Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnerships (IAS-RP)

Cairo Workshop, 15&16 January 2003

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and improved by the Workshop Participants

1 Two types of Research Partnership

The presentations made by IFAD, ERF, RAWOO, GDN, AERC, KFPE showed that two different types of research partnerships have or are currently being evaluated with regard to their impacts. ERF, GDN and AERC are dealing with so-called 'focused partnerships' while IFAD, RAWOO and KFPE analyse 'broad partnership'. These two types are working categories (see below) and might be adapted in the future process of IAS-RP.

Research partnerships can vary significantly between two extremes:

(i) "focused" partnerships where the partnership is targeted to a specific stage of a research project and where it is clearly defined beforehand.

(ii) "broad" partnerships where the partnership can include the whole research project cycle: from the identification of research issues through project implementation to project impact management. Therefore, the roles and tasks of the research partners might be loosely defined at the initial stage of the research partnership.

One of the key elements between these extremes is cost in terms of money and time, where "broad" partnerships are much more expensive than "focused" partnerships. It would be interesting and useful for the IAS-RP to shed light on situations, in which one kind of research partnership would be more appropriate and cost-effective than the other one.

Consequences:

a) With regard to future collaboration and in order to intensify the exchange among the involved institutions the two sub-groups members will stay in contact and exchange advancement respectively (including eventual intermediary meetings). This will replace the previous idea of working in mixed teams during the case study assessments which has shown to be not feasible.

- ✓ Please note that all relevant documents should be sent to the KFPE-Secretariat by the mid February 2003 at the latest. This includes in particular a copy of all Workshop (WS) presentations (power point, pdf) as well as the - eventually revised – papers. Please make sure that a wider public is able to understand your case study and indicate if possible links to your own homepage. KFPE will take care of placing the information on its website for full access to all the IAS-RP members and to a wider public.

b) With regard to the final synthesis report it appears to be useful to elaborate a 'taxonomy' (typology) of research partnerships with their characteristics[1]. A proposal should be available for discussion at the next WS.

2 Summary of current case study analysis

The participants who made a presentation will write a 3-4 pages summary regarding their specific case study containing in particular the following 4 key elements:

a) a short description of the partnership component as a primary contribution to the overall typology of research partnerships (see 1b)

b) the main messages, conclusions and recommendations gained so far in the case study

c) the relevant feedbacks and discussion points from the WS to be taken into consideration for the case study

d) the time frame of the future activities planned in the case study

3 Next WS-Meeting

The participants decided to again hold the next meetingas a WS jointly with the 5rh Annual GDN Conference, which will be in India in about a year's time.

For that WS an outline of the final report / product should be elaborated and first portions of content incorporated in advance in order to be discussed at the WS. The WS should then allow to join additional materials in particular the lessons learnt, first general conclusions and recommendations, context descriptions, the triggering/key factors (contributors and inhibitors/pit falls), a short description of good examples and best practices, general principles etc. It should also tackle the questions of whom do we want to reach with the IAS? Who are the end-users/target groups? What impact do we want the IAS-RP to have?

Consequence: all members are requested to tackle their case study as intensively as possible with regard to contributing to the above mentioned elements of the final report. The KFPE will elaborate a first outline and incorporate portions of content about four months before the next meeting. This very preliminary document will then be circulated among all the IAS-RP members for feedback and as basis for discussion at the WS. If IAS-RP members would like to participate in the elaboration of this first outline they are most welcome and should inform the KFPE Secretariat a.s.a.p.

[1] Including in particular: Time (duration of partnership, short- or long-term); Money (budget allocation and transparency); Balance (degree of asymmetries in RP); Types of research partnerships; What is the influence of the northern partner(s)? What types of partners (N & S) are actively participating in the research (e.g. relationships between researchers, NGOs, governmental institutions, end-users etc.)? What is the amount of jointly produced new (genuine) knowledge?

4 Working with others

The WS has shown that there is a scope to watch out for collaboration beyond the IAS-RP members. This is in particular true with the GDN working group «Bridging Research and Policy» led by Leena Srivastava who showed interest in information exchange, and with the IFORD[2] (Informal Forum of Research Donors). The KFPE Secretariat shall contact them. Further collaboration through the networks of the IAS-RP members will be sought at a later stage when a first draft of the final product will be available.

5 Most striking elements out of the Cairo-WS

(collection from all participants; only points mentioned which have not been incorporated in the previous chapters of the minutes)

a) General

- Importance, that equity and mutual benefit/learning in North-South research partnership (RP) deserve a great deal of attention. The northern contribution should not be perceived as help for the South (one-way support.)
- Importance to identify what factors inhibit or facilitate the impact like e.g. approaches, management of expectations by the end-users etc.
- Importance of having funds available for 'impact facilitating/enabling activities' and a separate process for managing these activities within a project (e.g. implementation/communication of results). The optimisation of impacts from RP projects requires specialised human and managerial resources, rarely found in researchers. To optimise research impact, it should not be treated as a research by-product.
- Importance of the joint set-up/discussion of desired/expected impacts in an initial phase of a project/program (including relevant stakeholders)
- Importance of developing jointly an evaluation and monitoring system and to involve all stakeholders in its set-up and use
- Participatory approaches as an important means to enhance impact (need to involve all stakeholders)
- Emphasis has to be put on and attention paid to processes of RP; the question of how to address, manage, and maintain processes in reaching research partnership impacts has to be considered; structural aspects also have to be taken into consideration
- Importance to distinguish impacts of RP from impacts on processes/activities within RP
- The issues conflicts, tensions and failures in RP has to be addressed (e.g. the western driven conceptualisation of what partnership has to be)
- Importance to differentiate, realise the difference between two kinds of RP: a) those with a dynamic of homogenisation where the partners become more or less the same and where differences disappear over time and those with a b)

[2] particularly in regard with the IDRC project dealing with the impacts at policy level led by Fred Carden

dynamic of heterogenisation where the RP helps the partners to mutually become more aware of their specificity and which helps strengthening them in a fruitful way (complementary)

- The role and importance of the general/specific context has to be highlighted
- Make (better) use of literature from other domains like methodology of consulting, management tools and approaches, and understanding of change processes for RP and for the IAS-RP
- Concerning the IAS-RP-Group: Importance of securing a critical minimal continuity in the group composition and work of the IAS

b) IFAD

- The 5 lessons from the IFAD case study have been perceived as very relevant for the IAS-RP (for more details see papers by Philippe de Leener):

  L1 Impact evaluation to be done with directly concerned staff

  L2 For change in the field also launch a change process at office/home level

  L3 Organisational and personal change processes are closely intermixed ('be ready for own change if you want to change things elsewhere both at individual and institutional level')

  L4 Working 'with' must be experienced personally through a self-reflectivity process (transfer of centrality is required: from 'my' to 'their')

  L5 without a strong mandate change is doomed to failure

The lessons include;
The agency that sponsors the research needs to be flexible enough to permit an open process in project design and implementation.

c) ERF

- Understanding the regional perspective in GRP
- The controversial use of local/regional or external researchers in projects with regard to the quality
- The case study brought out the need and possibility that the goal of a research project, and partnership, may change over time, and become more aligned to the specific needs of partners.
- The impact of RP may be assessed during different phases: during the conceptualisation or in the end, when results are analysed.

d) RAWOO

- Delegation of power to the local researchers as a principle (south-driven)
- Importance of involving high ranked Decision Makers up to Ministers for a RP programme to have the necessary power/backing for pro-actively addressing asymmetry issues in the partnership
- Inability/difficulty of the North to get senior researchers involved properly

- Impressive process to build up the two RP programmes in Ghana (health) and the Philippines (nature conservation and biodiversity)
- The question of symmetry of relationships between S and N partners was asked again and again during the project, emphasising the value placed on equity in relationships
- A realisation of the need to contextualise the process and lessons whenever the context of forging partnerships undergoes a change.

e) GDN: GRP-Project

- Interesting methodological approach chosen:

  a) The use of IAS-RP developed matrix to develop the survey questionnaire for the case study

  b) The use of e-mail for the survey (defined as participative) and the experiences made
- Southern ownership was a salient feature of RP design in the GRP. It ill be assessed to what extent southern ownership was maintained during the RP implementation
- Relatively low costs involved compared to more elaborated partnership
- A question that arose as a response to the methodology, was whether monetary compensation for the time or respondents is desirable, in order to increase the response rate and also to recognise the value of time that the respondents provide.

f) KFPE (Indo-Swiss partnership 'Rural Livelihood Systems' RLS)

- The huge variety of different types of impacts generated through different means by the 'Rural Livelihood System' Project and the processes of the evolution of the S-S RP as a base for deriving general principles
- Problematic of how much to identify oneself with the end-users in a strongly participatory / transdisciplinary project
- It is important to have policy influence mandated as part of research projects, so that effort is made during the project to make such impact.

g) AERC

- Problematic of developing measurable and meaningful quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess true impacts

The IFAD/ENDA case in a few words

Workshop "The Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnership",

15-16/01/2003, KFPE-GDN-World Bank, Cairo (Egypt)

Philippe De Leener

Cairo, 17/01/03

In Niger (Maradi Region, Aguié District), an IFAD-funded rural development project run by the Government was the theatre of complex partnerships in the wake of the introduction of a new participatory approach. The new collaborations end up to deep changes and impacts, at several levels, in the Aguié District (village and inter-village level), in local and regional administration but also at IFAD level (new way of negotiating, formulating and implementing an investment project). The most striking feature of this programme is that all the development activities were led as typical action-driven research in the form of combined social and technological experiments. Three detailed papers provide information and data on most aspects of this Nigerian case.

