branding will adhere to our funders' guidelines, acknowledging support and using their corporate logos as agreed. Our key phrases are: Advancing knowledge, building capacity and creating impact.

Short description

'TSRC provides academic research to enhance understanding and impact of the third sector. We make high quality research available and accessible to practitioners and policy makers, and promote the use of research to inform decision-making and action. We work closely with those at the heart of the third sector, to ensure our research reflects the challenges they face and meets their needs.'

Activities

Our activities as the Knowledge Exchange Team will have the following baseline principles:

- That we systematically capture and store knowledge, by bringing together research findings, evidence and analysis and making it accessible to all those interested in the Third Sector through the internet (and searchable database of research papers), working paper e-alerts, publications and articles in relevant media, presentations and stands at events.
- That the knowledge sharing and learning process is undertaken to maximise research uptake and impact, and is monitored and refined on a regular basis.
- That we are proactive in developing positive and productive collaborative mechanisms with other stakeholders in the collation of knowledge and its effective use for and with the sector.
- That we support engagement from different interests: government policy and decision makers, third sector funders and practitioners, academic institutions and research bodies and we will make research available in a range of formats depending on access requirements.

For each goal we have set short-, medium- and long-term activities which will be used to develop our implementation plan.

A Bridging gaps and building on understanding

Short Term

Focus on participating in existing networks and web spaces, establishing networks and raising our profile in the sector by attending events and conferences run by the Third Sector; having meetings with key stakeholders; Ensuring that we have strong links with other research bodies working on the Third Sector to create links to their websites and work.

Medium Term

Continuing to build on the database of networks, profile raising, and offering opportunities to stakeholders to come together and participate in the design of research and develop ways to implement research findings.

Long Term

Continually updating and refreshing our database of contacts and research, as well as opportunities for stakeholders to engage with each other and the research work undertaken on the sector.

B Making knowledge available in meaningful ways

Short Term

Developing an interactive website and establishing a database of those interested in TSRC, including information filtering; establishing reference groups of researchers, policy and decision makers and practitioners for research streams

Medium Term

Workshops and participatory action learning opportunities will be developed in partnership with other organisations to develop the uptake of research and start to monitor the usage of research and its impact.

Long Term

Continue to support uptake of research through workshops and learning activities. Working with other partners we will explore ways to ensure that the Third Sector develops its capacity to undertake research which is robust and methodologically sound.

C Identify bottlenecks in flows of knowledge

Short Term

Establish a feedback loop to ensure that we continuously monitor and review our research and the effectiveness of our knowledge exchange strategies. Identify areas in need of proactive work to ensure we reach different segments or the sector and 'below the radar' groups.

Medium Term

Ensure that we have reached isolated, 'under the radar' groups as well as all segments of the sector so that they have the opportunity to be part of the knowledge exchange loop. We will support training for

targeted segments of the sector, and encourage their use of research knowledge, in partnership with other stakeholders.

Long Term

Start to undertake an evaluation of the impact of TSRC research work and the mechanisms we use to transfer knowledge so as to inform future strategies and implementation plans in particular in relation to bottlenecks and knowledge flows

Knowledge Exchange Risk and Contingency Planning

Risk	Contingency
<p>Research users have limited experience of transferring research into practice because of leadership, staff resources, organisational stress, finance pressures, management types and intolerance for change</p>	<p>Short-term activities include the establishment of Reference Groups for research streams to engage users in the research process and increase the likelihood of research take-up. Medium-term activities include supporting the development of workshops and action learning activities to encourage the uptake of research findings</p>
<p>Web-based interaction between researchers and Reference Groups not effective, as the groups do not share common goals and have conflicting interests</p>	<p>Establishing Reference Groups include policy and decision makers and practitioners. They will meet at the beginning of the research with the researchers and engage through the website to inform the research process. They will then meet at the end to agree recommendations from the research, the dissemination strategy and target audience, possible implementation strategies for their 'communities of practice' and the measures which will be used to assess the impact of the research.</p>
<p>Conflicting knowledge claims between researchers</p>	<p>Through deliberation and debate, wider discussion with stakeholders, academics, policy makers and practitioners we will unpack conflicting knowledge claims .</p>
<p>Resource Limitations of TSRC for knowledge exchange work</p>	<p>We will continuously review our budget, and when organising additional events and activities with partners explore fundraising and new grants.</p>
<p>Resistance to participating in knowledge exchange process by TSRC staff</p>	<p>As knowledge exchange is a fundamental element of the TSRC approach to undertaking research with the third sector all staff will have to be involved, from agreeing the Strategy to participating in activities and events, and facilitating Reference Groups on their research streams.</p>

<p>Potential research users not receptive and unlikely to sway the opinion of others towards making use of the research and difficult to engage in the research process</p>	<p>Ensure, through our understanding of different research-user perspectives and cultures, that the research is presented in a format that encourages interest, and is relevant and significant in contributing to their work. Short-term activity of establishing the website and undertaking profile-raising and outreach work, along with the feedback loop and monitoring uptake of research. Also to encourage research that is relevant and useful to users by considering their priorities and feedback in the research process.</p>
<p>Certain segments of the Third Sector, and ‘under the radar’ groups do not benefit from and are not engaging in the TSRC</p>	<p>As a key objective we want to ensure a pro-active approach to engage with these segments and groups as part of our medium-term activities. Specific research stream on ‘under the radar’ groups and the establishment of a Reference Group will offer specific ongoing opportunities to engage.</p>
<p>Resource/policy implications for uptake of research knowledge too great to change in the short term</p>	<p>By engaging research users at all levels of the TSRC as Advisors and Reference Group members, research will be addressing issues that have been identified by the Third Sector and key stakeholders as resource and policy priorities.</p>

SECTION 4 COMMUNICATION

Purpose

The purpose of our communications is to give audiences a way and reason to engage with TSRC on all levels – from engaging with research findings to becoming involved in the research process.

