

EPSRC Stakeholder Audit

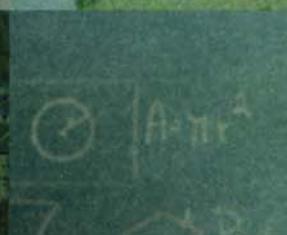
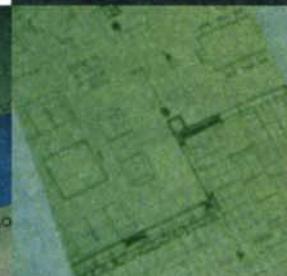
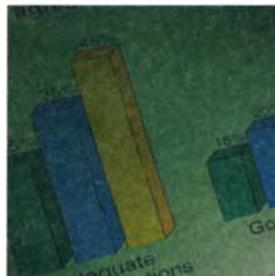
Reputation in industry & academia

Research study conducted for the
Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council

EPSRC

Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council

Spring 2005



Contents

Summary	1
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Research objectives	6
1.2 Research design	6
1.3 Sampling	7
1.4 Presentation and interpretation of the data	7
1.5 Acknowledgements	8
2. Familiarity and favourability	9
2.1 Familiarity with EPSRC	9
2.2 Favourability towards EPSRC	10
3. EPSRC's image	12
3.1 Organisational characteristics of EPSRC	12
3.2 Advocacy for EPSRC	14
4. The role and effectiveness of EPSRC	17
4.1 The role of EPSRC	17
4.2 The effectiveness of EPSRC	19
4.3 Meeting the needs of industry and academia	21
5. Interactions with key partners	22
5.1 EPSRC's interactions with other organisations	22
6. Communications	24
6.1 Communication channels	24
6.2 Communications content	29
6.3 Communications effectiveness	31
7. Strategy and the future	35
7.1 Opportunity to influence EPSRC's strategy	35

Appendices

Sampling tolerances and statistical reliability

Questionnaires

Summary

This report contains the findings from a survey of Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC) stakeholders in industry and academia. The research was conducted by MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of EPSRC, in April-May 2005.

Research objectives

The EPSRC is seeking to ascertain views about a number of areas: stakeholders' understanding of EPSRC's role, what its strategic priorities might be in the future, and the effectiveness of its interactions and communications.

Methodology

The research was conducted in three stages. Firstly, interviews were conducted among high-level EPSRC staff, in order to allow them to input into the research process and provide MORI with a deeper insight into the organisation's many functions, as well as to gauge how staff perceive the organisation to be viewed by its stakeholders.

This was followed by a qualitative pilot of 20 depth interviews with senior academics, industrialists, and current grantholders, which informed the design of the survey questionnaire and provided further context for the survey findings.

Finally, a telephone survey of 502 EPSRC stakeholders was conducted in April-May 2005, comprising

- 201 interviews with senior industrialists (such as Research and Development Directors/ Technical Directors in large companies, and Managing Directors in SMEs);
- 151 interviews with current grantholders (equally divided among science, engineering and technology disciplines); and
- 150 interviews with senior academics (such as Heads of Department/ Faculty, Deans of Research, Pro-Vice Chancellors).

Familiarity with EPSRC

Familiarity with EPSRC among academics is universally high, with almost all of this group saying they know at least a fair amount about EPSRC (93%), and half who feel they know it very well (52%).

However, **just one in ten industry stakeholders feel they know EPSRC well** (11%) and almost half say they know it just a little, or have only ever heard of it (47%).

Favourability towards EPSRC

Favourability towards EPSRC is very high (81%), with just 3% who say they are unfavourable. Favourability is highest among current grantholders (91%) and lowest among industrialists (73%). However, this does not mean industry is more likely to be unfavourable towards EPSRC – around a quarter of them are neutral.

Advocacy for EPSRC

Stakeholders were asked whether they would speak highly or critically of EPSRC to colleagues, as a measure of how far they would act as ‘advocates’. Again, findings are fairly positive in comparison to similar MORI research on behalf of other public sector organisations. **Around half would speak highly of EPSRC (48%)**, a third would be neutral (36%) and just one in six would be critical (16%).

Again, academics are more likely than industrialists to be positive, with industrialists more likely to be neutral.

EPSRC's image

Stakeholders were asked how far they associated EPSRC with a range of positive and negative descriptors developed from the qualitative research. Most would describe EPSRC as **professional, responsive and innovative**, although a majority would also describe EPSRC as being **bureaucratic**.

Areas of EPSRC’s image which may need to be addressed are the perception of it being an ‘old boys network’ – half of stakeholders feel this is the case at least to some extent (48%) – and of being ‘out of touch’ – felt to apply by a third (34%), particularly among SMEs.

EPSRC's role

Stakeholders perceive EPSRC’s most important roles to be **supporting UK research excellence and developing talented scientists and engineers**. They also prioritise supporting research that benefits society, and speaking out for engineering and physical sciences to government, as being more important than economic roles or increasing public engagement with research.

Notably, industrialists consider stimulating links between industry and academia, and supporting the UK economy, as more important roles than academics. The views of senior academics are more in line with industrialists on these issues, than with current grantholders.

EPSRC's effectiveness

Encouragingly for EPSRC, stakeholders rate it as being **most effective in the roles they consider most important**. Nine in ten deem EPSRC to be effective

at supporting UK research excellence, including over a third who say EPSRC is very effective in this respect.

Industry stakeholders tend to be less convinced that EPSRC is effective in its roles than those in academia, in particular when it comes to supporting the UK economy and increasing public engagement with research. Stimulating links between industry and academia is an exception, with industrialists more positive than academics. However, those in large companies are more likely to find EPSRC effective here than those in SMEs (84% compared with 62%). This is reinforced by the qualitative research, where external stakeholders indicated that EPSRC needs to focus more on SMEs.

Meeting the needs of engineering and physical sciences organisations

The majority of stakeholders judge EPSRC to be successful at meeting the needs of engineering and physical sciences in academia (80%). Almost half (46%) consider the same of the needs of engineering and physical sciences in industry, although there is room for improvement, with a significant minority (20%) saying EPSRC is unsuccessful in this respect.

When asked how successful or not EPSRC is at meeting the needs of their own organisation, industrialists are half as likely as academics to feel that EPSRC does so successfully (35% compared with 70%).

EPSRC's interactions with partner organisations

Stakeholders perceive that EPSRC has most interaction with **learned societies/professional bodies, other Research Councils**, and the **DTI**. There is a low level of awareness about interaction with other organisations, notably RDAs and the European Commission (EC).

Only a minority call for more interaction, in particular directed at the DTI and the EC. Senior academics are most likely to call for more interaction with the EC, RDAs and other Research Councils, while industrialists single out the DTI.

Communications channels

Email, the EPSRC website, and 'Connect' are the most recognised forms of communication, although email is by far the most preferred. Academics are consistently more likely to have received any form of communication than industrialists, in particular face-to-face forms of communication such as meetings and site visits.

A quarter of stakeholders would like more face-to-face contact (26%), in particular those in industry.

Usefulness of communications

The most useful form of communication is **face-to-face meetings**, followed by the **EPSRC's website**. This is particularly highly regarded, with nine in ten who have used it rating it as useful, including half who consider it to be very useful.

Although a majority consider EPSRC's publications to be useful, a significant minority do not. There is little correlation between the channels currently used and those felt to be most useful, suggesting that communications could be targeted more effectively.

Content of communications

A fifth of stakeholders do not want any more information from EPSRC, in addition to what they already get (22%). This rises to a third of current grantholders (34%). Senior academics are the least likely to say they do not want any more communication.

Among those who would like more information, the most popular topics are **new funding opportunities** and **strategic planning**. Trust in the accuracy of EPSRC's information is high (85% are confident about this, just 5% are not).

Effectiveness of communications

The majority consider that EPSRC communicates well with their organisation (71%), however around a quarter think it does not (23%). This view rises to around half of those in industry (46%), particularly SMEs (54%).

Most stakeholders believe that their contact at EPSRC is senior and knowledgeable enough. However, the majority agree that **EPSRC communications need to reach a wider audience (56%).** The qualitative interviews suggested that stakeholders would like to see more communications with younger researchers (not just grantholders), science and engineering undergraduates, and young people at school.

EPSRC's future strategy

Eight in ten stakeholders feel they have little or no opportunity to influence EPSRC's strategy (78%) – this rises to nine in ten among industry (89%). The most likely to feel they have some influence are senior academics in a senior management role, but even these are still in the minority (38% agree).

Stakeholders had diverse ideas about what EPSRC's future priorities should be over the next 2-3 years. Most cited encouraging **more collaboration with industry**, followed by **maintaining/ increasing funding for research**, and **attracting more young people into science and engineering**. Focusing on **longer term research issues such as sustainable energies**, and **reducing bureaucracy**, were also key mentions.

Stakeholders are less forthcoming about the best ways to improve relationships to be able to meet these priorities. Most suggest **improving communications** generally, followed by **reducing bureaucracy**, and **reviewing the system for allocating research funds**. More specific ways of improving communications that were mentioned include **more face-to-face communication**, especially through meetings and workshops, and **focusing on improving communications with industry**.

©MORI/J24820

Claire Simm

Kate Smith

Sue Cardwell

1. Introduction

This report contains the findings of a survey of Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) stakeholders in academia and industry. The research was conducted by MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of EPSRC.

EPSRC conducted this research seeking to gain high-level views about a number of areas: stakeholders' understanding of EPSRC's role, what its strategic priorities might be in the future, and the effectiveness of its interactions and communications with stakeholders.

1.1 Research objectives

In brief, the objectives of this study are:

- to assess **perceptions of EPSRC** and in particular the value key stakeholders place on the role and services that it provides;
- to assess the effectiveness of EPSRC's **stakeholder communications**;
- to gauge the level of understanding and support for the **key elements of EPSRC policy and strategy**;
- to gain feedback on the **effectiveness of the delivery of EPSRC strategy**;
- to identify where **improvements** can be made and to use external views to inform the **development of future strategy**.

EPSRC is also interested in **benchmarking its performance** against other organisations and over time - developing a method of gaining regular feedback on its performance.

1.2 Research design

The research design consists of three main stages:

- ▶ Depth interviews among 8-10 senior staff within EPSRC, to allow them to input into the research process, and to give the MORI research team insight into the organisation's many functions
- ▶ A qualitative pilot exercise involving depth interviews with 20 senior academics and industrialists, which informed the mainstage questionnaire design and gathered context for interpretation of the survey findings; and

- ▶ A mainstage telephone survey of 502 stakeholders from industry and academia.

1.3 Sampling

Three key stakeholder groups were identified:

- **senior industrialists**, for example Research and Development/ Technical Managers or Directors in larger companies, and Managing Directors/ Chief Executives in SMEs.
- **senior academics**, including those with pan-university responsibilities such as Vice Chancellors and Pro-Vice Chancellors or Deans of Research, and those more Faculty or Department-based, such as Heads of School or Department; and
- **current EPSRC grantholders** – the lead name on the grant application.

Random samples of current grantholders and industry contacts were drawn from EPSRC's grantholder and collaborating companies databases. To ensure the survey focused on senior level industrialists, the questionnaire included a screening section to ensure that questions were directed at the most senior person responsible for research and development within each company, who was not necessarily the named lead on the database.

Finally, a sample of senior academics was collated by EPSRC to a specification provided by MORI. The senior academic sample covered Heads of Department and more senior staff including Heads of Faculty, Deans, and Vice-Chancellors. The sample was designed to ensure a broad coverage across different research disciplines within engineering and physical sciences, as well as more senior academic roles not linked to a specific discipline.

In total, telephone interviews were conducted with 502 stakeholders. Further information on the survey methodology, including statistical reliability and response rates, can be found in the technical note.

1.4 Presentation and interpretation of the data

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a *sample* of EPSRC's stakeholder population, and not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances. In other words, not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant and there is a calculated margin of error for all findings. A guide to statistical significance is included in the Appendices.