- The first one has been written in 2001 but provides a wealth of information on how can farmers, developers and researchers practically carry out joint researches and actions (De Leener Philippe, 2001, From technology-based to people-oriented synergies: A case study on how the in-depth analysis of a synergy between farmers, researchers and developers invites to reconsider some basic perspectives on pro-poor agricultural research, Rome: IFAD / GFAR, Technical workshop on methodologies, organisation and management of Global Partnership Programmes, 9-10 October 2001, 19p). The key point analyzed in this paper is the close relationship between technological and social innovations: no technology improvement is possible without any organizational improvement.
- The second paper addresses the issue of partnership. The main purpose is two-fold: i) understanding the true nature of partnership bringing together partners holding deeply different visions of the world, ii) eliciting basic change mechanisms at work both at personal and organisational level. The analysis of changes at village and office level paves the way to better understand the generation of impacts (De Leener Philippe *et al.*, 2003, How changes generate impacts? Towards attitudinal, behavioral and mental changes in the footsteps of research partnerships (ENDA / IFAD / NIGER), Part 1, Workshop "The Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnership", KFPE-GDN, Cairo (Egypt), 15-16/01/2003, 30p).
- The third one is devoted to exploring an approach likely to trigger off deep transformation both at personal and organisational level. The paper explains how practically carry out a self-reflexive analysis of one's own professional activity. The paper also discusses how can self-reflexivity bring about changes at personal level (De Leener Philippe 2003b, Self-analysis of professional activity as a tool for personal and organisational change (ENDA / IFAD / NIGER), Part 2, Workshop "The Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnership", KFPE-GDN, Cairo (Egypt), 15-16/01/2003, 10p).

1.1 1- Most important components of partnership in Niger

- A complex landscape of partnerships among several social categories: farmers and village communities, extension services both private and public, Ministry of Rural Development, several divisions of IFAD (Rome), an international NGO (two branches of ENDA TM, ENDA GRAF Sahel specialized in action research and ENDA InterMondes specialized in knowledge exchange), scientific researchers (NARS and CGIAR), academics and students from the Niamey University and from the University of Louvain (UCL, Belgium).
- Different areas of partnerships: village-oriented researches but also joint actions in different fields (technology, agriculture, micro-economy and organisation), project management, decentralised and joint planning/monitoring, project cycle.

1.2 2- Main lessons in terms of change and impact generation

Some lessons can be drawn from the experience of Aguié in terms of how to help generate impacts:

- The most fruitful way to carry out the research on impacts is probably to do this research with staff called to generate both partnerships and impacts from partnerships. Making staff scrutinize the details of their own professional activity with regards to partnership paves the way for in-depth transformations at several levels (persons and organizations). That is how studying impacts generate new impacts !
- Change at field level is closely linked to change at the office level. In other words, if you want to trigger off a change at field level (village or inter villages), you have to launch a change process at office or project level for change processes are basically interconnected.
- Organizational and personal change processes are intermixed. They are true facets –and targets– of the same global change process. That is why both dimensions must be considered at the same time as crucial field of action.
- Working with is definitively not a matter of learning from someone else, but from what one actually does when willing or pretending to work with, more precisely from self-reflexive loops on one's own activity. Self-reflexivity (not only self-reflection) is the key of any progress in partnership initiatives and, at the same time, the stepping stone for change processes.
- Without a strong mandate, change is doomed to failure as change promoters do not have any protection to cover the risks they take. In Aguié, this protective mandate has indirectly been given by IFAD. It could have been given by the management or any other authority.

1.3 3- Emerging characteristics, key factors, true nature of partnership

In the footsteps of the analysis of the Aguié experience, it is possible to develop a point of view about partnership. A "genuine" partnership is characterised by a minimal set of components:

- A joint activity (doing together) supported by previously negotiated shared goals, understanding and benefits. Partnerships are built around and in actions to be carried out together for freely decided conscious common purposes.
- Partnership is "change-driven", that is brings about significant changes in real life situations (for example, poverty reduction, empowerment, peacemaking, gender equilibrium).

- Balanced "terms of exchange" between partners: two-way partnership or "win-win" partnership in the sense that each partner has the strong *impression* to receive as much as he/she gives. Partnership is not "instrumentalised" by one leading partner.
- Partnership triggers off both knowledge generation and learning processes among all the partners. True partnership does not limit to exchange already existing knowledge but also implies building new shared know how and conceptions. *Learning together* just does not mean *learning from* but also –and mainly– inventing and being transformed by what is invented in partnership.
- So partnership brings about and nourishes transformations at three levels, persons, organisations and profession.

1.3.1 3.1. Instrumental versus intentional partnership

Following these principles, doing the same things, at the same time, with similar means, methods, goals and prospects is definitively not a sufficient condition for achieving a partnership although these are often necessary conditions. People working along the same line in a factory are not partners, even if they work together. They collaborate within the framework of a sophisticated division of tasks. At best, this is an *instrumental partnership*. The adjective "instrumental" implicitly introduces the idea of unequal partners (at least a distinction between leading and executive partners). Here, as far as partnership is concerned, we talk about *intentional partnership:* partners freely decide to act together in the framework of previously shared and negotiated perspectives. Partnership is at the same time means and objective of the "freely being together".

1.3.2 3.2. Capacity building also means unbuilding

Learning is not a matter of storing knowledge in one's mind. In reductionist terms, learning may means integrating internally new knowledge which is basically either a new representation (concept, idea) or a new skill, that is a practical way of doing, a gesture or an operational procedure. To integrate a new knowledge, we need to partly deconstruct what we knew beforehand in order to make new knowledge consistent with already integrated knowledge. Learning means reorganising one's knowledge system in order to remain the internal coherence(accommodation). In providing opportunities for exchanging, discussing, debating, partnership help revise (revisit, refine) one's conceptions and accompany the accommodation process so that the progressive setting of new ways of thinking or operating progressively become effective.

1.4 Next steps in the partnership building process in Niger

The PDRAA project which has hosted the change process in Aguié is now completed. A new 7-year IFAD funded project is underway. It will be implemented by the end of 2003. Within this framework, several partnerships will be developed or intensified. Among these partnerships, the collaboration between North and South universities is worth being mentioned. This collaboration which is forged in view of providing the new IFAD project with technical assistance aims at (i) innovating in the way of carrying out research with village communities or farmer organisations (new experimental methods and designs, but also new concepts and theories in addition to new validation procedures and rationale), (ii) innovating in the manner to train science and technology for development in an university framework.

RAWOO facilitated cases:

NL-GHANA HEALTH RESEARCH
NL-PHILIPPINES BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH

Jaap Bijl, jaapumar@yahoo.com January 2003

UPDATE

RAWOO

1. The RAWOO is a part of the Netherlands' system of Sector Councils for Research and Development, united in the Committee for R&D Sector Councils (COS). RAWOO is the council for scientific research in the context of development cooperation. As such it is a "cross-cutting" research council: research in any sector in the context of development cooperation. RAWOO is independent and sends advisory reports to parliament and to three ministers (Development Cooperation [lead], Education Culture and Science, Agriculture Nature Management and Fisheries).
2. RAWOO is not a funding agency. Its tasks are to:
   - Advise on research priorities;
   - Propose long-term research programmes;
   - Foster communication among the various parties involved in research for development (researchers, policy-makers, end-users, both in the South and in the North).
3. The minister for development cooperation appoints the 15 council members for three years, once renewable. Six members come from the South, nine from the Netherlands. Three additional members are appointed by the three ministers to participate as observers.
4. RAWOO believes that knowledge is necessary for development and poverty reduction. RAWOO applies three basic principles:
   - Research must be southern demand-driven;
   - Co-operation should strengthen research capacity in the south;
   - South-North research partnerships must be equal, genuine and sustainable.
5. The asymmetry inherent in donor country - beneficiary country research-partnerships must be pro-actively addressed in all stages, in all aspects and at all levels of the partnership.

