

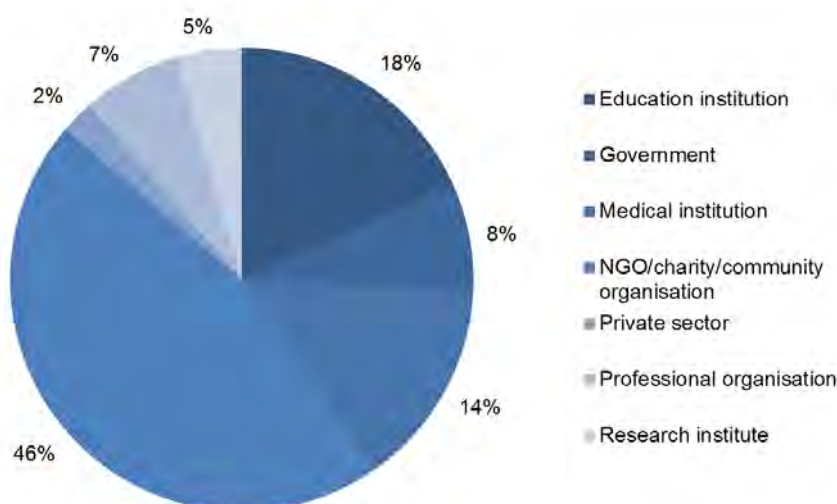
## Chapter 3 Other perspectives: feedback from host organisations and employers

Engaging with Professional Fellows' host organisations and employers is important, as it allows for data verification and further substantiates results, thus adding rigour to the evidence that we provide. The CSC has, since the outset of the Professional Fellowship scheme, sought to establish good working relationships with host organisations, many of which have hosted a number of Fellows over the years, as shown in Appendix 1. Organisations such as the Environment Agency, Conciliation Resources and VSO, for example, have also undertaken their own evaluations and, along with many other organisations, have regular contact with the CSC Secretariat. The Evaluation Team is also now working closely with the programme administration team to ensure synergy between processes and easier identification of impact and outcome examples. Employers are a more complicated group to engage with, as the CSC has most contact with the host organisation. However, we are seeking to increase contact with Fellows' employers, both to verify the evidence provided to us by Fellows and hosts, and also to contribute to our understanding of the relevance and effectiveness of the programme.

Therefore, as part of the new phase of evaluation work that the Evaluation Team is currently undertaking, a new survey was sent to host organisations and Fellows' employers. The survey results for the host organisations are detailed below. However, the response rate for the employers was so low (3%) that only partial analysis was conducted. This is not entirely unexpected, considering the length of time that had elapsed since the earlier awards particularly and, going forward, the Evaluation Team intends to engage in more outreach as a way of increasing the response rate.

Between 2008 and 2011, there were 131 host organisations that took part in the scheme by hosting a Professional Fellow. It should be noted that, in most cases, the nominator organisation is the same as the host, though there are a few instances in which they are different. For a full list of all host organisations that have taken part in the scheme from 2002 to the present, see Appendix 1. Figure 22 details the types of organisations that took part in the scheme. The majority (46%) were in the category of NGO/charity/community organisation.

**Figure 22: Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011, by type**



### Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011: survey analysis

In addition to updating the Professional Fellows alumni survey, the CSC Evaluation Team created a new survey for host organisations as a means of further data collection and verification. The survey asked about the host organisations' views on the impact of the Fellowship both on the Fellow and on the organisation itself. A total of 300 surveys were sent out, with 32 bounces, bringing the total survey population to 268. Of this number, 87 responded to the survey, providing a response rate of 32%. The response rate was higher than anticipated, and is intended to increase as the CSC streamlines this survey into part of the package that host organisations must complete when participating in the scheme. The results of this year's survey are as follows.

Respondents were asked to detail their type of organisation and their organisation's primary focus of work, as shown in Table 24 and Table 25. Please note that respondents were allowed to tick multiple responses for each question.

**Table 24 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents, by type**

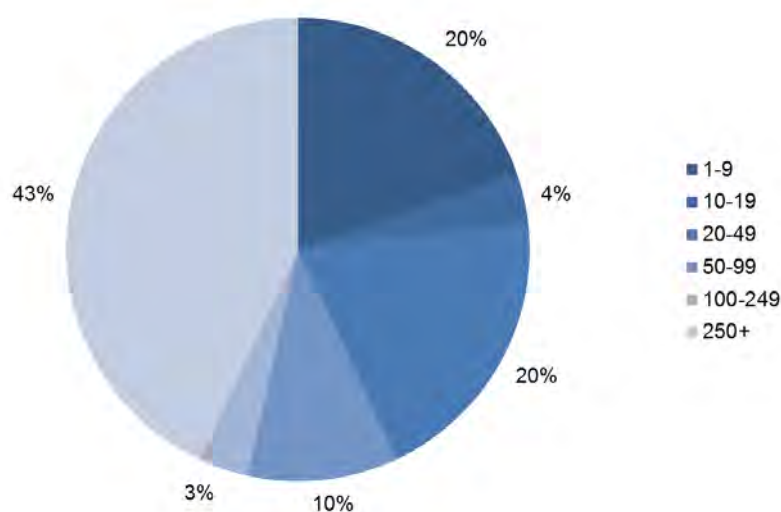
Type	% of total (n=86)
NGO/charity/community organisation	34
Government	8
Education institution	17
Professional organisation	10
Medical institute	0
Research institute	9
Public service provider	10
Private sector	2
Other	13