Researchers help audiences to:

- build capacity for research
- identify and access relevant research
- understand the implications of research findings and how they can be used to strengthen the sector, their work or their organisation

Audiences help researchers to make research more applicable to practitioners and policy-makers, by:

- identifying research needs
- informing research development and identifying questions that need asking
- increasing understanding of how research might be used by practitioners
- practitioners commenting on whether research findings accurately reflect experiences on the ground

Benefits

What we offer	Purpose/ benefit to stakeholder
Research on third sector practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform action of individual organisations to increase impact/success/ benefit • Offering an evidence base to add weight to current work/decisions • Help inform funders/commissioners/policy-makers in deciding what works
Research on third sector policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform decisions of policy-makers surrounding third sector, to help them improve their impact on the sector and society • Add weight to decisions of policy-makers • Help third sector advocate for policy changes
Research on theory about third sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide critical understanding of concepts and definitions, and analysis of discourses and ideologies, to underpin all empirical and policy work • Contribute to academic debate and dialogue • Provide basis and impetus for further third sector research
Research Library of a large body of research on third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative and qualitative database on the sector (potentially available to research users through ESRC archives, and aim, subject to additional resources, to

sector	<p>offer through an online portal with the British Library)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accessible resource in which it is easy to find relevant pieces of research • A trustworthy source • Help practitioners and policy makers use research more often and more appropriately
Trusted and authoritative voice on sector research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhere to turn for advice/support on research • Confidence in integrity of research • Provide link to third sector or academic communities, training, research opportunities
Collaboration with academics, practitioners and policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of research that is relevant and useful to practitioners and policy makers in third sector • Chance for third sector organisations to contribute to the development of the research agenda • Collaboration with policy makers adds weight and relevance in political arena of the third sector • Chance to bring policy makers, researchers and practitioners together to collaborate with each other
Learning and development on conducting and using research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the benefits of using research • Build capacity of sector for practitioner-led research which is methodologically sound • Encourage culture and use of research throughout third sector policy and practice
Building the capacity of stakeholders and individuals to undertake, use and participate in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer opportunities for CASE PhD studentships and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, vouchers and placements through the Capacity Building Clusters • Organise joint training workshops on using and undertaking research • Creating a platform for knowledge exchange and building bridges between researchers and third sector stakeholders

Audience and Channels

Explanation of terms:

Audience refers to the stakeholders with whom we are communicating. It indicates the stakeholder group or groups who are the end target of any specific communications being referred to, i.e. those for whom the research results could affect policy or action. *NOTE: those referred to in the table have been generalised, and in reality will be broken down into much smaller subsectors for whom research is relevant (i.e. charities working on specific issues/small community groups/academics working on specific topics etc).*

Channel refers to those who facilitate communications between us and our end target audience. *NOTE: names specifically referred to in table are just examples; these will be much wider and differ for each sub-sector.*

Method refers to the activity or mode we will use to communicate with each audience.

Audience	Channel	Method
Voluntary Organisations/ Social Enterprise/ Community Groups	Direct (split by much smaller subsectors)	web, newsletter, email communications, reference groups, stakeholder meetings, events, Advisory Board, Reference Groups and Critical Circle of Friends
	Infrastructure organisations (e.g. NCVO, NAVCA, ACEVO, SEC, DTA, Cooperatives UK etc)	Links from website, Notices/ news articles in organisations magazines/ newsletters, Inserts in magazines/ publications, emails to members' lists
	Influential 'voices' in sector or on that issue (org or individual)	Articles in magazines, Links on websites, Tie-ins with media activity, Meetings/ direct liaison
	Media (third sector specific media, issue based media, guardian, other where relevant)	Article submissions Press releases Press conferences
	Community/below the radar/ segmented groups (not registered or specialist groups)	Outreach to events and activities Build on action research which is involving them Use forums and networks on the local level
Policy-makers/Decision makers	Direct – with OTS and other Government departments, e.g. CLG, BIS, DoH/ Local Authorities	web, newsletter, email communications, reference groups, meetings, events
	MPs, All Party Parliamentary Groups	Meetings, events
	Local Government Cllrs, Commissioners	Links with LGA, Idea Feed into networks of officers and councillors working with the Third Sector – e.g. commissioners
	Media (government specific media, policy journals,	Press releases Article submissions

	public policy specialists in broadsheets)	
	Influential voices, advocacy groups, think tanks	Articles Links on websites Media Meetings, direct liaison
Academics	Direct	Web, email, forums/ networks, journal, personal contact
	Personal contacts	Through ESRC Research Centres, CBC's networks Networking events and conferences
	Institutions – e.g. Universities, ESRC Research Centres, Voluntary Sector Studies Network(VSSN)	Formal links to relevant University and institutions websites Peer Review Journal Presenting at Conferences
	Mainly through Research Publications and specialist Media	Articles in academic publications/journals/books
General public	General media and public	Press releases Web E-mail bulletins for those who subscribe
Funders	Big Lottery, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, CCGAP networks and Trusts	Regular updates, reports, copies of newsletters

Engagement

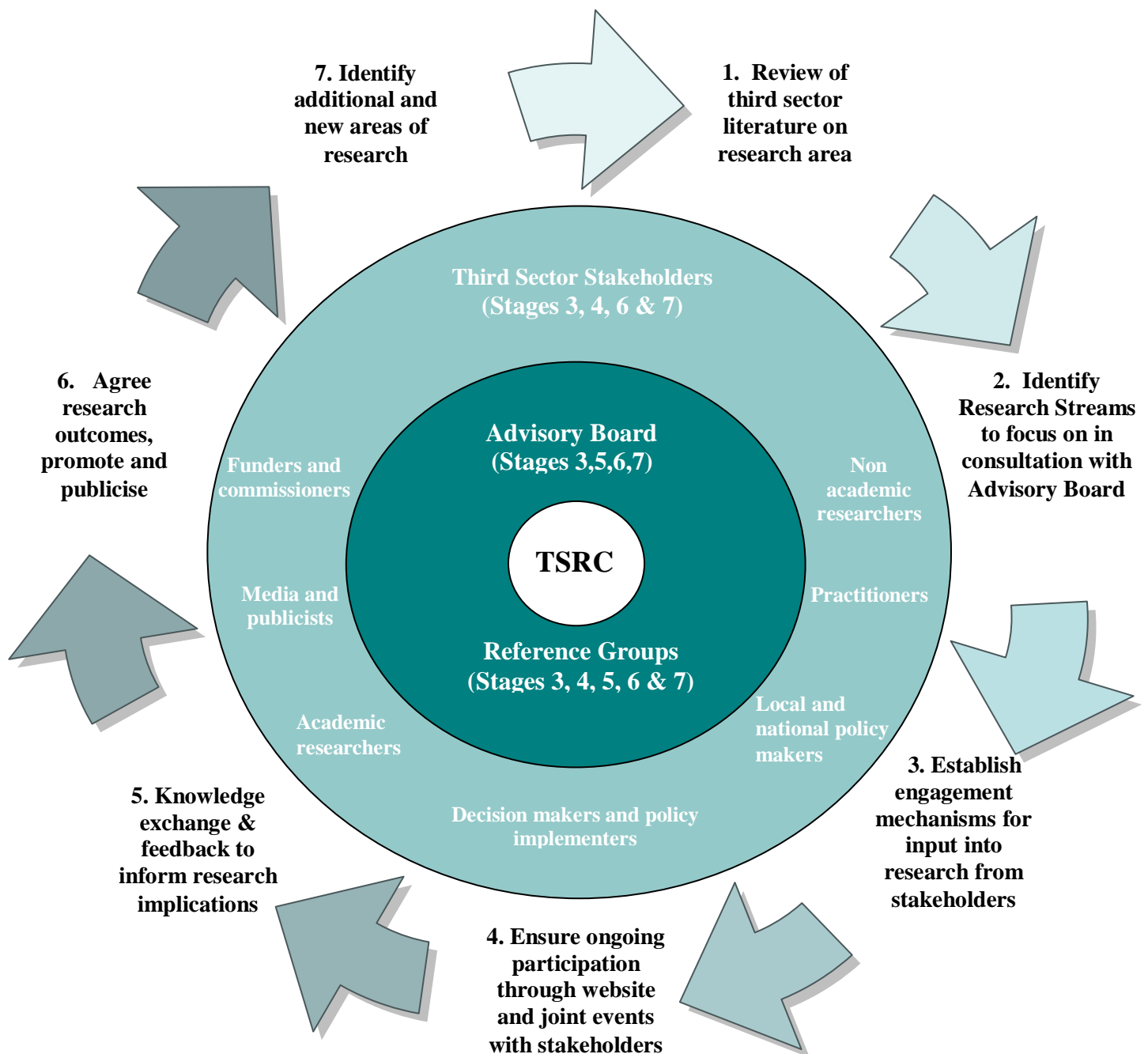
The following diagram is based on the Third Sector Research Centre, the work of the research teams in the Universities of Southampton and Birmingham and the social enterprise stream in the University of Middlesex. In addition there are opportunities for engagement through the Capacity Building Clusters which have been outlined in Appendix B.

