



Rights Lab and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

Designing a collaborative approach to research and innovation

About

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) has previously supported research undertaken by the University of Nottingham Rights Lab on a case by case basis. Quarterly meetings are held on a thematic basis for the IASC to understand current and forthcoming Rights Lab research and to help the Rights Lab align upcoming work to priority areas.

The IASC is supportive of the breadth and agility of Rights Lab research and seeks to develop a more structured approach to collaborate on research projects where there is an opportunity to do so, in particular research which aims to improve the evidence base on modern slavery and addresses the key challenges faced by policy makers and practitioners. Such research should also align with the IASC [Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#) and should consider impact, evaluation and place the best interests of victims and survivors at its centre.

Background

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) has a UK-wide remit to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of slavery and human trafficking offences and the identification of victims. To meet this remit, the IASC has stated her objectives and priorities for the period 2019-2021 in her strategic plan.

Getting value from research and innovation is one of these priorities, with four themes: defining the scale of the problem, developing strategic partnerships, defining research priorities; and maximising government investment.

Whilst there is extensive research taking place on modern slavery and human trafficking, much of this takes place across academic silos and it is not always clear what impact this research has on policy and practice. There is a need to link up academics, policymakers and practitioners to meet research gaps, build the evidence base and improve impact.

A [review](#) published by the IASC and the Partnership for Conflict, Crime and Security Research (PaCCS) called for researchers and stakeholders to cultivate a culture of collaboration, understanding and respect. The review also identified the need for a strategic infrastructure that could consolidate knowledge through partnership working and facilitate this translation of research into impact.

The IASC is developing ways to work more strategically with academics and stakeholders, as set out in this [online form](#) outlining the IASC's approach to research requests to the office.



Aims

The initiative to design a collaborative research design approach between the IASC and the Rights Lab sits within the priority theme of “developing strategic partnerships” but spans all themes and the wider priority areas of the IASC due to the interdisciplinary reach of Rights Lab research.

A collaborative approach to research and innovation between the IASC and the Rights Lab would be a way to identify and address research needs and gaps, develop a common understanding of the project design, and enable collaboration across the lifespan of the project.

This would be flexible according to the project, reflecting both the capacity and expertise of both parties and open to feedback and challenge across the project lifetime. Some projects may involve third party research and funding support. All IASC support equates to in-kind soft (non-financial) support.

A basic template for collaborative working will draw on previous successful joint projects and inform future working. A collaborative approach to joint project working and research support may include the following:

- Co-design of project aims and objectives
- Feedback on research themes and methodology
- Collaboration and communication throughout research project lifetime
- Contribution to stakeholder working group meetings
- Support with convening roundtables or events
- Make and support requests for data
- Feedback on final reports
- Dissemination of research outputs