Data was collected for 502 stakeholders, representing a valid response rate of 80 percent.¹ Overall findings are therefore subject to sampling tolerances of ± 4 percentage points.

In tables where percentages do not add up to 100 percent this is due to multiple answers, to rounding, or to the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'No response' categories. Throughout the tables an asterisk (*) denotes a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5 percent.

1.5 Acknowledgements

MORI would like to thank Claire Graves, Pilar Sepulveda, Philippa Hemmings, and Lucy Brady at EPSRC for their valuable advice and assistance throughout the lifetime of this project. We would also like to extend our thanks to all of EPSRC staff who contributed to the internal interviews and, last but not least, to the stakeholders who spared their time to take part in the research and share their views.

¹ Of those who met the criteria for taking part, 80% agreed to do so.

2. Familiarity and favourability

In this section we look at familiarity with and favourability towards EPSRC. There is a strong link between familiarity and favourability – three-quarters are very or fairly familiar with EPSRC, and a similarly large majority are either very or mainly favourable towards it. Industrialists tend to be less familiar, and partly because of this, are less favourable – in particular SMEs.

2.1 Familiarity with EPSRC

Overall, three-quarters of stakeholders feel they know EPSRC very or fairly well. This is to be expected given the sampling frame (drawn from EPSRC contact databases) and corresponds with the similar proportion who say they currently work on, collaborate in or co-fund an EPSRC grant (73%).

Current grantholders are the most familiar with EPSRC. The bigger the grant value, or the more grants that stakeholders and their organisations have collaborated in, the more familiar they are.

Figure 2.1: Familiarity with EPSRC across different types of stakeholder

Q How well do you feel you know the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)? Would you say you...



Base: All stakeholders Industry (201); Senior academics (150); Grant holders (151), April-May2005

Source: MORI

Familiarity is almost universally high in academia: almost all of this group know at least a fair amount about EPSRC (93%), and half feel they know it very well (52%). However, just one in ten industry stakeholders feel they know EPSRC well (11%); almost half know it just a little or have only heard of it (47%). Notably, there is no difference in familiarity with EPSRC between industrialists in large companies and SMEs within our sample, however, those who have had larger grants (>£2 million) are much more likely to know the EPSRC well or a fair amount (94%).

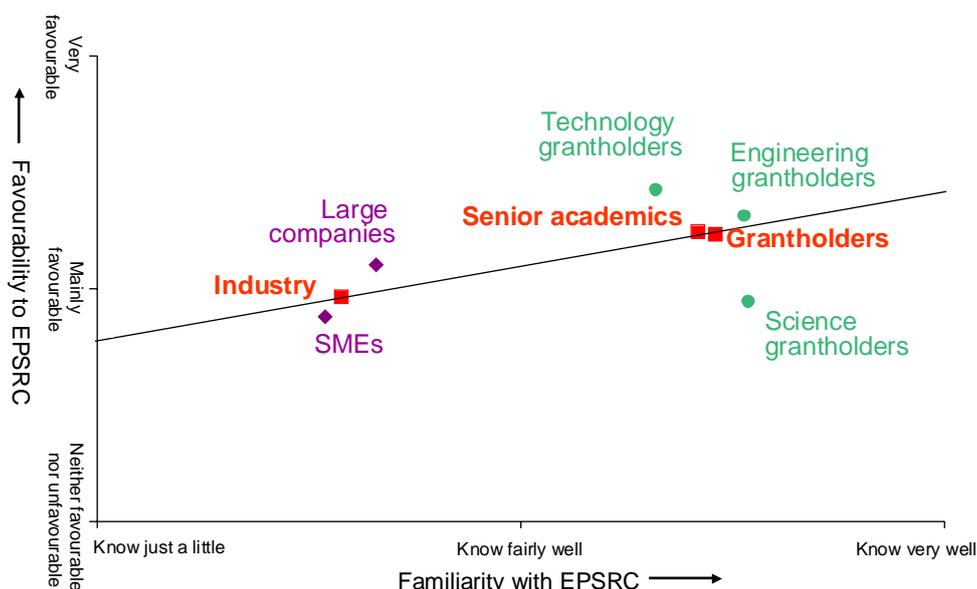
2.2 Favourability towards EPSRC

Favourability towards EPSRC is high. Four-fifths of stakeholders feel very or mainly favourable towards EPSRC (81%), whilst only a tiny proportion (3%) are unfavourable. As suggested by the qualitative research, favourability is highest in academia – with 91% of grantholders and 85% of senior academics favourable to EPSRC – and lowest amongst industry stakeholders (73%). However, industry stakeholders are not necessarily expressing negative opinion of the organisation (only 2% are unfavourable). Almost a quarter are neutral or unable to give an opinion, which typifies those less familiar with EPSRC.

Comparing the findings for favourability with those of other public sector organisations linked to higher and further education, EPSRC’s ratings are at the top end of the scale. However it should be noted that this audience are more likely to be favourable towards EPSRC than a random sample of academics/ industrialists would have been, given that three-quarters of them are connected to an EPSRC grant.

Each point on the chart below shows the familiarity and favourability of a subgroup of EPSRC’s stakeholders toward it. For example green circle named “technology grantholders” plots the familiarity (x-axis) and favourability (y-axis) of technology grantholders. In general, the higher a group’s familiarity is, the higher is its favourability. This tends to be a common pattern in research on organisational reputation.

Figure 2.2: Favourability towards EPSRC



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May 2005

Source: MORI

The analysis shown in Figure 2.2 indicates that EPSRC needs to build greater familiarity among industrialists, in particular with SMEs, if it wants to be regarded more favourably by them. Improving communications with those who currently feel these are poor will also lead to greater favourability. Those who feel EPSRC

communicates well are shown to be not only more familiar with the organisation, but more favourable to it.

Science grantholders show high familiarity with EPSRC but tend to be less overtly favourable than their counterparts in engineering and technology – 20% are ‘very favourable’, compared with 39% in engineering and 48% in technology. However, the majority of science grantholders remain favourable to EPSRC as a whole (86%), they are just more likely to say they are ‘mainly’ rather than ‘very’ favourable.

3. EPSRC's image

Here we focus on EPSRC's organisational image among stakeholders. Encouragingly, most stakeholders perceive EPSRC to be 'professional', 'responsive' and 'innovative', although three-quarters would also describe it as 'bureaucratic' to some extent. Almost half of stakeholders would be advocates for EPSRC with just one in six being critical.

3.1 Organisational characteristics of EPSRC

Qualitative interviews identified five main themes when stakeholders talk about EPSRC's image:

1. *"Bureaucratic", "procedural", "conventional", "rubber-stamping", "civil service", "administrative"*
2. *"Professional", "knowledgeable", "efficient"*
3. *"Responsive", "flexible", "helpful", "supportive"*
4. *"Secretive", "not transparent", "old boys network", "hijacked", "political"*
5. *"Critical", "vital", "essential", "important"*

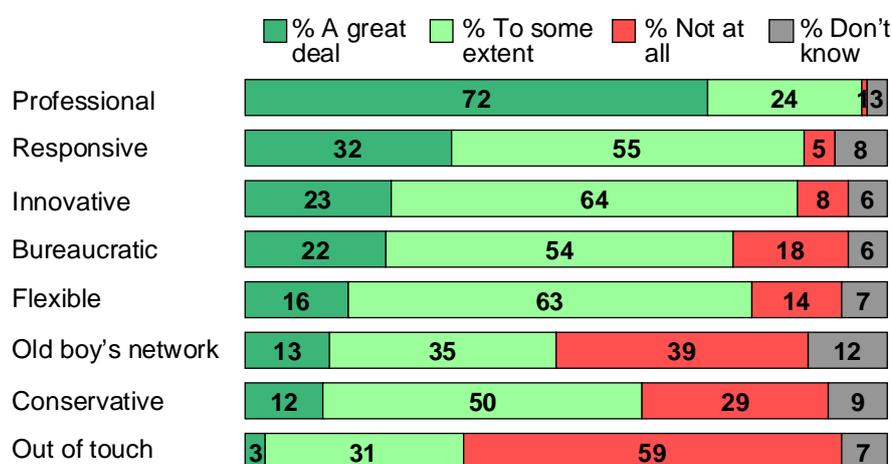
Stakeholders were asked to what extent they associated EPSRC with a series of descriptors, developed from this qualitative research.

Encouragingly for EPSRC, the word most closely associated with it by some margin was 'professional' (72% of stakeholders associated this with EPSRC 'a great deal'). Hardly any stakeholders feel 'professional' does not apply to EPSRC (1%). This was followed by 'responsive', 'innovative', 'bureaucratic' and 'flexible' – although stakeholders are more lukewarm about these terms, most feeling they apply to EPSRC 'to some extent' rather than 'a great deal'.

Areas of EPSRC's image which may need to be addressed are the perception of it being an 'old boys network' – half of stakeholders feel this is the case at least to some extent (48%) – and of being 'out of touch' – felt to apply by a third (34%).

Figure 3.1: The organisational characteristics of EPSRC

Q Here are some phrases and adjectives which may or may not describe the EPSRC. Please tell whether each one applies a great deal, to some extent or not at all.



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

EPSRC is uniformly viewed as professional (96%) – even by stakeholders who would speak critically of it. Almost all academics would describe EPSRC as professional at least to some extent (99%).

The table below shows that academics are more likely than industrialists to perceive EPSRC as responsive, innovative or flexible.

Here are some phrases and adjectives which may or may not describe EPSRC. Please tell whether each one applies a great deal, to some extent or not at all.

	Industry	Academics
<i>Base: All respondents (502)</i>	(201)	(301)
	%	%
Responsive	76	96
Innovative	79	92
Flexible	67	86

Source: MORI

Notably, larger companies are more likely than SMEs to consider EPSRC to be responsive (84% compared with 70%), as are stakeholders associated with grants valuing £2 million or above. Stakeholders who think EPSRC communicates well, or who would speak highly of EPSRC, are more likely to judge it as being responsive or innovative than other groups.

Industry stakeholders overwhelmingly perceive EPSRC to be bureaucratic by a ratio of ten to one (80% feel this applies, 8% feel it does not).

Bureaucratic – there are procedures, panels, committees, or “hoops” that my academic colleagues have to go through. I appreciate that they have to be accountable though.

Industry stakeholder

Fewer than one in ten stakeholders who would speak highly of EPSRC describe it as being a great deal bureaucratic (8%), but over half of those who are critical of EPSRC would do so (58%).

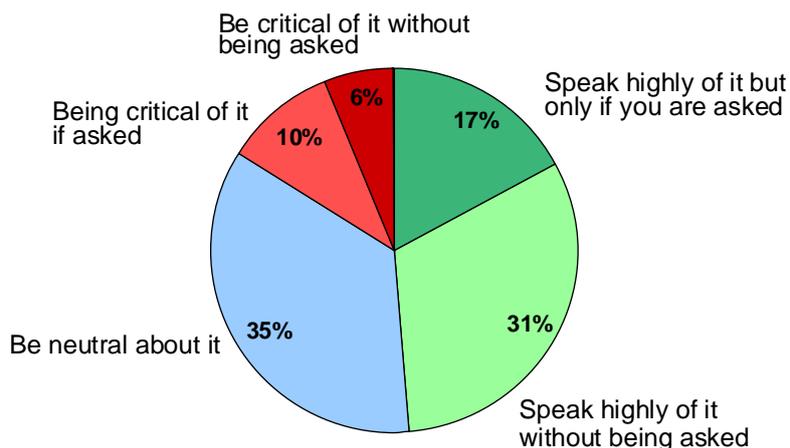
Perceptions that EPSRC is conservative and an ‘old boy’s network’ are fairly uniform across different stakeholder groups. Industrialists are more likely than academics to perceive EPSRC as being ‘out of touch’ (41% compared with 29%), in particular those in SMEs (46%, compared with 33% of large companies). Three-quarters of stakeholders who would speak critically of EPSRC would describe it as out of touch, at least to some extent.