There will be a two-way exchange of knowledge between stakeholders and researchers. Stakeholders will be engaged as active partners in developing the priorities and focus of the research streams through the formal Reference Groups and Advisory Board. We will develop a diverse range of mechanisms for informal engagement through the website with dedicated discussion boards and blogs for research streams, participation in events, workshops and other activities. Once the research is produced there will be opportunities to explore its implications and the ways in which it might be used to inform the work of different stakeholders.

The diagram below outlines a framework for engagement for TSRC:

- The **inner core** represented the research teams based in the Universities of Birmingham, Southampton and Middlesex.
- The **dark ring** represents the formal engagement structures and the light ring the stakeholders to whom we will offer engagement opportunities.
- The **outer arrows** are indicative of the research cycle stages and relate to engagement opportunities for stakeholders.

The website will have dedicated pages for each research stream outlining the key areas of focus and opportunities for those interested to find out more and give their reflections through discussion boards. Once initial findings from the research emerge these will be disseminated and discussed through knowledge exchange activities to consider the implications for the sector. This will also be an opportunity to identify new areas of research. We believe this iterative process will both ensure the academic quality of the work we do and its relevance to the sector.



SECTION 5 TOOLS AND METHODS

Website

This reaches across all elements of communication. It is our most prominent public face and the first stop for any interested parties. This should represent and promote:

- who we are – our overall identity as an institution and individuals within it
- what we do – what is unique about us and how we can benefit our audiences
- what we are doing now (i.e. always up-to-date information)
- use of research – why it is important, how it can be useful to different audiences
- access to research – searchable research library of existing research on sector, potentially in partnership with the British Library; downloadable TSRC research Working Papers, Briefing Papers and Abstracts; podcasts and videos of key messages from the research and potentially interactive access to qualitative data sets and statistics
- involvement and interaction – offer chance for people to become active participants in research process, through live blogs, discussion boards or forums on individual research streams, opportunities to join groups or mailing lists, opportunities to give feedback to researchers etc.

Publicity Materials

We will create specifically targeted publicity materials to promote the work of TSRC such as leaflets, banner stands and other events materials.

A generic leaflet explaining TSRC and what we stand for will be produced initially, so that it is available for anyone who asks for information. All other materials will be produced for specific uses and audiences.

Published materials

We will have a series of Working Papers, Briefing Papers and Abstracts on our latest research findings. We will support the publication of VSSN's new peer review journal *Voluntary Sector Review*. Our Publications Strategy for academic impact, as well as pursuing the possible publication of books, sector specific journals and publications will be followed. Submissions will also be made to other academic journals, edited books and chapters in edited collections. Wider press work will also be conducted (see below)

Methods

The proactive communication plan will revolve around two elements: initiating contact with and reaching our target audiences, and building an ongoing relationship with these audiences once contact is established. In addition, indirectly through the capacity building clusters work and other events within the sector our work will also be communicated.

Building contacts and expanding reach

This is vital in the initial stages especially in order to establish a presence and an audience. However it will continue to be important throughout in order for TSRC to communicate with as many people as possible and continually widen its reach.

- **Promotion of TSRC, its research and opportunities for engagement, through e-communications and publications of relevant organisations**

These will include relevant umbrella organisations and infrastructure bodies, other research centres and universities, other relevant membership organisations, sector news sources and publications (some may have to be paid for)

- **Links to/from other relevant websites**

Including partner organisations and funders, other associated universities, relevant infrastructure groups, organisations of steering group members, and other interested parties

- **Media work**

Press releases and articles in specialist, local and sector specific press will be developed, along with national press, radio and TV coverage where research produced is of relevance to wider audiences.

Our media strategy will involve:

Active media work around research projects, results, events

Reactive media work in response to issues/stories that emerge in the media, and where there is a connection to the issues or results of our research

We will target sector specific press, such as *Third Sector Magazine*, policy and academic magazines and journals, highlighting TSRC as an organisation and resource, as well as releasing details of upcoming research and results.

We will target more general media, such as the *Guardian*, and supplements, radio or television, concentrating on more 'issue-focused' stories, where research results highlight something of interest to current public/political issues.

- **Identify and hold meetings with opinion formers, individuals or groups in sector**

These people will be useful to build the name of TSRC and spread the word to others. They may also be a good starting point in setting up reference groups for individual research streams. Wherever possible we should maximise use of existing contacts – advisory board/steering groups. To whom are they connected, and how they can help us communicate the TSRC message?

This will also involve publicising research, through direct contact, to groups or individuals thought likely to be interested in specific projects

- **Events**

Hold stalls, interactive workshops or have speakers and presentations at events attended by relevant target groups – such as charity sector, social enterprise and policy conferences. Hold own events to publicise research projects or results in partnership with stakeholders.

- **Identify and target below the radar groups and segments of the sector**

We recognise that traditional channels, such as established networks or infrastructure organisations will not reach below the radar organisations and some segments of the sector. We will need to research these organisations and the issues they are interested in to find channels and methods of communicating with them.

Maintaining ongoing relationships

This is a vital part of not just communicating to, but engaging with our audiences. It aims to maintain interest in the TSRC and its outputs, encourage use of and engagement with its research. We have incorporated formal mechanisms for ongoing relationships through our Advisory Board, Reference Groups and Critical Circle of Friends, as well as informal mechanisms.

