

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION EVIDENCE PLAN 2011/12

Evidence Plans are part of Defra's business planning processes. They have been developed for each policy programme, ongoing function or hub with a substantial evidence base

The main purposes of Evidence Plans are to help Defra policy and evidence teams to:

- Maintain a clear 'line of sight' between policy objectives and evidence needs;
- Ensure best use of others' evidence and maximise opportunities for partnerships;
- Show a clear rationale and value for money for Defra investment in evidence;
- Prepare for policy evaluation.

1. POLICY RATIONALE

1.1 Policy context

There are many environmental and social impacts (e.g. resource depletion, climate change, pollution, economic growth, waste management, biodiversity loss, labour rights) which arise from the production and/or consumption of products and services in the UK. Many of these impacts arise outside the UK but arise directly from UK consumption. In many cases these impacts fall outside existing markets, and where the markets do account for them they are often hindered by lack of information causing inaccurate pricing of goods and services, especially in the long term. That many of the impacts affect public goods, such as ecosystem services, also means that the market cannot account for them. This has been demonstrated by many research projects, both within Government and outside.

The programmes and ongoing functions that previously formed the Strategy and Sustainability directorate have been realigned to create Green Economy and Strategy (GES). The GES directorate's overarching goals support the Coalition Government's priorities and therefore the focus of the SCP Programme is encompassed by GES policy areas. The SCP Programme covers the environmental, social and economic impacts of goods and services across their lifecycle, from resource extraction through to end-of-life. As such existing SCP policy focuses on the following areas of activity:

- Encouraging business to produce, market and use more **sustainable products**, i.e. goods and services. This is necessary as the true costs of goods & services are often hidden, and many of their impacts, such as water use and pollution, are not accounted for through the markets. There is much work going on in Defra which aims to highlight the main impacts the UK has on ecosystems and resources nationally and internationally, for example through the National Ecosystem Assessment and Natural Value Programme. SCP Policy also focuses on understanding the specific impacts of business and products on these ecosystems and resources.
- Encouraging **consumer demand** for sustainable goods and services, and reducing the environmental and social impacts of **household consumption**. Consumer buying decisions are often based on incomplete information as to the impacts of goods & services, and on prices which, as stated above, do not reflect the true costs of the product;
- Increasing the **resource efficiency** of business operations and processes. Often businesses can be unaware of the potential savings that can be made from more efficient use of resources, especially in the medium to long term. They can also be similarly unaware of the business risk that can occur through the volatile price and supply of resources, which can be mitigated through efficient resource use;
- Leading by example through sustainable **public procurement**. With the public sector spending (in 2008) around £220 billion per year on goods & services, the opportunity to influence markets through supporting providers of sustainable products is considerable; and
- Preventing, reducing and recycling **waste**, and reducing landfill. As a method of pricing an

'externality', the landfill tax has been invaluable in reducing waste to landfill. However, the solutions further up the waste hierarchy, such as reuse and sustainable product design, need Government support to ensure that business is aware of potential new markets.

One of the major roles for Government in all of these areas is its contribution to the evidence base; generating information, for consumers and businesses as well as for the development of policy, in order to address the areas where lack of information means these impacts occur outside the market.

These goals reflect the Coalition Government's priorities, as highlighted in Defra's Business Plan, particularly to "Support a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change. The specific sub-priorities of 'driving a zero-waste agenda', 'driving sustainable public sector practice across Government' and 'promoting a low-carbon and eco-friendly economy' are also key objectives for the programme.

However, the SCP Programme also has an important part to play in the other 2 main priorities; 'support and develop British farming and encourage sustainable food production' (through our work in areas vital to the food sector, such as packaging) and 'help to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life' (through work to reduce all impacts of goods & services, including on biodiversity).

The Coalition Government's policy approach advocates policy solutions for business that encourage collaborative, voluntary action to minimise the need for regulation. The SCP Evidence programme supports SCP Policy activity on voluntary action with industry. The pilot Product Roadmaps have depended on the Evidence programme for the underpinning information that has enabled Government to engage industry in thoroughly addressing its impacts. Without the evidence, industry could not have been properly engaged, and progress on voluntary activity would have been limited.