**Table 25 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents, by focus of work**

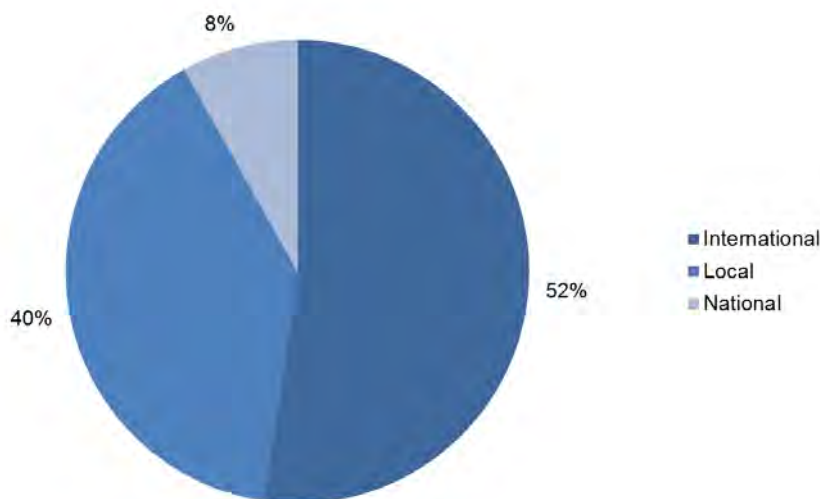
Focus of work	% of total (n=86)
Agriculture/fisheries/forestry	0
Economic growth	1
Education	20
Engineering/science/technology	9
Environment/climate change	9
Governance	2
Public health	33
Gender equality	1
Poverty reduction	16
Other	22

Host organisations were asked about the size of their organisation and whether they worked at the international, national or local level, as shown in Figures 23 and 24.

**Figure 23 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents, by size of organisation**



**Figure 24 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents, by scope of work**



### Relationship with Fellow’s employer

The CSC Evaluation Team was interested in how the Professional Fellowship scheme could build relationships to enhance institutional capacity building. Hosts were asked to rate on a ten-point scale how closely they worked with the Fellow’s employer both before and after the Fellowship. The rating average prior to the Fellowship was 4.38; following the Fellowship, this rose to 6.40, indicating that the Fellowship helped to strengthen working relations between organisations.

### Knowledge and skills

As part of the triangulation of data process, we asked hosts similar questions as were posed to the Fellows themselves regarding the attainment of knowledge and skills. Please note that we have not yet matched host and Fellow responses in a structured way, but will factor the need to do this into our data integration work.

**Table 26 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – knowledge and skills<sup>9</sup>**

Statement	Rating average
The Fellow gained knowledge in their field of expertise	4.59
The Fellow increased their analytical/technical skills	4.26
The Fellow accessed equipment and expertise not available in their home country	4.34
The Fellow has learned techniques for managing and organising people and projects	4.15

In the next part of this section, the CSC Evaluation Team focused on questions about areas to increase institutional capacity building, as illustrated in Figure 19: knowledge transfer, implementation, decision-making, transparency and accountability, strategic planning, leadership, and policy and procedures.

### Knowledge transfer

Hosts were asked to consider to what extent they thought the Fellowship was able to provide the Fellow with knowledge transfer and industry expertise. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with a rating average of 8.17.

Respondents were asked to rate on a ten-point scale the extent to which the Fellowship enabled the Fellow to build on relevant skills: technical, analytical, managerial, general information/education. Table 27 shows the rating averages of the responses.

<sup>9</sup> 1 = Strongly disagree, 3 = Neutral, 5 = Strongly agree.

**Table 27 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – ‘Please rate the extent to which the Fellowship enabled the Fellow to build on the following skills’<sup>10</sup>**

Skill	Rating average
Technical	7.79
Analytical	7.53
Managerial	7.00
General information/educational	8.49

## Implementation

The two questions regarding implementation sought to understand the extent to which the host organisation was able to provide the Fellow with the relevant skills and knowledge to implement new areas of work and changes in how work/programmes were conducted within their organisation upon their return home. Questions were asked on a ten-point scale. Both yielded very positive results, with the question about implementation of new areas of work resulting in a rating average of 8.52, and the question about being able to make changes in how work/programmes were conducted having a rating average of 8.25.

## Decision-making

Hosts were asked on a ten-point scale (1 = None at all, 10 = Very significantly) to what extent they felt the Fellowship was able to equip the Fellow with the ability to influence decision-making within their organisation. The rating average for this question was 7.88, showing generally positive results. Respondents who answered 7 or above were then asked whether this was at the team, departmental, and/or organisational level. Respondents were allowed to tick all appropriate answers, and the majority (69%) responded at the organisational level, as outlined in Table 28.