Two South-North research partnerships

6. Since 1997 partners in the South and in the Netherlands, assisted by the Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council (RAWOO) in a facilitating role, have been involved in applying these principles in two research-partnerships:
   - the Ghana-Netherlands collaboration in the field of health research (the Ghana Health Research Programme, or GHRP) and
   - the Philippines-Netherlands collaboration in the field of biodiversity research (the Philippines Biodiversity Research Programme, or PBRP).

Both are national programmes; not "RAWOO projects". RAWOO has facilitated the design of these partnerships by the Southern and Netherlands research communities.

7. Both long-term cooperation programmes have entered the implementation phase: PBRP started in 2000 and GHRP in 2001. RAWOO is not involved in this implementation phase. The Dutch government provides funding through the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, initially for a five-year period. The responsibility for governing these programmes is entrusted to Joint Programme Committees (JPCs), with each three members from Ghana/the Philippines and three members from the Netherlands. Programme management tasks are entrusted to executive secretariats in Ghana and the Philippines. Furthermore, a Support and Liaison Office (SLO) in the Netherlands facilitates the involvement of Dutch researchers in joint research and capacity strengthening activities and serves as the focal point for both programmes in the Netherlands.

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation project

8. An external committee has evaluated RAWOO's advisory work over the preceding six years in the spring of 2001. The committee considered the new type of partnership programmes developed under the guidance of the Council as "highly interesting experiences" and concluded that there is a need to learn lessons from this experience. It therefore recommended, among other things, that the Council should take the initiative to elaborate "a monitoring and evaluation system with respect to its experimental programming activities, as well as a methodology for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of RAWOO-inspired programmes".[3]

9. The Council decided to take up this recommendation and approach its partners in Ghana and the Philippines with the idea to launch a Joint Monitoring and Evaluation of Research Partnerships project (hereafter JM&E project). In the RAWOO view the M&E project should particularly stress the following:
   - The need to employ a multi-stakeholder perspective to M&E: the perspectives of researchers, policy makers and users must be taken into account;
   - Collective learning by doing and developing a collective programme memory is key. Monitoring should be an exercise that all stakeholders see as useful. Its objective should be to check how things are going in the programme;
   - Not the original plan but rather the expectations of the stakeholders and their evolvement over time are the yardstick: less static and more responsive.

10. After discussing the broad outline of the JM&E project with HRP, BRP and SLO in the spring of 2002, it appeared that they underlined the importance of M&E and **the need to develop an M&E system geared to the aims and objectives of the Research Partnerships** (RPs). They supported the RAWOO proposal to make it a truly joint undertaking. This would make it possible to **jointly develop the methods, instruments, tools and indicators - and to apply and test these on the ground**. The results of these pilots could be used to adapt and refine the M&E system, and for producing field-tested methods and indicators for measuring

[3] RAWOO External Evaluation Report, June 2001, recommendation 8, p.31.

the impact and quality of research partnerships - which could be relevant and useful for other programmes as well.

11. It was agreed that the main responsibility for developing the M&E methodology would lie with the programmes themselves. RAWOO would facilitate and assist the process and be responsible for overall coordination. So the programmes themselves come first, while RAWOO is there in a supportive and coordinating role.

12. **The Consultative Committee of Sector Councils** (COS) of the Netherlands **funds** the project. RAWOO is one of these Sector Councils and as such a member of COS, which runs a special fund for financing Sector Council initiatives in the area of research programming and methodology development.

Objectives

13. The **general objective** of the JM&E initiative is to contribute to the development of methods, tools and indicators for monitoring and evaluating development research partnerships.

14. **Specific objectives** include the following:
    - To design and establish a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation system (PM&E system) for the Health Research Programme and the Biodiversity Research Programme;
    - To devise and test methods, tools and indicators for assessing programme performance through a participatory, multi-stakeholder, learning-oriented approach;
    - To enhance (HRP's and BRP's) PM&E capacity through training and organizational development;
    - To share issues, experiences and emerging lessons, including methods, tools and indicators developed, among the project partners and with other national and international organizations and partners.

Methodology

15. The **key features** of the **PM&E system** that is to be developed through the present project include the following:
    - It involves **programme stakeholders** in the PM&E process;
    - It focuses on **organizational and institutional learning** among programme stakeholders with a view to improve the quality and effectiveness of the research programmes, and to stimulate ownership and the use of results in future work;.
    - It addresses both scientific and **societal impact** of the research programmes;
    - It recognizes that PM&E is an **ongoing process** that should be built into the research programmes as an integral element of programme management;
    - It must be **simple, efficient and cost-effective.** Too much complexity needs to be avoided; it must be practical and doable.

16. This implies that the methodological approach must assure the participation of programme stakeholders and that representatives of various groups who might benefit from or might be affected by the research programmes must be involved in the process of developing the PM&E system. As a review of the M&E literature suggests, an important question here is who should be involved at which stage, and what the degree of participation should be**.**

17. It also implies that it is important that the methodology addresses issues related to organizational and institutional learning through monitoring and evaluation, particularly methods and tools that might be used to facilitate and enhance the learning process.

18. Furthermore, the review of the literature suggests that the methodology should focus on the development of indicators that capture the social impact of the research partnership programmes and the changes in behaviours, which they have helped to support in order to meet their strategic objectives.

IAS-RP initiative

19. The Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) is coordinating a collaborative project aimed at evaluating the impact of South–North research partnerships (*The Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnerships, IAS-RP*).[4] The basic idea is to work with other research and development organizations and donor agencies involved in South-North research partnerships and to collect the empirical data through conducting case-studies of selected partnerships. Partner organizations participating in the exercise will use a common format and framework for the purpose of making comparisons.

20. RAWOO has explained to its partners in the IAS study that the focus of the JM&E project is more on methodology development and on making M&E an integral part of the RPs, and less on impact assessment. As the RPs have only just started it is still far too early to evaluate meaningfully their effectiveness in terms of impacts. In the initial stages of the JM&E project, therefore, emphasis will be placed on monitoring and process evaluation, while later on this will shift to effectiveness evaluation and impact assessment.

21. What is presented in this paper must be shared and agreed upon by all partners involved before the actual implementation of the work plan can commence. The success of the project largely depends on a clear common understanding of the objectives, conceptual framework and approach of the project, the expected outcomes and what is expected of the various partners in terms of their roles and responsibilities.

INDICATIVE Work plan

Introductory observations

22. The following work plan outlines phases, activities, outcomes and time-lines of the JM&E project. It is based on the following observations:
    - the phasing reflects that there is an immediate need for putting in place a programme monitoring system, and that “process evaluation” comes first, while “effectiveness evaluation” comes later;
    - integrating M&E in development (research) programmes costs time and should not be seen as a one time exercise, but as a continuing process;
    - the M&E system should be in place at the time when the RPs will be externally evaluated. In that way, they would be able to produce a systematic and

[4] KFPE, Second Draft, "Terms of reference of The Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnerships", (IAS-RP), 31 October 2001.

thorough self-assessment report that could greatly benefit from the results of the JM&E project;
- there should be a clear division of responsibilities among the partners, and a recognition of the principle that M&E is, in essence, a responsibility of the programmes themselves (who is accountable and who is going to deliver what?);
- there is a need for flexibility, we must be prepared to adapt the course of action along the way, if necessary: sequence and pacing is determined by the partners; planning is indicative.

Phases, activities and expected outcome

Phase 1: Definition, planning and design of JM&E initiative (April – December 2002)

23. The *objectives* of this phase are as follows:
    - Review M&E literature, clarify concepts and terms used and identify key issues related to monitoring and evaluation of development research programmes and capacity development efforts;
    - Draw up detailed project document outlining the basic concepts, objectives and approach of the JM&E initiative;
    - Reach consensus among the project partners on the project' s framework, approach and strategy;
    - Obtain commitment and adequate support of the project partners for the joint project.

24. Initial discussions with the JPCs of both research partnerships on the scope and objectives of the proposed JM&E initiative have taken place in the Spring of 2002. In principle, both programmes agreed to take part in the joint endeavour. It was decided that RAWOO would take the lead in drawing up a more detailed project document for discussion at the *BRP/JPC meeting* in the Philippines scheduled for September 2002. A JPC member of the HRP was present at this meeting in order to bring in the views and perspective from this programme.

25. The main decisions taken at the Philippines' meeting were the following:
    - To recruit local PM&E specialists to assist the JPCs of both HRP and BRP in designing and establishing a PM&E system;
    - To draft Terms of Reference for the local PM&E facilitators based on the project document;
    - To prepare a shortlist and collect CVs of possible candidates;
    - To work out a proposal for an appropriate organizational structure for the joint project;
    - To finalize the project document and incorporate comments of all project partners involved.

