

Working Paper 213

**Bridging Research and Policy:
Insights from 50 Case Studies**

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFREPREN	African Energy Policy Research Network
AHADS	Attapady Hills Area Development Society (India)
CAPP	Community Action for Popular Participation (Nigeria)
CIPPEC	Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth) (Argentina)
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CS	Case Study
DELIVERI	Decentralised Livestock Services in the Eastern Regions of Indonesia
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DTC	Delhi Transport Corporation (India)
EU	European Union
EU PHARE	A programme that helps prepare candidate countries for entry into the EU
FCTC	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
G-24	Intergovernmental Group of 24 on International Monetary Affairs
GALASA	Group Approach to Locally Adapted and Sustainable Agriculture (India)
GDN	Global Development Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GRADE	Group of Analysis for Development (Peru)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
id21	A fast-track research reporting service funded by DFID
IDB	Inter-American Bank for Development
IDEE	Initiatives for Democracy in Eastern Europe (Romania)
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITWPP	IWMI-Tata Water Policy Programme (India)
IWMI	International Water Management Institute (Sri Lanka)
JFM	Joint Forestry Management (India)
KRPLLD	Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development (India)
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests (India)
NCWCD	National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (Saudi Arabia)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NZODA	New Zealand Overseas Development Aid
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PMIP	Public Management Improvement Programme (Iran)
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RAPID	ODI's Research and Policy in Development programme
RAPNet	A network for researchers and policy-makers to share information, discuss and learn about how to improve links between development research and policy.
	Part of the GDN Bridging Research and Policy project
RUPFOR	Resource Unit for Participatory Forestry (India)

RWH	Rainwater Harvesting
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries
SMIs	Small- and Medium-Scale Industries
SPEECH	Society for the People's Education and Economic Change (India)
TERI	The Energy and Resources Institute
TIPS	Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat (South Africa)
TSS	Technical Support Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority (Pakistan)
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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The **Global Development Network** was launched in 1999 to support and link research and policy institutes involved in development. Its aim is to help them generate and share knowledge for development and bridge the gap between the development of ideas and their practical implementation. GDN can be contacted at Suite 1112, 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW Washington, DC, 20037 USA. Tel: +1(202) 338-6350/6351, Fax: +1(202) 338-6826/6831, Website: www.gdnet.org

ODI's **Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme** aims to improve the use of research in development policy and practice through improved knowledge about research–policy links; improved knowledge management and learning systems; improved communication; and improved awareness of the importance of research. Further information about the programme is available at www.odi.org.uk/rapid.

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Executive Summary

Reducing poverty and meeting the Millennium Development Goals will require improved policies around the world. Research is one way for policy-makers and other stakeholders to identify which policies are most effective and how they can best be implemented in different contexts. Yet there remains no *systematic* understanding of what, when, why and how research feeds into development policy. While there is an extensive literature on the research–policy links in OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, there has been much less emphasis on research–policy links in developing countries. The massive diversity of cultural, economic, and political contexts here makes it especially difficult to draw valid generalisations and lessons from existing experience and theory. In addition, international actors have an exaggerated impact on research and policy processes. A better understanding of how research can contribute to pro-poor policies, and systems to put it into practice, could improve development outcomes.

As part of the first phase of the three-year Global Development Network (GDN) Bridging Research and Policy project, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) was responsible for the collection and analysis of 50 summary case studies on research–policy links. This paper reports on the process, findings and implications of the case study work. The process of case study collection was transparent and bottom-up – local insights have helped inform a global project. The case studies were designed to capture existing experiences and relate them to streams in the literature, and to identify specific hypotheses for further investigation in the second phase of the project.

The 50 cases represent an interesting range of evidence and experience about research–policy links from around the world. They include examples of a wide range of types of research undertaken by a variety of organisations. A few cases describe situations where research had an immediate and direct impact on policy, although in most cases the impact was less direct and took some time, requiring strenuous advocacy efforts. The cases also illustrate different types of policy impact. Some resulted in clear changes in public policy, others in changes in policy implementation, and a few describe how action research caused substantial change on the ground, with little change in public policy.

In terms of cross-cutting analysis, the cases have been examined to address the question: why are some ideas that circulate in the research–policy arenas picked up and acted on, while others are ignored and disappear? We structure the discussion around a framework of three interlinked domains: context, evidence, links. We refer also to other issues that emerge from the cases, particularly the role of external influences and donors.

Context: This emerged as the most important domain in affecting the degree to which research has an impact on policy. Key issues concern prevailing narratives and discourse among policy-makers; the extent of demand for new ideas (by policy-makers and society more generally); and the degree of political contestation. Political resistance often hindered change, despite the existence of clear evidence, and bureaucratic factors often distorted public policies during implementation. At its broadest level, it seems that the degree of policy change is a function of political demand and contestation. The nature of political culture and degree of openness are also significant in enabling the use of research in development policy-making. The cases supported much of the existing theory on policy processes (for example, Kingdon, 1984), and the percolation of ideas (Weiss, 1977). However, they identified major gaps in the theory, which fails to address the political complexity of developing countries. There are three main remaining challenges here: how can contexts be categorised and how best can stakeholders operate to influence policy in these different contexts?

How do research–policy processes work in situations with democratic deficits? What can realistically be done to improve the context for the use of research in policy-making and practice?

Evidence: The findings from the case studies were clear. The key issue affecting uptake was whether research provided a solution to a problem. Policy influence was also affected by research relevance (in terms of topic and, as important, operational usefulness) and credibility (in terms of research approach and method of communication). In particular, the cases highlighted the impact of participatory approaches and the value of pilot schemes that clearly demonstrate the importance of new policy options. Policy uptake was greatest if the research programme had a clear communications and influencing strategy from the start, and if the results were packaged in familiar concepts. Strenuous advocacy efforts were often required to convince policy-makers of the value of more theoretical research. In this domain, there is still need for work on two main sets of issues. First, regarding the role of research units – either independent or inside government – what institutional characteristics and activities help foster research impact on policy? Second, what practical advice can be provided on what could work most effectively in different contexts?