**Table 28 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – ‘At what level do you think the Fellowship prepared the Fellow to influence decision-making within their organisation?’**

Level	% of total (n=74)
Team	49
Departmental	57
Organisational	69
Don't know	0

## Transparency and accountability

As transparency and accountability make up another tenet of institutional capacity building, respondents were asked to rate on a ten-point scale the extent to which they thought the Fellowship brought awareness of transparency and accountability in an organisational setting. The rating average for this question was 7.12, inferring that, although not the most pertinent topic, it was still relevant. Secondly, hosts were asked to what extent they felt that the Fellowship equipped the Fellow with knowledge and skills to implement transparency and accountability within their home organisations. The rating average was 6.82, demonstrating that this was generally not a core area of work that Fellowships focused on.

## Strategic planning

Respondents were asked to rate on a ten-point scale whether they felt the Fellowship prepared the Fellow to contribute to strategic planning within their organisation. The rating average for this question was 7.62, which denotes that strategic planning is generally a fairly important element of the Fellowships. Respondents who answered 7 or above were then asked at which level this occurred, as shown in Table 29. Respondents were allowed to tick multiple responses.

<sup>10</sup> 1 = None at all, 10 = Very significantly.

**Table 29 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – ‘At what level do you think the Fellowship prepared the Fellow to contribute to strategic planning within their organisation?’**

Level	% of total (n=67)
Team	46
Departmental	54
Organisational	69
Don't know	0

### Leadership

Respondents were asked whether they felt Fellows were able to improve their management skills and facilitation skills during the Fellowship. The rating average for management skills was 7.07, while for facilitation skills it was 7.23.

### Policy and procedures

Hosts were asked to what extent the Fellow was trained on how to influence policy and procedures. The rating average was 6.58, indicating that this was generally not a main focus area of the Fellowships. Respondents who answered 7 or above were then asked at which level they were trained, as shown in Table 30. Respondents could tick all appropriate answers. Training on how to influence policy and procedures departmentally seemed to be the most significant (67%).

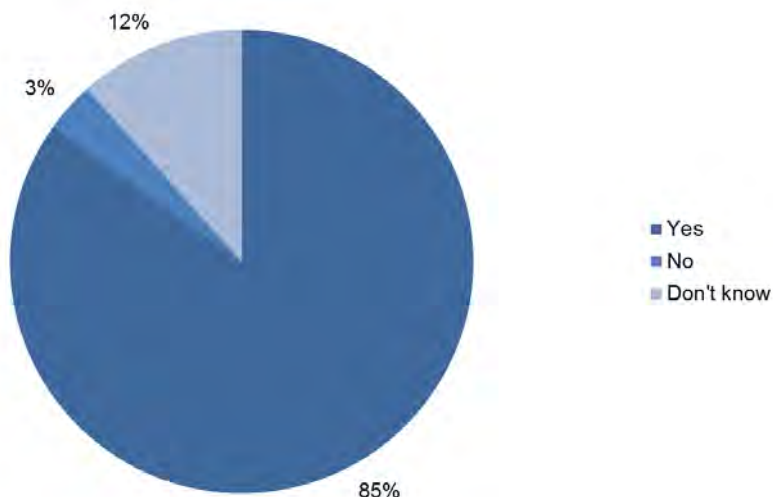
**Table 30 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – ‘At what level was the Fellow trained on how to influence policy and procedures?’**

Level	% of total (n=60)
Team	57
Departmental	63
Organisational	57
Don't know	0

### Development impact

As development impact is a key desired outcome of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, host organisations were asked to report whether they felt the Fellowship has been able to provide development impact. The vast majority (85%) responded ‘Yes’, as shown in Figure 25.

**Figure 25 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – ‘Do you feel that the Fellowship has been able to provide development impact?’**



## Links

Host organisations were asked whether they still maintain links with the Fellow, to which 86% reported that they did. Hosts were also asked whether they were able to establish new links with Fellows' employers that did not exist prior to the Fellowship. The response for this was not overwhelming positive, with only 37% claiming they had newly-established links.

## Organisational costs

In this section, the CSC Evaluation Team sought to understand the costs that organisations incur in hosting a Fellowship. Respondents were asked to rate a number of different areas on a ten-point scale including: financial costs, time and resources, individual commitments of staff outside work, logistical planning, programme planning, extra training (both within the organisation and external training), and support to the Fellow's employer (after completion of the Fellowship). The results show that, generally speaking, the biggest cost to organisations was the individual commitments of staff outside work. The smallest cost to organisations was providing support to the Fellow's employers after completion of the Fellowship, as shown with rating averages in Table 31. As all rating averages fell below 7, it can be deduced that hosting a Fellowship certainly has costs, but is not a massive burden.

