



Development of strategic performance indicators at the National Library of Scotland

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The paper explores the development of strategic performance indicators at the National Library of Scotland over the past two years. The chief influences on the need to change and develop indicators are:

- The introduction of a new corporate strategy for the organisation;
- The introduction, by the devolved Scottish Government, of an “outcome-based” performance framework for all public bodies.

The paper describes how NLS has reviewed its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in order to make them better aligned with the new goals of the revised strategy. The intention is that all strategic objectives have associated metrics or measurements. For some KPIs, (for example marketing and fundraising), such measures are relatively unproblematic, whilst others (for example on research outputs, use of digital resources) present considerable challenges. The paper describes how NLS has tackled this spectrum of difficulty.

The paper also describes how NLS has at the same time attempted to embrace the new political agenda of the Scottish Government, following the election of the Scottish National Party minority administration in May 2007. The Government expects all public bodies to play a part in achieving a small number of social and economic ‘outcomes’. This requires public bodies to show the difference that they make to society, rather than using more traditional input or output measures. This has also stimulated NLS to devise measures which cover ‘cross-cutting’ themes such as environmental sustainability and equality.

Finally, the paper looks to future developments, particularly at the intention to introduce Business Intelligence software to enhance both the quality of information and also its use by managers throughout the organisation. The focus of the paper is on cultural, management and implementation issues as much as on technical aspects.