3.2 Advocacy for EPSRC

When speaking to others about EPSRC, around half would speak highly of it (48%), although most of these would do so only if asked directly. Around a third (36%) would be neutral about EPSRC, suggesting that although stakeholders are favourable overall toward EPSRC (see previous section), they are not yet prepared to advocate it to others. Just one in six (16%) would be critical.

Figure 3.2: Advocacy for EPSRC

Q Which one of the following comes closest to describing how you would speak about the EPSRC to colleagues?



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

Which one of the following comes closest to describing how you would speak about the EPSRC to colleagues?

	Industry		Academia	
	Large companies	SMEs	Senior academics	Grant-holders
<i>Base:</i>	(201)			(301)
<i>All respondents (502)</i>	%			%
Be critical	12	15	15	18
Speak highly	43	34	52	57

Source: MORI

EPSRC’s results are very positive compared with other public sector stakeholder studies undertaken by MORI. However, there is still room for improvement, in terms of improving relations with critical groups and developing positivity among those who are currently neutral.

Academics are more likely to be positive advocates of EPSRC than industrialists (54% compared with 38%). The main difference is in spontaneous advocacy – they are four times more likely to speak highly of EPSRC without being asked (24% compared with 6% of industrialists). For their part, industrialists are no more likely to be critical of EPSRC – but they are more likely to be neutral (47%, compared with 28% of academics). There is no significant difference here between representatives from large companies and SMEs.

Figure 3.3: Advocacy for EPSRC by grantholder subject

Q Which one of the following comes closest to describing how you would speak about the EPSRC to colleagues?

■ Speak highly w/out being asked
 ■ Speak highly if asked
 ■ Critical if asked
 ■ Critical w/out being asked



Base: All grantholders (151), April-May2005

Source: MORI

Grantholders in science are particularly negative compared with other groups – a quarter (26%) would be critical of EPSRC. Although senior academics as a

group are no more likely than others to be critics of EPSRC, within this category, a fifth of those managing at Faculty or Departmental level would be critical (21%) compared with just 6% of those in more senior university-wide roles. Those who feel that EPSRC communicates poorly are also more likely to be neutral or critical of it, suggesting that improving communications will improve advocacy levels.

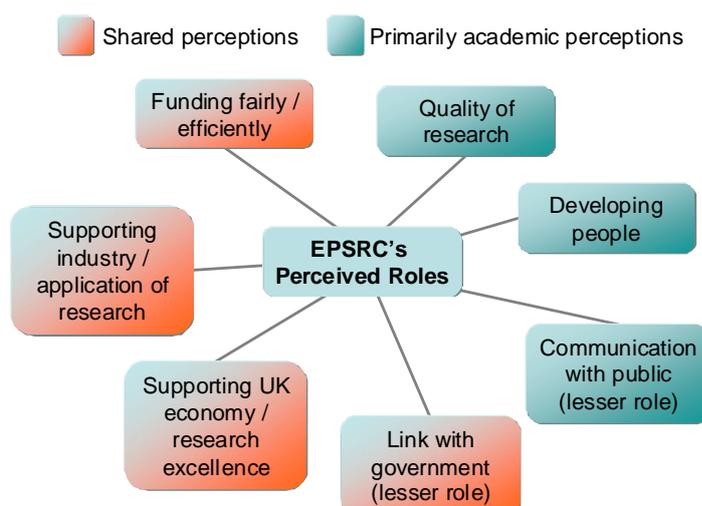
4. The role and effectiveness of EPSRC

In this section we explore stakeholders' perceptions of the role of EPSRC. The majority consider supporting UK research excellence and developing talented scientists and engineers to be EPSRC's most important roles. Encouragingly, these activities are felt to be carried out most effectively. However, a significant minority rate EPSRC as ineffective at increasing public engagement with science, and speaking out for engineering and physical sciences to government.

4.1 The role of EPSRC

The qualitative research identified seven main areas of responsibility for EPSRC. The chart below represents the views of external stakeholders in industry and academia, highlighting shared perceptions and those primarily voiced by academics.

Figure 4.1: Perceptions of EPSRC's main roles

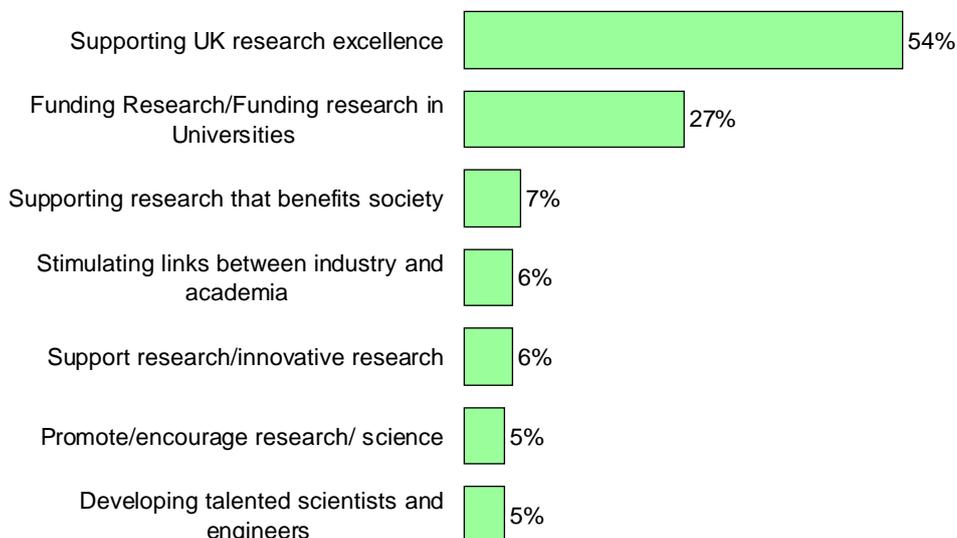


The survey asked stakeholders what they thought EPSRC's role to be (unprompted) and then asked them to rate the importance of various aspects of EPSRC's role (prompted). Some of these are part of EPSRC's stated mission, while others are not.

Unprompted, most stakeholders describe the main role of EPSRC as supporting UK research excellence (54%), followed by funding research (27%). Supporting UK research excellence is spontaneously mentioned much more than any other role. Just one percent of stakeholders spontaneously mention increasing public engagement with research as being one of the main roles of EPSRC.

Figure 4.2: The role of EPSRC (unprompted)

Q What do you perceive the main roles of the EPSRC to be? TOP MENTIONS



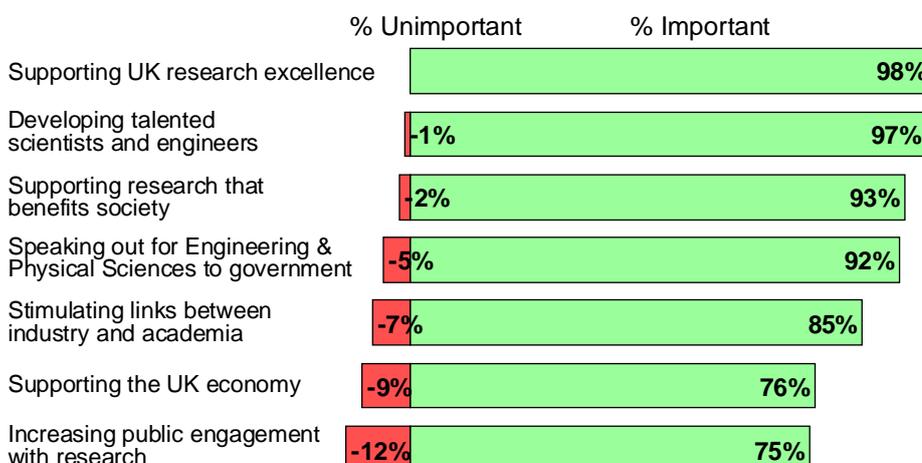
Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

On prompting, stakeholders rate supporting UK research excellence as EPSRC’s most important role (87% consider it to be ‘very important’), closely followed by developing talented scientists and engineers (81% ‘very important’). Speaking out as an advocate for engineering and science research to government (64% ‘very important’) and supporting research that benefits society (60% ‘very important’) are seen as more important than economic roles, and engaging the public with research.

Figure 4.3: The role of EPSRC (prompted)

Q Here are a number of possible roles for the EPSRC, some of which you may already have mentioned. How important or unimportant do you personally think each one should be for the EPSRC?



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

While there is uniformity about the importance of supporting UK research excellence and developing talented scientists and engineers in particular, the table below highlights statistically significant differences among different stakeholder groups (statistically significant differences are in bold). As might be expected, industrialists are more likely than academics to prioritise supporting the UK economy and stimulating links between industry and academia.

Notably within the academic group, however, senior academics tend to be more in line with the industry view on these issues. They are more likely than current grantholders to highlight both supporting the UK economy (83% compared with 64%) and stimulating links between industry and academia (85% compared with 75%).

How important should each one be for EPSRC...?				
<i>(% very/fairly important)</i>				
	Total	Industry	Senior academics	Grant-holders
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	<i>(502)</i>	<i>(201)</i>	<i>(150)</i>	<i>(151)</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Supporting UK research excellence	98	98	97	99
Developing talented scientists and engineers	97	97	97	99
Supporting research that benefits society	93	95	96	88
Speaking out for Engineering and Physical Sciences to government	92	90	93	92
Stimulating links between industry and academia	85	92	85	75
Supporting the UK economy	76	82	83	64
Increasing public engagement with research	75	70	77	79

Source: MORI

4.2 The effectiveness of EPSRC

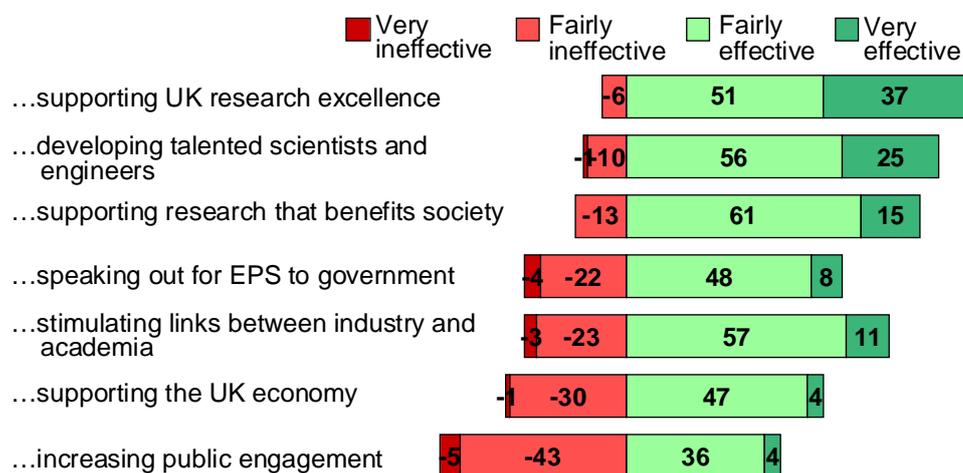
Positively for EPSRC, stakeholders rate it as most effective in the roles that are most important to them.

Almost nine in ten rate EPSRC's performance in supporting UK research excellence as effective – with over a third who say this is 'very effective' (37%). Developing talented scientists and engineers is also deemed to be done effectively

by more than eight in ten stakeholders, including a quarter who judge this to be 'very effective'.

Figure 4.4: The effectiveness of EPSRC

Q How effective is the EPSRC in relation to...?



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May 2005

Source: MORI

Stakeholders are less positive about EPSRC's efficacy at speaking out for engineering and science research to government. While over half think this is done very or fairly effectively (56%), a quarter rates EPSRC as ineffective in this regard, and the remainder do not know enough to give an opinion.

Stakeholders deem EPSRC to be least effective at increasing public engagement with science. Almost half (48%) consider this is currently ineffective.

Engaging public – there is still very low awareness and it's increasingly difficult to engage the public, who are more interested in where they are going on holiday

Industry stakeholder

The difficulties of engaging the public with science need to be borne in mind here. Recent MORI research on behalf of the OST and DTI, on Science in Society, has found that the majority of people in the UK do not feel informed about science, although overall opinions of science are generally positive, and the importance of young people learning about science is universally recognised.

