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the british council has been flexible in moving its attention and resources to match new uk priorities particularly in the islamic world and the far east it continues to implement numerous and extensive internal changes aimed at increasing its effectiveness and efficiency though delivery of projects and change has been uneven across its global network the council s approach to measuring its performance is well developed its scorecard shows positive results across most aspects of activity including audience sizes customer satisfaction scores and the perceptions of stakeholders and partners the council increasingly depends on contributions from external partners and commercial sponsors to expand its activities and impacts this will mean reversing the downward trend in sponsorship and other contributions of the last six years the council has recognised the importance of good customer service but it is not yet meeting the standards it sets for itself across the whole network it also needs to implement a customer database to enable it to track customer contacts and better understand its audiences the british council s 181 million english language teaching and examinations business has a strong reputation and more than covers its costs the teaching operation also supports uk public diplomacy notably by helping overseas governments expand the teaching of english in their schools and colleges but the teaching business has a high cost base charges premium prices and has limited reach outside overseas capital cities although there has been an increase in the numbers of students taught the network of teaching centres has contracted in recent years to continue to grow the business the council will need to put into action its ideas about alternative lower cost ways to deliver good quality teaching the british council is the uk s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations its purpose is to build engagement and trust for the uk through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide as well as education it runs programmes in the arts science sport governance and english language in 110 countries and territories worldwide 2009 marked the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the council it receives grant in aid from the fco for its public diplomacy activity 209 million 2008 09 a 6 increase from 2007 08 the committee concludes that the change in extent of data provided and the presentation of that data in the british council s 2008 09 annual report makes it more difficult to track and evaluate the council s performance over a period of years in future the annual report should include fuller performance data including corporate performance scores and reach to facilitate year on year analysis the recent decline in some of the scores achieved in relation to quality of service particularly in that relating to engagement with decision makers and senior influencers gives cause for concern the committee welcomes the council s efforts to re establish itself in iran and zimbabwe its increased focus on china and its progress in implementing nao suggested administrative reforms hc 625 session 2007 08 isbn 9780102954173 2009 10 will be a difficult year for the british council and further cuts in staff and services may be unavoidable in these circumstances it is important that the council concentrates its activities on its core business and key objectives this book tells the story of the british council s seventy five year involvement in the field of english language testing the first section of the book explores the role of the british council in spreading british influence around the world through the export of british english language examinations and british expertise in language testing founded in 1934 the organisation formally entered the world of english language testing with the signing of an agreement with the university of cambridge local examination syndicate ucles in 1941 this agreement which was to last until 1993 saw the british council provide substantial english as a foreign language efl expertise and technical and financial assistance to help ucles develop their suite of english language tests perhaps the high points of this phase were the british council inspired cambridge diploma of english studies introduced in the 1940s and the central role

played by the british council in the conceptualisation and development of the highly innovative english language testing service elts in the 1970s the precursor to the present day international english language testing system ielts british council support for the development of indigenous national english language tests around the world over the last thirty years further enhanced the promotion of english and the creation of soft power for britain in the early 1990s the focus of the british council changed from test development to delivery of british examinations through its global network however by the early years of the 21st century the organisation was actively considering a return to test development a strategy that was realised with the founding of the assessment research group in early 2012 this was followed later that year by the introduction of the aptis english language testing service the first major test developed in house for over thirty years as well as setting the stage for the re emergence of professional expertise in language testing within the organisation these initiatives have resulted in a growing strategic influence for the organisation on assessment in english language education this influence derives from a commitment to test localisation the development and provision of flexible accessible and affordable tests and an efficient delivery marking and reporting system underpinned by an innovative socio cognitive approach to language testing this final period can be seen as a clear return by the british council to using language testing as a tool for enhancing soft power for britain a return to the original raison d etre of the organisation 4 ielts catalogue and essays of an exhibition passports of the british council collection exhibited at the whitechapel gallery london 5th april 14th june 2009 a fact filled practical guide for anyone preparing for student residence or extended travel in britain a reference for those interested in the application of educational reform in the uk 3 6 this book explores the ways and means by which english threatens the vitality and diversity of other languages and cultures in the modern world using the metaphor of the hydra monster from ancient greek mythology it explores the use and misuse of english in a wide range of contexts revealing how the dominance of english is being confronted and counteracted around the globe the authors explore the language policy challenges for governments and education systems at all levels and show how changing the role of english can lead to greater success in education for a larger proportion of children through personal accounts poems essays and case studies the book calls for greater efforts to ensure the maintenance of the world s linguistic and cultural diversity

The British Council Collection 1980 the british council has been flexible in moving its attention and resources to match new uk priorities particularly in the islamic world and the far east it continues to implement numerous and extensive internal changes aimed at increasing its effectiveness and efficiency though delivery of projects and change has been uneven across its global network the council s approach to measuring its performance is well developed its scorecard shows positive results across most aspects of activity including audience sizes customer satisfaction scores and the perceptions of stakeholders and partners the council increasingly depends on contributions from external partners and commercial sponsors to expand its activities and impacts this will mean reversing the downward trend in sponsorship and other contributions of the last six years the council has recognised the importance of good customer service but it is not yet meeting the standards it sets for itself across the whole network it also needs to implement a customer database to enable it to track customer contacts and better understand its audiences the british council s 181 million english language teaching and examinations business has a strong reputation and more than covers its costs the teaching operation also supports uk public diplomacy notably by helping overseas governments expand the teaching of english in their schools and colleges but the teaching business has a high cost base charges premium prices and has limited reach outside overseas capital cities although there has been an increase in the numbers of students taught the network of teaching centres has contracted in recent years to continue to grow the business the council will need to put into action its ideas about alternative lower cost ways to deliver good quality teaching

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