

Defra and DECC Social Science Expert Panel

Appointment of up to 12 expert advisers

SEG 1100

Information pack for applicants

The closing date for the receipt of applications for these roles is:

23rd January 2012

Introduction

The [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (Defra) is the UK government department responsible for policy and regulations on the environment, food and rural affairs. Our priorities are to:

1. Support and develop British farming and encourage sustainable food production
2. Help to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life
3. Support a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change

Defra also holds responsibility to:

1. Prepare for and manage environment risk from animal and plant disease outbreaks
2. Prepare for and manage environmental risk from flood emergencies

Our [Business Plan](#) gives more detail on our structure and vision.

The [Department of Energy and Climate Change](#) (DECC) is the UK Government department responsible for policy and regulation in the energy sector and plays a central role in international negotiations on climate change. Our priorities are to:

1. Save energy with the Green Deal and support vulnerable consumers
2. Deliver secure energy on the way to a low carbon energy future
3. Drive ambitious action on climate change at home and abroad
4. Manage our energy legacy responsibly and cost-effectively.

Our [Business Plan](#) gives more detail on our structure and vision. In addition, the latest [Carbon Plan](#) sets out plans for achieving the emissions reductions committed to in the first four carbon budgets up to 2027.

Defra and DECC are seeking to appoint up to twelve social science advisers to provide evidence based advice and challenge to the departments' social research strategy, programme and priorities. The remit of the panel is to:

- Support Defra and DECC to develop their social science capacity by advising on how and where social science can best contribute to meeting strategic objectives and commitments
- Advise and critically assess how Defra and DECC gather and use social science evidence and advice
- Provide independent critique/quality assurance and peer review of the design and output of social science research and evaluation studies, drawing on wider expertise where appropriate
- Keep Defra and DECC connected to relevant social science in the UK and internationally.
- Provide expert input to specific projects.
- Draft occasional expert review pieces.

The social science advisors would be expected to attend 2-3 half-day meetings at departmental offices per year. Departmental requests for additional support would be discussed in advance with advisors, but between 2 and 6 days of additional work per year should be expected. We anticipate

that meetings for the advisory group will be chaired by a member of the group with senior DECC and Defra social science presence.

The first meeting of the panel is expected to run over two days, provisionally on the 12th and 13th of March 2012.

Requirements

Defra and DECC wish to engage with social scientists¹ across a range of fields and are looking for experts in particular fields, topics and societal groups, as well as methodological experts to provide support and advice to the department on social science issues. Applicants should note that Defra and DECC already have in place Scientific Advisory Panels (DECC [Science Advisory Group](#); Defra [Science Advisory Council](#)) and economics expert groups. The motivation behind creating a joint Defra-DECC social science panel is to ensure the natural synergies across departmental remits are recognised when engaging with the research sector.

We are setting up a multi-disciplinary social science-focused expert panel to support social science within the departments and ensure it has a clear voice in the policy development process, to complement the voices of natural and physical sciences, engineering and economics. For the purposes of the panel, social research is intended to be taken broadly – based more on demonstrated ability to undertake high quality research using recognised social science methods, philosophy of design and understanding, than on membership of specific academic disciplines. We are principally interested in individuals with a strong track record of carrying out primary fieldwork with human participants in a social, organisational or community setting using approaches which are recognised as standard or innovative social research methods and which makes use of the latest theory and findings from the wider social sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology etc). Additionally expertise in research which reviews or addresses primary research findings via synthesis or critique and further analysis (e.g. modelling or combining data in other ways) will also be acceptable. In particular we are keen to engage those with a multi-disciplinary background, so long as the emphasis of past research has been on working in on recognisable social science projects, utilising high quality empirical data and exploiting current theories and models.

The areas of interest for this panel are as follows:

¹ The [Government Social Research Service](#) (GSR) provides evidence to understand, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate government policies and services. Members of GSR represent the social sciences that specialise in behaviour change, the evaluation of policies and interventions and provide in-depth data and objective analysis on what people and organisations think, how they behave and why they may not be responding to initiatives as planned. GSR members come from a range of social science backgrounds including psychology, social policy, geography, sociology, political science, criminology and social statistics. GSR members are recruited through rigorous assessment procedures ensuring high quality social scientists are employed as government social researchers. GSR requires that social research output to be: “output based on sound methodology and established scientific principles. It must be designed, conducted and produced/published to high research standards, and be objectively judged as meeting these standards. It must be impartial and objective and based on the best design available, given constraints.”