26. At present (January 2003) the JPC's are in the process of recruiting their PM&E specialists.

27. *Outcome*: shared understanding among the partners of the objectives, basic concepts and approach of the JM&E project; project document approved; agreement on work plan and commitment of partners to engage in the project and make available necessary staff time for project implementation; PM&E facilitators recruited.

Phase 2: Design and testing of methods, tools and indicators for programme monitoring (January 2003 – September 2003)

28. Objectives:
    - Devise the methods, tools and indicators for programme monitoring and involve key stakeholders in the process of developing the methodology;
    - Apply and test the methods developed and train programme staff in using them;
    - Review and synthesise the results and translate these into operational guidelines for programme monitoring.

29. *How*: M&E facilitators draw up plan how to go about it, and discuss this with JPCs, national support secretariats and project committee.

30. Outcome: monitoring methods developed and tested; results reviewed and translated into operational guidelines for programme monitoring.

Phase 3: Design and testing of methods, tools and indicators for programme evaluation (October 2003 – August 2004)

31. Objectives:
    - Devise the methods, tools and indicators for programme evaluation and involve key stakeholders in the process of developing the methodology;
    - Apply and test the methods developed and train programme staff in using the methods;
    - Review and synthesise the results and translate these into guidelines for programme evaluation.

32. Outcome: evaluation methods developed and tested, programme evaluation conducted, self-assessment report produced.

Phase 4: Validate M&E system and review overall JM&E project results (September 2004 – December 2004)

33. Objectives:
    - Review and synthesise overall project findings, and identify major issues, experiences and lessons learned based on the results of phases 2 and 3;
    - Validate M&E system;
    - Share findings, experiences and lessons learned with IAS-study;
    - Disseminate project findings among donors, research organizations and the wider public.

34. *How: Validation workshop* bringing together relevant partners and stakeholders of each RPP to validate M&E system. *Joint Final workshop* bringing together participating partners to review project results.

35. *Outcome:* M&E system established and validated, overall project results reviewed, documented, disseminated and shared.

Project organization, partners and funding

36. The JM&E project is designed as a collaborative undertaking of the **participating partners**. The following partners participate in the project:
    - The Ghana-Netherlands Health Research Programme (GN-HRP)
    - The Philippines-Netherlands Biodiversity Research Programme (PN-BRP)

- The Support and Liaison Office for Demand-driven Research Partnerships (SLO)
- The Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council (RAWOO)

37. The structure of the project is as follows. The **PM&E facilitators report to the Joint Programme Committees (JPCs)** of HRP and BRP respectively. In practice, the JPC members responsible for the M&E project, i.e. Mrs Yaa Amekudzi for HRP and Dr Gil Saguiguit for BRP, will serve as the contact persons for the facilitators. On a day-to-day basis the **PM&E facilitators will work directly with the national support secretariats** of both partnership programmes.

38. Opportunities will be created for active interaction, sharing and exchange of experiences and emerging lessons among the PM&E facilitators from Ghana and the Philippines respectively. In this way, South-South collaboration will be fostered.

39. A **project committee** will be set up to supervise, guide and coordinate the overall project. This includes coordination with KFPE on the Swiss-initiated IAS-RP study. The project committee will consist of the following members: Mrs Yaa Amekudzi (HRP/JPC member), Dr Gil Saguiguit (BRP/JPC member), Mr Jaap Bijl (RAWOO member), Ms Sonia Montano (RAWOO member), Mr Rene van Veenhuizen (SLO), Mr Paul Smits (RAWOO secretariat).

40. RAWOO will also administer the **funds** provided by the COS for the project. A total amount of 50,000 euro is available for the project's implementation in 2002 and 2003. Project funds will be provided for activities undertaken by HRP and BRP within the scope and work plan of the JM&E project, i.e. for conducting workshops, case studies and external advice and support.

41. Recruitment of the PM&E facilitators will be done by HRP and BRP in cooperation with the project committee. The **persons recruited will be contracted by RAWOO** and will receive a honorarium and other expenses based on local costs.

Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnerships (IAS-RP)

The Global Research Project on Explaining Growth (GRP)

Issues from the Cairo Workshop, 15&16 January 2003

by Fernando Loayza, Consultant, GDN

Nature of Partnership

The main objective of the GRP is to compile the most comprehensive assessment of economic growth in developing and transition countries. The project has two phases. In the first phase in seven regions of the world – Latin America and the Caribbean, South Sahara Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States – regional studies on the sources of growth, growth and markets, microeconomic determinants of growth and the political economy of growth were carried out. These studies provided a framework for the exploration of key issues at the country level. In the second phase, consequently, the project turned from broad growth themes to in-depth analysis of growth in more than 80 developing and transition countries.

In addition to improve our understanding of economic growth, the GRP has sought to strengthen research capabilities in developing and transition economies. To reach this objective, a major instrument has been the utilization of partnerships between industrialized countries (IC) and transition and developing countries (TC/DC) researchers.

In the first phase, the regional thematic studies were carried out by TC/DC researchers but with substantial input of resource persons – scholars with an internationally recognized reputation, including Nobel laureates – mainly located in IC. This research partnership included technical assistance to TC/CD researchers, review of papers and participation in workshops by the resource persons. Moreover, in some cases resource persons trained DC/TC researchers. The partnership was short lived lasting approximately between four and six months. For covering research costs, the administration costs of the regional coordinating institution, the costs of holding a regional conference and of participating in a global meeting held in Cairo (October 28-29, 1999) each regional coordinating institution received a grant in the amount of US$ 100,000.

In the second phase, an even more focused research partnership than in the first phase was planned. All country studies would have to be carried out by DC/TC researchers and in each region a support group of IC resource persons was formed. Resource persons would have to (i) participate in the opening regional workshops guiding discussions of methodology and help draft country work plans; (ii) participate in regional training sessions addressing the areas in which most of the authors had little experience; (iii) offer ongoing technical and methodological support by E-mail; (iv) review drafts and provide comments; and, (v) participate in workshops where mid-term and final reports would be presented providing comments and input. The extent of the implementation of these support activities by the IC partners will be

assessed during the evaluation. Initially, the second phase was planned to be undertaken in each region during a year. However, for different reasons some regions have taken more than a year in completing the second phase. Overall the funding for the second phase was around US$ 2.15 million.

In conclusion, for undertaking the GRP a focused research partnership was adopted. This meant that the research project was implemented by the DC/TC partners and the role of the IC partners was mostly limited to strategically focused interventions of training and technical assistance. These interventions would have taken place during project design and launching and when mid-term and final reports were produced. The strength of this type of partnership, which will also be assessed in the evaluation study, would be that keeps project ownership with the DC/TC partners with much lower costs than those incurred in more intensive and broader partnerships.

Lessons learnt in the assessment of the GRP

When the Cairo Workshop was held, in the assessment of the GRP the gathering of data from stakeholders had been recently completed. Therefore, the lessons learnt at that time in relation to the assessment of the GRP were limited to the design and implementation of an electronic participatory survey that was the main tool used for gathering data. This section discusses these lessons.

- The electronic survey was participatory because it involved a two-tiered consultation process of the GRP stakeholders. First, GRP stakeholders received a proposal of the questionnaires for the survey and the criteria to analyze the data to be collected. They were requested for reviewing this information and making the changes that they would consider most appropriate for assessing the GRP. Second, GRP stakeholders were duly informed on any change in the revised criteria to analyze the data and were requested to fill the revised questionnaires that included the changes or adjustments required by them in the indicators and issues for evaluation of the GRP.

- In the first consultation round in addition to the draft questionnaires and criteria for analyzing the data, the stakeholders received a four pages document that explained the participatory assessment approach adopted. Unfortunately, the proper consideration of all these documents demanded for a non negligible amount of their time. The stakeholders may have felt, therefore, that this participatory approach required a much larger effort from their side than ordinary surveys. This may have induced a rather low rate of response to the first consultation. For the second consultation, not only the explanation of the participatory approach was not needed anymore but also the questionnaires were presented in a more compact format. The much greater response rate to the second consultation would likely have been due to the less work requested from the GRP stakeholders.

- The use of an electronic survey is a low cost alternative for undertaking a participatory assessment of a global project such as the GRP that reaches 7 regions and more than 80 countries. However, it is also a time consuming

activity for the survey participants as they have to review and propose impact indicators in a first round of consultation; and, check that their suggestions or concerns have been adequately incorporated in the revised questionnaires and then filling the questionnaires in the second consultation round. Clearly, in this kind of situation where respondents have to invest a significant amount of work and time would be reasonable to compensate them for their participation in the survey. As discussed in the Cairo workshop, on the one hand, a payment for proactively participating in the electronic survey would likely not only increase the rate of responses in the two consultations rounds but also encourage participants to pay due attention to the definition of indicators and the assessment criteria in the first round of consultation. On the other hand, however, the effect of this provision on the evaluation budget must not be underestimated. Should have been paid US$ 100 per respondent to participate in the GRP assessment survey, more than US$ 15,000 would have been needed for this item only.