Industry stakeholders tend to be less convinced that EPSRC is effective in its roles than those in academia, in particular when it comes to supporting the UK economy (39% of industrialists think EPSRC is ineffective here, compared with 27% of academics), and increasing public engagement with research (58% in industry versus 42% in academia judge EPSRC to be ineffective). There are no differences here between the views of SMEs and large companies.

A key exception relates to stimulating links between industry and academia, where industrialists are slightly more positive than academics, overall.

It may be that academics work effectively to stimulate partnerships because EPSRC requires it²

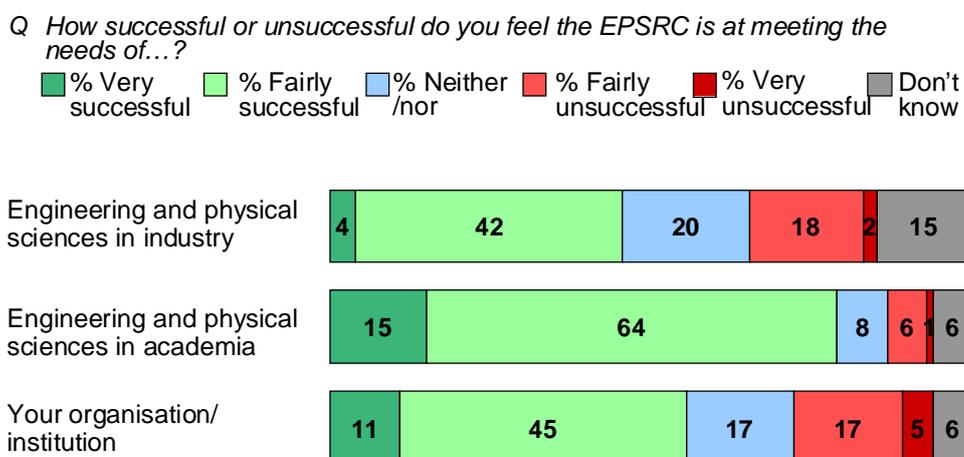
Grantholder

However, large companies and SMEs have diverging views on EPSRC’s effectiveness at stimulating industry – academic links. Those in large companies are more likely to find EPSRC effective (84%, compared with 62% of SMEs); while those in SMEs are three times as likely to rate EPSRC as ineffective (30%, compared with just 9% of large companies).

4.3 Meeting the needs of industry and academia

Overall, the majority of stakeholders consider that EPSRC is successful at meeting the needs of engineering and physical sciences in academia (80%). Almost half (46%) consider the same of the needs of engineering and physical sciences in industry, although there is room for improvement, with a significant minority (20%) saying EPSRC is unsuccessful here. Views among academics and industrialists are largely similar.

Figure 4.5: Meeting stakeholders’ needs in industry and academia



Base: All respondents (100), Fieldwork dates

Source: MORI

The majority also feel that EPSRC is successful at meeting the needs of their own institution/ organisation (56%) – although again a significant minority say it is not (22%). Stakeholders from industry are half as likely as academics to feel that EPSRC meets the needs of their own organisation (35% compared with 70%). SMEs are particularly unlikely to judge that EPSRC successfully meets their needs – just 30% consider this to be the case, compared with 42% of large companies.

² Note: EPSRC does not actually require industrial involvement, it encourages it.

5. Interactions with key partners

Although the majority of stakeholders consider that EPSRC already interacts with learned societies/ professional bodies, other Research Councils, and the DTI, there is a notable lack of awareness about other aspects of its partnership activities. Senior academics are most likely to call for more interaction, especially with the EC, RDAs and other Research Councils, while a fifth of industrialists think EPSRC should interact more with the DTI.

5.1 EPSRC's interactions with other organisations

Stakeholders consider learned societies/professional bodies, other Research Councils and the DTI to be the partners that EPSRC interacts with most (71%, 69% and 67% respectively).

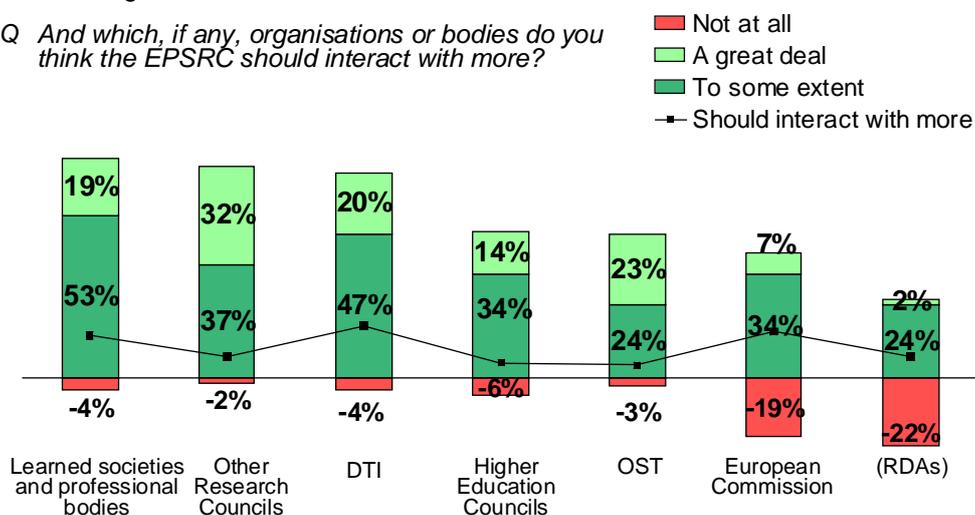
However there is a notably low level of awareness about EPSRC's interactions with other bodies, in particular Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and the Office for Science and Technology (OST), where half do not know enough to give an opinion. Academic respondents are less likely to think EPSRC interacts with any other organisations, especially RDAs. Over a quarter of academics feel the EPSRC does not interact with RDAs (28%, compared with 22% overall).

The chart below shows stakeholders' current perceptions about EPSRC's level of interaction with different partner organisations, and identifies where more partnership is needed (indicated by the black line on the chart). Around one in six stakeholders feel EPSRC should interact more with the DTI (17%) and one in seven think it should interact more with professional bodies/learned societies and the EC (15%). Indeed, around one in five currently feel that EPSRC does not interact with the EC at all.

Figure 5.1: Interactions with key partners

Q To what extent, if at all, do you think the EPSRC interacts with each of the following?

Q And which, if any, organisations or bodies do you think the EPSRC should interact with more?



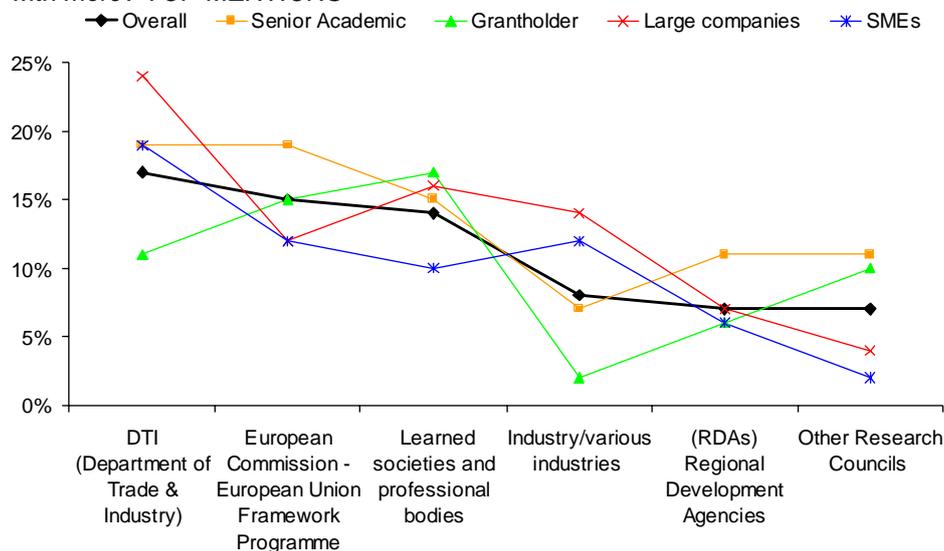
Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May 2005

Source: MORI

However, most stakeholders feel there is no need for further interaction with OST, other Research Councils, or Higher Education Councils. Indeed, only a minority call for more interaction with any organisation.

Figure 5.2: Interactions with key partners

Q And which, if any, organisations or bodies do you think the EPSRC should interact with more? TOP MENTIONS



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

Senior academics are most likely to call for more interaction, especially with the EC, RDAs and other Research Councils.

EPSRC is completely oblivious of the EU – it doesn't consider that UK is part of the EU. They need to become more aware of what the EU is already funding

Senior academic

A fifth of those in industry call for greater interaction with the DTI (21%), in particular those in large companies.

6. Communications

Almost three-quarters of stakeholders feel that EPSRC communicates well with their organisation, but a quarter do not. These tend to be industry stakeholders, especially those from SMEs. Email, the EPSRC website, and 'Connect' are the most recognised forms of communication, although email is by far the most preferred. Stakeholders find the website and direct forms of communications such as face-to-face meetings and site visits particularly useful. Overall, they trust the accuracy of EPSRC's information and consider their contacts to be senior/ knowledgeable enough, although a majority would like to see EPSRC communications reaching a wider audience.

6.1 Communication channels

Usage and preferences

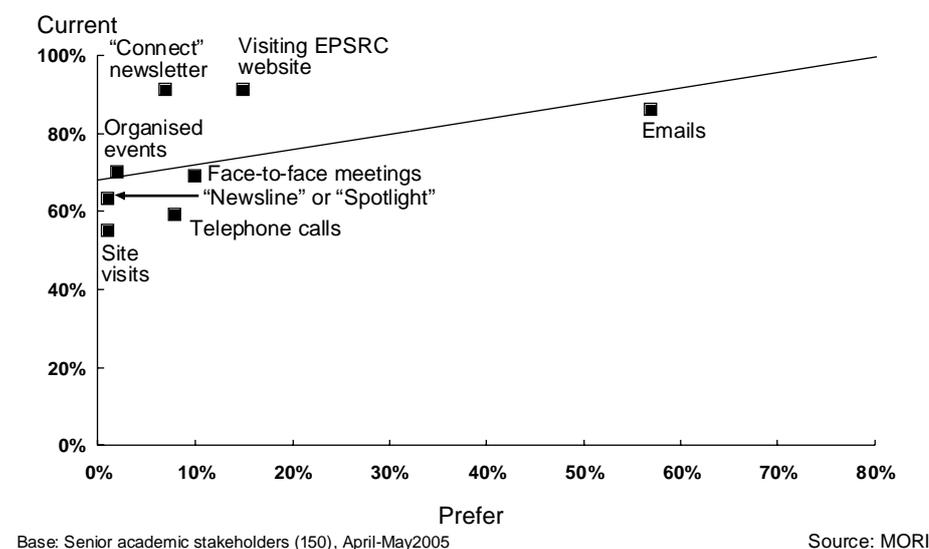
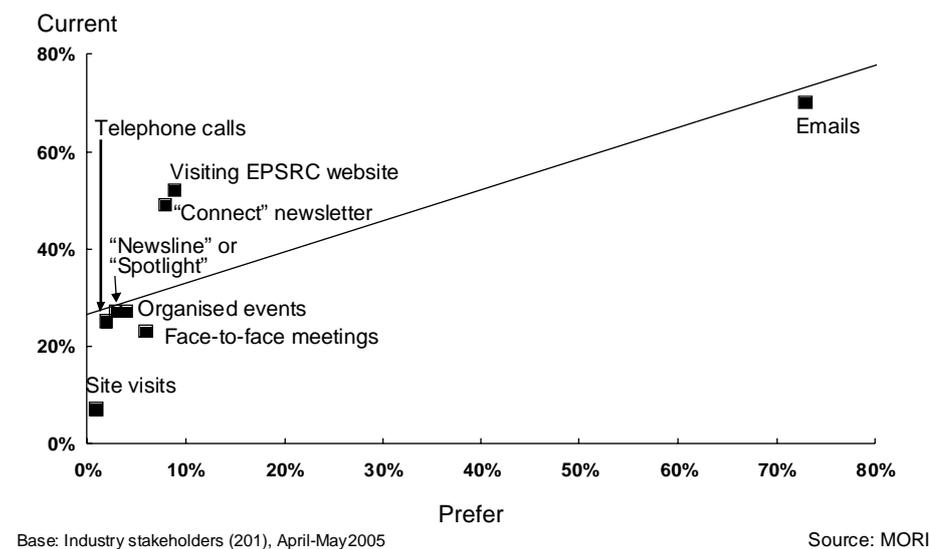
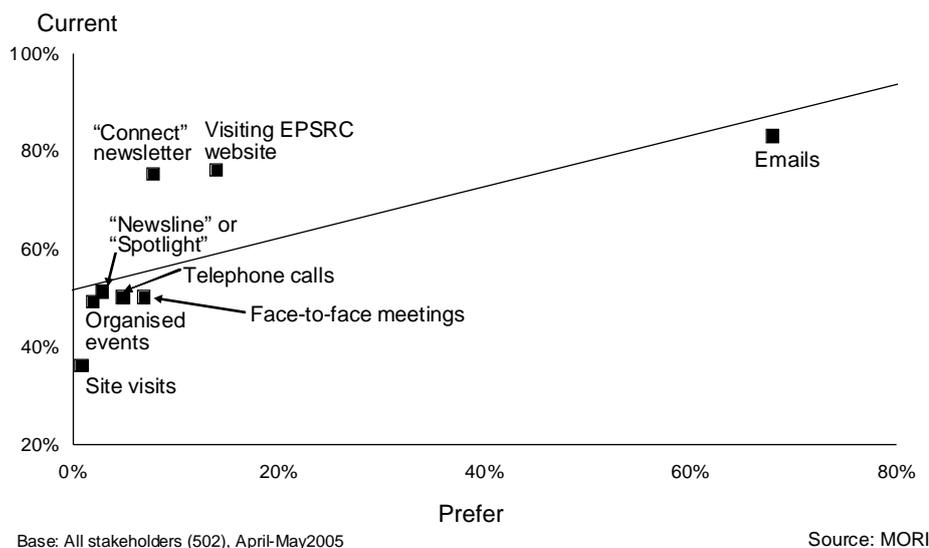
The most prevalent forms of communication with or from EPSRC during the past 12 months were:

- ▶ Emails (83%)
- ▶ Visiting the EPSRC website (76%); and
- ▶ 'Connect' newsletter (75%).

Email is the most-preferred form of communication (68%), followed by visiting the EPSRC website (14%). The charts below summarise use of, and preferences for, different channels of communication for each key stakeholder group. The y-axis shows the channels stakeholders have used in the past 12 months (current), while the x-axis shows the channels they would most like to use (prefer).

Academics are consistently more likely to have received any form of communication than industrialists. Among industry, those from large companies are consistently more likely than those in SMEs to have had any communication at all with EPSRC.

Figure 6.1: Communications channels – usage and preferences: (a) all stakeholders, (b) industry stakeholders, (c) senior academic stakeholders



Electronic communications are the most widespread, with almost all current grantholders having communicated with EPSRC via email during the past 12 months, declining to seven in ten industrialists. Three-quarters of stakeholders have visited EPSRC's website, although this falls to fewer than half those in SMEs (47%).

Academic stakeholders are more likely than those in industry to recall receiving any of EPSRC's publications during the last 12 months (96% compared with 63% of industrialists). Those from large companies are more likely than those in SMEs to recall receiving any publication (71% compared with 58%), the most likely being 'Connect' newsletter.

Those in academia are overwhelmingly more likely to have experienced face-to-face communications with EPSRC such as meetings, conferences and site visits. They are three times more likely to have had a face-to-face meeting with EPSRC (23% compared with 68%), and eight times more likely to have experienced a site visit (just 7%, compared with 55%). There is no difference between large companies and SMEs. Senior academics are the most likely to have attended one of EPSRC's organised events.

Stakeholders from institutions holding grants larger than £2 million, or those with more than one grant, are consistently more likely to have had any form of communication with EPSRC during the past 12 months.

Usefulness of communications

The most useful form of communication is felt to be face-to-face meetings (93% of stakeholders who have met with EPSRC say this was useful). EPSRC's website is also highly regarded, with nine in ten stakeholders who have used it rating the site as very or fairly useful (91%). Half of these rate it as 'very useful' (51%).

The website is excellent; transparent and easy to navigate

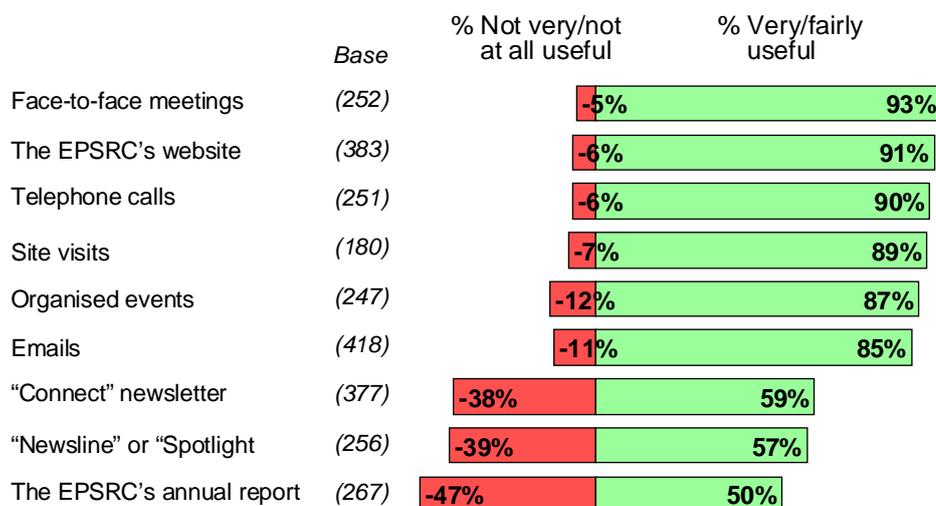
Senior Academic

Other more direct forms of communication are also regarded as being useful, and notably there is no difference in the views of industrialist and academics about the usefulness of site visits and organised events.

Shifting focus to EPSRC's publications, 'Connect' is described as "newsy," "glossy," "professional," and is seen as written for a general, non-academic audience – although stakeholders view this as both a positive and a negative. This is reflected in the survey findings which show that, while the majority consider 'Connect' to be useful, a significant minority do not. 'Spotlight'/'Newline' have similar ratings. Although EPSRC's Annual Report is considered to be least useful, industrialists are more likely to find it useful than academics (65% compared with 46%).

Figure 6.2: The most useful forms of communication

Q How useful do you personally find communication with EPSRC via ...?



Base: All stakeholders who used each, April-May2005

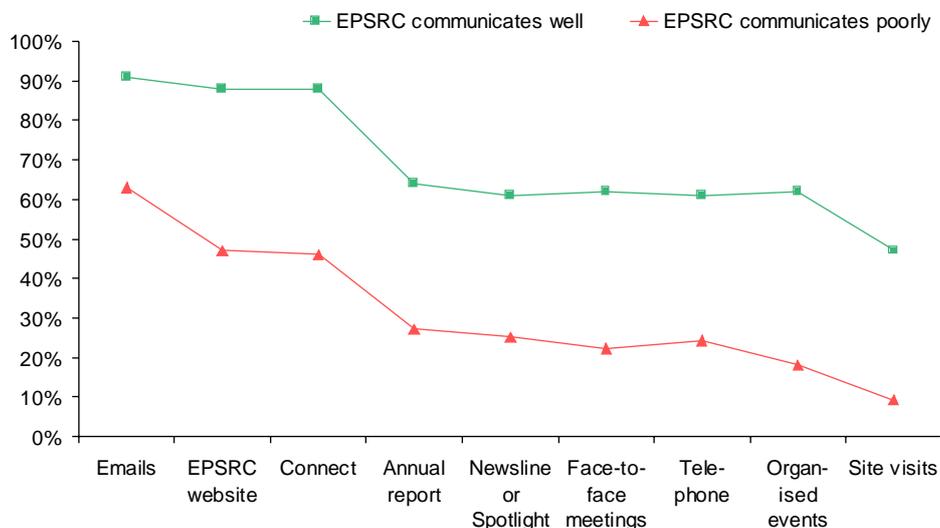
Source: MORI

There is little correlation between the channels currently used and those felt to be most useful.

Those feeling EPSRC communicates well use broadly the same profile of channels as those who feel it communicates poorly – so many in both groups use emails, website and Connect, while fewer in both groups have site visits. However, those who feel EPSRC communicates poorly have lower levels of communication across the board. For example, three-fifths of those with good communications have face-to-face meetings and organised events, while only one fifth of those with poor communications have each.

Figure 6.3: Forms of communication used by those with (a) good and (b) poor communications with the EPSRC

Q Do you recall having any of the following forms of communications with or from the EPSRC in the past 12 months?



Base: Stakeholders who feel the EPSRC communicates well (360), stakeholders who feel the EPSRC communicates poorly (116); April-May 2005 Source: MORI

Levels of face-to-face contact

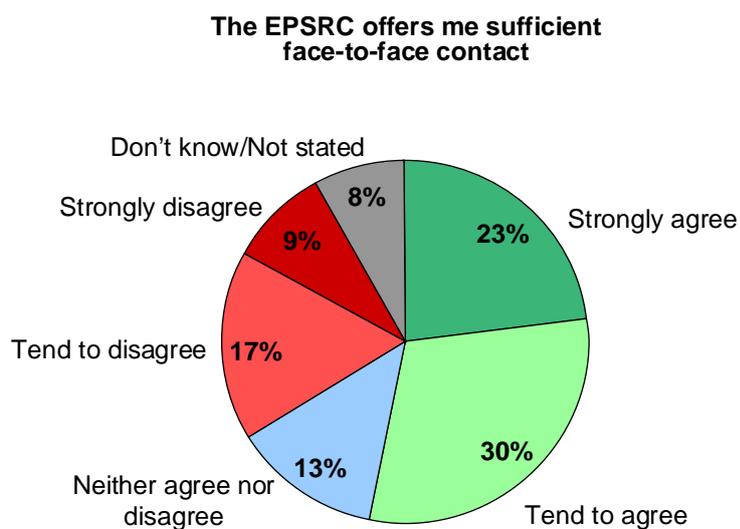
Stakeholders were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement 'EPSRC offers me sufficient face-to-face contact'. Overall, a quarter (26%) disagreed. This rises to over half of those who feel communications are poor (56%) and around half of those who feel EPSRC does not meet the needs of their organisation (49%).

They need to pay more one-to-one visits to gain knowledge and insight

Industry stakeholder

These tend to be industry stakeholders: seven in ten academic stakeholders already feel they get enough face-to-face contact.

Figure 6.4: Face-to-face contact



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

6.2 Communications content

What do stakeholders want to know more about?

When asked which aspects of EPSRC's activities, if any, stakeholders would like to know more about, the most popular responses were new funding opportunities (20%) and strategic planning (14%). However, a fifth of stakeholders do not want any more communication in addition to what they already get (22%).

Senior academics are the most likely to want more information overall – just one in ten do not want any more communication (11%), compared to a third of current grantholders (34%).

Figure 6.4: What do stakeholders want to know more about?

Q Which aspects of the EPSRC's activities, if any, would you like to know more about?