Links: The extent of links and feedback processes between researchers and policy-makers are clearly important. Issues of trust, legitimacy, openness and formalisation of networks emerged from the cases. The cases supported existing theory about the role of translators and communicators (Gladwell, 2000) and the value of informal networks, but there were no clear conclusions about the nature of the links – this arena in particular needs further investigation. How do different types of network and policy research communities influence policy-making in developing countries? Do different sorts of policy networks, work better in different environments? Do legitimacy and trust make a difference, and how can they be strengthened? Answers to some of these questions would provide practical advice to researchers and research institutes on what could work in different contexts.

External influences: The impact of external forces and donor funding certainly enabled research to have an impact on policy. Broad incentives, such as EU access or the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process, can have a substantial impact. The cases also highlight a number of innovative ways to ensure research has a greater policy impact. But much more systematic evidence is needed. As policy processes become increasingly global, this arena will increase in importance. Future research might address the impact of international politics and processes, as well as the impact of general donor policies and specific research-funding instruments.

The cases provide a fascinating insight into research–policy links around the developing world. Although too early to make extensive recommendations, the analysis of the theory and preliminary case studies undertaken so far already provide some useful lessons, recommendations and practical tools for policy-makers, researchers and donors.

While the literature review, framework and cases discussed here are useful, it is also clear that current understanding in this area remains thin. More systemic research to advance knowledge on research–policy dynamics is needed. First, there is a need for comparative analyses of factors in each of the three domains in the research–policy framework, and the role of external influences. Second, there is a need for analyses of specific examples where research has influenced policy in order to assess the relative impact of factors from all three domains, as well as from external forces. The next phase of the GDN Bridging Research and Policy project will undertake more thorough systematic research on the issues identified in this paper. Synthesising these different perspectives would enable the project to draw robust and consistent conclusions and make practical recommendations.

1 Introduction

Reducing poverty, accelerating development progress around the world and meeting the Millennium Development Goals require better policies. But policy-makers and other stakeholders often do not know which policies are most suitable and how they can best be implemented in different contexts. A better understanding of how research can contribute to pro-poor policies, and systems to put it into practice, could improve development outcomes. For this reason, the link between research and policy in development is of increasing interest, to both researchers and policy-makers.

It is clear that better use of research in development policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve quality of life. For example, household disease surveys in rural Tanzania informed a process of health service reforms which contributed to a 28% reduction in infant mortality in two years. In contrast, the HIV and AIDS crisis has deepened in some countries due to the reluctance of their governments to implement effective prevention programmes, despite clear evidence from research on what causes the virus and how to prevent it spreading. Although research clearly matters, there remains no *systematic* understanding of what, when, why and how research feeds into development policy.

While there is an extensive literature on the research–policy links in OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries¹ – from disciplines as varied as economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, international relations and management – there has been much less emphasis on research–policy links in developing countries. Yet the development arena is distinct. The massive diversity of cultural, economic, and political contexts makes it especially difficult to draw valid generalisations and lessons from existing experience and theory. In addition, international actors have a substantial impact on research and policy processes.

There has been a few notable initiatives to assess the impact of research on policy within the development sector. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) started a programme in 1996 to measure the effect of its research (Garrett, 1998) that has generated a range of important materials.² In 1999, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in the UK completed a study on the policy process and how research could influence it (Sutton, 1999). The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada is currently undertaking an evaluation of the policy impact of its own research programme. The UK government Department for International Development (DFID) has recently completed a major review of work as part of its effort to develop a new research policy. All this work concludes that there remains little systematic understanding of what works, when and why. The DFID study perhaps puts it best: ‘not enough is known about impacts of ... research programmes internationally and in developing countries, both directly and in relation to other types of development instruments’ (Surr et al., 2002).

The link between research and policy has been a key issue for the Global Development Network (GDN) since its inception in 1999. It was the theme of a series of panel discussions at the GDN Annual Conferences in Bonn (1999) and Tokyo (2000), and of a follow-up workshop held at the University of Warwick in June 2001. These meetings focused on exploring three key questions:

¹ There has also been increasing policy-maker interest – in the UK, work has been mainstreamed through the Cabinet Office and by the formation of the Evidence Network.

² See the work on Impact Assessment at www.ifpri.org/

- How can policy-makers best use research and move towards evidence-based policy-making?
- How can researchers best use their findings to influence policy?
- How can the interaction between researchers and policy-makers be improved?

Ideas generated during the Warwick workshop were further developed into a project proposal that formed the basis of discussions during the 2001 GDN Conference in Rio de Janeiro (Stone, 2001).

Among other things, the three-year GDN Bridging Research and Policy project aims to:

- enhance understanding of how to improve research–policy links and impact;
- provide lessons, recommendations and practical tools for researchers and policy-makers;
- develop an international coalition of policy-makers, researchers and communicators interested in collaborating to improve links between research and policy.

In the first year of work, the main efforts went towards reviewing the literature in this area, conducting a preliminary survey of researchers and of policy-makers, and the collection and analysis of 50 summary case studies. This paper reports on the process, findings and implications of the case study work.

The case study work was intended to contribute to all three goals above – enhancing understanding, providing a source for practical advice, and helping to build a network working on research–policy links. However, given the lack of work in this area, and particularly the limited case study evidence of research–policy links in developing countries, the principal aim was to advance knowledge. Specifically, the main objectives of the case study work were to capture existing experiences quickly, identify some preliminary themes, identify how the findings related to streams in the literature, and identify specific hypotheses for further investigation in the next phase of the project.

50 case studies were completed – a list and brief summary is in Appendix 1.³ After an open call, each case study proposal was screened by a review panel for suitability and either approved (often with guidance given to the author) or rejected. The completed case studies were then also checked and edited before being uploaded onto the project website – RAPNet.⁴

Clearly there is an extremely complex set of issues here. There is a great diversity of contexts and research affects policy in many different ways. Nevertheless, the case studies do highlight some themes for further investigation and many of the individual cases are valuable in furthering our knowledge in this area. Throughout this paper we refer to the cases by the GDN reference number (i.e. CS1–CS50) and a descriptive title.