**Table 31 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – 'Please rate the effect the Fellowship has had on your organisation in the following areas'<sup>11</sup>**

Cost to organisation	Rating average
Financial costs	3.90
Time and resources	6.34
Individual commitments of staff outside work	6.87
Logistical planning	6.41
Programme planning	6.74
Extra training	4.70
Support to the Fellow's employer	3.08

## Organisational benefits

Equally as important to the CSC Evaluation Team were the perceived benefits to organisations participating in the Professional Fellowship scheme. Respondents were asked to rate the following on a ten-point scale: increased knowledge and capacity building of their organisation, deeper understanding of in-country issues (in the Fellow's home country), inspiration and motivation, profile raising of their organisation, ability to have an impact in the Fellow's home country, cross-cultural exchange, ability to enhance their own work skills, and organisational links. Overall, the results indicate that the greatest benefit to organisations was the deeper understanding of in-country issues (in the Fellow's home country), with the least beneficial aspect being increased knowledge and capacity building, as highlighted in Table 32. Generally speaking, all rating averages received a score less than 7, perhaps indicating that host organisations take part in the scheme for altruistic purposes.

**Table 32 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents – 'Please rate the benefits to your organisation in the following areas'<sup>12</sup>**

Benefit to organisation	Rating average
Increased knowledge and capacity building of your organisation	5.49
Deeper understanding of in-country issues (in the Fellow's home country)	6.98
Inspiration and motivation	6.97
Profile raising of your organisation	6.69
Ability to have an impact in the Fellow's home country	6.84
Cross-cultural exchange	6.77
Ability to enhance your own work skills	5.59
Organisational links	6.64

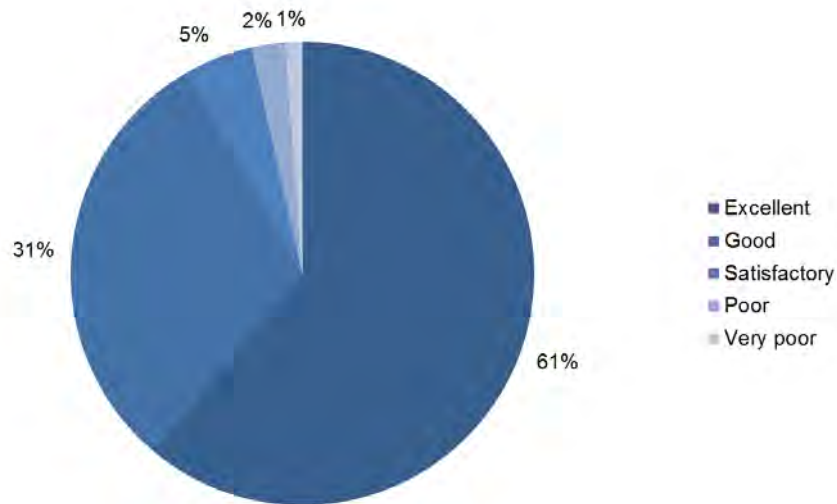
<sup>11</sup> 1 = Not at all significant, 10 = Extremely significant

<sup>12</sup> 1 = Not at all significant, 10 = Extremely significant

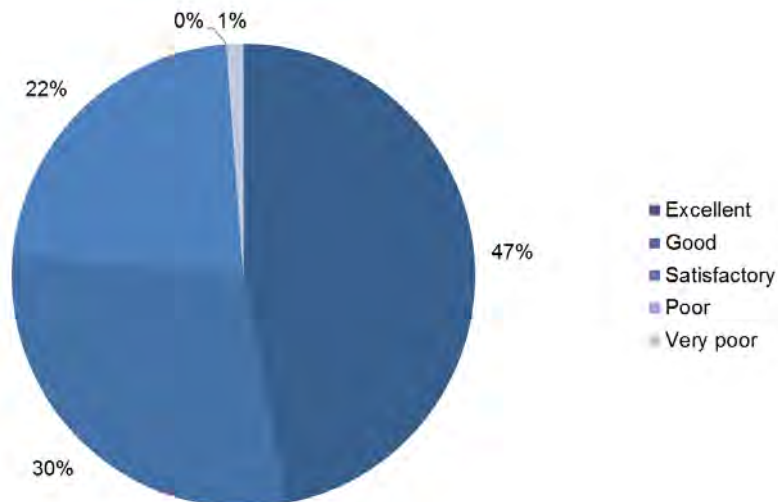
## Timing and administration of the scheme

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on the timing and administration of the Professional Fellowship scheme by both the CSC Secretariat and the British Council.