Key issues for the analysis stage

The following issues raised during the workshop discussions will be taken into consideration for the GRP assessment. It is noted that the discussion was benefited from the fact that several workshop attendees have been somehow involved in the GRP.

- In designing and carrying out the country case studies reaching policy makers would have not been an issue unless for the Commonwealth of Independent States region. The project's ultimate goal would have been understood by the researchers as one of improving our understanding of growth only. Would this be the case, the policy impact of the GRP might be affected to a certain extent.

- The focused research partnership described above would have been an extremely useful approach for encouraging cooperation between IC and DC researchers. This hypothesis will be tested against the data gathered through the E-survey.

- In some regions the country case studies would have been carried out by nationals from the region who are living or residing in IC countries. As such a situation would represent a sort of leakage in the GRP's goal of strengthening DC/TC research capabilities, it will as well deserve a great deal of attention during the evaluation.

- The distinction between the impact of a research project and the impact of the research partnership used in the project is relevant for the evaluation. This would help understanding how impacts of research partnerships can be generated and better managed.

- Optimizing impacts of research projects and research partnerships are different processes of delivering research findings. Therefore, separate management processes and funding would be required to optimize impacts from research projects. In the GRP evaluation this issue would be

approached through identifying the strategies followed by the different regions to manage the impact of the research promoted inasmuch as the information collected makes it possible.

- In the evaluation is important to ascertain the benefits from research partnerships that accrue to northern researchers as well as to the contribution to the success of the partnership from southern researchers. This would be done to the extent possible as it was neither considered during the evaluation design nor included in the terms of reference for the assessment.

Timeframe

Currently, the processing and analysis of the information gathered from the project's archives and from the electronic survey implemented has started. By the end of March the draft of the evaluation report would be submitted to the GDN Secretariat. It is expected, accordingly, that by the end of April the evaluation will be completed.

Impacts of an Indo-Swiss Research Partnership Project:
A Southern Perspective

Smita Premchander
January 2003

2 Introduction

This paper assesses impact of an Indo-Swiss research project on **Sustainable** Rural Livelihood Systems (RLS project) in India, and draws lessons for design of international research collaborations that have a greater chance of creating beneficial impact on different research partners, especially those whom the research seeks to benefit in the end. [5]

3 Background and Objectives of the Research

In the early 1990s, a research effort emerged from a sector strategy formulation by SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) for sustainable land-use in semi-arid areas in India. The aim was to conceptualise its development assistance in order to contribute significantly and effectively to India's own development efforts for land use improvement. The research was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (under Module 7: Environment and Development of the Priority Programme, "Environment"). The **goal** of the applied research was to contribute to the design and implementation of innovative development approaches which strengthen the self help capacity of farm households and communities for more sustainable management of natural resources in the semi-arid regions of India. The specific objectives were to build capacities for interdisciplinary research and training, to provide research findings on rural livelihood systems and to develop and test participatory research methods.

3.1 Research Partners

This research was conducted in the semi-arid regions of Gujarat and Karnataka, by three partner institutions in India, and one partner organisation in Switzerland. These organisations were:

a) Sampark, an NGO working for poverty alleviation and women's empowerment, based in Bangalore,
b) The Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), an academic institution based in Bangalore,

[5] *Acknowledgement: This paper has inputs from Drs. Ramaswamy and Karanth of ISEC, Drs. K.V. Raju, H.S. Shylendra and B.N. Hiremath of IRMA and Mr. Chidambarnathan, Mr. Jeyaseelan and Ms. Prameela of Sampark. It could not have been completed without the editorial and secretarial support of Chidambarnathan, Roshni Menon and Banu, who put in several hours to collate the information from different agencies, and to help with the qualitative analysis of all the responses received.* ***Though each individual researcher has provided inputs, the interpretation of these interviews and responsibility for the conclusions derived rests with the author.***

c) The Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA), an academic organisation, based in Gujarat, and
d) The Post-Graduate Programme on Developing Countries (NADEL) of The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich (ETHZ), in Switzerland.

3.2 Phases of Research

The research was conducted in three phases. During the exploratory phase (1994-1996) of this study, these institutions attempted to design a research study that would facilitate a better understanding of how farmers make decisions on the use of natural resources in the contexts of their livelihood systems. The conceptual approach was decided and some hypotheses selected for further exploration.

During the field research component of the project (1996-1999), various researchers conducted research on different aspects of the livelihood systems. General principles followed by all partners included following a holistic view and a participatory and gender sensitive approach. The different studies done are included in the accompanied box.

Topics Studied

a) Emerging Rural Leadership and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
b) Understanding Livelihood as Complex Wholes
c) Reality and Reflections: Gender and Leadership for Sustainable Natural Resource Management
d) Role of Non-Economic Motivation
e) From 'Marey' to Market: Changing Faces of Rural Livelihood System
f) The Threshing Floor Disappears: Rural Livelihood System in Transition
g) Appropriateness of Agriculture Technologies
h) The "Real Realities" of Life: Exploring Rural Livelihood Systems from a Gender Perspective
i) Core Issues in Agrarian Economy and Society of Karnataka
j) Rural-Urban Linkages

4 The Impact Matrix

Every project usually has a specific set of hypotheses or questions. Ultimately this is also true for expected or intended impacts. They describe the road map by which impacts are expected to take place. Once this road map is clear, indicators can be defined; they are usually highly project specific. They can be categorised in different ways. The classification followed in this study is based on the impact matrix with domains (A-D) developed by a group of persons and institutions coordinated by the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with developing countries KFPE (2000). The matrix has been extended by introducing a fifth domain (E) dealing with aspects of partnerships, and is presented in the table below:

Output of Research Partnership	Utilisation of Outputs/Outcomes	Effects	Benefits/ Drawbacks	Impacts
A) Improved knowledge and changed attitude of researchers				
B) Increased institutional and individual research capacity				
C) Policy relevant research results				
D) Application and user relevant research results				
E) Partnership Processes and impacts	Contributors / Inhibitors			

This basic matrix has been used and further elaborated to assess the impacts of the RLS project in India (Rural Livelihood Strategies).

5 Impacts Perceived from a South Perspective

The impact of the RLS project, based on the discussions with the southern partners and documents provided by them, is described in the following paragraphs.

5.1 Knowledge and Attitudes

There was a significant change in knowledge and attitudes of all partners during the seven years.

5.1.1 Conceptual Approaches

Dr. Ruedi Hogger, a representative for the Northern Partner, NADEL-ETHZ, introduced a more integrated and holistic approach to understanding RLS, called the Nine-Square Mandala concept. This concept was developed into a framework after many discussions among the researchers about the nature and complexity of livelihood systems.

The framework has now found flexible use not only among the RLS partners, but also among NGO partners of Swiss Development Cooperation, India. Partner institutions have used the framework to analyse and contribute to planning and design of development interventions.

Sampark worked on leadership imaging and developed it as a learning tool for people to select leaders and to hold them accountable. This has been made into a film for teaching and application in development programmes.

5.1.2 Conferences and Training Programmes

Several national and international exchanges took place through workshops attended by researchers from different institutions. Fifteen researchers made 21 presentations

through from 1996 to 2001, and used these to communicate their findings as well as conceptual and methodological approaches to a wide audience.

The research resulted in inclusion of Sustainable Rural Livelihood Systems in the teaching programmes of the partner institutions, reaching a range of practitioners and development professionals. Emphasis on practical experience got built in, as field-visits to research sites and NGOs were organized for the students. The interaction with Swiss partners continued through seminars and lecture-sessions by them as well as visits of Swiss students to the Indian institutions.

5.1.3 Attitudes

There were major shifts in research orientations and attitudes. Researchers learnt and applied participatory approaches, and developed new participatory methods, giving credence to people's perceptions, practices and indigenous knowledge. The practice of field visits by senior researchers became the norm during the currency of the project. Researchers made a significant shift from specialized research in their own primary disciplines to multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research. The attitude towards gender relations shifted a little, but the conviction of the value of gender sensitive research was not universal, reflecting in the fact that many researchers did not incorporate gender aspects in their research.

5.2 Individual Capacity Building

All researchers involved in the project felt that the project had significantly enhanced their capacities to do participatory, inter-disciplinary and collaborative research. Many field researchers moved to becoming independent heads of research projects and two did their doctoral programmes during the project. Their capacities were recognized by external organizations as well as their own institutions through invitations to design programmes and teach topics on participatory research and rural livelihood systems, e.g. by organizations like Swiss Development Cooperation, India, World Bank, DANIDA, DFID and the government.