<u>Topic Specialism</u>	<u>Cross-cutting</u>
<p>Sustainability of Natural Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Food <p>Energy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy demand in domestic and non-domestic settings • Energy supply and implications for communities and public acceptance <p>Land Use, Infrastructure & Planning (including in the energy system at both local and national levels)</p> <p>Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Conservation & Pollution</p> <p>Climate Change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes, values, understanding and behaviour • Approaches to mitigation and adaptation relationship to wider energy and sustainability policy <p>Animal Health and Welfare</p>	<p>Localism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Communities & Issues • Civil Society • Community Action • Local Government • Quality of Local Environment <p>Risk Communication & Perception</p> <p>Business/workplace Behaviour²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs • Landlords • Energy Intensive Industry • Corporations • Farming & Fishing <p>EU & International:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International energy systems • International negotiations on climate change • Other international issues (e.g. technology transfer) • Understanding of EU and international policy and research in energy and climate change • Comparative research <p>Methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation: impact, process, mixed methods and meta-evaluation • Qualitative expertise, in particular around innovative and emerging methodologies • Quantitative expertise, in particular around exploiting existing data

We acknowledge that some individuals will have expertise in more than one area whilst others will have very precise expertise which might not cover all elements we are interested in under a particular heading. We are interested in selecting a people with a broad range of expertise for the panel, and accept that individual expertise in every sub-heading may not be achieved.

² This includes understanding businesses as agents and their decision-making processes in addition to looking at human behaviour in the workplace.

Further detail on these topics

Sustainable use of Natural Resources

We are interested in how behaviours and attitudes shape the way humans interact with the natural environment and use natural resources, including energy, food and water.

Food

International food security & food systems, including food retail
Trade, environmental, development and agricultural policy.

Water

Management of climate-related risks in infrastructure systems, in particular relating to flooding, coastal erosion and water scarcity.

Energy

Research on how behaviour or practices are maintained or change in the domestic and non-domestic domains, both at a household and organisational level; role of technology and wider environmental factors; wider social and cultural factors, including the public acceptance of new technology and involvement of local communities in the generation of new forms of supply.

Land Use, Infrastructure & Planning

Research on how people and 'the public' react to and interact with plans to deploy new infrastructure at micro, meso and macro levels

Adaptation to climate change, and planning for a sustainable built environment.

Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Conservation & Pollution

We would like to capture understanding of how human behaviour impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, both on land - for example through forestry and plant health - and in marine environments.

We have an interest in diverse forms of pollution, including both noise pollution and air quality.

Climate Change

General public understanding of climate change/anthropogenic global warming; impact on behaviour, views, etc;

- implications for society (mitigation and adaptation)
- what works in moving developed countries towards a low-carbon future
- what works in the UK in terms of moving towards a low-carbon future
- barriers and facilitators to a low-carbon lifestyle

Role of international negotiations and agreements – what makes a difference in achieving goals in these complex geo-political settings; civil engagement with the issues and responses

Animal Health & Welfare

This area includes issues around livestock management, linking to food security and systems and to farming and Defra's responsibilities around animal disease breakout.

Localism

We are interested in how communities function at different levels and through different forms of government, for example through community-level groups, local government and civil society organisations.

An understanding of issues facing rural communities is important.

Risk Communication & Perception

Knowledge management and public perceptions of risk, particularly relating to Defra's responsibilities with regards to plant and/or animal disease and to flooding and DECC's responsibilities on Climate Change and the development of new energy infrastructure such as new nuclear and Carbon Capture and Storage.

EU & International

An understanding of the role of the EU, particularly in regulation - for example around the Common Agricultural Policy and/or Common Fishing Policy.

Undertaking research on areas such as the human, social and political elements of international energy systems, international negotiations on climate change (in particular understanding what works in driving agreements), technology transfer etc. This also includes comparative research on energy policy and infrastructure and international social research on climate change related issues.

Methods

DECC and Defra need to conduct research around often complex, innovative policies with long-term or hard to measure outcomes. It is therefore essential we have ongoing advice and support from individual(s) with expertise in methods. We are particularly interested in capturing expertise in evaluation. Evaluating innovative policies, for example around developing the framework to support a new market, will require innovative evaluation techniques. We are looking for expertise in impact, process, mixed and meta-evaluations. As part of this we are also interested in innovative approaches to the valuation of social impacts.

We are also interested in the application of quantitative methods to social research, in particular around exploiting existing data. On qualitative research we are keen to have experts in innovative and emerging methodologies.

Business & Workplace Behaviours

Understanding how businesses come to make investment decisions; emergent behaviour; spread of innovation across businesses (for example, considering GM and Nanotechnologies); businesses as agents. Key to this agenda is an understanding of how government can support businesses to develop sustainable supply chains.

As well as understanding the similarities and differences between businesses of different sizes, such as SMEs, micro-businesses and large corporations, we also have an interest in particular segments, such as farming and fishing or energy intensive industries.

We would like to build understanding of both organisational behaviour and individual behaviour in a work environment.