The analysis of the cases in this paper is greatly informed by the preparation of an Annotated Bibliography (de Vibe et al., 2002) and a new framework (Crewe and Young, 2002) for understanding research–policy links. The cases have been examined from the perspective of research uptake pathways, addressing the question: why are some ideas that circulate in the research–policy arenas picked up and acted on, while others are ignored and disappear? Based on the project framework, we structure the discussion around three broad areas: context: politics and institutions; evidence: approach and credibility; and links: influence and legitimacy. We refer also to the role of external influence and donors.

³ For more information see www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Studies_Index.html

⁴ For more information see www.gdnet.org/rapnet/

This paper outlines some findings from the case study process. It describes work in process, which others might find interesting and helpful, rather than an exhaustive analysis of the theory, or definitive recommendations for practitioners. Section 2 outlines the definitions of research and policy, the process of collecting the cases studies and some of the opportunities and challenges. It also provides descriptive statistics on the cases collected. Section 3 provides a detailed discussion of the emerging themes, highlights interesting cases, and relates these to the main streams of theory in this area. Section 4 makes suggestions for future work in this area, in terms of further research within the GDN project and in practical strategies. Section 5 concludes.

2 Definitions, Case Study Process and Descriptive Statistics

2.1 Definitions

In collecting the case studies, the project decided to use relatively open definitions of research and policy. This was important given the preliminary nature of the work, the diversity of expected cases, the complexity of the topic area, and the lack of existing case studies. The call for cases did not provide any specific guidance in this respect. In assessing the proposed cases, we considered the following issues regarding research and policy.

Like others, we thought it was difficult, and often unhelpful, to provide an overly specific definition of research, since the exact meaning will depend on the context. For the case studies in the Bridging Research and Policy project, we considered research to be ‘any systematic effort to increase the stock of knowledge’. This included, therefore, any systematic process of critical investigation and evaluation, theory building, data collection, analysis and codification related to development policy and practice. It includes action research, i.e. self-reflection by practitioners towards the enhancement of direct practice.

Policy also has a wide range of definitions. In collecting case studies, we considered policy to include declarations or plans, as well as actions on the ground. The cases were intended to explore how research can influence policy horizons, policy development, declared public policy regimes and policy implementation or practice.

2.2 Case study process: opportunities and challenges

The process for collecting the case studies was open. Any individual or organisation could submit a proposal. One key issue was whether the proposal contained a real focus on research–policy links (the lack of this focus ruled out many cases). Another key criterion was that the case needed to be supported by existing documentation (this ruled out a few). Contributors were paid US\$1000 – US\$500 for an approved proposal and another US\$500 on completion.

The process for collecting the case studies consisted of two rounds. The first round was an open invitation to submit case studies on the GDN website. This generated 80 applications and 20 approved cases. The second round included personal calls for messages from project steering committee members and project staff, as well as another call on the GDN website and in the GDN newsletter. This generated another 120 proposals and another 30 approved cases.

As implied above, it was more difficult than expected to obtain the necessary quantity (50) of case studies of direct relevance. This was partly due to the lack of a sufficiently vigorous communication strategy from the start. The potential for generating more cases was indicated by the response in the second phase, and communications initiatives could be taken further in the future. Equally as important, however, the project was asking people to look at issues through a new lens, and this has not been easy.

The same basic process was followed in each case. The submitted proposals were initially assessed by the coordinator and, after inquiries were satisfied, sent to the panel for assessment. If approved, a full case was sought. The comments and suggestions from the panel were also passed on to the contributor. Once the full case was submitted, it was assessed by the coordinator. After revisions by

the contributor (and basic editing if needed), the case was uploaded onto the project website. We believe that the standard of the completed case studies has been high.

The call for proposals suggested a rough structure for the cases, based around:

- the background context (location, date, organisations involved, prevailing policies and policy climate);
- the research results (content, source, reliability);
- the policy change (type of change – legislation, policy document, law, practice; period over which change took place; process of policy change);
- the critical factors influencing the link (or lack of it).

This approach has potential benefits in the following areas:

- *Process*: We believe that having a process that was open, transparent and bottom-up, as well as involving feedback to contributors, helped to make the research more credible and legitimate.
- *Enhancing understanding*: Given the lack of case studies on this issue – and the number collected by GDN – we believe that the work will help by providing detail of individual cases as well as in identifying critical themes and issues for future research.
- *Network-building*: We believe the open nature of the process helped to develop a global network of actors working on research–policy links.
- *Awareness-building*: The widespread call involved in the process also helped build awareness of the value of research for policy-making in development. However, it was also clear that more could certainly be done in building awareness on this set of issues.

However, the approach also means that care needs to be taken in analysing the findings. Some of the drawbacks of the approach are outlined below:

- *Representativeness*: The call for proposals was primarily made to those in the GDN network. Contributors then ‘self-selected’. This means that the cases were not a random sample of the spectrum of work in this area. The proposals received and the completed studies tended to focus more on where research had been successful in influencing policies and the reasons why. However, about 20% of the cases included examples where research had not had an impact. These were often as instructive.
- *Contributor involvement*: Contributors were often involved in the cases and were making an assessment on cases they were involved in. Their interpretations might be open to criticism as reinventing history by others involved. We believe this problem was limited by the need for support documents and the fact that no interpretations have been challenged since the data has been published on the project website.
- *Measuring impact and attributing causality*: A general methodological problem with the project is that it is often very difficult to isolate the impact of research (if any) on policy change. Since policy processes are complex, multi-layered and they change over time, it is difficult to identify and emphasise the key factors that caused policy to change (or not).

