

<p><b>Institution: University of Cumbria</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 19 - Business And Management Studies</b></p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>There are two key areas of research in Business and Management at University of Cumbria: <i>local and regional development</i>, and <i>leadership and sustainability</i>. The unit as a whole has a long-established track record of applied research through stakeholder engagement, delivering policy and enterprise relevant outputs.</p> <p>Research on local and regional development is driven through the activities of the Centre for Regional Economic Development (CRED), which aims to engage with policymakers at a variety of spatial scales; from local to European. CRED research aims to inform policymaking through economic analyses, baseline studies, and evaluations of policy interventions in local and regional economies. The main beneficiaries of CRED research are local and regional devolved governments, UK government and the European Commission, as well as commercial organisations who are affected by economic policy. The impact is primarily in the form of improved regulatory frameworks, governance, or support available benefiting business entities, but also on stimulation of policy debate and directly through influence on governmental policies.</p> <p>Research in leadership and sustainability is led by the recently established Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS). Research in IFLAS focuses on how professionals (including entrepreneurs and community leaders) can employ novel ways to resource their activities to enable the transition to sustainability, social justice and prosperity, as well as the implications of this for governments, foundations and other stakeholders. The main beneficiaries are organisations (particularly small and medium sized enterprises: SMEs) and communities whose opportunities can be improved through better access to finance and improved workplace practices, in addition to benefits for the wider public in stimulating debate on social and economic change.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>CRED has a long track record of stakeholder engagement, having been formed in Carlisle in 1996 as part of the University of Northumbria. Impact was engrained in the formation of CRED, which was initially sponsored by local authorities and regional development agencies in Cumbria. The purpose of CRED is to evaluate and address issues relating to regional growth and development. The Centre engages with user groups and aligns itself with stakeholder priorities by responding to research tenders from local authorities, development agencies, government departments and the European Union. Examples of client-based projects include research on the nuclear supply chain for West Cumbria Development Agency, and a study of the regional impacts of public procurement for Cumbria County Council. The majority of CRED activity is driven through contract research, ensuring that the work is closely aligned to the needs of key beneficiaries, but which is also used as the basis for more theoretical, academic outputs to develop the disciplinary knowledge base.</p> <p>Examples of successful CRED projects at national level include commissioned research on the effects of rates relief on small businesses in Wales for the Welsh Government, and a study of business perceptions of regulatory burden for the UK Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). At local and regional level, CRED has built an extensive client-base which has sustained repeat-contracts by meeting the needs of stakeholders and engaging with client groups through research partnerships and collaborations, as well as commissioned research projects. CRED Researchers also engage through events hosted by academics, policymakers and businesses including, for instance, presenting research findings at the annual conferences of the Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE). Also, in 2009, the Centre co-hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> Rural Entrepreneurship Conference in Cumbria, sponsored by the Commission for Rural Communities and involving partnership with Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency.</p> <p>CRED Research Director, Professor Frank Peck, is also engaged directly with European policymakers through involvement as independent expert for Framework Programme 7 evaluations over the period 2008-2013. This culminated in an invitation to join an Expert Group on Clusters and Smart Specialisation (for DG Research and Innovation). This work was presented at the Week of Innovative Regions of Europe (WIRE) Conference held in Cork, Eire, in June 2013.</p>

## Impact template (REF3a)

Professor Peck is also a Board Member of the Regional Studies Association, whose members aim to produce high quality academic research (through the Journal *Regional Studies*) and to make the findings accessible and relevant to policymakers. Engagement with RSA events and activities, including the European Conferences, provides another platform for engagement with policymakers and practitioners at EU level.

IFLAS is led by its Founding Director and Professor of Sustainability Leadership, Jem Bendell. Focusing on social and organizational change, IFLAS was established in 2012; however, Professor Bendell has 17 years' experience in responsible business development, and in developing alliances for sustainable development, transformative philanthropy and sustainable currencies. He is widely published in academia and policy arenas where his work has been recognised through awards, research commissions and positions of responsibility, particularly through recognition as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, on-going engagement with the United Nations through the Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), including a commissioned research report (the co-authored programme paper *Noble Networks: Advocacy for Global Justice and the "Network Effect"*, 2009) and inauguration and co-chairing of a Special Session on Alternative Finance and Complementary Currencies.

The Institute also engages with research users through hosting events, some held jointly with collaborators. For example, a recent seminar on *Unlocking Local Wealth* in July 2013 was hosted at the Cumbria Business School in association with the New Economics Foundation and the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, with the support of Impact International.

External engagement with user-groups is a key function of the research active staff within CRED and IFLAS. The unit as a whole engages with Faculty enterprise staff who provide advice and support on bid-writing, costing of projects, marketing and identification of bid opportunities from beyond core partners. The unit as a whole also supports research through CRED and IFLAS by providing specific capacity, capability and expertise to deliver individual projects as required.

