

DSA Business Plan 2015-2018

1 Introduction

1.1 The Development Studies Association

The Development Studies Association (DSA) works to connect and promote the development research and HE teaching community in the UK and Ireland. We improve links and information exchange between DSA members, represent the development studies community in important consultations and help bring their work to a wide audience of existing and prospective students, partners and research users. The mission of the DSA is *'to advance knowledge of the alternative processes and methods of socio-economic change'*. The DSA has both individual members and institutional members.

The vision and activities of the DSA include:

1. The DSA exists to nurture the intellectual tradition of development studies, to be: politically sensitive, reflective, critical, normative and multidisciplinary.
2. Core to this is the support from the DSA to institutions that teach and do research on development studies and provision of a platform for their collective voice.
3. Because plurality and diversity is valued by us, and because change requires a broad coalition of actors, the DSA wants to engage with a wider ecosystem of research, practice and policy in international development.
4. We recognise that aid is neither necessary nor sufficient for development but that it accelerates development under the right conditions and that given our wide knowledge of development-and because we want to see our work lead to change - we have an important role to play in supporting aid to promote 'good change'.
5. We are committed to being inclusive as an Association but, on occasion, will not admit to membership institutions or organisations that do not support our purpose.
6. The DSA is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards and quality in all of its activities.

1.2 Services

In meeting these aims the DSA will:

- Organise and host an annual DSA conference
- Organise study groups
- Produce a monthly newsletter
- Maintain a high quality website that meets members needs
- Represent the DSA membership in negotiations with key institutions (eg HEFCE and REF, ESRC and research programmes/impact, DFID Research Division, and others)
- Foster collaboration with sister associations (EADI, British Academy, AoSS, GDN, discipline-based scholarly associations and others)
- Support students in development studies and related disciplines and foster early career development of DS researchers and HE teachers
- Support capacity development of DS Research and HE Teaching institutions in low and middle income countries
- Other services as determined by the DSA Council.

1.3 Governance, Management and Administration

Governance and direction is provided by the DSA Governing Council, whose members are selected and ratified by the DSA Membership. Individual members serve for a limited (renewable) period. The Council is headed by a President, selected by the membership for a three year term. The Governing Council meets at least twice yearly (and when exceptional meetings are required).

The President takes particular responsibility for overseeing implementation of the decisions of the Council and of the business plan. S/he is assisted in this by:

- Co-opted members of the Council who take responsibility for specific tasks
- Management and Administrative Support provided through an external service provider (ESP).

1.4 Operational Objectives

DSA's objective is to act as a leading and innovative learned society and by doing so, raise the quality and impact of research and teaching in the broad field of development studies, and raise the public understanding of international development.

DSA will have succeeded in this when the majority of those in the UK working in fields related to development studies are active members of DSA.

1.5 Financial Objectives

DSA's immediate financial objective is to deliver a balanced budget. That is to say a budget where total revenues are not less than total expenditure.

DSAs medium term objective is to build up cash reserves to a level that is equal to one year of recurrent costs.

2 Operational Strategy

DSA will deliver the business strategy by focussing on three core themes:

2.1 Management processes

2.1.1 Review and Update of External Service Provision

Management services will be provided by an external service provider (ESP) selected through the public tendering of a contract. The contract will run for three years with the possibility of extension.

2.1.2 Improving management information flows

Management information flows will be upgraded to ensure that

- a) Those involved in the governance, management and administration of DSA have a regular and clear view of how activities are progressing against the plan and the degree to which a planned course of action is having the desired impact.
- b) Management decisions are made and action taken in a timely and informed fashion.

Management information will be provided through a restricted area of the web site and provision of such information will be incorporated in the terms of reference of the external service provider.

2.2 Service provision to members

As a membership organisation, service provision is central to DSA's activities. The introduction to this business plan sets out the core services expected by our members.

The table below expands on how this service is provided.

