

Overview of the scheme

The Professional Fellowship programme has been part of the CSC's portfolio of awards since 2002. It is a professional development programme that aims to have a catalytic effect on international development by enhancing skills that can be subsequently applied in the Fellows' home countries upon their return. The programme provides funding for professionals from developing Commonwealth countries to undertake programmes of activity in the United Kingdom for between one and six months, with programmes normally tenable for three months.

Candidates are nominated and hosted by organisations in the United Kingdom ranging from international NGOs to UK-based charities, as well as organisations from both the public and private sectors. Candidates would normally be expected to have at least five years' relevant experience and must be able to demonstrate that their work is valuable to development in their home country. In addition, as well as the primary aim of enhancing the capacity and knowledge of the individual and their employer, the programme hopes to have a positive impact on host organisations and act as a tool for international collaboration.

The development focus is reflected in the fact that priority is given to applicants who are seeking to gain practical experience in the following areas:

- Agriculture/fisheries/forestry
- Economic growth
- Education
- Engineering/science/technology
- Environment
- Governance
- Public health

Applications are invited from nominating organisations in the UK willing to set up a programme of activity and either host the Fellow themselves or provide a link to a host. Organisations wishing to apply are required to set up a suitable programme and identify the Fellow(s) themselves. A programme can include time spent within the organisation itself, learning from colleagues in a structured manner, as well as time spent at other organisations in the UK and at conferences, and a limited time on short courses. In line with the CSC's mandate, programmes must have demonstrable development impact in the Fellow's home country.

Purpose of the review

The purpose of the review is twofold: firstly to provide an overview of the programme to date as well as an analysis of data collected since 2002, and secondly to identify the potential outcomes and development impact of the programme. For the latter, an analysis of data collected from the new survey tailored specifically to Professional Fellows has been undertaken, as well as qualitative research through focus group discussions held with the Fellows and host organisations. This review also seeks to address the fact that, although the CSC has collected a variety of data since the programme began 11 years ago, this data has not always been consistently collected or reported. In addition, this review is very timely as the methods undertaken will assist the CSC as it develops its evaluation capacity and will offer the opportunity for extrapolation of methods to the evaluation of its other programmes in due course.