



International Migration, Settlement and Employment Dynamics

(IMSED Research)

IMSED RESEARCH STRATEGY

The Department of Labour's IMSED Research team has a clear mandate and responsibility for research regarding immigration, settlement and related issues. The IMSED research strategy has been developed to meet the need for a solid evidence base regarding international migration, settlement and employment dynamics. It is positioned to provide the essential information base that will enable the Department to work smarter to attract the migrants we want, manage risk, and support settlement in a globally competitive environment.

IMSED RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Understanding international migration, settlement and employment dynamics is complex, incorporating a multitude of interrelated factors. The approach used for framing the key components of the IMSED research programme is adapted from the key elements for developing a strategic programme of research identified by the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Committee (SPEaR).¹

Key components of the IMSED Research work programme include:

- describing and monitoring trends and variation in immigration and settlement outcomes;
- understanding the multiple causes of variation in immigration and settlement outcomes;
- monitoring key causal factors associated with variation in immigration and settlement outcomes;
- analysing 'what works' to create positive immigration outcomes for migrants and New Zealand as a whole;
- anticipating the likely impact of future social, socio-demographic, and economic change on New Zealand and its implications for immigration.



The research programme takes into account the information needs and priorities of the immigration and settlement policy areas. It is a programme of work that maximises the usefulness of this information (focus, timeliness and reporting) for policy/process development and review work. The research programme also takes into account short, medium and anticipated long-term information needs.

IMSED Research activities can further be grouped in the following way:

■ On-going monitoring

- Reporting of immigration trends;
- 'Indicators and outcomes' monitoring programme (migrants, employers, and the community);
- Global customer satisfaction surveys;
- Environmental scanning of domestic and international changes and trends relevant to immigration;

■ Specific policy and practice review needs

- Evaluation of new initiatives;
- Evaluation/review of existing policies and practices;
- Short term research projects to meet immediate policy/practice review information needs;

1. Hong, B. (2000): Improving the Knowledge Base for Social Policy; <http://www.spear.govt.nz>

■ Strategic research

- Short, medium, and long term strategic projects.

Factors that are used to inform the choice of strategic research projects undertaken include:

- how the project fits alongside existing knowledge (builds on or extends it into new territories versus duplication);
- certainty of results versus risky (innovative) approaches;
- ensuring the research is feasible, robust, and scientifically sound;
- opportunity cost – projects that are capitalising on a serendipitous situation (e.g. linking in with another project or event);
- regret principle (what ways could we compensate if this information is needed in the future and we chose not to do this project?);
- spread across areas of focus and short, medium, and long term horizons;
- expected contribution to overall immigration and settlement related knowledge needs (and knowledge building) in the future;
- pool of research funding available.

As well as research projects, IMSED Research includes activities to promote leadership, capacity building and international linkages. Strategic priorities are identified and reviewed every three years in consultation with primary stakeholders.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The IMSED Research strategy aims to:

1. undertake and facilitate high quality research to understand the migration process and migrant experiences and settlement outcomes, including their experiences of, contribution to and impact on New Zealand in the short, medium and longer term;
2. build a strong and relevant evidence base for the development of optimal immigration and settlement policies and processes that will maximise the likelihood of successful outcomes both for migrants and New Zealand as a whole;
3. provide leadership and a central platform for building the knowledge base about international migration, settlement, and employment dynamics for the development of optimal immigration and settlement policies and processes;

4. provide leadership in the broader research community around immigration and settlement related research and evaluation including the dissemination of results and ensuring connections across research and relevant policy practices are made.

PRINCIPLES FOR HOW WE WORK

In all of our endeavours we value:

- Relevance, timeliness and usefulness;
- Excellence;
- Leadership;
- Collaboration;
- Professionalism;
- Transparency;
- Integrity;
- Initiative and innovation;
- Effective communication.

These attributes underpin our approach to our work. They include a commitment to research excellence while providing results which are useful and timely. We pledge to work collaboratively within the Department of Labour and across government agencies. We will also seek collaborative opportunities with research agencies domestically and internationally. Further, we will ensure effective dissemination of research and evaluation to inform policy and practice in a timely manner and inform public debate through the provision of evidence.

LEADERSHIP AND BUILDING CAPABILITY

A key element of the IMSED Research strategy is to provide leadership and build research expertise and capability. This will be achieved through a range of ways including:

- having a critical mass of researchers to build breadth and depth of expertise;
- establishing and maintaining a reputation for excellence in research;
- building a positive domestic and international profile and connections;
- facilitating secondments (domestic and international);
- being innovative;
- facilitating training and development workshops and opportunities;
- sponsoring, facilitating and presenting in conferences, fora and seminars;
- collaborating in research and establishing partnerships;
- publishing in peer-reviewed publications.



QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The inclusion of quality assurance processes is a routine expectation of the IMSED research strategy. These processes help to ensure that the research we undertake meets our strategic objectives and principles for how we work. It is expected that research that is undertaken or commissioned as part of IMSED Research:

- involves consultation with immigration policy/process officials in defining information needs so projects are optimally aligned to meet current or potential future information needs;
- has a project plan with clearly articulated objectives, method, milestones and timing, roles and responsibilities, and reporting and governance structures;
- aligns with best practice approaches;
- adheres to professional codes of ethics and research conduct;²
- is peer reviewed (external review for substantive projects);
- has a communications/dissemination strategy.

COMMUNICATING AND DISSEMINATING FINDINGS

Timely and appropriate communication and dissemination of research findings is fundamental to IMSED Research. Ongoing updates and liaison about the progress of a project will be established for multi-year research projects. A key driver for the method and timing of dissemination is ensuring the usefulness of the results to inform policies and processes and the likely audience. Multi-year projects are likely to involve a range of products aimed at different audiences (for example, summary, full and technical reports). Further, through effective communication and dissemination, IMSED Research will inform public discourse and debate through the provision of evidence on immigration and settlement.

Potential methods of dissemination include:

- debriefing workshops (e.g. when using real-time evaluation techniques and providing fast turn-around findings to inform the ongoing implementation and development of an initiative);
- written reports and publications (hard copy and web);

2. Such as the Australasian Evaluation Society code of ethics; Association of Social Science Researchers code of ethics and principles for research; SPEAR Good Practice Guidelines.

- seminars and presentations;
- digital story-telling (where a visual presentation is more suited to the audience);
- articles in relevant community and scholarly publications.
- Each project will have a communications/dissemination strategy that is developed in consultation with the governance group.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Measures of success include:

■ Process

- three yearly review of strategic priorities completed;
- annual internal review of work programme completed;
- project plans completed for all projects;
- policy/process officials always consulted in the identification of information needs;
- peer reviews undertaken;
- timely completion of projects;
- Minister of Immigration regularly updated (six monthly);
- sponsoring of conferences, seminars and workshops;
- publications;
- presentations at conferences and other fora;
- international liaison and networks established and maintained;

■ Outcomes

- research findings are considered in the development and review of policies and processes;
- evaluation results inform decision-making;
- principal Department of Labour stakeholders are satisfied that IMSED Research is relevant to policy and process planning and review;
- international connections result in sharing of expertise and increase in knowledge capabilities;
- positive peer reviews that build our reputation;
- collaborative research is undertaken;
- IMSED Research contributes to the public discourse and debate on immigration and settlement through the provision of evidence.



IMSED Research Strategy

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2007/08 TO 2010/11

Six strategic priority areas have been identified that inform the choice of strategic projects undertaken. These priority areas have been identified drawing from the knowledge gaps identified through the development of the Immigration Policy Framework.³ They will be further refined following consultation with principal Department of Labour stakeholders and others. The priority areas are:

1. Understanding the factors associated with global mobility (immigration and emigration)

This includes understanding the relative importance of different factors (such as the immigration system, personal relationships and economic opportunity) in influencing migrants and New Zealand-born citizens decisions to reside in New Zealand or elsewhere, and the factors that influence length of stay in (or time away from) New Zealand.

2. Building a strategic settlement knowledge base

This includes the development of settlement outcome indicators; mapping the current knowledge base; and compiling evaluative evidence on 'what works' in settlement service provision.

3. The inter-relationship between migration and employment

This includes understanding how the labour market impacts on migrants – including low skilled and temporary migration; and migrant impacts on the labour market and impacts and implications for workplaces.

4. Social cohesion and social impacts of migration

This includes understanding host community and migrant perspective's on integration; the dynamics of migrant youth integration and social networks; and impacts of migration (first and later generations) on national identity and social cohesion.

5. Adverse impacts and outcomes of migration (crime and security)

This includes understanding the characteristics of crime at the border (organised trafficking/smuggling) as well as criminal activities involving migrants on arrival or later.

6. New Zealand's role in the Pacific and internationally

This includes understanding the dynamics and impacts of migration of Pacific Peoples on both host and source countries.

³ Department of Labour, November 2006: Immigration: Delivering for New Zealand – Immigration Policy Framework, Key findings and implications