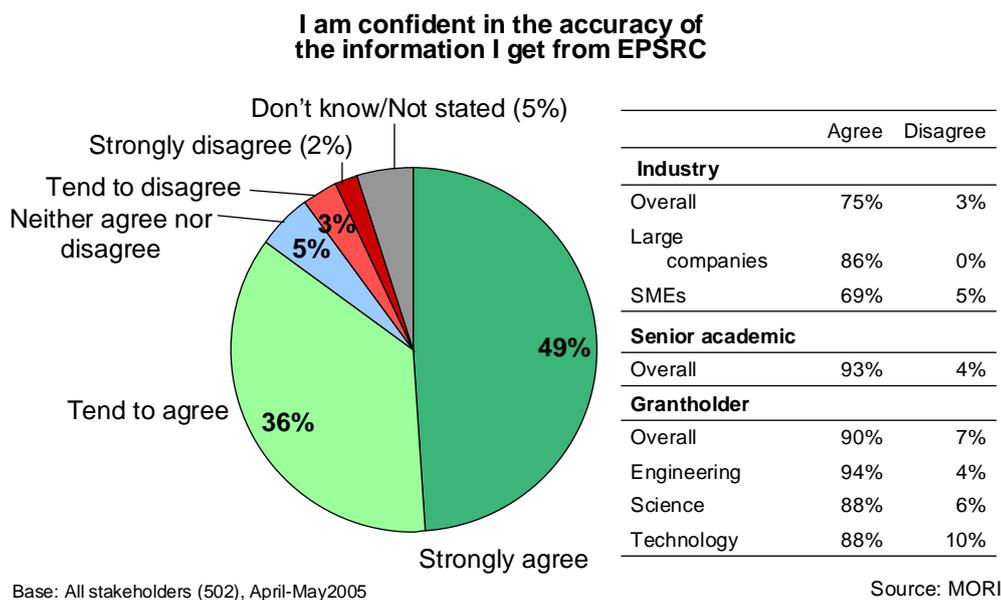


Trust in the accuracy of EPSRC's information

Trust is not an issue for the vast majority of external stakeholders, who were asked how far they agreed or disagreed with the statement, *I am confident with the accuracy of the information I get from EPSRC.* The vast majority of stakeholders have confidence in the accuracy of EPSRC information – 85% of stakeholders agree. Grantholders in engineering are more positive than those in other subjects.

Those unfavourable to EPSRC and those who would be critical of it if asked are more likely than others to feel that information from EPSRC cannot be relied upon, although they remain in a small minority.

Figure 6.5: Accuracy of information from EPSRC



6.3 Communications effectiveness

Overall communications

Seven in ten stakeholders (71%) feel that EPSRC communicates with them very or fairly well. Around a quarter (23%) consider communications to be poor, rising to almost half (46%) of industry stakeholders.

Bring industry into line with what they are doing (and vice versa) by communicating more with industry

Industry stakeholder

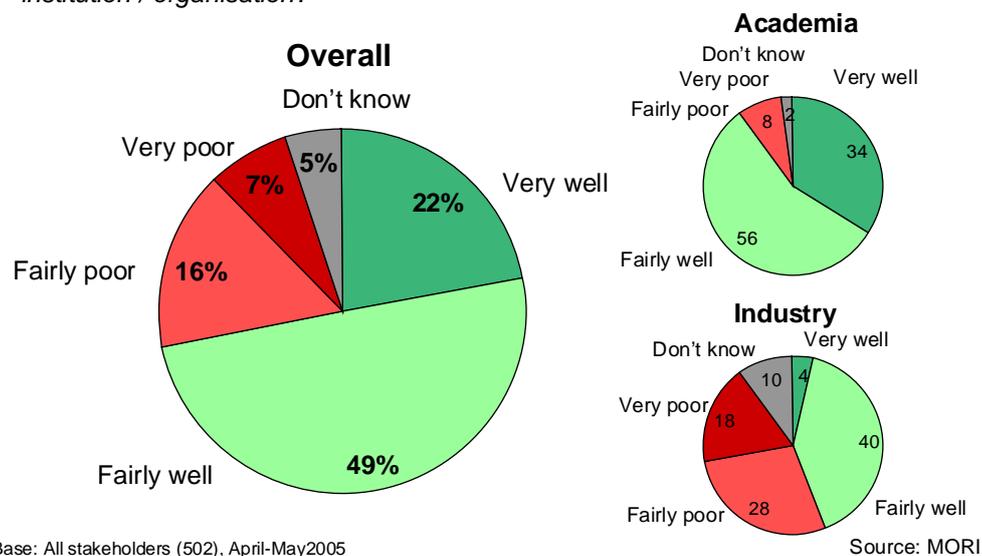
Those in smaller companies are particularly negative, with the majority considering communications to be poor (54%).

There is a hand-waving to industrial relevance but often no real link. The links that are there come from personal relationships between academics/universities and industry rather than being fostered by EPSRC. It would be really helpful if EPSRC had a database of companies interested in different aspects of EPS research that they could match up with academics. Academics know what the big companies are doing but not the SMEs who could be doing lots of innovative things and we'd know nothing

Grantholder

Figure 6.6: Overall effectiveness of EPSRC's communications

Q Overall, how well or poorly does the EPSRC communicate with your institution / organisation?



Overall effectiveness of EPSRC's communications – breakdown by stakeholder type

	Well	Poorly
All stakeholders	72%	23%
Industry		
Overall	44%	46%
Large companies	55%	33%
SMEs	38%	54%
Senior Academic		
Overall	89%	10%
Grantholder		
Overall	91%	6%
Engineering	96%	2%
Science	88%	8%
Technology	90%	8%
Grant size		
Grants >£2m	91%	7%
Grants <=£2m	51%	40%

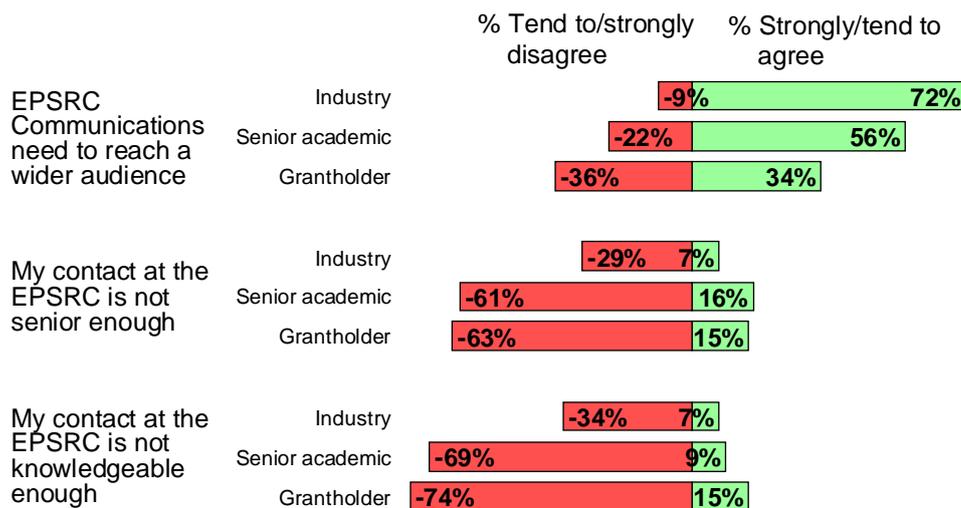
Source: MORI

On the whole, stakeholders tend to feel that while their contact is both senior and knowledgeable enough, EPSRC communications need to reach a wider audience (56% agree with this statement).

Targeting the right individuals is seen as difficult, with a high level of job movement in the engineering and physical sciences community. However, respondents would still like to see publications reaching a greater number of those involved in research, especially younger researchers as well as named grantholders. Some feel that communications should be reaching more distant stakeholders including the general public, A-level students, and undergraduates.

Figure 6.7: Attitudes towards EPSRC communications

Q For each of the following statements about the EPSRC's communications, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree.



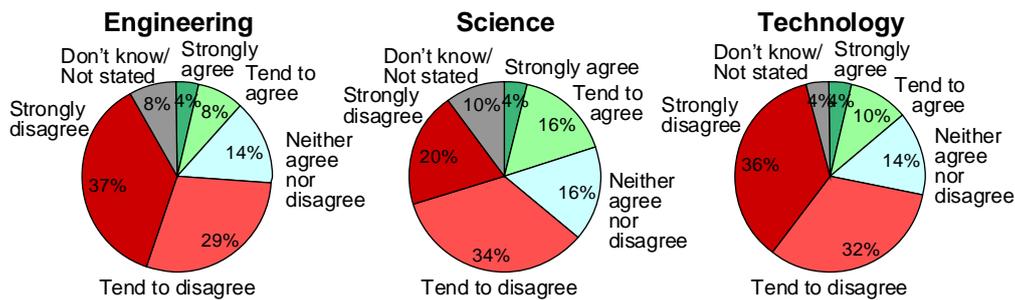
Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

Most feel their contact at EPSRC is sufficiently senior and sufficiently knowledgeable although one in ten is critical in each case (10% and 12% overall respectively). Industry stakeholders are less likely to feel their contact is not senior enough. Grantholders within science are more likely to be critical than those in other subjects.

Figure 6.8: Seniority of contact by grantholder subject

Q My contact at the EPSRC is not senior enough



Base: Grantholders in Engineering (51), Science (50) and Technology (50); April-May2005

Source: MORI

7. Strategy and the future

Stakeholders perceive the opportunity to influence EPSRC's strategy as limited. Just a fifth feel they have any significant influence, primarily grantholders and senior academics. Stakeholders have diverse views about future priorities for EPSRC in the coming 2 to 3 years – the most popular are encouraging greater collaboration with industry, and maintaining or improving funding levels for research. Better communications with stakeholders are called for in order to build the relationships that will help this to take place.

7.1 Opportunity to influence EPSRC's strategy

Almost eight in ten stakeholders feel they have little or no opportunity to influence the strategic direction of EPSRC (78%), rising to nine in ten within industry (89%).

They are doing ok. They need more consultation with end-users in terms of strategic initiatives

Grantholder

Figure 7.1: Stakeholders' perceptions of their influence on EPSRC strategy

Q To what extent, if at all, do you feel that you have the opportunity to influence the strategic direction of EPSRC?



Base: All stakeholders (502), April-May2005

Source: MORI

Those more likely to feel they have a say are senior academics with a senior management job role (38% feel they have the opportunity at least a fair amount) and grantholders in science (32%), but even in these groups the majority feel they have little or no opportunity.

7.2 Future priorities for EPSRC?

Stakeholders were asked to think about what two or three things it would be most important for EPSRC to achieve over the next 2-3 years. The top five emerging themes were:

- ▶ Encourage more collaboration with industry (22%)

Take a view of what industry is looking to do, as well as academia

Industry stakeholder

- ▶ Maintain/ increase funding for research (16%)

Ensure that their funding base is protected so it can continue to fund projects. Increase funding if possible

Grantholder

- ▶ Attract more students/ young people into science and engineering (13%)

- ▶ Focus on longer-term research issues such as sustainable energies (12%); and

- ▶ Greater transparency in how EPSRC operates/ reduce bureaucracy (12%).

Industrialists were four times as likely as academics to call for more encouragement for collaboration (40% compared with 10%). There were few notable differences among the other priorities that were raised – although science grantholders were particularly likely to call for more research funding under responsive mode, rather than through managed programmes (22%, compared with 8% overall).

7.3 Improving stakeholder relationships?

When asked how stakeholder relationships could be improved to help achieve these priorities, around a fifth (22%) were unable to provide an answer. There may be a need to listen to their stakeholders more.

The key emerging themes for stakeholders relate to:

- ▶ Better communication generally (13%)

Be more aware of our needs

Senior academic

- ▶ Greater transparency/ reduced bureaucracy (10%)

Be totally transparent about who's on committees, who's received money, who's submitted grant proposals – if this is possible

Senior academic

- ▶ Review of the peer review system/ how funds are distributed (7%)

Need to make more small grants available to fund new/ young researchers

Grantholder

- ▶ More face-to-face/ one-to-one communication (7%)

Need to pay more 1-1 visits to gain knowledge and insight

Industry stakeholder

- ▶ More meetings/ workshops/ consultation (6%); and

They shouldn't be afraid of engaging the public in forming those strategic visions' – need more 'lay representation' in strategy

Senior academic

- ▶ More communications/ improved relationships with industry (6%).

