

Science in Society Fourth Programme meeting

The legacy of the Programme

Since our last Programme meeting, the ESRC has commissioned a third and final round of funding, which has brought the number of projects in the Programme up to 45. At this point, and with the end of the Programme in sight at 31st July 2007, it is now appropriate for us to consider how, as a fully-developed Programme, we can address the issue of the Programme's legacy. With many research projects complete or about to complete, we are in a position to begin to pull out the threads that make up the over-arching picture arising from Programme research and to decide upon ways to ensure that the messages emanating from the Programme as a whole are clearly defined and articulated. In this way, we will most effectively target our audiences and reiterate the relevance of our work for business, NGOs, the media and civil society.

Expectations and objectives for the meeting

This meeting is intended, therefore, to help us to focus on the end of the Programme and the legacy that we will leave. We need to consider how to make certain that the lessons learned from Programme research live past the end date of project awards. One measure of our success at the end of the Programme will be that the ESRC will not feel it necessary to ring-fence funding for further work on similar themes to those in the Programme, as it has done in the past when other dedicated funds have run their course.

What we will develop at this meeting is an understanding of what you, as researchers on the Programme, feel is necessary for the Programme as a whole to assure the continuity of intellectual endeavour.

- What do you think should be the central message of the Science in Society Programme?
- Are we already doing enough to get this message across?
- What should we be doing in addition?

Aims and objectives of the Programme

The points below have been taken from several sources, including the final Programme specification, which was used during the final round of funding, and which is also available for you to consult.

- Develop UK research capacity relevant to understanding science, technology and social change
- Enhance public and policy debate about new scientific and technological developments and their relationship to social needs
- Investigate what it means to 'solve' human problems through the application of science and technology
- Evaluate the role of R&D institutions and explore alternative models for their design in the light of public goals and social aspirations
- Examine the implications for the governance of science that are raised by increasing recognition of the plurality of expertise and knowledge

- Evaluate the social and economic pressures on technical decision-making processes especially those of public accountability and international competitiveness
- Understand the experiences of other countries and of the role of British and international science and technology in their social, economic, and political development
- Provide the framework for future discourse in this area
- Encourage interdisciplinary research across the broad boundaries of social science, natural science and technology.
- Enhance communication across a broad spectrum of actors, bringing the work of social science to the forefront of activity in civil society, business and other areas.

Science in Society contribution to achieving these aims

The Science in Society Programme has already identified several aspects of the current science in society landscape that need to be adjusted. The Programme was set up in the wake of the food and disease crises of BSE and FMD, when the government perceived that there was a lack of trust in government science and advice. Several projects in the Programme have highlighted the fact that the actual problem is *not* a case of lack of trust in science but that it is rather a lack of trust in the *governance* of science that is the more important for the public. Project work has also indicated the move away from the model of the public understanding of science (PUS) that is employed by almost all the Research Councils and other science community bodies and towards issues and difficulties surrounding the representation of public and community interest in the introduction and deployment of new scientific advice and technologies.

The Programme undoubtedly has perspectives to add to the science and society debates occurring at all levels and in all sections of society. It is essential, therefore, that these and other insights into this area are not lost at the end of the Programme, but continue to resonate and to influence these debates. How we achieve this is the purpose of today's discussions.

Activity

We will develop this dialogue by working through the possibilities for the future of the Programme. Three groups have been established from among you to look at these future scenarios. Each group will work on presenting a position paper to the rest of the meeting, in which a specific view on the Programme legacy will be put forward. Groups will be facilitated by Professor Rafael Ramirez, who will lead the session, Dr Sue Dopson and Mr Hardin Tibbs. Brief biographies are attached at the end of this document.

The three groups will approach the discussion of the legacy of the Programme from the following perspectives:

1. What are we learning, both in terms of content and process? What is surprising and useful, and how does it compare with our expectations, or the expectations of funders/policy makers/industry etc? How do we fine-tune the rest of the programme to home in on the areas where we are making advances in understanding? Can we map our expectations versus the actual learning we have made (a kind of mind-map of the field)?
2. How do we communicate what we are learning, both now, and after the end of the programme? How has our work already been received and how has it made an impact? What modes of communication are the most effective? Who is most receptive to our message? Who are the friends and champions of the programme? What would be the key themes of our communication?

3. How do we ensure that the findings of the programme are adopted and applied? What are the key policy implications of what has been learned so far? How do they compare to the views and beliefs currently shaping policy? Which are the policy and decision-making areas that the findings are most relevant to? Which organisations/agencies are responsible for these policy areas, and who are the stakeholders and gatekeepers? What needs to be done to act on this analysis?

In each case, you will be expected to justify your position and give examples of what should or should not be undertaken in order to arrive at your group's final opinion.

Steve Rayner
November 2005

Professor Rafael Ramirez

In addition to his position at Templeton College, Rafael is Professor of Management at HEC, France's leading business school. Rafael holds a PhD in Social Systems Science from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation was on the Aesthetics of Organisation. He also holds a Master's degree in Environmental Studies (MES) from York University in Toronto, where he was 'projects director' at its Action Learning Group. He has worked as a staff analyst at the Management and Behavioral Science Center of the Wharton School, as 'Chercheur associé' at the Centre de Sociologie des Organisations, CNRS, in Paris, and as consultant and researcher with R Normann and his SMG colleagues in Stockholm. He was elected an 'individual' member of GBN (Global Business Network) in 1985, and was Visiting Professor of Scenarios and Corporate Strategy at Shell International from 2000 to 2003.

Dr Sue Dopson

Sue Dopson is Vice-Chair of Templeton College, Oxford. She is a postgraduate tutor, a Reader in Organisational Behaviour at the Saïd Business School, and teaches elements of the University's degree programme in Management, as well as teaching on Management Development programmes for various companies. She also works on Templeton College's Strategic Leadership Programme. She is involved in the development of courses for the NHS and a number of research projects in the arena of health care, including the evaluation of projects aimed at improving clinical effectiveness, exploring issues of getting the results of medical research evidence into clinical practice and more general research in the area of NHS management. She has published on the changes in the management of the NHS, the changing nature of middle management, management careers and developments in public sector management.

Mr Hardin Tibbs

Hardin Tibbs is a management consultant with extensive international experience. He is CEO of Synthesis Strategic Consulting Ltd, a UK-based management consulting firm. Hardin specializes in long range thinking and strategy development, and is an experienced scenario planner. Previously, he was a senior consultant with Global Business Network (GBN), the futures research and consulting firm founded by Peter Schwartz in California. He then moved to Australia, where he established Synthesis Strategic Consulting Pty Ltd in 1996, before returning to the UK in 2001. In addition to his strategy work, Hardin has made significant contributions on issues involving technology and environment, and he is the author of an influential paper defining industrial ecology, a new approach to industrial sustainability. Before joining GBN, Hardin was a consultant at Arthur D. Little, Inc., the international management, technology and environmental consulting firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. <http://www.hardintibbs.com/>