FORMAL

- **Advisory Board**

This will be made up of sector partners, academics and policy and government representatives. These are important stakeholders with direct connections to the project. They will be kept up to date through regular communications and meetings. Our expectation is that wherever possible, Advisory Board members will facilitate further communication with groups they are connected to. We will establish processes for sharing of information through them e.g. forwarding communications where appropriate, hosting meetings or events, or representing TSRC at external events.

- **Reference groups**

These will be formed for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and for individual research streams. They will be made up of individuals from third sector organisations and political institutions, with interest in particular areas of research or the region. These groups will allow us to communicate directly with stakeholders, bringing them much closer to TSRC and its research. The groups will facilitate two-way communication, allowing us to gain a non-academic perspective on research issues. The reference group members will also help facilitate further communication with their contacts in the sector.

- **Critical Circle of Friends (Knowledge Exchange Expert Panel)**

This is formed of a maximum of 12 individuals known in their field as having a strong track record and commitment to knowledge exchange, from the regions, from academia, third sector, funders and government. Their role will be to advise and critically evaluate the work of the Knowledge Exchange Team.

INFORMAL

- **Regular communications**

This will involve setting up a database, which allows us to record and store information of interested parties, in order to deliver targeted communications, filtered by their interests and preferred methods.

Communications will include:

- E-newsletter/bulletins – perhaps tailored by audience
- Abstracts, Briefing Paper and Working Paper series
- CDs, paper formatted newsletter, leaflets and publicity
- Tailor-made leaflets for specific events, research streams or communities

- **Creation of online communities**

These will be formed around topic areas, and will allow interested parties to join a forum for discussion on relevant research areas

- **Stakeholder meetings**

Regular meetings held with reference groups and advisory board as above. Plus wider ‘interest groups’, with whom we will hold a meeting at the start and end of each research project and communicate throughout via the web. This will allow us to widen our engagement.

- **Media contact database**

Establish regular contacts in the media with whom we build relationships and regularly feed information to.

Publicising research

Dissemination of research results will be filtered and targeted to interested parties, to ensure people receive information that is relevant to them. In order to do this we will have a database of contacts, segmented by interest and relevant issues. This will include our user database (of third sector organisations, policy makers and academics) as well as database of channels and dissemination partners such as infrastructure organisations, membership bodies and media contacts.

Publicising of research will be conducted with the aims of

- Reaching audience (gaining their attention)
- Stimulating interest (illustrating why it is interesting, relevant and useful to them)
- Encouraging action based on findings
- Encouraging and facilitating feedback and further involvement

For each Working Paper we will

1. Identify target audience/s and channels through which we will publicise results

2. Organise joint events and feed into activities of relevant stakeholders (*this will be much more segmented than audience table above, i.e. by specific issue or specialist community of policy makers, practitioners or researchers, to access their specific networks and contacts*)
3. Identify facilitators/channels which will help reach audience
i.e. relevant media, institutions or networks specific to sub sectors of audience, or events where researchers can present their findings
4. Identify suitable format of communication for target audience
5. Identify and publicise
 - Elements of research that will interest each audience
 - Advantages it can bring them
6. Each communication should let people know
 - Why this research is relevant/important to them
 - The main thing we want them to know? (key finding)
 - How the research can inform action (how it can be used in practice)
 - How this will benefit them
 - Currency – why is it relevant now?
 - If necessary, how can they overcome barriers to implementation and challenge accepted knowledge or practice?
 - Have users been involved in project, can we offer them ways to be involved?

Building Capacity

Each of the Capacity Building Clusters will be developing partnerships with voluntary organisations and academics through a range of CASE Studentships during the next 3 years. They will also establish a number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships where research staff apply their expertise to a project that is central to the development of their collaborative third sector partner. In addition there are voucher schemes available where organisations can buy in research time and placement opportunities for researchers and practitioners to exchange work shadowing in their respective environments. These activities provide new and innovative methods of knowledge exchange and we will disseminate the outcomes from the Capacity Building Clusters through our wider knowledge exchange work, and use the relationships created to continue ongoing knowledge networks.

In addition the Knowledge Exchange Team will plan a series of workshops, training sessions and seminars in partnership with other stakeholder organisations and ESRC Research Centre partners across the UK to increase the understanding and support the take-up of research knowledge by organisations, and advance their understanding of how to ensure 'good quality robust' research within the sector. We will also offer workshop facilitation in sector-led events on knowledge exchange and present at ESRC and other regional and international conference on how key findings from research can be made use of by policy, decision makers, funders, practitioners and academics.

SECTION 6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Background

Although there is literature on different models and approaches to knowledge brokering and exchange most remain in the realm of academia and if they have been used in practice have rarely been evaluated. With the push for demonstrating research impact, new roles in knowledge brokering are being developed and so there is an ever-increasing demand to know what works in which context, for whom and why. This is a new area of work with limited research, and has traditionally focused on scientific research transfer, and more recently moved into the health field.

In addition to the ESRC reporting and monitoring mechanisms, we would like to propose additional evaluation mechanisms for the knowledge exchange element of TSRC. This is due in part: to the unique nature and opportunity created by establishing a dedicated knowledge exchange resource as part of Third Sector Research Centre; and the widely acknowledged lack of guidance available for planning and evaluating knowledge broker interventions⁹ and a lack of knowledge about how it works, what contextual factors influence it and how effective it is.¹⁰

By planning and designing a framework for the monitoring and evaluation of our knowledge exchange activities over the next 4 years we would hope to contribute to the knowledge base of what works in knowledge exchange. Our Critical Circle of Friends will play a key role in advising and guiding us in this and helping us to reflect, learn and develop our approach to knowledge exchange.