5.3 Institutional Capacities

The institutions involved began to recognize more explicitly the value of people oriented research. There was also a realization of the need for communication of interim results, at different stages of the project, to communities involved as well as a wider audience of researchers, development practitioners and policy makers. Some institutional procedures were also relaxed, as the project funding was established under a separate head, this could then become practice for other project collaborations by the institution.

The three institutions developed expertise in livelihoods analysis, community organisation, leadership and income generation, and received recognition for this in the form of training and other project support assignments from the government and donors for large projects that benefit a large section of the poor. New research was initiated on the topics selected. Nine articles were published in external journals and books, and the three institutions brought out 19 in-house publications.

5.4 Policy Level Impact

The major policy level impacts include:

- Training and advisory support by IRMA is in the state of Andhra Pradesh, where strategies for improvement of livelihoods are now planned in a holistic manner, and this has a positive influence on planning and implementing major programmes for the poor.
- Contribution by Sampark to the Planning Commission (through a consultant to DFID), at the time of formulation of the Tenth Five Year Plan, into the policies and programmes for women-in-agriculture.
- Effort by Swiss Development Cooperation, India, to disseminate and utilize the findings of the RLS research as reference material for designing and implementing their own livelihood projects, as also for using the framework to assess projects supported by SDC.

5.5 End-user benefits

The use of participatory research methods had a significant impact on people's own understanding and articulation of their livelihood. They gained several new perspectives, on issues like gender, leadership, agricultural production, migration and natural resource management. The process of participatory research was itself an empowering process as information was analysed and communicated through village level exercises. The two feedbacks conducted at village level, not only involved people in the validation and understanding of their own situation, but also evoked responses in terms of demands for more advise, training and continued support. In the case of Sampark, a field project was started in the villages where the research was conducted. The project currently reaches 1700 women in 40 villages through micro finance; women have saved more than two million rupees ($400,000), learnt to manage their savings and take external credit from banks and other sources, and made productive investments. In the next phase of fieldwork, a people's forum has been started for natural resource management at village level.

6 Factors Affecting Impact

In analysing the process that brings about impact, there are several factors that either facilitate or inhibit impact. These have been termed 'contributors' and 'inhibitors'. These may relate to north-south, south-south aspects of partnerships, or may relate to intra-institutional processes, those within the teams of each institution. Some contributors and inhibitors experienced during the RLS partnership are described in the following paragraphs.

6.1 Direct Contact with Community

Across the board, in all the partner institutions and teams, the value of field visits was recognized. These help to create relationships with people and among research teams, change attitudes and trigger changes in behaviour. The contact with people also included feedback exercises, and this resulted not only in validation of findings but follow up for capacity building, analysis and action at community level.

6.2 The RLS Forum

All institutional partners, with their full research teams, formed an **RLS Forum**, which met at least twice every year during the project period. These visits were often preceded by visits of inter-institutional combined teams to the field, often including the northern partners. The Forum provided the space for researchers to share their research methods, approaches, findings, and conclusions and for the partners to make plans for sharing these with the research and development community outside the research project.

There was an undercurrent of competition between different researchers, and this resulted in inadequate support for innovative and new approaches from within the Forum. Often researchers perceived this attitude to change only after someone external to the Forum acknowledged the value of an innovative research. However, the strengths and benefits of the Forum far outweighed the occasionally negative processes.

6.3 The 'Expert' Attitude

Each researcher was an 'expert' in some field, be it agriculture, forestry, gender, or occupational diversification. This attitude inhibited researchers from relating to others, thus the engaging in one another's research was very limited. It could have been much more, had it been possible to find more joint research teams.

6.4 Fears and Orientations

Fears, anxieties and prior orientations limited not only formation of deeper partnerships, they influenced the opinions that one researcher held of another's research. Gender related research often led to involvement with women's difficulties, and such emotion was seen as detracting from objectivity. It was only during the second phase of the project that emotionally moving experiences were recognized as powerful change agents, and as positive influences both in research and development.

6.5 Inter-institutional Biases

The partnership involved research and academic institutions as well as NGOs. During the first phase of research, there was a greater perceived value of research pursued within academic institutions, compared to that of NGOs. This perception was seen to arise from a similar perception among the northern donors of the project, so that there was additional effort required to prove the value and contribution of the NGO partner. Such perceptions can result in financial inequities, especially as academic and research institutions already have greater government support than NGOs do. There was a shift in attitude during the project period, and towards the end of the project, the value of NGOs, as those capable of research *plus* action, was recognized both in terms of work and financial allocations.

6.6 Speaking the Right Language

Making an impact at different levels requires speaking the language of those that one seeks to influence. For instance, most members of the RLS forum felt that they could have had much greater policy level impact. They felt that though they had learnt to speak the language of the researchers, they did not speak the language of policy makers.

7 Achieving Greater Impact: Some recommendations

The seven-year partnership, involving different types of institutions in the north and south, provided several lessons, based on which a few recommendations can be made for meaningful partnership formation and for their effectiveness.

7.1 Formation of partnerships

A partnership is usually made with a given project objective, in a given time frame, and it is important that partners form a relationship of mutual respect and work compatibility reasonably early in the project. It is useful, therefore, if the partners know one another, and such a base exists already at the time of partnership formation. During the early stages of the project, time and effort needs to be invested in building such relationships, then greater inter-institutional exchange and collaboration in the research can become possible. A process of frequent exchanges during the project promotes mutual learning and helps to keep the project on track, enabling better project management.

7.2 Sharing of Tasks

The management of partnership projects is a very demanding task, time consuming and requiring of multiple skills including those of project management and coordination. The project manager was loaded with these jobs, with the reporting, and carried the primary onus of collating and presenting the project outputs to the northern sponsors. While the sharing of these tasks between northern and southern partners was initially envisaged, it did not happen, in part due to the competition and lack of collaboration among southern partners. This overload resulted in the project manager's time being allocated more for management and reporting than for research collaboration. A system of sharing of project management and reporting tasks among all partners, from south and north, is essential for more equitable and responsible partnerships.

7.3 Articulate Intended Impacts

The intended impacts of a research partnership are not sufficiently outlined in most such partnerships. This needs to be done, and then it is possible to weave the process of creating impact, into the process of conducting the research.

7.4 Sharing Research for Impact

The question of who should be called for sharing research results during the currency of a research project is important for creating impact. Once the intended impacts are outlined, the category of people instrumental in bringing about the different impacts need to be involved in generation of research findings, or at least in understanding

the research findings, so that their knowledge and awareness levels change enough to trigger change in behaviour patterns.

7.5 Policy Level Impact

Influencing policy requires taking on board certain key actors and influencing agents, so that they understand and communicate and influence the change at policy level. As such an intensive effort is called for, policy level impact needs to be stated as part of the project objectives, and planned for as part of the project activities.

One such step needed is to reach the research findings and recommendations for policy to those who influence policy; these may be researchers, NGOs, communities and those who lead advocacy.

As government officers are seen as those who influence policy, what is the level of officers who are most effective in policy change? While the middle level officers are definitely those with greater field contact, they may not be able to influence policy. However, they may be able to change the projects that they work with, and this impact may be worth seeking, too. Senior officers may be in a position to influence policy, but often have a lower ability to listen and absorb new findings from the field.

It is important to realise that those who influence policy have little time to read and absorb, hence research results need to be communicated to them in the form of short abstracts and papers, and not long reports.

7.6 End-User Impact

Most research projects are formulated in terms of research questions and hypotheses, and do not clearly lay down the intended impact on end-users of the research. If a project is to provide benefits to all research participants, especially the community, this has to be built into the research design. Thus end user impact needs to be mandated in research projects, and necessary budget allocations must be provided for this to become possible.

There is a need to recognise that it is difficult to create impacts at local level through research partnerships. Research partnerships that seek to influence development projects must not only involve development practitioners, but must involve those research institutions who have a greater capability to help create larger impacts at local level.

7.7 Intensive Exchange Processes

Attention to ‘processes’ is instrumental to creating impact. Intensive processes (of consultation, conflict resolution, etc.) are necessary to creating impact. Such processes are costly: “investments in intensive processes are needed for perfect partnerships.”

Impact Assessment Study on Research Partnerships (IAS-RP)

Case Study
'Swiss Priority Programme Environment (SPP-E)
Module 7 Environment & Development'

The Northern Perspective

Preliminary Draft prepared by Daniel Maselli for the
KFPE-GDN Workshop, Cairo/Egypt, 16-17 January 2003

1 Context

The following paper is a preliminary synthesis of an attempt to assess the various impacts of the so called 'Module 7 Environment & Development', a component of the Swiss Priority Programme 'Environment' (SPP-E) run from 1994 to 2000 (2001). The Module 7 assembled a variety of research partnerships between Swiss and Southern institutions. During its first phase (1994-1996) 18 projects were supported. They were reduced to 14 and arranged in 3 groups for the second and last phase 1996-2000 (see figure in Annexe 1). The goals of the Module 7 were the following four:

- To test the innovative joint venture between the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- To motivate and increase the number of Swiss researchers and research institutions to carry out research in partnership with developing countries
- To contribute to the capacity building mainly in the partner countries (at individual an less at the institutional level)
- To contribute to solve pressing problems in the partner countries related to environmental issues (e.g. solid waste management, drinking water supply, conflicts over natural resources etc.)