In terms of future activities regarding the project, more effort needs to go towards generating inputs from non-researchers. The current phase has not received many cases from policy-makers,⁵ practitioners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the media. Many such people were

⁵ The survey responses have also been low.

probably not aware of the opportunity – this could be resolved via a strategic communication strategy. There may also be different, and perhaps better, ways to capture the experience and expertise of such groups, for example through write shops, new surveys, etc.

Given the methodological limitations, it may not be appropriate to make any kind of definitive statements about research–policy links from the cases collected. However, the work generated an impressive collection of cases in terms of breadth and diversity. The approach has, as intended, allowed us to capture quickly a range of existing experiences of research–policy links from around the world. Many of the individual cases are very instructive in terms of focusing on research–policy links in different contexts. In sum, we do feel that the cases allow us to raise some preliminary issues and make suggestions that could inform the subsequent work of the project.

2.3 Descriptive statistics on the cases collected

From the outset, we wanted to collect a broad range of case studies – from across regions, sectors and themes – including examples where research has influenced policy, and where it has not. The cases collected, and the descriptive statistics, are outlined below.

Regional balance: The process generated a large number of proposals and completed cases from South Asia. Because of this imbalance, there was effort in the second phase to generate cases from other regions and this helped ensure a reasonable spread. There remain, however, relatively few cases from the Middle East and North Africa. The full range is outlined in Table 1:

Table 1 Range of case studies by region

Region	Number of Cases
South Asia	13
East and Central Asia and Pacific	7
Sub-Saharan Africa	10
Middle East/North Africa	3
Latin America/Caribbean	7
Eastern Europe	8
International	2

Different sectors: Coverage is broad in terms of the issues covered – from macroeconomic issues to small enterprise development, livestock services, environmental management, governance issues and public administration reform. There is a relatively large number of cases on agriculture and rural development. See Appendix 1 for a full list of the cases collected.

Source of studies: Almost all the current studies are from researchers. A couple are from policy-makers, practitioners or NGOs. There are none from the media.

Policy-driven processes and research-driven processes: Most of the cases seem to be initially policy-driven, i.e. where there has been a demand from the policy-makers. However, there was a few cases where research eventually led to policy change (such as CS42: rainwater harvesting in Tanzania, CS28: measuring inflation in Peru, CS38: Joint Forest Management in India).

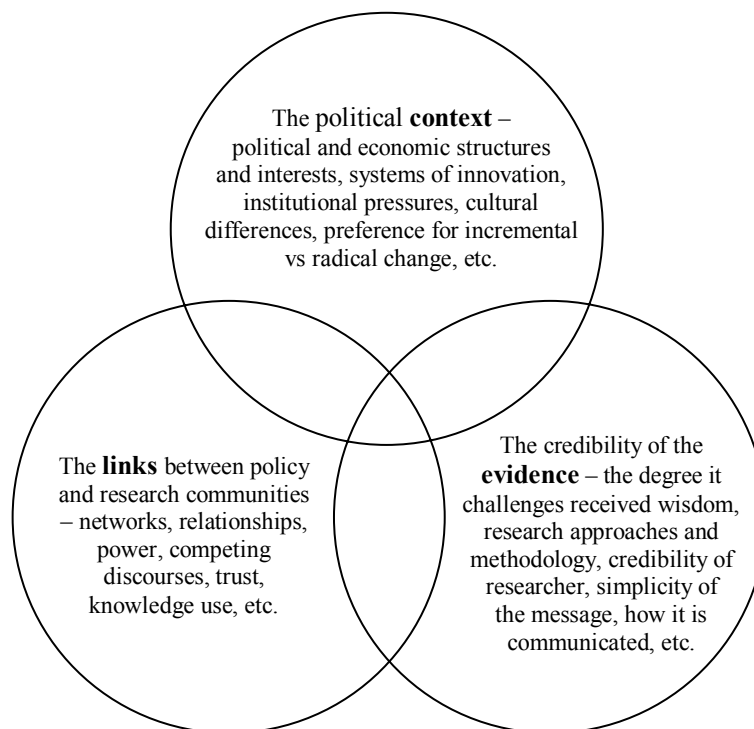
Policies at different levels: Most of the cases are local or national. 12 out of the 50 are local (e.g. CS7: clean air for Delhi), 31 are national (e.g. on issues of fiscal policy or poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs)), five are regional (e.g. CS23: African Energy Policy Research Network – AFREPREN) and two are global (e.g. CS36: support for the Intergovernmental Group of 24 (G-24)).

Different types of institution: Most of the cases focus on official institutions or processes (i.e. national or local governments), but some also focus on unofficial organisations such as foundations, think-tanks or NGOs.

3 Issues and Emerging Themes

Traditionally, the link between research and policy has been viewed as a linear or rational process, whereby a set of research findings is shifted from the ‘research sphere’ over to the ‘policy sphere’, and then has some impact on policy-makers’ decisions. At least three of the assumptions underpinning this traditional view are now being questioned. First, the assumption that research influences policy in a one-way process; second, the assumption that there is a clear divide between researchers and policy-makers; and third, the assumption that the production of knowledge is confined to a set of specific findings. Literature on research–policy links is now shifting towards a more dynamic and complex view that emphasises a two-way process between research and policy, shaped by multiple relations and reservoirs of knowledge. The key question is: why are some of the ideas that circulate in the research–policy arenas picked up and acted on, while others are ignored and disappear? The discussion is structured around the themes of context, evidence, and links as outlined in the framework developed by Crewe and Young (2002). In the framework, research uptake is seen as a function of the interaction of context: politics and institutions; evidence: approach and credibility; and links between researchers and policy-makers, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The context, evidence and links framework



Each of these will be examined in turn below. However, this section starts with a discussion of some preliminary issues that emerged from the case studies regarding the types of research, and types of policy and policy change they describe. It closes with a discussion of some ‘other issues’ that the cases revealed, particularly external influences and the role of donors.