### c. Strategy and plans

Research in CRED and IFLAS share similar approaches to maximising research impact through active engagement with user-groups in the conduct of projects, either through research collaboration or through client relationships. CRED is guided by its mission "to be recognised regionally, nationally and internationally for high quality research and consultancy on regional economic change, local governance and regeneration" with the following strategic objectives:

- To undertake academic activities through delivery of research papers at international conferences, hosting CRED Seminars, and publication of research in high quality journals;
- To secure funding for research and consultancy in regional development and regeneration at regional, national and international levels;
- To serve the needs of development agencies and local authorities in Cumbria and the North West for high quality research and consultancy on issues related to local and regional development.

Applied research and direct stakeholder engagement are integral to the work of CRED, resulting in impact being a central feature of the centre's activity. CRED continues to work with local partners and prepare bids for research and consultancy in response to tenders, with focus on research with and for local authorities, development agencies, enterprise agencies and other public organisations in Cumbria, the North West and North East of England, national government departments and the European Union as a key element of its purpose and strategy. This will include continuing to engage in partnerships to deliver research where appropriate, such as work on assessing skills needs as a baseline for the Economic Plan for Cumbria, which is currently being prepared by the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This analysis will be used to guide targeting of resources on the skills requirements of employers in the County. CRED will also continue to host its seminar series which is open to all external partners. The seminar series has themes, chosen to inform local policy priorities, which aim to attract interest from practitioners. CRED Seminars regularly attract an audience of local authority officers, elected members, development agencies and business support organisations, as well as academics.

## Impact template (REF3a)

IFLAS seeks to become a global hub for debate on leadership and sustainability and this will be achieved, in part, by involving academics and non-academic user groups and experts. IFLAS aims “to be a powerful enabler of professionals from around the world who lead transitions to fair and sustainable societies”. To achieve this, IFLAS seeks to deliver research, education, events and advice to social, cultural, political and business stakeholders at national and international level:

- To provide accredited and non-accredited courses for national and international students, to enable them to lead transitions to fair and sustainable societies.
- To provide venues and support for dialogue, experimentation and research for national and international professionals, to enable them to lead transition.
- To influence professional and public discourse through research-based communications on the need, nature and mechanisms for transition.

IFLAS seeks to maximise impact by engaging with world experts as IFLAS collaborative scholars:

- For "leading transition" these currently include the Vice President of The Royal Geographical Society; a Senior Consultant with Impact International; the Director of the European Sustainability Academy; the leadership centre in Greece; and the CEO of Kaos Pilots, the Denmark-based pioneer in polymath education for social change.
- For “scaling transition” collaboration includes the former Coordinator of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) work on corporate responsibility and sustainable consumption; a former Research Fellow with UNRISD; the Deputy Director of Forum for the Future; working with companies on sustainable business models; and the Founder and Co-Convenor of the Finance Innovation Lab, enabling collaboration on sustainable finance.
- For "resourcing transition", these include a Professor of Economics at UC Louvain, Belgium; a sustainable architect and founder of Future Perfect; a Senior Associate with Community Forge; and the Country Director of Green World Campaign, Kenya.

As a newly formed institute, IFLAS has not yet had significant amounts of tangible impact which was generated from Cumbria research. However, the Institute has a global ambition and has commenced the work of convening a network of world experts in this field. Impact is an intrinsic part of the research of IFLAS and its overarching purpose, direction and strategy, and it is anticipated that IFLAS will generate significant impacts within the next assessment period.

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

The submitted case studies both relate to the activities of CRED. At its inception in 1996, CRED received external sponsorship from a range of public and private sector bodies in Cumbria for a number of years; these included local authorities, development agencies in Cumbria, Westlakes Properties and Barclays Bank. After the sponsorship period, research work continued but on a contract basis with former sponsors and this was used as a basis to extend the client base. Research work in CRED has therefore always been based on a collaborative model where user-groups are actively involved in the design and delivery of projects. CRED’s model for research differs, therefore, from more conventional “linear” academic approaches involving conduct of pure research which is then subsequently used to inform policy and practice. Rather, CRED’s research is largely co-produced with external users.

Academic publications have therefore been produced as integral to the process of client engagement. The case studies submitted both illustrate the outcome of this process. Research work commissioned by Cumbria County Council, and subsequently the North West Development Agency (NWDA), formed the basis for publications on the impact of public and private sector procurement on small and medium-sized enterprises in local economies. The case studies illustrate how these commissioned pieces of research and subsequent publications have had an influence over policy debate and practice in local economic development specifically in the context of public procurement in Cumbria and the socio-economic responsibilities of Sellafield in West Cumbria. Similarly, a sequence of studies of clusters across the North of England provided the basis for publications on the significance of cluster strategies and, more recently, smart specialisation in regional development. This recent work has also influenced policy-thinking in relation to the way in which cluster strategies can be used to deliver smart specialisation.