The Coalition Government is also very interested in how a 'behaviour change' approach can encourage citizens to do things differently. The Centre for Expertise on Influencing Behaviour (CEIB) directly supports this focus and the Centre's social research and practical evidence and insight into consumer and business behaviour is a resource for all Defra policy teams, complementing the social research undertaken by the embedded researchers across Defra.

In order to deliver outcomes in the areas above, SCP Policy focuses on the following themes:

- **ASSESSMENT AND TOOLS:** Helping Government and business understand how to assess the life cycle impacts of products, identifying methods of reducing those impacts and how to market and differentiate those products. This supports the Coalition Government's "small government" approach of providing business with useful tools and standards against which they can operate.
- **SUSTAINABLE ENERGY USING PRODUCTS:** To increase the sustainability of energy using products through a range of product policies (EU minimum energy efficiency and energy labelling standards, and supply chain and international engagement) in order to contribute to UK carbon reduction targets.
- **EU AND PROCUREMENT:** Developing challenging but achievable UK Government and EU-wide frameworks for the sustainable procurement of products. Product specifications for public purchasing are developed and published as Government Buying Standards. The evidence supporting the development of Government Buying Standards is essential for helping the Coalition Government become the "greenest Government ever".
- **PRODUCT ROADMAPS:** Further developing and encouraging implementation of product roadmaps that identify the environmental and social impacts that occur across the lifecycle of high impact products. This approach is being developed under the Coalition Government's goal for more Responsibility Deals with business.

- **SUPPORTING BUSINESS ACTION TOWARDS A GREEN ECONOMY:** Ensuring that future growth is also 'green' growth by supporting sectors to become more green, including those new sectors that are vital to a green economy, such as renewable technology industries, but also all existing industries as they become lower in impact and more productive. This includes identifying and encouraging the skills required for a green economy, acknowledging the global nature of business by engaging with initiatives on resource efficiency at international & EU level, ensuring that supports best respond to customer needs and addressing barriers to greater sustainability.
- **UNDERSTANDING AND INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR:** People living more sustainable lifestyles with less impact on the environment will be delivered through collaborative action from business, civil society, communities, and government. This includes a key role for business to reduce their impacts across the production and supply chain and engage its customers. Additionally focus is on individuals and communities reducing the impact of the food they buy, using less water and energy, producing less waste, and buying and using products and services more sustainably. While some people and organisations are actively making sustainable lifestyle choices, this change is not yet at the level needed to meet environmental challenges. Understanding behaviour, motivations, habits and the barriers to further action means policies can effectively influence people's choices and enable them to move towards more sustainable lives.

2. CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE, INVESTMENT AND FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Current state of knowledge

The case for Government intervention in terms of business impacts comes from evidence that while territorial GHG emissions (i.e. within UK boundaries) have been declining, global GHG emissions arising from UK consumption have been rising as the UK increasingly imports manufactured goods from abroad¹. This could also be used as a proxy for other environmental and social impacts, such as water use and biodiversity loss. Much natural science and economic analysis has already been undertaken, both nationally and internationally, looking into the production and supply processes of goods and services that have the highest impacts over their life cycle^{2,3}. These form the focus of the Policy work into priority product impacts.

Wider product issues, such as maximising the lifetime of products, are also considered through ongoing research, with input from the Centre of Expertise on Influencing Behaviour (CEIB), which gives expertise on issues such as consumer opinion of product lifetimes. Reduction in the impacts of products and services relies on action by both businesses and consumers. The case for action by business has been well researched through the economic investigation of the environmental, financial and competitiveness benefits of resource efficiency measures^{4,5} and the risks associated with resource use⁶. Other tools for use by businesses, e.g. corporate reporting and GHG footprinting, have been investigated to determine the scale of the benefits (economic & environmental) that can be expected and how these can be maximised^{7,8}. Government's potential in changing markets through its procurement practices is investigated on a product by product basis, and implemented through Government Buying Standards. This is informed by the targeted product work stated above, set against Government spend in key areas.

Defra has been developing an internationally respected social research evidence base to help us to understand and investigate the links between people's environmental attitudes, values, current behaviours and motivations and barriers. Behaviour is complex and there is *no single solution* to encouraging people to act – while most say they are willing to do a bit more, people have different reasons for acting, as well as different barriers to action⁹. Influencing behaviour needs a package of interventions which works with people's motivations and addresses the fundamental barriers to action (e.g. *start where people are*). This is likely to include interventions that provide the infrastructure to enable people to act; demonstrates that government, business

and others are already acting (e.g. *we will if you will*); considers the role of incentives and disincentives; and engages people through trusted intermediaries and peers.