3.1 Types of research

There were five main points regarding research. First, it was very clear from the case studies that research included a wide range of activities – from basic experimentation and social science research to policy analysis and action research. Second, research was drawn from a range of sources – from governments, NGOs and international organisations as well as the more common sources of universities and think-tanks. Third, a key point, is that research products can include knowledge that is codified (such as documented in reports, books, working papers, briefing documents) and tacit (i.e. based on systematic analysis by an individual or organisation). Fourth, it was obvious that international sources of research were important (directly or indirectly) in many of the cases. Finally, although the case studies focus on specific pieces of research around specific policy events, much research influences policy indirectly by informing the general discourse within which specific policies are made.⁶ The cases of technical support to G-24 (CS38), biodiversity in Saudi Arabia (CS19), measuring inflation in Peru (CS28), fiscal policy in Chile (CS39), and the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) in Pakistan (CS24), all illustrate how research can provide stores of knowledge that filter into policy as the need arises.

3.2 Types of policy and policy change

There are also a number of interesting issues that emerge regarding policy and policy change. The case studies described the impact of research on public policies, policy implementation, and changes in practice on the ground. Examples are inclusion of new issues into policy discussions (CS14: remittances in Nepal), new priorities in public documents (CS42: rainwater harvesting in Tanzania), parliamentary decisions and actions (CS37: regional development in Croatia), and legal precedents (CS24: the WAPDA case in Pakistan). They also included new activities (CS43: community-based animal health workers in Kenya) and ways of operating on the ground (CS47: farming in Central America).

A second related point, that is perhaps obvious, but nevertheless striking, is that policy-makers are an extremely heterogeneous group. They include, among others, government officials, legislators, civil servants, civil society, the judiciary and the media. Anyone trying to influence policy needs to be aware that there may be multiple sets of entry points. Similarly, groups of policy-makers (such as government) are not a homogenous entity themselves. The case focusing on the poverty reduction strategy in Tanzania (CS26) highlights significant differences of opinion within government.

Third, the volatility of policy environments in developing countries was marked. Context and policy-maker interests can change quickly, affecting the uptake of research. The fall of autocratic regimes enabled research to have an unexpectedly large impact in two cases each from Peru and Indonesia. It works both ways however. Changes of context in India (CS40: illegal slate mining case) led to the cutting of all links between research and policy. The lack of impact of an EU project in Lithuania (CS20) was directly attributed to the fact it was carried out ‘at a very turbulent time when the Government position was frequently changing (it was exposed to institutional changes and policy pressure from the EU and the domestic interest groups).’

Fourth, it was interesting to note that, in the collected cases, change on the ground often happens before public policy changes. For example, the adoption of rainwater harvesting by smallholder farmers in Tanzania (CS42) ‘began well before an enabling policy for its promotion by planners and

⁶ Weiss’s (1977) ‘percolation’ model argues that although research in most cases will not have a direct influence on specific policies (as implied in the linear model), the production of research can still exert a powerful indirect influence, as new terms and concepts percolate into the policy discourse through various policy networks.

development workers was in place.’ The use of paravets in Kenya (CS43) grew rapidly in arid areas despite the fact it was, and remains, illegal. Although a programme on sustainable agriculture was influential at the village level in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (CS47), it had negligible impact on national policies. In sum, as highlighted by the Society for the People’s Education and Economic Change (SPEECH) case in India (CS13), a local view of policy tends to highlight policy implementation rather than formal policy.

Fifth, it was notable that bridging research and policy often takes a long time and this needs to be considered in any discussion. In the study on assessing inflation levels in Peru (CS28), changing policy took eight years. In the case of animal health workers in Kenya (CS43), public policy has not changed after 20 years of research (and change on the ground). The time dimension is important both in terms of methodology of assessing impact and also in considering practical strategies for changing policy based on research findings. How to reduce the time lag is a key issue for further investigation.

Sixth, the cases indicate that changing the process (the way things are done) is as important as changing the policy (what is done). See Box 1 for an outline of how research helped improve local government processes in the Philippines. Many cases highlight the importance of participatory approaches. For example, the Decentralised Livestock Services in the Eastern Regions of Indonesia (DELIVERI) case (CS1) addressed issues of decentralisation, privatisation and participation in livestock services. In the fiscal policy case study in Chile (CS39), the government called for and followed advice from a panel of experts in a transparent manner, thus giving legitimacy to their policy.

Box 1 How research can help improve fiscal processes and accountability: a case from the Philippines (CS6)

The Indicators for Good Governance and Local Development project in the Philippines aims to promote good governance at the local government level. This was done through the development of a set of simple, understandable and useful indicators for assessing the performance of local governments along three fundamental aspects: provision of basic services, development orientation, and people’s participation. Implemented by the Philippine Center for Policy Studies and funded by the Ford Foundation, the project has so far yielded two desirable outcomes: (i) the improvement of fiscal and decision processes resulting from the adoption of a Governance for Local Development index; and (ii) the enhancement of transparency and accountability, as well as heightened level of social awareness, induced by the participation of the stakeholders in the project.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_06_Intro.html

Finally, with regard to bridging research and policy, the cases indicate the need to take a broader look at assessing the impact of research on policy change – one that goes beyond impact on formal documents or visible practices. The time lag and complexity of issues suggest that analyses in this area should include issues such as policy capacity and policy horizons of policy-makers (supporting the issues identified by Lindquist, 2003). Important issues here include less immediately tangible ways that research affects policy, such as improving the knowledge of policy actors and opportunities for networking, as well as introducing new policy ideas into public debate or into private policy-maker discussions.

3.3 Context: politics and institutions

Policy-makers are just ordinary people working within organisations and institutions with complex political, economic, institutional, cultural and structural dimensions. Education, attitudes, beliefs, prevailing ideas, time available, and personalities all influence how they behave and respond to new ideas. The degree of democracy, academic and media freedom, vested interests, history and political machinery influence their room for manoeuvre. And government systems and the incentives on bureaucrats influence how policies are put into practice. The clear finding from the literature and these case studies is that the political context is very important – often the most important issue – in affecting the degree to which research affects policy. We discuss this under three sub-headings below: how policy-makers think, the political process, and policy implementation.