2 Evaluation

The Module 7 has already been evaluated in 2000, tackling in a participatory evaluation process the following three main questions:

- Was the concept / idea of North-South research partnerships meaningful?
- Did the strategy take into account all the needs of researchers in developing countries with respect to the development of research capacity?
- What style of project management produces the best yield with regard to research capacity and scientific results ?

The re-assessment by the IAS focuses specifically on intended and unintended impacts as stated in the ToR jointly elaborated by the IAS Group.
For that reason a series of semi-structured interviews were carried out with various key players of the SPP-E in general and of the Module 7 in particular. The 'Rural Livelihoods Strategy' project (RLS Project) from India was chosen as a case study to be analysed more in depth jointly with a southern project partner. According to the various roles of the interviewed persons and their institutional affiliation the character of the present analysis is obviously one of a critical self-evaluation. To better understand and crosscheck the statements about the impact external actors should also be included. This might happen at a later stage depending upon the availability of both time and funds.

3 Situation prior to Module 7 in Switzerland

N-S collaborative research could be compared to a more or less white sheet of paper for the SNSF in particular and the Swiss research community in general – it played only a very marginal role and was more or less completely unknown to many.
The Module 7, a programme component of the SPP-E created as an off-spring from the UNCED in Rio 1992, was from its very beginning a highly contested module. In was cancelled due to the lack of money together with an other module of the SPP-E before it could even start. Due to considerable political pressure and thanks to the innovative commitment of the SDC - which entered a pioneering joint venture with the SNSF accepting to cover all the expenses of the southern partners - and to the permanent advocacy of some few influent individuals, the Module 7 was eventually launched in 1994 with two years of delay compared to the other modules of the SPP-E.

Prevailing prejudices

But what does this mean concretely and what did facilitate such a change process?
N-S collaborative research initially suffered from a double critical mindset / prejudice:
a) out of the perspective of 'hard core' scientists and their institutions:
N-S collaborative research is not really research, it is of less good quality (3rd class research); 'partners' don't have the intellectual capacities required to really contribute to research
N-S collaborative research is too much development and application oriented
b) out of the perspective of development practitioners
N-S collaborative research is too academic, too expensive and useless / of little use for development cooperation
N-S collaborative research is being promoted mainly to contribute to the survival of the involved Swiss research institutions.

4 General Role and Importance of Module 7 for Switzerland

In retrospective the Module 7 has mainly created and offered a platform to discuss and become acquainted with this kind of collaborative research. Concretely this led or contributed to the

- ✓ 'forced' handling of project proposals by the SPP-E Expert Group consisting of traditional researchers and representatives of various institutions - in particular the very traditional SNSF, and the SDC - as well as international experts
- ✓ composition of a complementary Advisory Group for Module 7 projects to handle this unusual programme
- ✓ controversial discussions among various members of the Expert Group and the financing institutions about the selection / evaluation criteria and the differing assessments and contradictory expectations with regard to the project proposals.
- ✓ recognition for and promotion of the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries KFPE (1994) which consequently led to the organisation of two international Conferences on research partnership in Switzerland (Berne 1996 and 2000) and to the development of the '11 principles for research partnerships with developing countries' (1998)
- ✓ creation and implementation of a new and additional instrument for collaborative research between SDC and SNFS (new venture).

All this finally led somehow to a certain recognition for the pioneering efforts in collaborative research made by Switzerland at an international level. This in turn influenced the Swiss research and research policy community which became more sensitive for and aware about such scientific collaborations and its potential. This also led to a certain change of attitude and partially to a change of behaviour of the people more intensively confronted with this programme component.

5 Assessment of the Post Module 7 Situation in Switzerland

In Switzerland N-S collaborative research is nowadays more widely known and better accepted particularly within some units of the SNSF and within the Swiss Science Agency (SSA) compared to 10-15 years ago. But obviously it still plays a marginal role. However, the creation of an additional new 'regular' programme at the SNSF with again the support of SDC is a clear indicator for the better scientific recognition or for the increased importance given to such kind of research.
The very surprising success of the creation of a National Centre for Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South against all odds in 2001 represents so far the climax of this increasing recognition. The fact that core issues challenging particularly developing countries have kept staying on top of the international (political) agenda and have been dealt with at a series of UN conferences (e.g. Bejing, Copenhagen, Istanbul etc.) probably facilitated the needed political support in Switzerland for making such a proposal acceptable to the concerned decision makers who stood under considerable pressures from many sides to choose economically much more attractive NCCRs.

6 Main Findings and Conclusions by Stakeholder Groups

- ***Impacts on Northern Researchers / Research Institutions***

Some members of the Module 7 Expert Group and within the SNSF have changed their negative attitude with regard to N-S collaborative research by realising e.g. that the partners in the developing countries have the intellectual capacity to participate in research activities and that this kind of research is often carried out under very difficult and demanding situations and working conditions.

- ***Impacts on Southern Researchers / Research Institutions***

Some – in particular the hierarchically rather highly ranked – partners have been forced or motivated to go to themselves to the field (again). This has encouraged or 'forced' others to go as well making 'outdoor research' acceptable. This has greatly contributed to their personal better understanding of the real life situation of the concerned population their were making research 'on' and 'for', Through the introduction of transdisciplinary methodologies by the Swiss partners where e.g. the end-users are given an active role in the research they were initiated in doing research 'with' the target groups.

- ***Impacts on Policy and Decision Makers***

The Module 7 has contributed to raising the awareness about such research. It has strengthened the role seen and the importance given to the KFPE. Together with the increased importance shown at the international level for the need of collaborative research tackling issues in the South and East this paved the way to reach the stage of having enough weight to be successful in the competition for the new NCCRs.

- ***Impacts on Development Practitioners***

This is probably where so far the least impact has been achieved in Switzerland. This has probably to do with clearly insufficient and non-adequate ways of communication and valorisation of the research findings relevant for development practice.

It is however remarkable that the impact seems to be much higher in the South where in various cases representatives of administrations, governments, local NGOs and even international organisations have acknowledged and even adopted or incorporated some of the findings and achievements of the project. This was particularly the case in Uganda.

7 Shortcomings Impeding (better) Impact

- ***Delayed or missing publications***

Example: The RLS final project publication with as its core product the 9-Square Mandala useable as powerful working tool to improve the design and implementation of rural development programmes and projects is yet to come (June 2003 most probably), The time passed is a loss with regard to the potential benefit a timely publication could have triggered.

- ***Missing or rudimentary communication***

Example: Many progresses were made in methodological approaches to tackle the various environmental issues dealt by the Module 7 projects. However, most of them were never put down to paper, never communicated and not made accessible; this led to the impression that no progress has been achieved at all.

- ***Difficulty to bring involved people to the field***

It appears that many Southern partners resisted at first to go to the field pretending to know the reality well enough or not to have enough time. Surprisingly this was true in a few cases even for the formal project leaders from Switzerland who never took the necessary time to pay the research area(s) in the South a single visit!

8 Pre-Conditions for Success (Enabling Factors and Favourable Circumstances)

((chapter yet to be formulated by extracting the essence from the insights gained so far))

9 Best Practices to Enhance Impact

((chapter yet to be completed by extracting the essence from the insights gained so far))

- ✓ Strong commitment of individuals ('empathy')

Example: Prof. Dr. B. Messerli, first chairman of the Module 7 Expert Group and Representative of the Swiss National Science Foundation continuously acted as ambassador for North-South research partnerships at high levels.

- ✓ …

10 Recommendations

The following preliminary recommendations are equally concerning the involved researchers and the responsible donors/funding institutions as many of the activities proposed ought to be performed at least in part jointly.