Specifically looking at Energy using Products (EuP), we have a well developed economic evidence base in terms of consumption in use, UK stock and potential savings from various policy interventions¹⁰. This has included recent research into how behavioural economics can be incorporated into policy design to maximise policy effectiveness. However, the performance of products is dynamic and the policy landscape and number of products covered by UK, EU and international policies are constantly changing so the evidence base needs to be updated and maintained.

Please also [annex key references](#).

2.2 Primary objectives of evidence activities

The overarching objectives of SCP evidence are:

- To enable access to evidence in the field of SCP (national & international) for Policy Leads and wider stakeholders;
- To synthesise and interpret existing and emerging SCP evidence for Policy Leads and wider stakeholders in an appropriate language and format to maximise use of that evidence;
- To devise the most effective way (in terms of cost and quality) to gather robust evidence by pursuing joint funding opportunities with other stakeholders;
- To regularly review developing SCP evidence with policy and evidence colleagues, and to challenge that development through comparison with existing and emerging policy needs;
- To conduct ground-breaking research and use key insights from the evidence base to advise policy and communications colleagues on the most effective approaches to influence change.
- To support the development of national, EU and international policy and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies.

The specific areas that are the focus of future evidence activities, along with SCP Evidence processes for identifying them, are detailed in Section 2.4.

2.3 Current investment in evidence

In order to support SCP Policy in the areas listed in Section 1.1 SCP Evidence encompasses a diverse range of evidence projects within the following research themes:

1. **SCP Measurement Methods** (e.g. ecological footprinting, Material Flow Analysis, Life Cycle Assessment, SCP indicators); this natural science and economics-based work aims to enable the effective measurement of UK production and consumption environmental impacts, as well of those of specific goods & services, to a level that is informative for SCP policy making and UK business. This theme directly supports the 'assessment & tools' and 'EU & procurement' policy areas and contributes to the Defra priority of 'supporting a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change' by promoting and developing the tools business needs to identify and reduce the major impacts of its activities. This also supports the priority 'help to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life' as many of these impacts will be on the natural environment.
2. **Sustainable Products, Services and Materials (including Energy using Products)**; through a combination of social research, natural science and economics-based work this theme identifies the environmental and social impacts of products, services and systems across their lifecycle and highlights effective interventions to reduce them. This theme supports the 'sustainable energy-using products' and 'product roadmap' policy areas and therefore the Defra priority to 'support a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change'. This is achieved through identifying and focusing resources on those

products that have the highest impacts through UK consumption, and by working with industry and the EC to reduce those impacts. Mostly this will be through voluntary measures by industry, although in the case of energy-using products compulsory standards are set at EU level. Again this also contributes to the other Defra priorities of 'help to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life' and 'support and develop British farming and encourage sustainable food production' where the products have impacts on the natural environment and are food-related.

3. **Business, Economy and Environment** provides evidence that is used at both a strategic and practical delivery level within Defra to:
- Encourage effective resource efficient behaviours by business;
 - Help with the transition to a green economy; and
 - Encourage the internal management and external reporting of environmental and social impacts by business.

This theme supports the 'supporting business action towards a green economy' policy theme, and therefore the 'support a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change' Defra priority by making the business case for resource efficiency, studying the risks associated with resources and contributing to the UK's obligations under the Climate Change Act by investigating the role of public reporting in reducing GHG emissions by UK business. As public reporting is increasingly focussing on wider issues, such as water use and biodiversity loss, it is expected that this theme will also contribute to Defra's priority of 'helping to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life' in the future. The work in this area is largely economics and natural science-based. However, social research providing insight into business behaviours will be increasingly undertaken in conjunction with the Centre for Expertise on Influencing Behaviours.