Get even closer to the needs of the manufacturing industry at large

Industry stakeholder

Industrialists are twice as likely as academics to call for better communication generally (18% versus 9%). In particular, a fifth of those in large companies call for improved communications generally and better relations with industry as a whole.

Appendices

Statistical Reliability

The table below shows the statistical reliability, at the 95% confidence level for different sample sizes at the aggregate level:

Sampling tolerance applicable to results at or near these percentages bases (based on 95% confidence level)

	10/90%	30/70%	50%
	$\pm\%$	$\pm\%$	$\pm\%$
Sample Size:			
50 Science grantholders	8	13	14
125 SMEs	5	8	9
150 senior academics	5	7	8
201 industry stakeholders	4	6	7
301 academic stakholders	3	5	6
502 stakeholders (total sample)	3	4	4

Source: MORI

If the results of the survey of 502 stakeholders show that around 50% say that the most important factor when deciding upon which funding award to apply for is reputation - the range within which the true figure would lie (if all stakeholders had been interviewed) is ± 4 percentage points, i.e. between 46% and 54%. In fact the true figure is likely to lie at the mid-point of the range (i.e. 50%), rather than at either extremes.

The main benefit of a larger sample size is improved statistical reliability of the overall sample (and the ability to make realistic comparisons between sub-groups within the sample if large enough). We would usually recommend a minimum of 100 interviews in any sub-group where separate analysis is required, in order to ensure statistically reliable aggregate results of ± 14 points.

Sampling tolerance applicable to results at or near these percentages bases (based on 95% confidence level)

	10/90%	30/70%	50%
	$\pm\%$	$\pm\%$	$\pm\%$
Sub-group size:			
100 and 100	8	13	14
201 industry stakeholders versus 151 grantholders	6	10	11
51 Engineering grantholders versus 50 Science grantholders	12	18	20

Source: MORI

Quantitative survey questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/ afternoon. My name is X and I am calling from MORI, the independent research organisation. We are conducting some research on behalf of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The aim of this research is to investigate the views of organisations and individuals with a strategic interest in the role and effectiveness of the EPSRC. This is so that the EPSRC can better understand the needs and preferences of its stakeholders. Can I please just check a couple of details with you first? It will only take a minute.

SCREENER

ASK INDUSTRY CONTACTS ONLY, OTHERS GO TO Q3b

Q1. **Are you the person who is mainly responsible for research and development in your organisation?** PROBE FOR MAIN/JOINT RESPONSIBILITY. SINGE CODE ONLY

Yes – mainly responsible	1	GO TO Q3a
Yes – jointly responsible	2	
No	3	ASK Q2
Don't know	4	

ASK IF DOES NOT HAVE MAIN/JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (CODE 3 OR 4 AT Q1) OTHERS GO TO FILTER AT Q3a

Q2. **We would like to speak to the person who is mainly responsible for research and development in your organisation. Please can you give me his or her contact details?**

TAKE CONTACT DETAILS FOR REFERRAL:
NAME, JOB TITLE, TELEPHONE CONTACT NUMBER

THANK AND CLOSE

Q3a. **What is your role within your organisation?** DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

CEO/ Chairman	1	
Managing Director	2	
R&D Directors	3	
Head of Department	4	INDUSTRIAL QUOTA
General Manager	5	
Team Manager	6	
Researcher	7	
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	8	

ASK ALL

Q3b. **How well do you feel you know the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)? Would you say you...** READ OUT AND REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Know it very well	1	
Know it a fair amount	2	
Know it just a little	3	
Heard of it but know nothing about it	4	
Never heard of it	5	CLOSE INTERVIEW

ASK ALL

Q4 **Could I just check, do you currently work on, collaborate in or co-fund an EPSRC grant?** SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1	GO TO FILTER AT Q5A
No	2	CLOSE IF GRANT-HOLDER, OTHERS GO TO INSTRUCTIONS AT Q5A
Don't know	3	

ASK INDUSTRY CONTACTS ONLY, OTHERS GO TO Q6

Q5a **Including yourself, how many employees does your company have on the payroll at this location?** *PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE INTERVIEWER NOTE – ADD IF NECESSARY: We are interested in all those on the payroll but not self-employed or outside contractors/agency staff*

	Q5	
1	1	
2-4	2	
5-9	3	
10-24	4	
25-49	5	
50-99	6	
100-249	7	
250-499	8	
500+	9	
Don't know	X	CLOSE

CATI INSTRUCTION: CODE RESPONSE FROM Q5 AS FOLLOWS FOR QUOTA:

Number of employees		
1	1	
2-4	2	
5-9	3	
10-24	4	
25-49	5	
50-99	6	
100-249	7	
250-499	8	LARGE INDUSTRY QUOTA
500+	9	

ASK GRANT-HOLDERS AND SENIOR ACADEMICS ONLY, OTHERS GO TO INVITATION
 Q6. **What is your role within your institution?** DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Vice Chancellor/Principal	1
Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellor	2
Deputy/Assistant Principal	3
Dean	4
Head of Faculty/School	5
Head of Department	6
Lecturer	7
Researcher	8
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	9

ASK ALL

INVITATION

Thank you for those details. The interview takes no more than 15 minutes and your answers would be completely confidential. Would you have 15 minutes now, or would another time be better?

Conduct interview, make appointment or record reason why refused (if applicable).

ASK ALL

AWARENESS/FAMILIARITY

Q7. To start with, I'd like to ask you about some organisations that help to fund research in engineering and the physical sciences. For each, please tell me how well you feel you know it – very well, a fair amount, just a little, heard of but know nothing about it, or never heard of it. ROTATE LIST AND REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE EACH ONE

	Know very well	Know a fair amount	Know just a little	Heard of but know nothing	Never heard of
a) Other Research Councils (excluding the EPSRC)	1	2	3	4	5
b) DTI (Department of Trade & Industry)	1	2	3	4	5
c) European Commission – European Union Framework Programme	1	2	3	4	5
d) Higher Education Councils – e.g. HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and SHEFC (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council)	1	2	3	4	5

ASK FOR EACH ORGANISATION THAT RESPONDENT HAS HEARD OF (CODE 1-4 AT Q7)

Q7.b **And for each of the following organisations, please tell me how favourable or unfavourable your overall opinion or impression is. If you do not know enough about an organisation to rate it, please say “don’t know”.** PROMPT WHETHER VERY/MAINLY FAVOURABLE/UNFAVOURABLE. ROTATE LIST. SINGLE CODE EACH ONE

	Very favourable	Mainly favourable	Neither/nor	Mainly unfavourable	Very unfavourable	Don't know
a) EPSRC (Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council)	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Other Research Councils	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) DTI (Department of Trade & Industry)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) European Commission – European Union Framework Programme	1	2	3	4	5	6
e) Higher Education Councils – e.g. HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and SHEFC (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council)	1	2	3	4	5	6

ROLE AND CULTURE OF THE EPSRC

ASK ALL

Q8. **Now thinking specifically about the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), I am going to read out some phrases and adjectives which may or may not describe the EPSRC. Please tell whether each one applies a great deal, to some extent or not at all.** ROTATE LIST AND REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE FOR EACH

	A great deal	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know
a) Bureaucratic	1	2	3	4
c) Responsive	1	2	3	4
d) Old boy's network	1	2	3	4
e) Conservative	1	2	3	4
f) Professional	1	2	3	4
g) Out of touch	1	2	3	4
h) Innovative	1	2	3	4
i) Flexible	1	2	3	4

Q9a. **What do you perceive the main roles of the EPSRC to be?** DO NOT READ OUT.
MULTICODE OK

Q9b. **I am going to read out a number of possible roles for the EPSRC, some of which you may already have mentioned. Please tell me how important or unimportant you personally think each one should be for the EPSRC.** ROTATE STATEMENTS AND REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE EACH ONE

	Very important	Fairly important	Neither/nor	Fairly unimportant	Very unimportant	Don't know	Q9a
a) Supporting UK research excellence	1	2	3	4	5	6	1
b) Supporting the UK economy	1	2	3	4	5	6	2
c) Developing talented scientists and engineers	1	2	3	4	5	6	3
d) Increasing public engagement with research	1	2	3	4	5	6	5
e) Speaking out for Engineering & Physical Sciences to government	1	2	3	4	5	6	6
f) Stimulating links between industry and academia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g) Supporting research that benefits society	1	2	3	4	5	6	8
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY							10
Don't know							11

Q10. **And how effective do you feel the EPSRC is in relation to each of the following aspects of its activities?** ROTATE STATEMENTS AND REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE EACH ONE

	Very effective	Fairly effective	Fairly ineffective	Very ineffective	Don't know
a) Supporting UK research excellence	1	2	3	4	5
b) Supporting the UK economy	1	2	3	4	5
c) Developing talented scientists and engineers	1	2	3	4	5
d) Increasing public engagement with research	1	2	3	4	5
e) Speaking out for Engineering & Physical Sciences to government	1	2	3	4	5
f) Stimulating links between industry and academia	1	2	3	4	5
g) Supporting research that benefits society	1	2	3	4	5

Q11. **How successful or unsuccessful do you feel the EPSRC is at meeting the needs of...? ROTATE LIST AND REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE FOR EACH**

	Very successful	Fairly successful	Neither/nor	Fairly unsuccessful	Very unsuccessful	Don't know
a) Engineering and physical sciences in industry	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Engineering and physical sciences in academia	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) Your [***organisation/institution]	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q12. **To what extent, if at all, do you feel that you have the opportunity to influence the strategic direction of EPSRC? READ OUT, SINGLE CODE ONLY. REVERSE SCALE.**

a) A great deal	1
b) A fair amount	2
c) A little	3
d) Not at all	4
e) Don't know	5 (DO NOT READ OUT)

Q13. **Which one of the following comes closest to describing how you would speak about the EPSRC to colleagues? READ OUT. REVERSE CODEFRAME FOR 50%. SINGLE CODE ONLY**

Be critical of it if asked	1	
Be critical of it without being asked	2	
Be neutral about it	3	
Speak highly of it without being asked	4	
Speak highly of it but only if you are asked	5	
Don't know	6	DO NOT READ OUT ()

INTERACTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

My next few questions are about how the EPSRC interacts and communicates with different organisations.

Q14.a **To what extent, if at all, do you think the EPSRC interacts with each of the following?** ROTATE LIST. READ OUT. SINGLE CODE FOR EACH

Q14.b **And which, if any, organisations or bodies do you think the EPSRC should interact with more?** DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

	A great deal	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	Q14b
a) Other Research Councils	1	2	3	4	1
b) OST (Office of Science & Technology)	1	2	3	4	2
c) DTI (Department of Trade & Industry)	1	2	3	4	3
e) European Commission – European Union Framework Programme	1	2	3	4	5
f) Higher Education Councils – e.g. HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and SHEFC (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council)	1	2	3	4	6
g) (RDAs) Regional Development Agencies	1	2	3	4	7
h) Learned societies and professional bodies	1	2	3	4	8
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)					10
None					11
Don't know					12

Q15. **Do you recall having any of the following forms of communications with or from the EPSRC in the past 12 months?** READ OUT A-I. MULTICODE OK>

a) Face-to-face meetings	1
b) Site visits	2
c) Organised events	3
d) Telephone calls	4
e) Emails	5
f) "Connect" newsletter	6
g) "Newslines" or "Spotlight"	7
h) Annual report	8
i) Visiting EPSRC website	9
Other EPSRC publication (unnamed)	10
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	11
No contact	12
Don't know	13

ASK OF EACH RECEIVED AT Q15, OTHERS GO TO Q17

Q16. **How useful do you personally find communication with EPSRC via ...?** READ OUT IF CODED 1 AT Q15. SINGLE CODE EACH ONE

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Don't know
a) Face-to-face meetings	1	2	3	4	5
b) Site visits	1	2	3	4	5
c) Organised events	1	2	3	4	5
d) Telephone calls	1	2	3	4	5
e) Emails	1	2	3	4	5
f) "Connect" newsletter?	1	2	3	4	5
g) "Newslines" or "Spotlight"?	1	2	3	4	5
h) The EPSRC's annual report?	1	2	3	4	5
i) The EPSRC's website?	1	2	3	4	5

ASK ALL

Q17. **In what way or ways would you prefer to receive information from the EPSRC?** DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

Face-to-face meetings	1
Site visits	2
Organised events	3
Telephone calls	4
Emails	5
Email alerts	6
"Connect" newsletter	7
"Newslines" or "Spotlight"	8
Visiting EPSRC website	9
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	10
Don't want any more communication	11
Don't know	12

Q18. **Which aspects of the EPSRC's activities, if any, would you like to know more about?** DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

Successful funding applications	1
How to apply for funding	2
New funding opportunities (e.g. calls for proposals)	3
Evaluation and monitoring of funded projects	4
Strategic planning	5
Financial information (e.g. budgets and success rates)	6
Support for partnership working or collaboration	7
Initiatives to increase public engagement with research	8
Initiatives to lobby government for extra funding	9
International activities	10
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	11
Don't want any more communication	12
Don't know	13

CLOSING SECTION

Thank you for your time and answers which will be very helpful to the EPSRC. Your answers will remain entirely confidential and will not be reported in any way that could identify you or your organisation.

