

<p><b>Institution: University of Durham</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Unit of Assessment: Politics and International Studies</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>In line with the Durham University strategy 2010-20, which emphasises the centrality of impact to research excellence, SGIA aims to demonstrate the relevance and utility of its mission <i>to develop excellence in regional studies within the disciplinary contexts of politics, international relations and international political economy</i> through consolidation and expansion of partnerships with non-academic beneficiaries and a self-conscious inclusion of impact-related outputs in research activity. Specifically, and focusing on our areas of particular research strength, we aim to contribute to policy debates, public awareness, governance and regulation to enable more effective decision-making by public authorities. This is achieved through:</p> <p>(i) <i>Research-based consultancy engagements with decision-makers in public policy, governance and regulation, and civil society/advocacy roles.</i> A principal beneficiary is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which benefits from SGIA's expertise in East Asian, Middle East, European, African, former-Soviet Union and increasingly South Asian politics. SGIA staff regularly brief senior officials, ambassadors-designate, ministers and Whitehall communities, and contribute to the development of FCO research agendas through workshops, Wilton Park conferences and seminars. Impact Case Study 2 provides a detailed example of research-based consultancy impact in the field of immigration.</p> <p>ii) <i>co-production of research with public and private stakeholders which subsequently informs the work of practitioners.</i> Examples here arise from the Durham Global Security Institute's partnerships with DFID, USAID, NORAD, the KPMG Fragile States Unit, and the UK Armed Forces, as well as evolving partnerships with the UN Police, civil society organisations in Africa and – more locally – North East museums.</p> <p>iii) <i>Training and continuing professional development.</i> Staff research-based expertise provides the basis for a range of professional training and CPD activities delivered through the Durham Centre for Islamic Economics and Finance (DCIEF) and The Durham Global Security Institute (DGSi), both in Durham and overseas. This is not academic education but skills and knowledge up-grading for practitioners in Islamic financial services and post-conflict state-building. Delivery engages international partners such as the Dar al Sharia Legal and Financial Consultancy in Dubai and the Society for Economic Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics in Istanbul.</p> <p>iv) <i>Public engagement activities which inform public knowledge and debate.</i> SGIA staff regularly contribute to print, broadcast and social media, offering country-specific expertise which enables complex events and issues to be analysed and framed. During the Arab Spring, for example, SGIA staff were interviewed and quoted extensively by international and national media, including al-Jazeera, the BBC, the China News Service, the <i>Guardian</i> and <i>The New York Times</i>. SGIA research also generated a number of cultural events. Recognising that dissemination does not automatically equate with impact, we understand this to be a key public service function arising from our research.</p> <hr/> <p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>Our partnership-based vision for impact follows two principal routes: co-production of knowledge and knowledge exchange.</p> <p>Co-production stresses the role of research users in developing research projects and producing research data alongside academic practitioners. Work with the FCO Middle East and North Africa Research Group (MENARG) provides an example (detailed discussion of a key aspect of this is Impact Case Study 1). In September 2011, SGIA sponsored and co-hosted a <i>New Research Agendas for the Middle East with a View to Impact</i> workshop with MENARG including academics, Whitehall practitioners, private sector representatives and the ESRC. The objective was to transform an essentially reactive approach to requests from the FCO for engagement, into a proactive agenda-setting role. An example outcome of those discussions was recognition of the UK's need to understand the impact of regional events on women. This was also identified as a priority by the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, a subject of a subsequent successful bid to the AHRC for Centre for Advanced Study of the Arab World (CASAW) stream funding for a workshop bringing together Arab women activists and scholars (held in Durham April 17/18<sup>th</sup> 2013). Current planning for a collaborative project proposal with a Tunisian women's rights organisation will extend this impact further.</p>
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The SGIA-led Durham Global Security Institute (DGSi), founded in 2011, is a further example of the co-production route to impact. Funded as a priority initiative by the University (£462K in 2011/12 and 2012/13), the Institute is an inter-disciplinary hub with a practitioner-led Strategic Advisory Board. It seeks to build end-user links with international, national and Civil Society Organisations such as the United Nations, USIP, the Ministry of Defence, the FCO/MoD/DFID Stabilisation Unit, Control Risks, and Capita Symonds, with teaching staff engaged in field-based research and consultancy (such as Professor Nick Lewer's work on the Kenya Strategic Conflict Assessment for DFID, the British High Commission and the USAID Kenya Mission; or Dr Jeroen Gunning's work on Police Reform with the Egypt Team/ Security and Justice Group in the Stabilisation Unit). The Institute is emerging as a model for engaging practitioner communities in research, teaching and learning, also facilitating knowledge exchange through research-led CPD courses (on themes such as *Conflict-sensitive Project Design*, *Conflict Mediation* and *Terrorism, State and Society*) which have attracted participants from organisations including the FCO, Control Risks, and embassies (eg: Cambodia).

Knowledge exchange activities also result from long-term development of other established clusters of expertise within SGIA. For example, the School has established world-leading expertise in global regulation and governance of Islamic banking and finance. The Islamic Finance Summer School has run for 7 years involving over 400 participants from both conventional and Islamic financial service sectors in both course delivery and study. Participants now constitute a global network involved in key service provision and regulatory decision-making in institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank, the Kuwait Investment Authority, and closer to home the Financial Services Authority. Detailed discussion of this work is in Impact Case Study 3.