Conceptual Framework

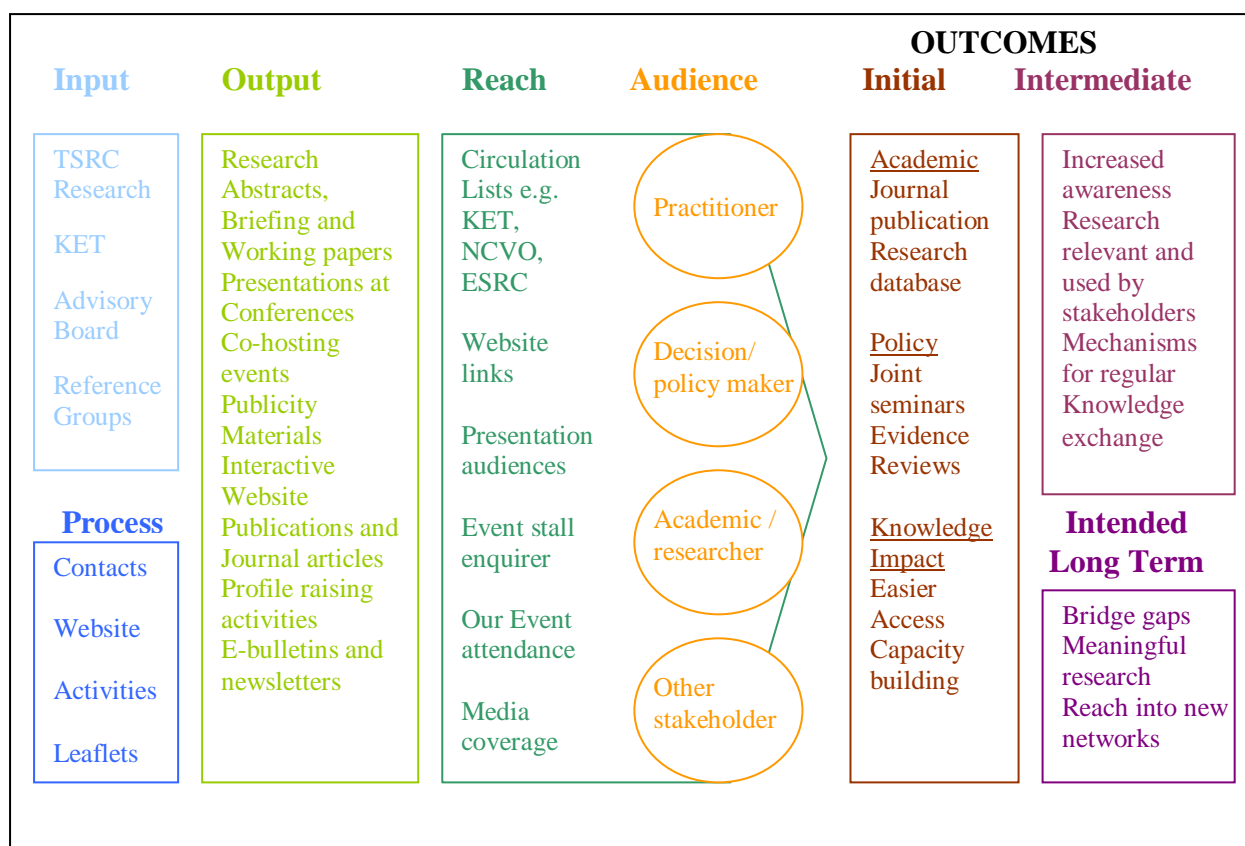
This framework is adapted from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Centre for Communications programs, 2006 to provide an overview of our knowledge exchange work. The framework offers a flow mechanism from:

- **inputs** of human and institutional resources,
- **processes** of product and service development and dissemination,
- **outputs** of the information products and service,
- **reach** through initial distribution, secondary distribution and referrals,
- **audiences** in policy, practice and academia,
- **initial outcomes** including usefulness, user satisfaction and quality,
- **intermediate outcomes** of use in being more informed, enhancing practice, adding to research knowledge and collaboration,
- **intended long-term outcomes** based on or vision and goals.

⁹ See for example Robeson et al. (2008) *Journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association*, Vol 29 and Ward et al. (2009) 'Developing a framework for transferring knowledge into action: a thematic analysis of the literature' in JHSRP Vol 14, No 3, and 'Knowledge brokering: the missing link in the evidence to action chain' Policy Press, Vol 5, No 3 (2009) and Jackson-Bowers et al. (2006) 'Knowledge Brokering' Focus No 4 Adelaide: Primary Health Care Research and Information Service.

¹⁰ Conklin et al. (2008) 'Briefing on linkage and exchange: facilitating diffusion of innovation in health services' Occasional Paper 231, Cambridge RAND Europe and Ward et al. (2009) 'Knowledge brokering: the missing link in the evidence to action chain' Evidence and Policy, Vol 5, No 3 (2009)

Suggested TSRC, Knowledge exchange framework



Ensuring Research Uptake and Use

This is based on TSRC’s Knowledge Exchange and Communications Strategy and Impact Strategy, and work undertaken by DFID on learning lessons on research uptake and use as part of their research communications program, an interactive toolkit and guide is available on: <http://www.research4development.info/communicationsCorner.asp>.

TSRC’s research will be of quality, based on sound methodologies, relevant to current contexts and expectations of the sector, offering a minimum time lag between research completion and findings being shared. We have established strong links between the knowledge exchange team and research teams, attending meetings and research stream reference groups. We will aim to:

Access research primarily through our research teams, but ensure that their research is informed by the work of other research providers on the third sector who contact us on a regular basis, from attending events and seminars and through web information alert systems.

Repackage research to make it accessible by summarising specific research findings, re-formulating research findings in a format/media/language suitable for particular target groups, ensuring that the research reaches those beyond current knowledge flows, through events and web links.

Identify and differentiate between research users by analysing mailing lists, undertaking user surveys, tracking web usage, recording requests for information and queries, working collaboratively to co-host events, seminars and workshops targeting particular research and third sector communities, gaining their feedback and monitoring audiences.

Combine different delivery methods to ensure reach. These will include internet, audio, visual and presentation materials, interactive web space, attending and organising workshops and events and face-to-face meetings, and using online technologies to offer more opportunities for engagement e.g. online web conferencing.

Strengthen demand for our research and the capacity of users to use our research through marketing and promoting our work and through training courses and workshops for different communities.

Data Collection Methods

We will try and ensure that data collection is integrated into our work as the knowledge exchange team on a daily basis, we will do this through:

Routine recording of our activities e.g. dissemination of our research papers at events, through e-bulletins and downloaded from the web; a record of requests for information and outcomes; web statistics; citations in other publications and reports; number of, and attendance at, events; contacts made; circulation lists; media coverage; and number of collaborative ventures.

User surveys from those who download working papers, online feedback surveys, focus group discussions and event evaluations and with Advisory Board and Reference Groups.

Research use through content analysis of: publications; bibliographical references; citations in academic journals and other papers and reports; and case study examples.

Ongoing Monitoring

We will continually monitor the results of our Knowledge Exchange, Communication and Impact Strategy, evaluating success and continually informing changes to increase impact.

QUANTITATIVE

We will monitor the numbers of people we are reaching, the varieties of audience we are reaching, and the types and level of action taken by audiences. We will do this through:

- Monitoring web activity – hits, downloads, etc.
- Monitoring size and growth of our database – numbers of people receiving newsletters, journals, other communication
- Monitoring sectors/types of audience receiving information – e.g. third sector organisations/academics/policy-makers, what types of third sector organisations, how many community groups, below radar groups, social enterprises, etc.
- Monitor, record and evaluate media coverage

- Monitor citation in academic and policy documents
- Monitor actions taken as result of communication – i.e. requests for more information, signing up to mailing lists, joining groups, giving feedback
- Monitor actions taken as a **direct result of specific communications** – i.e. how many people took action they were directed to take by each communication
- Evaluate audience experience of communication through qualitative feedback, including feedback forms on website, face to face feedback in meetings and through stakeholder groups.