Q24. **Would you be willing to be re-contacted to take part in further research concerning the issues discussed in this interview?**

Yes	1
No	2

Q25. **Please can I just check that the details we have for you are correct?**

CHECK NAME, JOB TITLE AND ORGANISATION NAME FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

IF AGREED TO BE RECONTACTED (CODE 1 AT Q24) ALSO CHECK ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS

THANK & CLOSE

Qualitative interviews (external)

topic guide

Introduction:

Good morning/ afternoon. My name is X and I am calling from MORI, the independent research organisation. Thank you for agreeing to speak to me. As you know, we are conducting some research on behalf of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The aim of this research is to investigate the views of organisations and individuals who have a strategic interest in the role and effectiveness of the EPSRC.

Your answers will remain entirely confidential and will not be reported in any way that could identify you or your organisation. The interview should take no more than 45 minutes.

Section 1: Background (5 minutes)

Can I just check, what is your job title?

How much, if any, of your role entails a direct involvement in engineering and/or physical sciences?

How important or unimportant are engineering and physical sciences, generally, to your institution/ organisation? Why do you say that? *PROBE:* Do you expect this to increase or decrease over the next 2-3 years?

Section 2: Awareness and understanding of EPSRC's role and remit (10 minutes)

How well would you say you know the EPSRC and its activities?

Which two or three words would you use to describe the EPSRC? Why?

What do you see as the main roles and responsibilities of the EPSRC? *PROBE FULLY.* Do you see them as relevant to you/ your organisation? Why/ why not?

The EPSRC's main roles are to support world-class research in the engineering and physical sciences; to develop talented scientists and engineers; to support the growth of the knowledge economy; and to increase public engagement with research.

Are any of these roles new or unexpected to you? IF YES: Which ones and why?

Is there anything that you think the EPSRC should be doing more of? What?

Is there anything you think the EPSRC should stop doing, or do less of? What?

Which aspects of the EPSRC's work are most interesting to you? *PROBE:* How does the EPSRC's work relate to your own organisation? What more, if anything, would you like to know about what EPSRC is doing?

Which of these comes closest to describing how you would speak about the EPSRC? Would you...*Speak highly of it without being asked/ Speak highly of it but only if you are asked/ Be neutral about it/ Be critical of it if asked/ Be critical of it without being asked / Don't know*

PROBE: Why do you say that?

Section 3: Partner organisations, consultation and engagement (10 mins)

How effectively or not do you think the EPSRC interacts with

higher education institutions

industry

other Research Councils

learned societies and other professional bodies related to engineering and/ or physical sciences

Government departments?

PROBE for each: Why do you say that? How could this be improved?

How well does the EPSRC understand the culture/ environment that *you* operate in?

Which, if any, organisations do you think the EPSRC should be interacting with *more*?

How would you compare the EPSRC to other Research Councils? PROBE: Why?

How would you compare the EPSRC to other funding bodies? PROBE: Why?

Is there anything more that EPSRC should be doing about strategic priorities and relationships, internationally? If so, what?

To what extent do you agree or disagree which each of the following statements about EPSRC? PROBE: Is that strongly or tend to agree/ disagree?

PROBE AFTER EACH RESPONSE: Why do you say that?

I feel I have enough opportunity to have my say in the strategic direction of EPSRC.

EPSRC has a strong understanding of the needs of the engineering and physical science research community in academia.

EPSRC has a good understanding of the needs of the engineering and physical science research community in industry.

EPSRC works effectively to stimulate partnerships between industry and academia.

EPSRC is a flexible and accessible organisation.

Section 4: Communications (10 mins)

To start with, could you please tell me what, if any, publications you recall receiving from the EPSRC? PROBE: How do you rate the publications you have received – do you find them useful?

What would be the best way of communicating information from the EPSRC to you personally? PROBE for channels: Email, web, hard copies via post, seminars, information packs, leaflets.

How else do you find out about what the EPSRC is doing? PROBE FULLY: TV/ radio coverage, press, newsletters, website, word of mouth)

Do you ever meet anyone from the EPSRC? What form does this contact take? How useful is it in understanding what they are about?

What comes to mind when you think about communication from the EPSRC? PROMPT: Relevance? Style? Tone? Usefulness?

What sort of information would/ do you find most useful? Why?

And how do you prefer to receive this information? PROBE for different media as previous.

Is there any way the EPSRC could improve the amount, type or style of their communications, to better reflect their role? PROMPT: Targeting? Length? Focus? Style?

Section 5: Future directions (5 mins)

How, if at all, do you think EPSRC's strategic priorities should change over the next 2 to 3 years and beyond? How should this be reflected in relations with its stakeholders?

Thinking about the issues we've been talking about, what is the one main message that you would like the EPSRC to take note of, in terms of

strategic priorities? ; and

communications?

Section 6: Main stage methodology (5 mins)

Thanks very much for taking part in this interview. We are hoping to undertake a survey of EPSRC stakeholders in industry and academia, and this interview will contribute to the results. It's important that we cover as many of EPSRC's senior stakeholders in industry and academia as possible, so we want to know what you think about our proposed methods of data collection.

We are planning to conduct several hundred interviews among senior academic and industry personnel, using a structured, questionnaire-based interview lasting 15 minutes, over the telephone.

Would you have any concerns about this method, or not?

Do you have any suggestions you would like to make? (eg. interview length/ content, how to identify most appropriate respondent (industry)).

Thanks very much for your help.

Qualitative interviews (internal)

topic guide

OBJECTIVE	QUESTION/ITEM	TIME
<p>Thank respondent.</p> <p>Check role.</p> <p>Introduce topic.</p>	<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>Thanks for agreeing to speak with us today as part of an overview of EPSRC's communications and strategy, and how this impacts on your relationships with external contacts. We're interested in what you feel are the issues for the EPSRC <i>at an overview level</i>, rather than specific processes such as Peer Review. I'd like to tape-record the interview so I can take a bit more time to absorb everything you say, rather than trying to write lots of notes as you talk. It won't be used for anything else, and everything you say will be anonymous. Is that ok? <SWITCH ON RECORDER IF YES></p> <p>First of all, can I just check, what is your role here at the EPSRC?</p>	2 minutes
<p>Establish level of contact with stakeholders.</p> <p>Clarify what is meant by the term and how the respondent defines EPSRC's stakeholders.</p>	<p>2. External Contacts/ Defining 'Stakeholders'?</p> <p>What contact do you have with people outside the EPSRC in your role here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sorts of roles do they have? Would your contacts be at a senior level within their organisation? - For what reasons do you contact them or do they contact you? <p>IF NOT MENTIONED And what about contact with people in industry/academia?</p> <p>What is the frequency of your communications? (meetings/spoken/written)</p> <p>What do you understand by the term "stakeholder"?</p> <p>Who would you consider to be EPSRC's stakeholders?</p> <p>IF NOT MENTIONED What about industry/ academia?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROBE: In what way do you consider these to be stakeholders? Are any of these more important to you/ the EPSRC, than others? Why? 	5-6 minutes
<p>Establish overview of external opinion.</p>	<p>3. External Perceptions</p> <p>How do you think the EPSRC is perceived externally, by its stakeholders?</p> <p>PROBE Why do you say that?</p> <p>IF NOT MENTIONED Would that differ for stakeholders in industry/academia?</p> <p>What do you think are EPSRC's key strategic priorities as an organisation? (corporate not programme priorities)</p> <p>PROBE How do you think external stakeholders view the EPSRC's role/mission?</p> <p>Are there any elements of EPSRC's mission that you feel are more relevant to its</p>	8-10 minutes

	external stakeholders than others? Which ones and why? PROBE How do you think external stakeholders view EPSRC's interactions? Do you perceive them to be well-informed about EPSRC or not? Does this differ between stakeholder groups? (PROBE for any potential differences between industry/ academia).	
Establish issues experienced in contact with stakeholders.	4. Issues and Problems In your contact with stakeholders, what comes up as an issue or problem on a day-to-day basis? NB CHECK WITH RESPONDENT IF IT SEEMS THAT THEY ARE NOT TALKING FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE - industry - academia What else?	3-4 minutes
What do they think the solutions are? Expand on issues.	5. Making Relationships Easier Is there anything that could make day-to-day dealings with stakeholders more straightforward? What? PROBE: Does that relate to... - What EPSRC does? - What EPSRC wants its stakeholders to do? - Communications? - Something else?	3-5 minutes
Explain purpose of survey. Counter any objections or complications before they are raised. Explain use of this interview.	6. Introduce Survey As you may know, MORI has been asked to survey stakeholders regarding their overall impressions of the EPSRC. The survey will only target two groups of stakeholders - academia and industry, not because other groups such as government and opinion formers are not important, but because EPSRC wants to get a good understanding of its academic and industrial collaborators, and other stakeholders will be considered elsewhere. Early next year, we will be asking these groups about the EPSRC's broad role, priorities, perceptions and communications, at a corporate level. We will not be looking in depth at process issues. This survey is designed to complement rather than replace other ongoing consultations, and it is hoped that it will give high level feedback that will be useful to people throughout the EPSRC. We will be looking at the results in conjunction with the views of internal stakeholders, as a reference point, in our analysis.	1 minute
What does respondent think are the issues for different stakeholders? What will the stakeholder view be, according to the respondent?	7. Stakeholder Themes What are the key themes that you think will emerge from stakeholders? PROBE for strategy and communications issues. PROMPT IF NECESSARY Are there any topical areas that you think they will mention? Which ones? Why? Would those be the same for industry/academic stakeholders?	4-6 minutes
What does respondent want to see covered?	8. Survey Content? If there was one thing you could ask stakeholders, one thing that would be really useful to you to know in your job, what would it be? IF NECESSARY:	6-8 minutes

<p>Will it be really useful?</p>	<p>Remember we are talking about EPSRC's role/mission and communications here – not specific processes.</p> <p>IF TOO SPECIFIC In this survey, we only have limited time to ask stakeholders about their overall opinions of the EPSRC. Is there anything else you would like to know from them, at an overview level, about the EPSRC?</p> <p>Would you ask that of both industry and academic stakeholders?</p> <p>Why would that information be useful to you, how would you use it?</p> <p>What do you think they will say about it?</p> <p>Are there any other questions that you feel will be particularly pertinent to this survey?</p>	
<p>Thank again. Avoid raising expectations. Chance for other feedback.</p>	<p>9. Thank and Close</p> <p>Thank you very much for your input, you've been very helpful. We may not be able to cover all of the issues that everyone raises within the stakeholder interviews as we only have a limited amount of time, however, we will take all the important points you have given us into account in our report.</p> <p>Before we finish, is there anything you would like to add? PROMPT Any other points you would like to feed back to the survey team?</p>	<p>2-3 minutes</p>
<p>TOTAL</p>		<p>Max: 45 minutes</p>