Knowledge exchange further extends into public engagement activities which make academic research on diverse global issues accessible to local and non-practitioner communities. For example, partnership in The Centre for Advanced Study of the Arab World, an ESRC/AHRC/SFC/HEFCE-funded Language-based Area Studies initiative, has enabled Durham staff to organise a range of events enabling cultural public engagement activities such as the Tentmakers of Cairo Exhibition (St Mary's College, 2011), the "Behind a Camera: in front a Hawza" photographic exhibition (2012, Al-Qasimi Building, Durham) and the "From here to Eternity" Arab mosaic/calligraphy exhibition (2012, Al-Qasimi Building, Durham), contributing to the vibrancy of local cultural diversity. Lecture series such as those on "The Anglo-American Special Relationship" delivered on board the Queen Mary for Cunard, or for educational charities such as the G.K. Chesterton Institute for Faith and Culture, media work on a range of international subjects (for mainstream outlets such as the BBC, al-Jazeera, and Channel 4), and contributions to local schools' projects on Contemporary China are further examples of knowledge exchange activities which engage with, and impact on, non-academic and communities.

### c. Strategy and plans

SGIA's strategy for impact is embedded within The Durham University Strategy 2010-20, which identified impact as a key component of academic activity, established institution-wide vehicles to deliver this and has provided the context within which SGIA has sought to embed impact in our own research strategy. Considerations of impact are now included in annual Personal Research Plans, recruitments and promotions, applications for research leave, the annual review of research and the annual plans and reports of research centres. An Impact Champion liaises between University support systems and SGIA, and assists individuals in developing plans for, and evidence of, impact in their own research. Staff may also apply for University or department funds to support staff with generating or collecting evidence of impact from research (eg: £5K in 2012/13 for an on-line survey of Islamic Finance Summer School participants).

Our strategy seeks to enhance current activity in the coming 5 year period, routinizing consideration of impact across our research portfolio through refinements in resource allocation (in terms of both time and money) which incentivise impactful research and its evidencing.

- Cognisant that not all research fields have the same potential for generating identifiable or quantifiable impact, we are exploring ways to include recognition of impact activity within the SGIA staff workload model. Where impact activity is externally funded as part of grant income, this can be done "in-year", but where impact takes place over a term exceeding the research itself, and where clear pathways to evidencing impact are set out, retrospective time allocations may be applied for in subsequent years. This incentivises staff to build

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impact considerations into research funding proposals and projects, and enables a more systematic department approach to gathering and storing evidence. Impact outcomes will be key in assessing applications for departmental financial support for research activities.

- We are seeking to expand our interactions with the University Research Institutes which also have impact-oriented funds available (for example, Hill's workshops under the 2013/14 IAS Emergence theme), and through applications to the seedcorn fund which supports pilot research with the potential to lead to impact-heavy longer-term projects. SGIA received over £35,000 in University seedcorn funding for research in this REF period and aims to significantly increase this in the next five years.
- Through these allocations, and through ensuring that excellence in manifesting impact from research is fully recognised through promotions and extraordinary contribution awards, we seek to incentivise individual staff as well as embedding effective processes and structures.

Alongside building considerations of impact into new research, we are also seeking to explore them further in existing partnerships and engagements with practitioners and stakeholders. We seek to work with them to identify pathways to impact and vehicles for evidence gathering, restructuring relationships in a mutually beneficial way and with an emphasis on developing partnerships which can transform knowledge exchange activities into sustainable, nurturing and co-productive contexts. The further development of DGSi will extend emerging institutional links with key NGOs such as the Royal United Services Institute (with whom co-sponsorship of events in 2014 has been agreed), and with governmental departments, IGOs and NGOs in fields such as development and conflict, social movements, governance and justice in conflict and post-conflict situations. The al-Sabah Programme for International Relations, Regional Politics and Security initiated in 2012 has a strong impact agenda focused on informing and shaping public policy debates in the UK and the Gulf region (for example, being commissioned to devise an agenda for the Kuwaiti Emir's 'Diwan' on Asianisation). The network of Durham University Research Institutes, particularly the Durham Energy Institute, the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, and the new Global Policy Institute also offer potential partnerships and vehicles for SGIA to benefit from inter-disciplinary networks and experiences of working with key governmental, commercial and third sector partners in related fields. Initiatives such as the "Buddy" system which links lay members of University Council with departments, and the membership of SGIA staff of bodies such as the Royal Society of Arts, continue to reinforce our commitment to dissemination, engagement, knowledge transfer and ultimately impact. We are also seeking to exploit institutional support for impact through improved outreach and communications capabilities, improving work with alumni, new staff development activity, and enhanced impact data gathering to enable more effective dissemination of good practice and identification of opportunities and synergies for impact.

#### **d. Relationship to case studies**

The selected case studies demonstrate the strategic objective of establishing a spectrum of impact-generating activities which include both knowledge exchange and co-production, as well as enabling the transformation of the former into the latter through partnerships. All three demonstrate the strategic commitment to impact on the effectiveness of policy-making and regulation by public authorities in the UK and beyond.

*British Justice with Reference to the Gulf Monarchies* is a relatively straight-forward example of publications underpinning recognised expertise which is then used to inform key constituencies and impact upon their decision-making. *Influencing Foreign and Commonwealth Office Thought and Policy towards the Middle East and Asia* also begins its story with recruitment on the basis of publication-based expertise, but here the nature of the engagements with the partner organisation transforms over time and through a broadening of the range of activities evolved into one of co-production of knowledge. In this instance, the impact of the individual is identifiable through the sustained reliance by the partner on his participation in its internal thought-processes and policy preferences. The final case-study, *Informing Governance and Building Capacity in the Islamic Financial Services Sector*, combines direct knowledge exchange (through design and delivery of sector-specific training) with co-production activity (through participation in production of sector governance benchmark standards). The case study is illustrative of the possibilities for widening and deepening impact through extensions of research-related activities across a field of study.