3.3.1 *How policy-makers think*

Policy-makers like straightforward stories and advice they can understand. Roe (1991) shows that development policies are often based on arguments, scenarios and narratives that do not stand up to closer scrutiny. In spite of this, the ‘policy narratives’ persist and continue to inform policy-making largely because there is a strong pressure to carry on reproducing simple narratives when difficult decisions have to be made. This is demonstrated well in the case of irrigation in Kerala, India (CS2), where incomplete research was accepted because it supported the current, although ‘incorrect’, view of policy-makers. On the other hand, policy-makers can be convinced of the value of new approaches if the story is simple and convincing enough. The cases of remittances in Nepal (CS14) and rainwater harvesting in Tanzania (CS42) both illustrate how research can challenge and replace an existing narrative. The rainwater harvesting case notes that while few policy-makers ‘doubt the critical importance of rainfall, they have not previously considered the importance of using run-off for increasing water supply. Indeed, the overriding view was that run-off is a hazard rather than a resource, and leads to soil erosion. This perception has driven government policy for many years.’

Kingdon (1984) argues that in order to understand (and influence) policy, one must understand the agenda-setting process, a key influence on which are ‘political streams’. This refers to the wider political environment, including issues of government changes and public opinion. He also describes how ‘policy streams’ influence agendas. The implications are that research will have a greater impact if it fits within a range of what can be seen as ‘good advice’. The case of starter packs in Malawi (CS32) provides a good example. It describes how policy-makers at the Malawian Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, who were trained in the era of Green Revolution technologies within an interventionist government, were much more comfortable with the idea of subsidised inputs and new technology than with newer concepts of sustainable smallholder agriculture in the open marketplace.

3.3.2 *The political process*

A first general point here concerns broad issues of democracy and governance. Overall, the case study work suggests that open political systems are important in allowing evidence to be freely gathered, assessed and communicated. It is not a great surprise that among the cases collected, there are very few from non-democratic contexts, where academic, public and media freedoms are severely curtailed. The contexts of most of the case studies collected are basically open, although there is a great deal of diversity in the detail. Chile (CS39) provides an example where international research and local technical expertise contributed to the improvement of fiscal policy within a context of a democratic polity. There are a few cases from more closed systems, but it is too soon to

tell exactly how a closed political system affects the impact of research on policy-making. In some of the cases in less open systems, there has been little impact of research on policy (CS3: national economic planning in Iran); in others there has been an impact (CS27: small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) formation in Ukraine). The case study on fiscal reform in Morocco (see Box 2) concludes that better links between research and policy are only possible if policy-makers have confidence in policy research, and the willingness and capacity to pursue good governance.

A second clear point is that the degree of policy-maker demand is one of the main issues that distinguishes cases of research uptake from those that have little impact. Research appears to have a quicker and greater impact when it is policy driven – at least to start with – or has high-level political commitment. In the collected cases, a clear policy-maker demand usually led to research impact on policy. And when there was little demand from policy-makers, research tended to have a much weaker impact. Responsive research is, almost by definition, likely to be more operationally relevant and provide the solution to a problem. Among others, the cases of development planning reform in Lithuania (CS20) and regional development in Croatia (CS37) provide clear examples of this. In the Croatia case, the ‘specific and urgent need for drawing and adapting of the appropriate new legislation’ was a key reason for the adoption of the recommendations of the study. It is much more difficult for policy-makers to ignore the findings of any research if they had commissioned it. The importance of policy-maker demand applies in all regions and contexts. Identifying situations – and responding in a timely manner – when policy-makers do require assistance is clearly an important way in which researchers can influence policy outcomes.

Box 2 Barriers to use of research on fiscal issues in Morocco (CS41)

Why do decision-makers not use reliable and more comprehensive research when they design and implement fiscal policy reforms? The case study identified the following:

- inadequate knowledge and training of decision-makers;
- the widespread belief that policy research is extremely theoretical and vague;
- inadequate dissemination of reliable research in the fiscal policy research area.

But aspects relating to governance and interest pressures matter more. These included:

- poor governance, reflected in public sector irrationality and wasting expenditures, as well as in corruption and the lack of credibility of rules;
- the effects of bureaucratic interest groups who agree fiscal adjustments but resist efficient fiscal reforms.

The paper reveals that the government often relies on generalising policy research that is politically feasible and easily practicable. More comprehensive and reliable research is often rejected because of the lack of governance and the impact of rent-seeking groups. The research results show that the strengthening of links between research and policy, especially on the fiscal front, may be possible only if the policy-makers have the confidence in policy research, as well as the willingness and the capacity to set up good governance and to resist rent-seeking groups.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_41_Intro.html

This is not to say that all research should be policy driven. There was a number of cases involving research on issues that were not immediately policy relevant (CS42: rainwater harvesting in Tanzania and CS14: remittances in Nepal) where researchers identified problems and convinced policy-makers to create new policy directions. Public demand can also stimulate policy change (CS25: the water weed case in Ghana), and researchers can try to influence the public and change policy indirectly. The case of the Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat (TIPS) in South Africa (see Box 3) highlights some of the ways think-tanks can respond in different contexts.

A third apparent finding is that the degree of political contestation also matters greatly. Even in open systems, many decisions are political and research-based evidence may be completely ignored, even if it was convincing. The case of poverty reduction strategy in Tanzania (CS26) provides a good example of the issues here. As the case notes, ‘wide-scale confidence in research results is inadequate to ensure impact so long as policy decisions are fundamentally political.’ This does not mean that work in this area should concentrate on political issues alone. As the Tanzania case also notes, ‘Research can be part of the political process ... research results can shake up the balance of political forces and enable movement.’ The lack of policy shift was attributed to blocking by the special interests of groups or individuals (cases in Kyrgyz Republic (CS5) and Morocco (CS41)). For example, what can be done in situations like the case of illegal slate mining in the Dhauladhar Himalayas (CS40), where the ‘entire research-led effort, policies, action and administrative framework fails against the vested interests backed by political abettors’?