**Figure 26 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents, by rating of CSC Secretariat administration**



**Figure 27 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents, by rating of British Council administration**

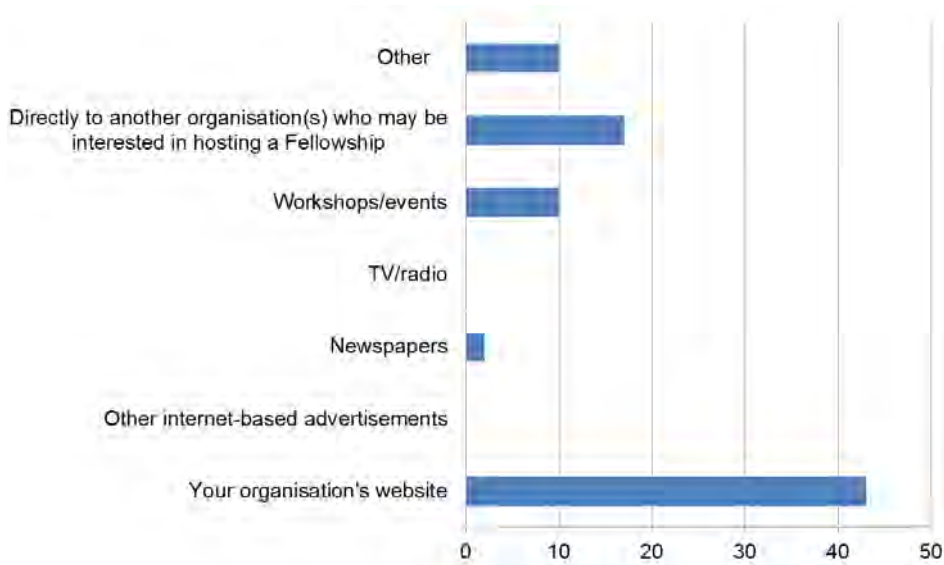


## Publicity

Host organisations were asked whether they would participate in the Professional Fellowship scheme again. The vast majority (99%) stated that they would take part again, indicating that, overall, the scheme yields positive experiences for both Fellows and host organisations alike.

Finally, we were interested to know where host organisations publicised information about the Fellowship. 52% reported posting it on their organisation's website, as shown in Figure 28.

**Figure 28 Professional Fellowship host organisations 2008-2011 survey respondents, by publicity channel**



### Host organisations: summary of focus group discussion

The hosts' focus group discussion (FGD) was held on 6 December 2012 at the CSC's offices in Woburn House, London. It was attended by representatives from 14 different organisations and lasted one and a half hours. It was part of a day's programme billed as a networking opportunity for host organisations participating in the Professional Fellowship scheme, giving them the chance to meet each other, to hear about scheme developments from the CSC Secretariat, and to learn about the experience of one particular host – the Environment Agency, which has hosted Fellows every year since the scheme's inception in 2002, and were able to provide an insightful account of their evaluation of the programme.

The main aim of the FGD was to gain an insight into the first-hand experiences and motivations of host organisations with regard to participation in the scheme. A secondary aim was for the Evaluation Team to build longer-term working relationships with the host organisations, with the intention of being able to easily identify potential case studies for future reports.

Similar to the Fellows' FGD, the session was split into three parts: 'Before the award', 'On the award', and 'After the award'. The questions that were asked are as follows:

#### Before the award

- What was your main motivation for becoming a part of the scheme?
- What are your criteria for selecting a candidate? (Are there specific skills you look for?)
- Do you have a partner organisation that you work with?
- If so, what are the benefits to having a partner organisation?
- If not, would you prefer to have a partner organisation? What are the benefits of not having a partner organisation?
- What is your relationship with the Fellows' home employer?

#### On the award

- What effect does the take-up of the Fellowship have on the resources or your organisation?
- How do you ensure that the Fellow's objectives for the programme are being met? Does this relate to your organisational objectives?
- What benefits does your organisation get from hosting a Fellow?

#### After the award

- Does your organisation undertake any evaluation of the programme in relation to the benefits and costs it has to you? (If not, what do you think would be involved in an evaluation?)
- For the organisations that have been in the programme for at least a few years, what motivates you to continue hosting Fellows?
- How can the CSC motivate you to participate in our evaluation of the programme?



## Participants

The host organisations that attended broadly represented the wide range of types of organisations involved in the Professional Fellowship scheme. Some organisations have close international links because they have international offices (for example, Childreach International), or because they work closely with professionals from around the world (for example, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation). There was also a mix of levels of engagement with the scheme, ranging from the very experienced (the Environment Agency) to organisations that had hosted their first Fellow in the most recent application round (Childreach International).

**Table 33 Professional Fellowship host organisations – participation in the focus group discussion**

Organisation type	Organisation name
University	Roehampton University
University	University of Edinburgh
NGO/charity/community organisation	The Law Society of England and Wales
Professional body	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health - East Midlands
NGO/charity/community organisation	Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation
NGO/charity/community organisation	Childreach International
NGO/charity/community organisation	Garforth Academy
Government	Environment Agency
NGO/charity/community organisation	Widows and Orphans International
NGO/charity/community organisation	The Haven Wolverhampton
NGO/charity/community organisation	St Lucia Diabetes Project
Private sector	Hogan Lovells LLP

## Summary of FGD results

### *What was your main motivation for becoming a part of the scheme?*

Host organisations provided a number of reasons regarding motivations for taking part in the scheme which were dependent on the method of operation and relationship with employer organisations. Nonetheless, it was clear that there are benefits to be had for hosts and Fellows alike. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) was cited as a reason by the only private sector organisation represented – the international law firm Hogan Lovells LLP – as well as by the Environment Agency, a UK government body. In addition, the Environment Agency also mentioned that it takes part in the scheme as a learning opportunity, to gain knowledge of techniques and methods to deal with situations, such as flooding and drought, in which other countries have more experience.