4. **Understanding and influencing behaviour** – provides a broad understanding of current behaviours, how to influence behaviour to more sustainable actions, the motivations and barriers to change and what will best achieve change. Research also includes piloting and testing innovative approaches to encourage sustainable behaviour through an innovative programme of Action Based Research and small-scale pilots. This social research evidence theme supports the policy theme of the same name, essential in moving towards Defra's priority of 'supporting a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change' but also contributing to the other two as investigations into consumer behaviours input insight to all areas.

2.4 Identifying and prioritising new evidence needs

The current state of knowledge has been outlined in Section 2.1 and is extensive. Therefore our priority must be in making the maximum use of this wealth of knowledge. The creation of SCPinfo.net is specifically to support easy access to the available, existing evidence, to avoid over-commissioning.

Evidence needs are prioritised through the use of existing, and sometimes specially commissioned, literature and synthesis reviews. This is also achieved through discussion with experts in priority fields, who have the most extensive knowledge and understanding of their subject. This information is then placed in a policy-relevant context to enable policy leads to understand and use the information. This, in tandem with discussions with colleagues (evidence, policy and specialist (i.e. economist and statistic)), helps to identify gaps in knowledge. The Evidence Advisory Panels also advise the evidence teams on current and future research needs.

Initial scoping and further discussion with external experts helps determine whether the evidence gap is genuine, whether commissioning new research would represent value for money, and whether Government needs to fill the evidence gap. If Government is not the right commissioner, the evidence need can be presented to appropriate bodies such as research

councils and delivery bodies for consideration. Evidence needs are reviewed throughout the financial year and the prioritisation of projects is an ongoing process.

Through the most recent iteration of this process the following gaps have been identified and prioritised according to the Coalition Government's priorities and whether data is currently available for analysis, or is likely to be available in a few years time.

Immediate needs (prioritised in the 2011/12 financial year)

- Research into the wider effects of resource efficiency measures on other resources (such as water and material resources) and economic issues such as employment.
- Research into the environmental and social impacts of resources vital to a green economy, such as the rare earth metals needed for renewable energy technologies and electric car batteries.
- Better understanding of how best to influence individuals and communities to adopt more sustainable behaviours and lifestyles (e.g. through piloting and testing different intervention methods).
- Increased understanding and effective interventions for changing business behaviour, both in the UK and within global supply chains meeting UK demand for goods & services.
- Better understanding of the usage patterns and user behaviours of domestic energy using products, in order to explore the benefits of dynamic demand policies as they relate to appliances.
- In terms of sustainable public procurement, further work on specifications for individual products is needed and underway (particularly to ensure alignment with the EU's Green Public Procurement standards, against which the UK Government's procurement contracts will be measured by the EC, in 2011). Research into indicators for sustainable procurement is underway to help demonstrate the environmental, financial and social outcomes of sustainable public procurement.

Longer term needs (2011/12 and beyond)

- Further understanding is needed of the impact of sustainable public procurement on the market, and the benefits and impacts of sustainable procurement by Government compared to the private and third sectors.
- Investigation into the scope for further impact reduction tools for products, e.g. for water footprinting.
- Investigation into the role of investors in reducing environmental impacts, especially the GHG emissions of business.
- Strengthen the cost and benefits analysis element of the EuP evidence base to better support policy development, including research into how the impacts of innovation reduce the costs of sustainable products.
- Investigation into the products, sectors and impacts that can be most benefitted from sustainable product design.

2.5 Secondary benefits of evidence activities

One of main secondary benefits of SCP evidence activities across the programme will be in creating and developing relationships with other stakeholders, including the devolved administrations, research councils, OGDs, trade associations and consumer groups, business representatives and other countries/ regions. This adds to, and sometimes kick starts, engagement on a policy platform and is shown by the number of workshops and stakeholder discussion forums held through evidence projects which then go on to form the basis of wider policy stakeholder groups. For example, in the case of the Centre of Expertise on Influencing Behaviour, developing an evidence base and best practice that is accessible to other organisations, is key to the work. This enables other stakeholders to build on the evidence base to develop more effective approaches for delivering change within organisations, with individuals

and communities.