QUALITATIVE

We will establish a Critical Circle of Friends (Knowledge Exchange Expert Panel) who will offer advice and review and evaluate our work as the KET. Through our Reference Groups we will monitor research processes, outcomes and impact. We will report to the Advisory Board on a regular basis. We will do this in the following ways:

- TSRC will keep a record of all enquiries, activities, events attended and articles published, as well as research produced.
- We will cross reference these records with stakeholder categories to ensure that we are reaching all segments of the Third sector, and that we are engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Response to our research publications will be used as part of the monitoring and refinement of our work as well as an evaluation form for activities and events we organise and attend.
- We will ensure ongoing feedback on our website with pop ups for anyone wanting to download our research from the website to find out what they will use the research for, as well as a virtual comments and suggestions box.
- We will use the following impact criteria: change in attitude/awareness, change in policy, citation by other researchers, reference in policy documents, or use in third sector publications and reports.

We will annually evaluate our work based on the implementation plan of this Knowledge Transfer Strategy. This will inform the work of the following year and the priorities we will address. We will undertake a Performance Management Review every two years with stakeholders of our work as the Knowledge Exchange Team. We will share our learning and report on the main activities in an Annual Review of our work.

Annual Review

As part of our annual review we will establish the following standardised indicators to measure reach, usefulness and use of our research, collaborative ventures and capacity building initiatives. This model is adapted from 'Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Health Information Products and Services' by Sullivan et al. for US AID (2007). This mechanism will help us understand the knowledge exchange pathways that inform policy and practice.

Monitoring **Reach** through:

- primary distribution lists size and representation (e-bulletins, RSS feeds, stall distribution)
- secondary distribution lists (web counts and downloads, media coverage)
- Referrals (number of citations, referencing, posts and links on other websites)

Monitoring **Usefulness** by:

- User satisfaction (focus groups on satisfaction, format and presentation, content, knowledge gained and changing views)
- Quality assurance (online feedback, e-mail responses to queries, Journal Impact factor)

Monitoring **Use** by:

- Online usage (pop-up poll when downloading on sector, purpose and relevance)
- Feedback questionnaire (need to adapt information, use to inform policy/decision making or improve practice)

Monitoring **Collaboration and capacity building** initiatives through:

- Activities
- Partners
- Numbers
- Feedback

Evaluation

Impact Events

Once research has been produced, we will co- host events with key stakeholder partners, when relevant, to explore the implications of the research findings and how we can action change and maximise its impact. This mechanism will be adapted from the Overseas Development Institute's RAPID (Research and Policy in Development) Model which is an approach to maximise influence of research-based evidence on policy and practice (Young, ODI, Gateway for capacity development, www.capacity.org)

1. Map socio-economic and political context and key factors of influence
2. Identify key stakeholders and create interest and influence matrix
3. Agree changes needed among stakeholders from current views
4. Undertake positive and negative force field analysis and degree of influence over them
5. Analysis capacity to effect change
6. Establish monitoring and learning framework to oversee actions
7. Review extent of impact and change in medium to long term

Qualitative Realistic Evaluation

As part of our Performance Management Evaluation we will undertake a more intensive qualitative evaluation of our knowledge exchange activities every two years. This will be the most resource intensive element of our evaluation, in addition to the evaluation of all our monitoring information. It will be based on the Realistic Evaluation Model (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) which suggests that all programmes are theories and through their model they offer a way of differentiating what works in which context and with whom. Vicky Ward et al. (2009) have been developing a framework for gathering evidence using this type of evaluation for knowledge exchange interventions in health.

Process to be used:

- Agree the programme theories and mechanisms we have used to bring about change and impact including the target audiences and desired changes and outcomes from our knowledge exchange work
- Codify and map these mechanisms in relation to user motives, outcomes and contexts through stakeholder and recipient views, administrative data and cross tabulating responses
- Identify outcome patterns in the analysis
- Suggest the different outcomes that occur in different contexts (policy, practice and academia)

End Project Evaluation and Exit Strategy

The ongoing monitoring, Annual Reviews, Performance Management Evaluations and qualitative realistic evaluations will all feed into the end of project evaluation of TSRC and our knowledge exchange work. Our ongoing commitment to evaluation will hopefully offer reflective learning for future research centres, knowledge exchange activities and the TSRC.

The Third Sector Research Centre is a five-year investment programme by the ESRC and OTS, which started in September 2008. Part of the aims of the centre is to become a sustainable Research Centre in the future on the Third Sector, but this does not necessarily offer the resources for knowledge exchange.

There are possibilities for the research resources gathered and created by the centre to survive beyond the lifetime of the Centre through partnership working with the British Library. The Capacity Building Clusters are five programmes (except for the Economic Impact CBC which started a year later and is for four years) will create a legacy from the opportunities created through the CASE studentships and knowledge transfer partnerships.

Impact Dimensions

The Third Sector Research Centre aims to have an impact on a number of different dimensions, in the academic world of knowledge, in communities through building the capacity and research skills of the sector, in society by informing policy and decision making on the third sector, and in the economy by exploring the impact of the sector. Key areas of impact are detailed below each dimension:

Knowledge

- Academic outputs
- Methodological innovation
- Academic training provided through CBCs
- Teaching programmes
- New avenues of dissemination (new academic journal)
- Collaborative activity with other academics

Community

- Researcher career progression (TSRC, CBCs)
- CASE Studentships PhD training (CBCs)
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (CBCs)
- Placements and Fellows (TSRC, CBCs)
- Student internships (TSRC, CBCs)

Society & Policy

- Action research/feedback leading to policy change
- New practice initiatives
- Good practice guidance
- Collaborative activity with policy and decision makers including local and central government, funders and think tanks
- Collaborative activity with third sector organisations to learn from and support practitioners who work to deliver change

Economy

- Expansion and extension of TSRC research activity and funding
- Consultancy activity
- Improved resilience and survival for third sector organisations from qualitative work
- Research into the impact of the sector which is qualitative and quantitative

Approach: Making a difference in policy, practice and academia

Scoping work undertaken prior to the commissioning of the Third Sector Research Centre along with extensive consultation on the proposal, informed our approach to deliver impact from investment in TSRC. The Third Sector Research Centre has a commitment to increase the academic and non-academic use of our research through the close engagement of potential users in the research process. We want to make a difference at all levels and across all disciplines in the sector during the life of the TSRC.