With offices in India, Bangladesh, and Tanzania, Childreach International said that it takes part in the scheme as a means of sharing learning across the organisation and to provide shared training opportunities. In addition, the scheme helps the organisation to build brand awareness and increases awareness of different in-country operational situations.

Similarly, the two participating universities stated they are involved in the scheme because it provides an opportunity for colleagues involved in cross-border research projects to come together, allowing for ‘train the trainer’ opportunities (University of Edinburgh). It was also highlighted that, for Fellows, participation in the scheme is seen as a badge of honour and consequently involvement in the scheme motivates other staff who see their colleagues being awarded Fellowships.

### *What are your criteria for selecting a candidate?*

The criteria do differ slightly depending on the type of host organisation and the relationship they hold with the employing organisation. However, there were a number of commonalities that arose. Many host organisations expressed the need for candidates to have a minimum level of qualifications and relevant experience. Moreover, candidates across the board need to demonstrate that, in addition to being personally suitable, their work is in an area that ensures they will be able to effectively implement knowledge gained and influence positive change. To do this, organisations use criteria that show commitment to the issues involved and the ability to take initiative.

Another key criterion, alongside qualifications and experience, is the seniority of candidates. This is seen in the context of long-term involvement and the impact of taking part in the scheme, with the logic being that if the most senior members of staff participate first, they will see the value of the scheme to their workplace and proactively champion it on their return, encouraging the staff they manage to also take part. Those hosts that work with partner organisations rely on the latter to shortlist candidates; they deem this the best method due to the fact that they work closely with the candidates and therefore have first-hand knowledge of the best-suited people.

This issue of partner organisations' involvement in candidate selection directly links to the question about the benefits of working with partner organisations. Having partners ensures quality and consistency of candidates. It also facilitates long-term engagement and the increased likelihood of deeper impact, particularly when senior management take part, as it allows for the needs of the organisation and staff to be most effectively addressed.

### ***What effect does the take-up of the Fellowship have on the resources or your organisation?***

The impact on host organisations' resources is significant. While the award covers the costs of travel, accommodation and living expenses, there are often additional expenses. Some relate to finances; for example, the award might not be sufficient to cover additional costs such as accommodation if a Fellow attends a training course away from their usual place of residence. However, the main effect is on human resources. The pastoral care of Fellows is labour intensive and lasts throughout the period of award. Usually, management of the scheme is handled by one or two individuals, who dedicate a large amount of personal time.

On the positive side, the high personal involvement in the Fellowships means that individual friendships are often maintained after the Fellows return home. This personal contact also sometimes results in unexpected benefits. Outside London, where finding appropriate accommodation for such a short period of time can be difficult, Fellows often stay in the homes of employees. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health regularly does this, and recounted a story where a female employee who regularly housed Fellows commented to one of her guests that all the Fellows who had stayed were men and questioned why there were not more women. Following this, the partner organisation now regularly sends a more balanced gender mix – something the host organisation itself had been trying, unsuccessfully, to encourage.

For host organisations that were new to the scheme, the logistical planning is very difficult because of the large number of considerations that need to be taken into account. They suggested that including a planning checklist in the guidance for hosts would be helpful, as would the ability to seek guidance from more experienced hosts.

### ***How do you ensure that the Fellow's objectives for the programme are being met? Does this relate to your organisational objectives?***

Most hosts had some kind of system in place for ensuring objectives were appropriately set, monitored and achieved, some more formal than others. The Environment Agency has the most formal process, with the implementation of a mentoring system, involving weekly meetings between Fellows and their mentors to discuss objectives and change them when appropriate. This last point was echoed widely in the group. With Fellows often unfamiliar with the environment they are coming into, their own expectations about what they want to achieve can change considerably once they are aware of the opportunities on offer. As a result, ensuring Fellows' objectives stay focused on their original intention is sometimes a challenge. In order to achieve this, host organisations do different things. Some work with employer organisations to devise general areas of focus for the Fellowship, to ensure that the organisational objectives are kept in order and the Fellowship does not become focused on individual development only. Some ensure that Fellows are aware of the host's objectives when setting their own and that the objectives were SMART (Smart, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound).

In terms of issues related to Fellows achieving their objectives, there were a few common recurring issues. Some hosts have problems with Fellows being expected to continue doing their job while in the UK because temporary arrangements have not been made. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health solved this by implementing a memorandum of understanding to ensure that Fellows do not do this, as it detracts value from the Fellowship. Many hosts commented that it can be challenging to ensure that Fellows stay focused on their objectives because they can be overawed by the many potential opportunities which might not be relevant to their objectives or their employers.