Another key benefit is the degree to which SCP evidence is applicable across many other areas of work, both within Defra and without. Key examples include:

- The input of SCP evidence on the impacts of goods & services on the natural environment and the tools for measuring such impacts into the Natural Environment White Paper, prepared by the Natural Environment Strategic Unit.
- The input of information on the benefits of resource efficiency to waste reduction, and the potential barriers to business on further waste reduction into the Waste Policy Review, prepared by the Waste Programme.
- The co-running of evidence on the level of UK consumption of palm oil, used by the EU & International Unit in their negotiations with international governments on the impacts of palm oil.
- The use of evidence on the resource risks to UK business as part of engagement with the EC on materials security and sustainable materials management; also inputting into the EU Raw Materials Initiative, due for publication in 2011.

2.6 Alignment to long-term evidence challenges and Reform Plan objectives

Most of the areas where SCP evidence contributes to Coalition Government priorities have been highlighted throughout the document. It is fair to say that many of our current and planned evidence activities contribute to the overarching challenge of climate change mitigation, especially those that fall in the 'Business, Environment and Economy' theme. These include information and communication to businesses of the benefits of using resources efficiently (including energy and reducing waste), and reduction of impacts from public procurement. SCP evidence in Assessment and Tools develops methodologies which allow business to reduce the impacts of their products, including food, and develops ways to increase the uptake of these methods by industry. As product and business impacts are considered in their entirety this also includes a focus on resources such as metals, minerals, water and biotic resources such as timber and plant extracts. These therefore contribute to the challenge of protecting ecosystem services as well as ensuring a sustainable food supply (through a focus on the importance of water). The EuP evidence base also helps to support wider UK Government carbon reduction measures, such as carbon budgets and the DECC Green Deal.

Many actions in Defra's Business Plan support the current direction of evidence spend. For example, the focus on driving sustainable food procurement by Government is a goal of our Sustainable Procurement Policy Team (who are jointly developing the Government Buying Standard for food, with Food Policy colleagues), and therefore a driver for our evidence needs. A consideration of water use will also be required to increase domestic food supply, and therefore water use by other industries as well as agriculture will become key. The international focus of preserving biodiversity fits with our current focus on key, high impact products, such as Palm Oil.

The work on understanding and influencing behaviour will be a central source of evidence for the GES directorate. This evidence work will also be central to help support and deliver against the collation priorities on big society, particularly in terms of developing alternative models of delivery.

3. INTERNAL CAPABILITIES - USING DEFRA'S EVIDENCE SPECIALISTS

3.1 Range of knowledge disciplines needed

Research managers in SCP tend to have scientific training, or in the case of CEIB, are specialists in social research. Research managers need to gather together individuals with

specific expertise for each project or work stream and utilise that expertise to generate high quality new evidence, or understand and use existing evidence. The research manager also acts as an interpreter for policy leads; ensuring information is accessible in tone and format and therefore allowing policy leads to get the most from the evidence.

In terms of specialist knowledge, the following is required; lifecycle analysis (both overall and for specific products), statistics and modelling (on a whole economy, organisation or citizen scale), business processes and economics expertise (including expertise on product and business model design), expertise on understanding and influencing behaviour (including social marketing) and social research expertise. These needs are usually met in 5 main ways:

- For an individual project, by employing a specialist Research Managing Agent to manage technical projects;
- By utilising the specialist advisors employed by the Policy Teams and who also advise on evidence;
- By using in house expertise in social research and Defra's statistics (ESI) and economics (EGE) teams, including expertise in our agencies such as WRAP;
- By using the expertise (social psychology, sociology, behavioural economics) within the Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group and the Sustainable Practices Research Group; and
- By engaging specialists within OGDs and industry, including economists at BIS and technical experts at the Technology Strategy Board. These individuals often sit on individual research steering groups or on the Programme's Business Contact Group.

3.2 Access to internal specialists

The team has access to social researchers, natural scientists, economists, statisticians, legal, a research and insight manager and a specialist in social marketing and behaviour change.

Some further information on the Defra (but external to the SCP Programme) specialists used:

Environmental Statistics Resource and function

Statisticians are involved at all stages of the policy cycle across the whole of the SCP Programme, from helping to define and quantify the problem, providing advice on research projects to understand the issues, analysing the data to identify and target policy options and approaches, modelling likely outcomes and setting performance targets, setting up systems to monitor and report on performance and modelling and evaluating actual outcomes.