Box 3 Research–policy interactions and the role of think-tanks: insights from South Africa (CS18)

The Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat (TIPS) was set up after the fall of the apartheid regime and shift to democracy in South Africa. It was set up as a clearing house for policy relevant and academically credible research, with the South African Department of Trade and Industry as its main client. The TIPS case highlights that research–policy links are complex and multi-layered and that think-tanks can only, at the best of times, help policy-makers make more informed decisions. Think-tanks that aim to impact policy have to be aware of the environment in which they operate. The best environment is one where there is efficient and accountable government with competent policy-makers who clearly articulate their research needs. In this scenario, efforts to remain close to policy-making are sensible. However, in an environment where there is no clear articulation for policy research, and government suffers major inefficiencies, the role of think-tanks ought to be considerably different, such as creating ways by which policy-makers can become more accountable. Under this scenario, think-tanks have a less tangible impact, yet still important.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_18_Intro.html

More specifically, a key discovery is that research is unlikely to affect policy if reforms go against the interests of important political players. This was found in the case of donor-driven research in the Kyrgyz Republic (CS5). In the Malawi starter packs case (CS32), the government adopted part of the research findings (about universal provision of seed packs) – where the evidence fits neatly with political imperatives – but ignored the other findings which raise serious questions about the desirability and viability of current agricultural policies. In some cases, the findings were implemented partly because there was an absence of interest groups able to lobby against research-generated reform. Another relevant finding here concerned the issue of consensus on a policy change. In many cases, if research recommendations were not implemented, it was because there was no internal consensus on priorities (CS17: Kerala local research programme). However, in a few other cases, research helped generate a consensus (CS26: poverty reduction strategy in Tanzania and CS39: fiscal policy in Chile). The distinguishing issue here was related to how democratic the context was.

The political context can, and often does, change very quickly in developing countries. The cases certainly show how crises can affect the impact of research on policy (with examples of both increases and decreases). In terms of increasing impact, crises worked in two ways. First, they tended to generate a demand for solutions to problems (see Box 4 for the DELIVERI case in Indonesia). Second, they tended to remove barriers to solutions that might have been on the shelf (the two Peru cases: CS28 and CS45). In terms of decreasing research–policy links, volatility was the pivotal issue.

Lindquist (1998) describes routine, incremental, fundamental and emergent policy processes – each of which has different implications for the uptake of research. Most policy decisions are routine policy processes, merely modifying previous decisions, and there is little scope for research uptake. Incremental processes deal with selective issues as they arise and may make use of whatever analysis is close at hand, but are unlikely to involve a comprehensive review of all the associated issues. The cases of healthcare in the Caribbean (CS8) and trade policy in South Africa (CS18) describe this sort of situation, showing how policy-makers look for analyses that are already ‘on the shelf’ or can be adapted very quickly. Researchers can only capitalise on these situations if they have simple useful recommendations ready at the right time.

Box 4 Action research, crisis and policy impact: DELIVERI in Indonesia (CS1)

The Decentralised Livestock Services in the Eastern Regions of Indonesia (DELIVERI) project was a programme of action research to make livestock service institutions more responsive to the needs of small-scale farmers. It was remarkably successful, with clear impact not only on service provision but also on livestock service policies and practices at field, district, provincial, and national level. The downfall of Suharto midway through the project meant that there was an increase in demand and a fall in contestation of the issues addressed in the project (i.e. decentralisation, privatisation and participation in livestock services provision). The project was only able to have this impact since it had taken a participatory, inclusive and collaborative approach, with the explicit goal of influencing strategy from the start.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_01_Intro.html

Many of the GDN cases describe situations where more fundamental or emergent policies are being made,⁷ or what Kingdon (1984) refers to as ‘policy windows’, where more radical solutions are needed. Policy windows provide opportunities where research can have a substantial impact, but they tend to occur suddenly by chance or due to an external crisis, and are difficult for researchers to predict. Some of the GDN cases, particularly those from Indonesia (CS1) and Peru (see Box 5), describe how ongoing policy research activities can capitalise on these when they occur.

Box 5 Responding to a policy window: measuring inflation in Peru (CS28)

The importance of links – and how they can change – is powerfully indicated in the case of the consumer price index (CPI) in Peru. Despite the solid evidence put forward, the Peruvian Statistical Agency initially disregarded the advice of GRADE (the Group of Analysis for Development) and publicly criticised their research contribution. However, after the change of regime, the Peruvian Statistical Agency called upon GRADE’s researchers to conduct an independent audit of the way the official CPI was constructed. This resulted in a policy change.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_28_Intro.html

Finally, the cases highlight that the degree to which the policy-making community is committed to development goals is important. Policy-makers committed to development are more likely to be interested in improving policies and learning from evidence. This is often implicit in the case studies, although it is mentioned explicitly in the governance indicators in the Philippines (CS6) and education policy in Peru (CS45) cases. It cannot always be assumed (CS28: CPI in Peru and CS1: DELIVERI in Indonesia before the regime change) and may not exist at all (CS40: illegal slate mining in the Dhauladhar Himalayas), but it does appear to affect the nature of research uptake significantly. This issue is related to demand, i.e. there is a demand for research that might improve

⁷ It is important to note that the process of collecting cases probably underemphasises the importance of routine and incremental decisions and overemphasises the importance of fundamental or emergent ones.

development performance. However, it is also worth looking further at whether it is the lack of funding to implement research findings, rather than the lack of commitment, that is the key issue.

3.3.3 *Policy implementation and practice*

Lipsky (1980) describes how ‘street-level bureaucrats’ – the people in schools, courts and welfare agencies for example – have an enormous influence on how policies are implemented. It is not enough for research to influence formal policy formulation without also paying attention to how the policies will be put into practice. This is highlighted in the SPEECH case in India (see Box 6) and the cases of the Kerala local development programme (CS17) and WAPDA in Pakistan (CS24).