Service	Description	How delivered
Annual DSA Conference	Mount annual conferences in collaboration with host member institutes.	Council supports member organisations to make offers to host the annual conference and selects successful candidates. Prime responsibility awarded to the DSA member organisation(s) selected to host the event. Management of the conference undertaken with support from the ESP and/or a separate contract if the ESP takes on overall management/delivery.
Study Groups	Groups of members with a specific research interest interacting through meetings and web-based activities.	Members establish, lead and contribute to the study groups. DSA website and newsletters provide a means of communications between study group members and prospective members.
Newsletter	The DSA produces a monthly electronic newsletter to its members. Its objective is to inform and engage.	The ESP is responsible for managing the production and distribution processes. This includes soliciting content from members. Service is free to members but non-members are charged a fee for the inclusion of materials that have a commercial purpose.
Website	The website is the main vehicle through which DSA's member services are provided.	It is the responsibility of the ESP to maintain the DSA webpages. It is the responsibility of the Council, working with the ESP, to continually review and update the website so that it best serves the membership. Institutional members are responsible for updating their own webpages on the DSA website.
Representation	The DSA will represent the profession with key strategic partners (see 1.2)	This will be undertaken by selected members under the direction of the President and facilitated by the ESP.
Early Career Development	The DSA aspires to be the first port of call for those seeking to enter or develop their careers in the profession	The DSA will make publically available a catalogue of study opportunities provided by its institutional members for prospective students. Funding and job opportunities will be announced through the DSA website. The ESP will be responsible for administering this service. In addition the DSA will promote and support student conferences, job fairs and careers events.

Capacity development of sister institutions in low and middle income countries	Support institutions and individuals from low and middle income countries to interact with DSA community.	Encourage and support researchers and HE teachers from low and middle income countries to participate in DSA activities and to utilise the DSA website.
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2.3 Marketing the DSA

A marketing plan will be prepared and delivered. This will focus on

- Ensuring that existing members continue to see the benefits of staying with DSA and are actively encouraged to renew their membership. This will be measured by the level of membership renewals
- Reaching potential members. This will be measured by the level of new memberships.

The marketing plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

Effective marketing will be underpinned by effective and visible provision of services to members, both individual and institutional.

3 Financial Strategy

In 2014 DSA incurred a loss of £35K. DSA enters 2015 with reserves of £55K. DSA plans to deliver a balanced budget in FY 2015-2016. This is as follows:

<i>Income:</i>	<i>Subscriptions</i>	<i>52K</i>
	<i>Conference (all income)</i>	<i>32K</i>
		<i>84K</i>
<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Governance</i>	<i>2K</i>
	<i>Management & recurrent activities</i>	<i>46K</i>
	<i>Conference</i>	<i>28K</i>
	<i>Others</i>	<i>3K</i>
		<i>79K</i>

DSA plans to build sufficient reserves in the medium term. The intention is to build reserves to a level of approximately one year of recurrent costs by 2020.

Summary financial projections for the coming five years are shown in the table below:

<i>Year End Jan 31st:</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
<i>Type</i>						
<i>Income</i>	52,240	60,656	83,650	88,500	90,250	92,035
<i>Expenditure</i>	87,744	75,855	78,361	74,464	75,953	77,472
<i>Surplus</i>	-35,504	-15,199	5,289	14,036	14,297	14,563
<i>Surplus carried forward</i>	55,952	40,753	46,042	60,078	74,376	88,939

Assumptions made:

- Management & admin costs to reduce by 10% by 2017 from 2015.
- Subscriptions to increase to £52,500 per draft budget and maintain that level
- Conferences to achieve surpluses up to £5,000 pa

- Reserves to increase to annual recurrent costs by 2020
- Inflation added at 2% pa in later years
- Council costs included at around £1800 (assuming that most Council members can meet their own travel costs through their institutions).

In order to deliver the financial strategy, DSA will address the following:

3.1 Maintaining and Increasing Membership

The table below presents membership targets for the coming five years.

Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Individual</i>	180	180	200	220	250	300
<i>Concessionary</i>	100	100	150	200	250	300
<i>Institutional</i>	36	36	37	38	39	40
<i>Premium</i>	4	5	6	6	7	7

3.2 Increasing Financial Oversight

The Council will be provided with monthly operational financial reports which will include:

- Monthly Profit and loss Account
- Balance Sheet
- Membership numbers
- Schedule of renewals

4 Outline Implementation Schedule

The implementation schedule and timetable of key events for 2015 is shown in the figure below.

Item	Month												Comments
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
Business plan agreed		X											
Tender launched			X										
Service Contract operational						X							
Council Meetings			X				X				X		
DSA Conference									X				
Student career event													Timing to be confirmed
PGR event													Timing to be confirmed