Economist resource and function

The resource in the SCP Branch of Environmental & Growth Economics (EGE) is primarily used to advise policy colleagues, attend meetings, carry out internal analysis and help design and input into external research projects. General advice relates to testing whether there is a market failure present, and if so, addressing that failure in the most cost-effective way by working out the additional costs and benefits of a number of options. The team also provides active support to the Market Transformation Programme (which is part of the evidence for Energy using Products work) in producing the correct evidence in line with the DECC Carbon Budgets.

Legal

The SCP Programme largely utilises legal advice and expertise through the Energy using Products team, which requires advice on relevant national and EU regulations and laws to negotiate and implement energy standards at EU-level.

3.3 Future resource needs and filling gaps in expertise

Resource needs in the SCP Programme are expected to remain constant in the next few years. Any additional expertise needed will be acquired as detailed in Section 3.1 and through the use of internal specialists as detailed in Section 3.2.

4. EXTERNAL KNOWLEDGE SUPPLY AND PARTNERS

4.1 Strategic external capabilities and suppliers

Two Research Groups focusing on Sustainable Behaviours have been set up as a joint research initiative between Defra and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). These Research Groups will be the primary source of new evidence for the Sustainable Behaviours Unit for the next three years.

The Groups will each be conducting a programme of research that aims to achieve new and relevant understandings of the processes which lead to changes in people's behaviours and practices and to provide advice on realistic strategies to encourage more sustainable lifestyles.

Defra is the majority funder of a Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group (SLRG) based at University of Surrey, with ESRC majority funding the Sustainable Practices Research Group (SPRG) based at University of Manchester. Both funders are clear that having two Research Groups focussing on complementary elements of sustainable behaviours will be a significant and progressive strengthening of research in this field. The two centre solution will help to ensure a holistic approach is taken to a complex and challenging sustainability issue.

The two Groups provide value for money in a number of ways. By collaboratively funding the Groups with the ESRC and the Scottish Government, Defra and the Groups benefit from the pooled resources. This is both in terms of the spread of expertise involved and ensuring all perspectives inform the scope of the projects to stretch the usefulness and reach of the findings.

The Groups also individually benefit from further funding that contributes to their activities. For example the Sustainable Consumption Institute has contributed to the SPRG.

The Groups are comprised of a consortium of academic partners who bring their specialisms to their own and each others' projects. This critical capacity will stretch the research into innovative and challenging territories.

The strategic direction of the Groups is subject to guidance from an Advisory Group consisting of the Group Directors, funders, three academics, a business representative and a civil society representative. The Advisory Group will help ensure the work of the two Research Groups is brought together, provide a challenge function from their field of expertise and will optimise the value for money of the investments, particularly by broadening the reach of the Groups' findings. The Market Transformation Programme is the model of energy using products (market and technical information) and is an essential resource to support the negotiations in the EU on Implementing Measures under the Eco-Design and Energy Labelling Directives.

4.2 Leverage and partnerships

Groups or organisations that have interest in our work, and vice versa include:

- Other areas of Defra *
- The Devolved Administrations ^ (which includes the Welsh Assembly Government as part of a shared evidence budget covering England and Wales)
- ODGs *
- Research Councils (and funded bodies e.g. universities and think tanks), including NERC and EPSRC^
- Government/Research partnership bodies, such as Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) ~
- Independent / lobbying organisations e.g. World Economics Foundation, Association of the Conservation of Energy
- NGOs, e.g. WWF

- Industry ~
- Agencies, e.g. WRAP and the Technology Strategy Board *
- The European Commission and its agencies ^
- International universities and organisations ~

There are 3 main aims in our relationships with stakeholders (individuals and groups):

1. To be aware of and utilise the existing relevant evidence they have, be it formal research or anecdotal expertise,
2. To make them aware of, and where appropriate engage in, the evidence we undertake (including situations where stakeholder buy-in to the evidence is essential as they are the intended audience and we want them to use it), and
3. Where priorities overlap sufficiently, to work together on specific projects or workstreams as a means of meeting aims 2 and 3 with the most efficient use of resources.

In terms of Aim 1, we keep up with external research through regular newsletters (where available), individual contacts and relationships, yearly or multi-yearly updates, calls for information or tenders, research portals e.g. ERFF, and international conference proceedings. Many of our commissioned research projects also include workshops and interviews (where relevant) in order to gather anecdotal evidence in the form of experience or opinion. Sometimes these are undertaken separately and outside of a commissioned project in order to gather opinion in new areas, or where a fully commissioned project would not represent value for money.