### ***Does your organisation undertake any evaluation of the programme in relation to the benefits and costs it has to you?***

Only one of the organisations in attendance has conducted a formal evaluation of the scheme – the Environment Agency. When asked how hosts know if the Fellowship has been successful, they stated it is mainly as a result of information obtained via individuals and personal friendships with Fellows and through unrelated in-country visits post award. This kind of anecdotal information was recognised as difficult to capture, with a lack of knowledge of evaluation methods and resources given as the reasons for not doing so. It was suggested that it would be helpful if the CSC could provide the resources and tools for hosts to use.

Due to the differing nature of work of the host organisations, timeframes given for post-award evaluation ranged from six months to two years. There was a majority agreement that some initial contact after six months would be advantageous. It was acknowledged that, while this might not give sufficient time for the effects of the Fellowship to be adequately judged either for Fellows, hosts or employers, the fact that it would involve contacting the employer organisation would show senior management that there is follow-up and evidence to demonstrate success, which would encourage future participation.

### ***For the organisations that have been in the programme for at least a few years, what motivates you to continue hosting Fellows?***

For those that have had long-term involvement with the scheme, the perceived level of positive in-country impact was the main reason for continued involvement. The positive impact on host organisations was also cited. The efficiency of the scheme's administration by the CSC Secretariat, particularly the quality of communication, was also given as a reason for continued involvement.

## **Conclusion**

The FGD yielded useful and insightful information. It was successful not only in terms of the evaluation aims and outcomes, but also for the participants themselves. The FGD was part of a networking day which provided host organisations with the opportunity to meet each other and share experiences on an informal level. This was a major factor in its success, as it not only gave the Evaluation Team the opportunity to learn about the experiences and ideas of the host organisations, but also gave hosts the opportunity to learn and share with each other for the first time. This meant the discussion and conversation in the FGD was enthusiastic and plentiful.

A major theme that emerged was the long-term nature of host organisations' involvement in the Professional Fellowship scheme. Participation in the scheme was generally seen as part of a long-term strategic alliance with employer organisations. As a result, participation by senior management of employer organisations was seen as integral to ensure buy-in for the scheme. This has potential impact on how we evaluate the impact of the scheme, because it may mean tracking long-term change of employer organisations in addition to Fellows.

In addition to the comments relating to the questions asked, other issues emerged:

### ***Return visits***

In order to improve the effectiveness of the scheme, hosts thought it would be good for UK staff to conduct return visits to the Fellows' employer organisations. This would increase the transmission of knowledge and expertise, because it could allow for 'train the trainer'-type schemes which would involve more individuals and potentially increase impact.

### ***Community of practice***

Hosts were enthusiastic about the creation of a community of practice for all host organisations. Organisations that were newer to the scheme were particularly keen to have a forum that would enable the exchange of ideas and information, so that less experienced hosts could get advice from those with more experience. It could also facilitate identifying and sharing events and courses for Fellows at different organisations who work in the same region. This in particular was reported as being requested by many Fellows; it does not currently happen because hosts are not aware of other organisations or Fellows on award at the same time.

## Guidance and checklists

Related to the community of practice, there were suggestions to add to and improve the application and guidance documents that would not only help new hosts, but also have the potential effect of increasing host numbers. Inexperienced hosts suggested providing checklists of elements to consider when planning hosting a Fellow, which would ensure robust planning and promote a high-quality Fellowship experience.

The issue of ensuring a certain standard of experience for Fellows came up at various points throughout the discussion. As a result of organisations being located in different parts of the country and the lack of aforementioned checklists and guidance on such issues as finances and other aspects of the day-to-day experience of Fellows, the discussion highlighted that an individual Fellow's experience can differ considerably. While much of this relates to issues such as accommodation, which are outside the control of the CSC, a negative experience for a Fellow may reflect badly on the CSC's reputation. Providing more guidance on making an application and planning a Fellowship programme would not only ensure key elements are planned for and provided, but could also possibly increase both the quality and number of applications.

## Evaluation resources

As a result of the focus group question asking whether host organisations conduct any evaluation of their participation in the scheme, a request was made for the CSC Evaluation Team to provide resources and tools to enable hosts to evaluate Fellowships. This could include survey questionnaires to be completed by hosts, Fellows and employers. It was highlighted that hosts often have close relationships with employer organisations, which could facilitate their participation in evaluation work, for both the hosts and for the CSC.

### Case study: Environment Agency<sup>13</sup>

The UK **Environment Agency** has hosted Commonwealth Professional Fellows since 2003. During this time, around 50 Fellows from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan have spent periods of three months at the organisation.