(1) All those persons who are actively involved and responsible in particular to judge and evaluate N-S research partnerships should get repeatedly in direct contact with the concerned locations in order to be able to get familiar with the context. (R, D)

(2) Each programme or project has to develop jointly an appropriate reporting, documentation and communication strategy including an action plan allowing

to be as much as possible proactive and transparent – not to the least in order to avoid unnecessary tensions or conflicts. (R, D)

(3) For each new collaborative programme or project a appropriate monitoring and evaluation system allowing to assess work in progress and to take corrective measures if necessary should jointly be elaborated at an early stage. There must be a strong commitment to make proper use of this E&M system by all those concerned. (R, D)

(4) For any new programme or project the desired or expected impacts should be discussed, defined and agreed upon at a very early stage. Corresponding indicators have to be identified and an appropriate evaluation of the impacts must be secured. (R, D)

(5) In order to create a favourable environment contributing to the achievement of the targeted impacts the critical persons and institutions involved in a collaborative programme or project should clearly state their commitment to remain affiliated with the activity for a minimum period of time. This might be secured through clear and negotiated ToR and corresponding contracts. (R)

(6) Each programme or project has to make sure that sufficient and appropriate feedback is given to the stakeholders involved in the research activity. A modest regular annual budget for some concrete development support to the involved local communities could be planned and put at their disposal for immediate actions.

(7) In each programme or project the requested human capacities and the necessary time for administration, coordination and management have to bee foreseen. These tasks should be shared among the partners.

11 Annexe

a) ((figure Module 7 in Phase II))

b) Resource persons interviewed and their institutional affiliation

- ✓ Dr. Urs Christ, Swiss National Science Foundation, Administrator of SPPs
- ✓ Dr. Rudolf Högger, Private Consultant, Swiss co-responsible for the RLS research team
- ✓ Prof. Dr. Rudolf Baumgartner, Co-Director NADEL, ETHZ, Swiss co-responsible for the RLS research team
- ✓ Prof. Dr. Hans Thierstein, Chairman of the Expert Group SPP-E, ETHZ
- ✓ Prof. Dr. Bruno Messerli, Chairman of the Export Group SPP-E, University of Berne
- o Dr. Rudolf Häberli, Coordinator for SPP-E (yet to take place)
- o Prof. Dr. Thierry A. Freyvogel, Member Advisory Group Module 7 (yet to take place)

CASE STUDY
THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Jennifer Mpungu, AERC, Kenya

1. Introduction

The purpose of this brief is to provide a summary of the work that has been initiate by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) to establish a program performance monitoring system (PMS) that will enable the organization to track progress in achieving AERC program objectives.

The AERC engaged two consultants to assist in the task and whose focus was on identifying indicators to help AERC gauge the attainment of its mission. The work presented is based on the report of this initial effort by the AERC.

Statements of goals and objectives of AERC and the Training and Research Programmes and Publications and Communication group were reviewed with staff to identify desired results at the AERC and unit level. Illustrative performance indicators for measuring progress toward the results were considered. Some of these indicators will be shared with a view to seek their improvement and to elicit further comment on their application and appropriateness for the AERC as a capacity building institution.

Full participation of the staff of each of the units was encouraged and obtained in formal and informal meetings.

2. African Economic Research Consortium

The motivation underlying the establishment of AERC was the goal of creation of a community of professional economists who would shape Africa's development agenda and lead the management of its economies.

Indicators of achievement of the goal were discussed but considered too problematic to pursue. Recognizing the difficulties, it is worth further brainstorming to come up with a performance indicator that would capture the essence of AERC's goal and is feasible to implement.

To achieve the goal AERC's "principal objective is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent rigorous inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa."

Illustrative performance indicators are highlighted in bold type below:

Objective: Local graduate economics programmes that maintain international standards produce supply of high quality economists that meets demand for economic managers, researchers, policy analysts and teachers.

- **Number of new graduates from graduate economics departments that maintain international standards as percentage of estimated demand for new graduates at MA and PhD levels (every 4-5 years)**

There was extensive discussion of AERC's contribution to policy dialogue and policy change. Influencing or contributing to policy debate is an objective of AERC.

Objective: Better informed policy debate:

- **Increased number of policy makers and analysts and researchers reached directly and indirectly by AERC products (qualitative assessment of ELC and Research Programme every 4-5 years)**

Another mission level objective is "sustainability" considered both in terms of substance and long-term finance. The Strategy includes a statement of the sustainability objective.

Objective: "demonstrated capacity to attract sufficient funds to carry out planned programmes."

Annual funding level is sufficient to carry out planned programme (annual)

3. Training Programme

The goal of AERC in training is that high quality economics graduates of collaborative MA and PhD programmes influence economic management and policy analysis in African countries.

The objective of the Training Programme is to "…develop economics masters [and PhD] programmes in Africa that meet international standards, are relevant to African needs and can eventually be sustained from local resources."

Illustrative performance indicators are highlighted in bold type below:

Goal: Influence economic management and policy analysis of African countries

- **Net increase in number of collaborative programme graduates placed in government in economic management and policy analysis positions; also, number of graduates placed in key economic management and policy analyst positions (every 4-5 years)**

- **Number of new collaborative programme graduates taking jobs in government economic management or policy analysis positions (annual)**

Objective: Raise quality of collaborative MA and PhD economics programmes to international standards.

Category B universities demonstrate progress toward meeting international standards or continue to meet standards (every 4-5 years)

Collaborative PhD programme economics departments demonstrate progress toward meeting international standards (every 4-5 years

Objective: Sustain collaborative economics programmes from local resources

Reduced AERC contributions to CMAP category B economics departments that participated in the program for ten or more years and meet international standards (annual).

4. Research Programme

The statement of the objective of the Research Programme is "Expanded local capacity to undertake high-quality, policy relevant research intended to contribute to economic management."

It is important to note most of the recipients of grants are university economics faculty. Hence, there is an indirect contribution to the universities. The grant recipients not only produce research, but also have enhanced capacity to teach research methodology and use relevant research.

Illustrative performance indicators are highlighted in bold type below:

Objective: Increased number of researchers applying enhanced research skills.

Net cumulative increase in the pool of researchers who have been associated with the AERC Research Programme and continue to do research, or are in positions where their enhanced research skills can be applied. (every 4-5 years)

Objective: Quality of policy relevant research improved.

Quality of AERC publications, research papers and books, meet international standards (every 4-5 years)

Objective: Increased contribution to policy debate

Increased contribution of AERC sponsored research, publications, seminars, workshops and other products on policy debate (qualitative assessment with ELC every 4-5 years)

5. Publications and Communications

The stated objective of the dissemination strategy is "to facilitate the impact of AERC products on economic policy formulation, training and research in Africa." This is accomplished mainly creating awareness of AERC products among both general and targeted audiences and facilitating dissemination of AERC products.

Illustrative performance indicators are highlighted in bold type below:

Objective: Increased awareness of AERC and its products among policy makers, researchers and others who might use AERC materials in their workplace

- **Increased number of policy makers reached by different AERC products directly (annual)**

- **Increased contribution of AERC sponsored research, publications, seminars, workshops and other products on policy debate (qualitative assessment with Research Programme every 4-5 years)**

Objective: Enhanced quality of AERC products

- **Improved user friendliness of AERC products (qualitative assessments of different products each year over 4-5year cycle)**

6. Performance Monitoring System

The preferred option for structuring the PMS is to decentralize its implementation to the units responsible for the outcomes that will be reported. Thus each unit would be responsible for the data collection, processing and presentation as well as any clarification that may be required with respect to source and reliability of data for the performance indicators of its goal and objectives.

The Executive Director would appoint a person to coordinate the collection of performance indicator data and maintenance of the PMS. The PMS coordinator would chair a committee composed of the person from each unit responsible for that unit's performance indicators. The committee would ensure timely collection of data, develop standard formats for the presentation of data for each indicator and explore possible synergies in data collection among the units.

Utilization of the performance indicators should be planned in conjunction with establishing the system. The PMS committee could take a lead role in suggesting options for the use of the system.

Indicators could be used at periodic meetings with external partners to probe what they and AERC might do to improve performance; they could be used internally to help guide resource allocation; and they could be used to communicate progress to the Board of Directors as well as a broader audience via mechanisms such as an AERC Performance Report or the AERC Annual Report.

7. Concluding Comments: The Way Forward

The work reflected above was only the start of a process. What is important is that the staff internalized the concepts underlying the PMS to move forward to design and implement AERC's PMS. Ownership of the PMS by the staff will be critical to its effective design and implementation.

While the decision to enhance reporting on progress toward achieving objectives by employing performance indicators may have been premised on annual reporting, the nature of AERC's work, mainly capacity building, is unlikely to show significant results before five years or even longer have passed. Reporting on progress toward

goals and objectives for most indicators may be best done at intervals of four to five years.

In the interim years, a few performance indicators that are generated from data that AERC can relatively easily collect and are considered important indicators of progress at an objective or output level towards might be provided annually.

After AERC has drafted a PMS with which it is comfortable, a vital step before implementation will be to present it to stakeholders to obtain their feedback on the proposed system. When their comments and perspectives have been incorporated into the system, AERC should be ready to begin implementation.

A final note is that the PMS invariably will change as programme emphases shift and external realties impinge on planned results. The system will require continuing care, maintenance and commitment from staff.

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