For Aim 2 it is important to target communications with the audience in mind. Often individual experts sit on project advisory panels. Evidence is disseminated through trade magazines, internal Government communications, presentation at events, press notices, by-lined articles, intermediary partners such as LWEC and 1-2-1 meetings with key individuals. The workshops and interviews undertaken in or outside of projects also contribute to this Aim.

Aim 3 depends greatly on timing as evidence commissioning cycles vary between organisations. However, it has been found that individual relationships with research commissioners and intermediary bodies is the most effective way of identifying and setting up co-funding partnerships as this allows deeper understanding of the priorities of the two (or more) parties. However, in future the Programme will be putting in place more general calls for relevant research and it may be that identifying potential co-funding opportunities can also be furthered in this way. The potential for future collaboration is highest with those organisations whose priorities most closely match our own, and who have the potential to match our funding. This includes ODGs, agencies, Devolved Administrations and the relevant Research Councils. In the case of the latter partnership organisations such as LWEC are likely to be useful in brokering this kind of collaboration.

The bodies marked with a (*) above are those where many of these forms of engagement are already in place, and it is considered that strong relationships with the Programme's evidence teams already exist. For example, Agencies and OGDs such as WRAP and BIS sit on many project steering groups, attend joint dissemination events and contribute to discussions on existing and future evidence needs. The programme's evidence teams have co-funded several projects with other areas of Defra, including the Food & Farming Programme and the Natural Environment Strategic Unit.

Relationships with those marked with (^) are currently being developed in order to understand and/or influence their remit and interests, and to potentially start a collaborative process with them. This remains a priority for the Programme's evidence teams. For example, a research manager is currently being seconded to the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) in order to understand how existing and new policy should affect the identification of new evidence needs and knowledge exchange activities with NERC. It is hoped that this will allow Defra to more actively influence NERC's research priorities.

Relationships marked with (~) are those where much more work is needed in order to fully engage the organisation or group in the Programme's evidence activities. This will be taken forward mainly through bringing these organisations into pre-existing groups, such as the Programme's Evidence Advisory Panels, developing individual relationships at events and targeting dissemination activities down the routes they are mostly likely to use.

Independent organisations and NGOs are not likely to collaborate with Government as they feel it compromises their independence.

An online tool (SCPinfo.net) is under development to provide a web-based access to the full range of evidence on SCP related subjects. This tool is intended to help policy makers and academics find all existing reports/studies on SCP issues of relevance. It is likely to be launched before the end of 2010/11.

4.3 Use and value of advisory bodies and external specialist advisers

As stated in Sections 3.1 & 3.3, the Programme's evidence teams rely on external expertise through advisory bodies and external specialist advisors. Apart from the Evidence Advisory Panels already highlighted, these specifically include:

- The SCP Business Contact Group
- National Materials Co-ordination Group *
- Resources & Risks informal working group *
- The Advisory Panel for the Sustainable Lifestyles and Sustainable Practice Research Groups *
- EuP external stakeholder group *
- Energy Saving Trust and other agencies *
- The Cabinet Office Behavioural Insight Group *
- Individuals brought together for specific project steering groups

Between them, these groups comment on high-level evidence plans and draft evidence reports for relevance, value for money and scientific and economic accuracy. They also provide an opportunity to increase awareness within OGDs and wider stakeholders of Defra's interest in specific areas. Most of these groups (marked with a *) are cross-governmental or wider and do not exist solely to provide advice to the SCP Programme. Therefore their contribution to our evidence goals is not formally evaluated. In the case of the Evidence Advisory Panels, these are newly set up and therefore no formal evaluation procedure has been implemented. Individual specialists are mostly used to comment at specific points of evidence projects; either as a peer reviewer of an initial specification or a final report.

5. MEETING NEW EVIDENCE NEEDS

5.1 Overall approach to meeting your evidence needs

While SCP Programme priorities are not likely to significantly change with the creation of the GES directorate, there are nevertheless several major policy reviews, including the Natural Environment White Paper, the Waste Policy Review, the Green Economy Roadmap and the Growth Strategies led by BIS, that may highlight new and specific areas that should be focussed upon in terms of evidence. Therefore our approach to meeting our evidence needs must have in-built flexibility to allow us to adapt. We believe we have that flexibility in a framework that ensures robust, value for money and policy relevant evidence.