*'The Environment Agency takes a strategic approach to the Commonwealth Professional Fellowship scheme, working with our international partners to develop programmes which meet their needs as well as deliver environmental outcomes in the UK.'*

*'Our programmes focus on "practitioner to practitioner" learning, which exposes Fellows to a range of activities to ensure the best possible conditions for the **transfer of knowledge and skills**. This encompasses desk-based research, attending meetings with internal and external staff, site visits, and practical hands-on training. Feedback from previous programmes supports this approach as a means of creating the best possible conditions for knowledge transfer. Not only does this programme add value to existing relationships and programmes, it is a great way of starting new ones.'*

*'Since 2003, our Fellows have achieved a lot in terms of implementing the knowledge from their placements. In 2006, Anna Maembe, who at the time was Director of Environmental Information, Communication and Outreach at the National Environment Management Council in Tanzania, undertook a Professional Fellowship to learn about our different environment management processes for water, land, and air, as well as understand how we communicate to the public and others about the environment. On her return to Tanzania, Anna implemented a new web portal for **sharing environmental information about industries**, and helped develop guidelines for environmental regulation in the areas of bio-fuels, mining, and telecommunications.'*

*'In 2005, we hosted Benjamin Langwen, Deputy Director of Compliance and Enforcement at the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) in Kenya. We have continued to engage with NEMA Kenya to understand their strategic priorities and how we can support them through the Professional Fellowship scheme. Next year we hope to add value to Benjamin's first placement by hosting him a second time, along with Fellows from Uganda and Nigeria, to take part in a programme to develop laboratory management and analytical skills. Benjamin is responsible for setting up an environmental laboratory within NEMA Kenya, so this placement fits well with his responsibilities. Scientific data is also integral to successful **compliance and enforcement of environmental regulation**, so the placement also supports the risk-based approach to regulation which he implemented following his last placement. This programme also is also aligned with our*

<sup>13</sup> First published in Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom, *Evaluating Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom: Assessing impact in environmental sustainability* (2013) <<http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/2013/06/assessing-impact-in-environmental-sustainability>>

*new model for the Professional Fellowship scheme, as it will benefit the Environment Agency through staff development opportunities. It will also help us to more accurately target our commercial services through understanding the requirements of laboratories in developing countries.'*

## **Professional Fellowship employers 2008-2011: survey analysis**

In conjunction with the host organisations' survey, the CSC Evaluation Team also sought to collect relevant data from Fellows' employers back in their home countries. In line with the notion of data triangulation, employers were sent a survey with similar questions to host organisations that reflected key questions asked on the Fellows' survey.

Employers were selected to take part in the survey based on the 2008-2011 Professional Fellows for whom we held employer contact details. This amounted to a total of 162 employers, who were sent a survey via email. There were 22 bounces, bringing the total potential survey population to 140. It should be noted that this survey had a very low response rate of just 3% (4 responses). Going forward, the CSC Evaluation Team intends to capture information from employers at a much earlier stage, in order to increase response rates.

### **Breakdown of respondents**

All four respondents held senior positions within their organisation. Their working relationship to the Fellow ranged from line manager to head of department to executive director of the organisation, which all indicated high-level positions.

The types of organisations included an NGO, government, an education institution, and a medical institution. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses, which led to some overlap. It should be noted that one of the respondents worked with the Fellow on an individual basis, and therefore their organisation was not relevant to this study. Furthermore, many of the questions were not applicable and were therefore left out of the analysis. The employers' primary focus of work varied, and included agriculture/fisheries/forestry, environment/climate change, governance, public health, and poverty reduction. As respondents were able to select multiple responses, there were some intersections in areas of work. The size of these organisations varied from small-medium (10-19 people) to very large (250+), and operated locally, nationally and internationally.

### **Relationship with Fellow's host organisation**

With the exception of the Fellow who worked for the employer on an individual basis, all other respondents noted working very closely with the Fellow's host organisation prior to the Fellowship. Of these three respondents, two reported maintaining an extremely close working relationship with the Fellow's host organisation, while one indicated a small decrease due to cutbacks within their organisation.

### **Promotion**

In all four instances, the employer reported that the Fellow is currently working at the same organisation or on an individual capacity basis. Employers were asked to report whether the Fellow had received a promotion within 12 months of completing the Fellowship. One respondent noted that the Fellow had received a promotion, while another two noted that they had not. The employer whose Fellow had attained a promotion reported that the Fellowship had a very significant role in this: '[The Fellow] gained skills and knowledge from BTCV [the host organisation] especially in fundraising and organisational management which has contributed a lot to the growth of the organisation'.

### **Impact of the Fellowship**

In this section, the CSC Evaluation Team sought to determine whether employers felt that the Fellow was able to gain knowledge and expertise in their field as a result of the Fellowship, as well as whether they were able to increase their analytical and technical skills. Furthermore, we sought to identify whether the Fellow was able to transfer these skills to others and whether they were able to introduce new policies and procedures into the workplace following the Fellowship. As with the host organisations' survey, we looked at key areas related to institutional capacity building, including: knowledge transfer, implementation, decision-making, transparency and accountability, strategic planning, leadership, policy and procedures, and evaluation. We also asked whether the employer felt that the Fellowship had a development impact, whether they still maintained organisational links with the Fellow's host organisation, the costs and benefits to their organisation, and if they had publicised the Fellowship.

Although the data was analysed, no conclusions could be made given the small amount of respondents. It is intended that over time, once more employer data is collected, the analysis of the four respondents who provided answers to this survey will be added onto the analysis of other employers, in which stronger conclusions can be made.