Our work will have significance in the academic world

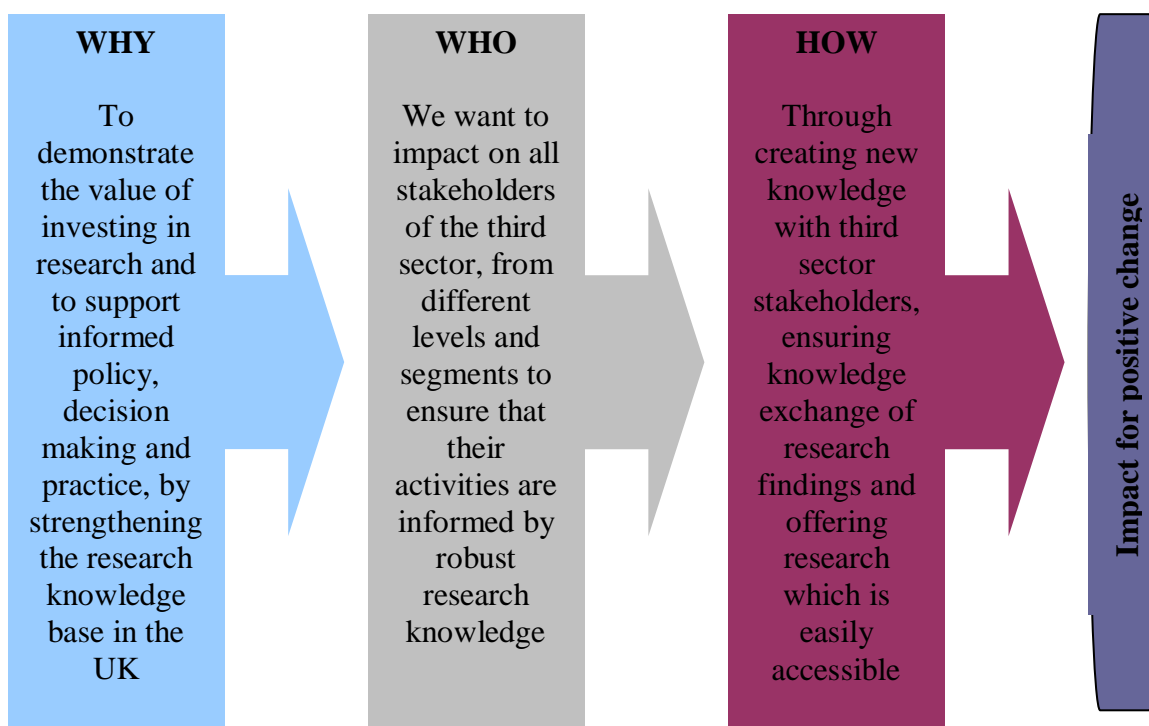
- Systematic review of existing research knowledge
- Original and cutting-edge research knowledge created
- Innovation in theory and research methods, tools and techniques
- Interrogating existing datasets and establishing a robust research base
- Development of international comparative work
- Development of data sources in order to have a strong evidence base

We will have an innovative engagement approach with stakeholders

- Advisory Board
- Reference Groups for each research stream and for each of the regions
- Partnership working with ESRC and other research centres (NCRM, NGPA, CGAP, CMPO)
- Strong partnership working with key stakeholders in academic, policy and practice
- Collaborative research initiatives and workshops across the devolved regions
- Increasing research capacity with the sector through Capacity Building Clusters and our knowledge exchange activities

We will offer new ways to access research knowledge

- Web Portal of TSRC research knowledge on the third sector in the UK
- Working paper series, publications and debate
- Events and seminars on the implications of the research with stakeholders
- Qualitative and quantitative database on the sector



Ways of Measuring Impact

Using the Aspen Institutes 'Theory of Change'¹¹ we suggest that by investing in robust research into and with the third sector, informed actions can be taken which will improve the impact of the third sector and inform decisions which affect the sector's ability to deliver change. Key assumptions underlying this theory of change will be that relevant research is undertaken and that effective mechanisms are used to ensure the research is used by sector stakeholders.

Critical success factors in the research will include: building on research areas which are weak; using methodologically sound approaches; ensuring the research is independent, impartial and authoritative offering opportunities for stakeholders to engage in the research process (either through action research, reference groups, virtual blogs and discussion boards, and stakeholder events); and that the research contributes to the research knowledge base of the third sector and can be used to improve stakeholders' understanding of the sector and influence their actions.

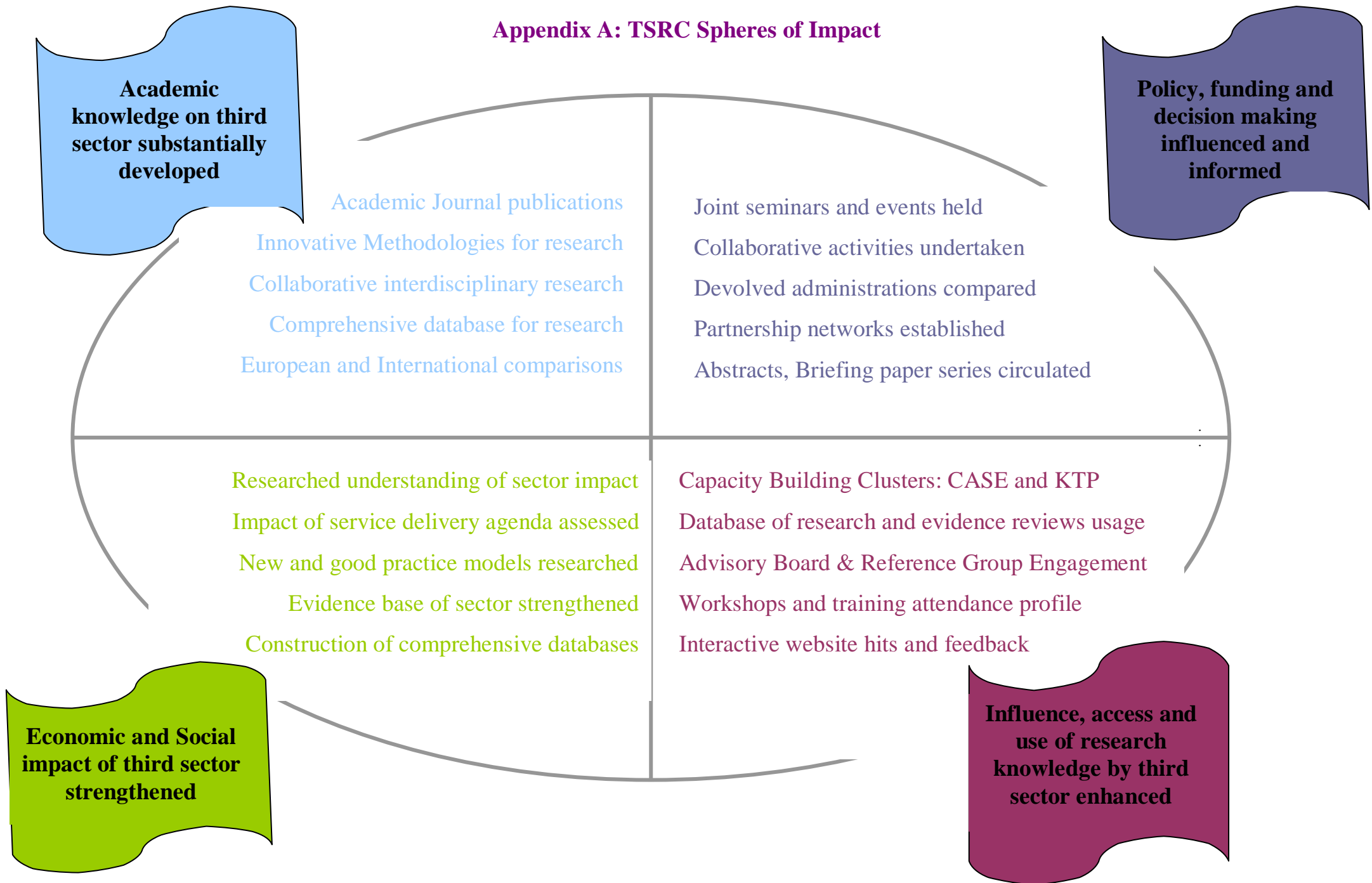
We will assess the impact of TSRC using the following measures:

- 1) Third party verification – development of structure for engagement and feedback from academia, policy and practice
- 2) Case Studies – recorded throughout TSRC programmes
- 3) Capacity Building Cluster outcomes from CASE studentships, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, vouchers and placements
- 4) Metrics cross-referenced with academics, policy and practitioners in the sector
 - Website hits and activity
 - References, citations and publications
 - Invitations to present at conferences nationally and internationally
 - Events organised and attended
 - Collaborative projects
 - New projects commissioned and funded
 - Media coverage
 - E-mail distribution list

We will measure our impact against our contribution to the ESRC Third Sector Engagement Delivery Plan 2009–2012 and relevant milestones (see Appendix C). We will also demonstrate the quality and quantity of our activities in our Spheres of Impact diagram (Appendix A).

¹¹ The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives (2003) see also <http://www.aspeninstitute.org>

Appendix A: TSRC Spheres of Impact



APPENDIX B

How TSRC will deliver on ESRC's Strategy for Engagement with the Third Sector

As part of the Economic and Research Council's (ESRC) **Strategy for Engagement with the Third Sector**¹² they have co-funded the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) with the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) and support from the Barrow Cadbury Trust. The University of Birmingham and the University of Southampton are responsible for running the Centre. The TSRC will deliver primarily on the Strategic Aim 1: To increase and improve the evidence base for the third sector, contributing to improved effectiveness of the sector.

The **Capacity Building Clusters** which are being funded separately but which will report to the TSRC, will support in part the **Strategic Aim 2**: Build capacity for carrying out and making use of research relevant to the third sector by supporting the development of skills, resources and involvement in third sector research. The Capacity Building Clusters are specialising in social enterprises, active learning, community empowerment and economic impact of the third sector; they are led by Middlesex University, Lincoln University and University of Bristol respectively. These Clusters will offer CASE studentships which enable academics and third sector organisations to work in partnership, knowledge transfer partnerships where research staff can apply their expertise to a third sector project, placements and voucher schemes. These opportunities will support the coproduction of knowledge and its application to the third sector.

A key element of the TSRC is its Knowledge Exchange Team of research and knowledge brokers based in London. This element will ensure interactive third sector engagement in the research process, and offer resources to translate and encourage the take up of the research outcomes by policy and decision makers, funders and practitioners. The Knowledge Exchange Team will contribute primarily towards the **Strategic Aim 3** of the ESRC Strategy for Engagement with the Third Sector: to develop systems for knowledge brokering and exchange amongst third sector stakeholders to ensure that ESRC responds to needs and achieves greater social and economic benefits from its investment in research.

As per the TSRC contract with ESRC and OTS we are delivering on **Section 3 the Knowledge Transfer Programmes**:

- 3.3 Regarding major advances in the communication and co-production of knowledge between the academic sector and the policy and practice communities
- 3.4 Regarding a programme of engagement with policy and practice communities to make a significant contribution in the areas of:
 - 3.4.1 Development of a capacity to analyse and advise its stakeholders on the actual and likely impacts of public policies on the sector
 - 3.4.2 Development of instruments for the identification and communication of research needs, planning of research strategies and the communication of research outcomes
 - 3.4.3 Development of a robust, sustainable and widely recognised and utilised system of communication between researchers, TSOs and policy makers
 - 3.4.4 Programmes of networking, seminars, conferences and workshops, designed in collaboration with stakeholders
 - 3.4.5 Development of a capacity to identify needs for and provide and/or broker provision of appropriate research-related training, for both TSO staff and commissioners of research from outside the sector

¹² See ESRC website page on Third Sector
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/KnowledgeExch/ESRCthirdsectorengagement.aspx>

APPENDIX C

Relevant deliverables from ESRC Third Sector Engagement: Delivery Plan 2009–2012

Strategic Aim 1: To increase and improve the evidence base for the third sector

- Supporting the development of research and knowledge exchange activities
- Enhancing the evidence base and building capacity with, for and on the sector
- Systematically map and measure the third sector
- Identify the role, impact and effectiveness of the third sector
- Support international comparisons of third sector issues
- Support interdisciplinary research
- Identify needs of relevant 'segments' with the sector
- Build capacity for engagement and co-production of knowledge
- Developing synergies between TSRC, CGAP and CMPO
- Contributing to the editing and promotion of the new academic journal on the sector – *Voluntary Sector Review*
- Co-production of knowledge and involvement of a mix of practitioners/researchers/policy makers in research from identifying needs, defining research issues through to communication of results

Strategic Aim 2: To build capacity for carrying out and making use of research

- Developing and commissioning a project on quality standards for research
- Identifying and providing relevant training/other resources available in research methods /commissioning research for third sector practitioners with NCRM, NCVO and research user sessions
- Organising a workshop on 'Benefits of Data Infrastructure for Third Sector Research'
- Developing a portfolio of bespoke developmental and training workshops
- Working with funders to develop an evidence-based culture in the third sector
- Introducing a third sector fellowship scheme
- Introducing a public sector fellowship scheme
- Developing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Strategic Aim 3: To develop systems of knowledge brokering and exchange amongst third sector stakeholders

- Developing a comprehensive database of all relevant networks, academics, third sector organisations and policy makers
- Establishing strong relationship with VSSN and European Third Sector Network
- Providing funding for comprehensive reviews of relevant third sector research in an appropriate format for third sector audiences
- Developing a network of all third sector researchers and policy makers to improve greater interaction and knowledge exchange
- Organising third sector networking days in collaboration with the four nations

Strategic Aim 4: To assess and maximise the impact of ESRC's research and KT activities

- Ensuring maximum impact of TSRC on policy and practice
- Continuing to review, identify and utilise effective mechanisms for communicating and engaging with the third sector.

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To find out more:

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