In order to meet these evidence needs several processes and initiatives will be used. A new Joint Evidence Programme between Defra's Waste & SCP Evidence Teams, the Environment Agency and WRAP is being created in order to create line of sight between projects, which will involve projects commissioned by the different organisations being presented and

communicated together in similar themes. This will also highlight areas of overlapping remit and interest and therefore areas of potential co-funding of evidence. Guidance is being put in place to make a process of co-funding between these three organisations as easy as possible.

Where an evidence need has been identified the evidence will remain being commissioned directly through competition to consultancies, universities, other research providers and consortiums. Co-funding outside of the Joint Evidence Programme described above, for example with different parts of Defra, other Government Departments, the EC or Research Councils with LWEC as a partnership broker, will also be prioritised and identified through the relationship building described in Section 4.2. In addition SCP Evidence will make greater use of open calls in tendering, i.e. asking universities, consultants and others to submit research in specified areas of interest for the SCP Programme. This will ensure that SCP Evidence utilises the expertise that exists in the private sector and allows innovation in research to be funded, providing it matches SCP priorities.

Current successes in innovative evidence include the CEIB's programme of Action Based Research and small-scale pilots. Not all behavioural interventions are tried and tested and we need to take an innovative approach to how we think about problems, and the interventions/solutions we develop. Through developing small-scale pilots, we can test innovative techniques (based on theoretical insights) to identify what works, what does not work, and why. These small-scale pilots provide an important stepping stone to developing a case for/ or against wider scale-up or rollout. Each project within this programme of work draws on theory and is testing an approach where evidence suggests there is potential for change. The pilot projects follow an action based research design, this research technique helps ensure that learning is fully captured, and fed back into the project as the pilot progresses.

Many different areas of work focus on secondary analysis of existing data in order to understand the implications for policy, often with strong elements of stakeholder engagement built in. However, CEIB's Action Based Research Programme described above collects *primary* social research data on individual behaviours under different stimuli, while evidence contributing to the implementation of energy using product regulation is also often of primary data on the differing impacts of potential policy on minimum standards.

Mechanisms to ensure robust and value for money evidence include risk registers for the Programme and individual evidence teams, which will continue to be maintained and followed up by the Programme Board. These focus on the risks to the overall evidence commissioning process and the team as a whole. The robustness and value for money of individual projects (or clusters of related projects) is assured through a new evaluation process, currently being piloted by the SCP Evidence Team, which consists of start-up and post-research interviews with the main policy customers of the project. This process identifies success criteria for each project and evaluates that project on those criteria, which include value for money, at publication. This process was developed in response to the recent Evidence Assurance Review (EAR). Other recommendations from the EAR included an increased use of peer review to ensure research quality, and this is being considered.

Knowledge management and effective use of existing evidence will become an increasing priority as budgetary pressures continue. Interpretation of evidence for Policy Leads and other stakeholders will remain a priority for Research Managers as it helps to ensure that evidence is used for maximum effect. The introduction of evidence summaries for presentation at conferences and to interested parties was seen as a success in increasing the visibility of SCP research and the formats in which evidence is presented to different audiences will continue to be challenged, both within the teams and without.

The consequences if these evidence needs are not met range from losing momentum in key policy areas to risking infractions of EU or national regulation, as highlighted above.

5.2 Evidence investment forecast

Annex

Key references supporting the current state of knowledge [\[Return to Section 2.1\]](#)

- 1) Minx, J., et. al., SEI, 2010, *Understanding Changes in the UK's Carbon Footprint 1992 – 2004*, commissioned by Defra. Publication Imminent.
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- 5) SEI, 2009, *Meeting the UK Climate Change Challenge; the Contribution of Resource Efficiency*, commissioned by WRAP.
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- 8) Risk & Policy Analysts Ltd, 2006, *Review of Ecological Footprinting Methodologies*, commissioned by Defra
- 9) Framework for pro-environmental behaviours, Defra, 2008
- 10) Saving energy through better products and appliances – analysis, aims and indicative standards for energy using products, Defra, found here:
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