Essential criteria

Candidates must clearly demonstrate the following personal qualities, skills and experience through their application (CV and covering letter).

Essential criterion 1:

Expertise in one, or preferably more, of the areas of interest identified above as relevant to DECC and/or Defra's portfolio of work, specifically from a mainly social science perspective. We anticipate that to have the requisite depth and breadth of experience the individual appointed will hold a Professorship, or have at least ten years post doctoral experience. In certain circumstances, where applicants have an exceptional track record of publication of relevant research in peer-reviewed, high impact journals, and a track record of contributing to large scale public policy programmes or applied programmes of research, this may also be considered in lieu of the above requirements.

Publication in high impact journals, and journals within standard, mainstream social science (e.g. Psychological Review) will hold greater significance than lower impact publications within the academic press focused on only environment or energy.

Essential criterion 2:

Ability to assess social science and evidence input into policy areas across a broad range of topics. This includes the ability to assess required evidence needs for policy-making and evidence quality³. Part of this will be demonstrated by your track record of published research, but we also require evidence of how you have tailored or adapted research to be useful for applied policy settings. This could be evidenced by significant input into research funded via government or business etc, along with any evidence you have of how that research affected practice (or was intended to affect practice in that instance).

Desirable Criteria

Desirable criterion 1:

Demonstrable experience of working in a high level policy context, including with international, national and local governmental organisations, public bodies, parliamentary committees, high profile thinktanks, industry or third sector groups. In particular, demonstrable experience of having

³ Applicants may wish to refer to the policy and evidence cycles on page 31 of the [Evidence Investment Strategy](#) for more information on how Defra approaches policy making and use of evidence. DECC has also adopted a policy cycle approach to embedding evidence into policy development and [evaluation](#), which the panel will be a core part of implementing.

influenced an organisation's research agenda in an applied setting (e.g. business, local authority, national policy or third sector delivery etc).

Desirable criterion 2:

Knowledge of Defra's "[Evidence Investment Strategy 2010-13 and beyond](#)" (EIS) in the context of Defra's Business Plan.

And/or

Knowledge of DECC's strategic priorities and its main delivery programmes (including the Business and Carbon Plans).

Desirable criterion 3:

Experience of working on an interdisciplinary committee or project or having substantial experience or knowledge of a non-social science area applicable to DECC or Defra policy areas.

Terms & Conditions

Advisors are appointed for a period of one year with the possibility of re-appointment subject to satisfactory performance, which will be at the discretion of the departments. Appointments are restricted to a maximum of three terms.

- Individual members would be expected to be able to be called on for advice, challenge and quality assurance throughout the year. The minimum resource expected from each panel member will be two days per annum and anticipate that additional resource may be called on up to around six days per annum. Turn around time for any outputs will be agreed on a case by case basis. It is likely that the call on resource will be spread throughout the year, rather than in a single block.
- On occasion, the advisors may be asked to come together as a group to provide feedback and advice to the departments. We anticipate this will be 2-3 times per annum, and will usually be for a half day meeting.
- Advisors may charge a standard fee of up to £500 per day, plus (standard class) expenses when travel to departmental offices is required. If an overnight stay is essential Defra will cover a stay in a hotel of their choosing plus subsistence.

Conduct

Advisors must observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide. Appointees will be accountable to Defra and DECC's Heads of Profession for Social Research and through them to the Directors of Analysis and Chief Scientists.

This is not an appointment to a public body.

Members must not:

- Misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms businesses or other organisations.
- Generally occupy paid party political posts or hold particularly sensitive or high-profile unpaid roles in a political party. Subject to that, members should be free to engage in low level political activities, provided that they are conscious of their general public responsibilities and exercise proper discretion, particularly in regard to the work of the board of which they are members. Board members should not normally make political speeches on matters regarding the work of the board, and abstain from all controversial political activities. Members must inform the Chair and sponsoring departments if significant political activity is undertaken during the term of appointment.

Any appointment can be terminated early if the appointee fails to perform his or her duties to a satisfactory standard.

Applicants' attention is drawn to the Seven Principles of Public Life (see Annex A)

Applications

To apply, please provide a CV and covering letter detailing your experience and expertise against each of the criteria highlighted in the 'Requirements' section above. Together, these two documents should not be longer than 4 sides of A4 (annexes or appendices not included). Please also include details of your expected day rate in your application.

Applicants should state clearly whether they will be available to attend the proposed first meeting of the panel on 12th and 13th of March 2012, although this will not be taken into account in assessing their suitability for the post.

Please direct any queries about the posts or application procedures to Davina Henderson at davina.henderson@defra.gsi.gov.uk or on 020 7238 1018.

Please return applications to Davina Henderson at davina.henderson@defra.gsi.gov.uk on or before 23th January. .

Annex A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.