Rondinelli (1993) suggests that the policy process can be seen as a sort of social experiment. The policy process is less a matter of prediction, and more a matter of trial and error. In this model it becomes important for researchers to be able to provide feedback throughout the policy experiment, so that the policy has a chance to readjust and adapt to unforeseen circumstances as it develops. The watershed approach (CS10) and clean air for Delhi (CS7) cases from India, the poverty reduction strategy case in Tanzania (CS26) and the healthcare case in the Caribbean (CS8) emphasise the importance of continuous feedback loops between research, policy, implementation and monitoring. However, it is also abundantly clear that in many contexts, such systems are simply not in place.

Box 6 The importance of street-level bureaucrats: the case of SPEECH (CS13)

The case of the Society for the People’s Education and Economic Change (SPEECH), an NGO in India, highlights that the main points of contact with the policy system (of people and researchers) are with the state and national civil servants responsible for revenue collection and provision of services, such as education, agricultural extension, and public works. The system is fragmented, complex and responsible for a huge number of programmes, which are sometimes in contradiction with one another or with stated policy objectives. As a result, the manner in which policies are implemented is as important as the decision-making and the explicit statements of intention that drive it. The bureaucracy responsible for policy delivery suffers from insular incentives and a risk-averse culture, which can cut off public officials from the concerns of those they nominally serve. Those who do attempt to correct perverse policy outcomes face enormous difficulties, because the formal channels of the state bureaucracy are slow and tend to discourage initiative. The result of all this is that from the local point of view, policy can seem opaque, unresponsive and arbitrary in its execution, depending on the goodwill and energy of public officials to bring policies set at state level in line with local needs. Relationships between officials and local communities are thus often marked by tension and recrimination, and the challenge for SPEECH and other similar organisations is how to work alongside the system and help ground it in local realities, without becoming subject to its limitations.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_13_Intro.html

Factors influencing research–policy links in the policy context arena can be summarised in a simple expression: ‘policy change equals demand minus contestation’. Demand is not only demand from policy-makers, but also from society more generally. Demand is affected by the nature of the political context. Contestation can occur during policy formulation, if new ideas fall outside current narratives or policy streams, through political debate, and during policy implementation if bureaucrats oppose new policy directions.

3.4 Evidence: credibility and communication

In the evidence section, we focus on the factors that affect whether research influences policy-makers. We focus on two main sets of issues in turn. The first set relates to the research – such as the credibility of the researchers and method used, and the degree of consensus in the research community. The second set highlights the importance of the strategy around communication – or lack of it. An ideal implied from the cases is that relevant, credible research provides the solution to a problem (having been developed and discussed with a target group of policy-makers). Reality is a little more complicated.

3.4.1 *Credibility and consensus*

The nature and quality of the evidence does emerge as important for policy uptake, and the key dimensions seem to be relevance, credibility and providing solutions. One issue that comes to light in the case studies is that research has a much greater impact when it is topically relevant. For an impact in the near term, research needs to relate to the policy issue of the day. The cases of regional development in Croatia (CS37) and small- and medium-scale industries (SMIs) in Indonesia (CS21) provide good examples where the focus on issues of policy relevance made a difference, but this issue emerges more broadly. In the longer term, research is more likely to have an impact if it really focuses on major issues facing society. Some examples here include the case of rainwater harvesting in Tanzania (CS42) and animal health workers in Kenya (CS43).

The cases indicate that it is not just substantive relevance, but also operational relevance, that seems to matter. Research that had an operational or action research orientation had a great impact, for instance, in the DELIVERI case in Indonesia (CS1), public administration in Ukraine (CS34) and the Caribbean health case (CS8). Taking the latter as an example, the lack of success in health finance reform in St Lucia and St Vincent is attributed to the fact that ‘very little operational research accompanied or followed the initial situational analyses.’

Policy-makers are particularly convinced where something has been piloted and works (CS42: rainwater harvesting in Tanzania, CS43: animal health workers in Kenya, CS27: SMEs in Ukraine). Another important issue is that theoretical knowledge needs to be contextualised and made applicable to the cultural, political and economic conditions if it is to influence policy. This was the case with policy-making in Iran – the policy impact was limited because the research was from a single discipline and did not address other relevant issues (see also CS41 in Morocco). The case of biodiversity management in Saudi Arabia (CS19) is an interesting example of the way new ideas were linked to traditional environmental management concepts in making research findings operational.

Relevance – substantive and operational – clearly matters, but does the quality of the research? Although it is difficult to make a comment about the quality of the research in all the cases, the issue of credibility does come out as central.⁸ For example, in the regional development in Croatia case (see Box 7), a key issue was the fact that ‘a firm scientific basis (i.e. methodology), divorced from all political (mainly regional) biases was needed as the only defensible argument immune to regionalisms and border-tailoring without objectively firm criteria.’ The credibility of an expert panel was cited as important in the case of fiscal policy in Chile (CS39). The lack of serious

⁸ Beach (1997) describes three ways in which people determine the credibility of information. The first is recognition – individuals rely on experience from previous situations to guide them in similar new situations. The second concerns the role of scenarios, stories and arguments. Being able to see a situation in the light of a new ‘story-line’ may suddenly convince individuals to rely on evidence that previously did not seem credible, (CS42: rainwater harvesting in Tanzania). The third is related to moral and ethical values.

criticism was important in the case of education policy in Peru (CS45). In contrast, contested research seems to have hindered policy change in the clean air for Delhi case (CS7), where different research institutions came to opposite conclusions.

The reputation of the research institution is also a major issue in terms of the impact made – and especially for think-tanks to make a sustained policy impact. For example, the credibility of the organisation was an important factor for the cases involving TIPS in South Africa (CS18), AFREPREN (CS23), the Group of Analysis for Development (GRADE) (CS45), and the Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) in Argentina (CS12). These are some of the best-known development-related research institutes in their countries/regions. This raises a key question for further analysis: what are the characteristics of such institutes that enable them to build up and sustain a reputation for quality and sound advice?

In addition, the method used to carry out research also influenced the research–policy link. While the most appropriate method of research will depend on the study, it is important to draw attention to the fact that participatory approaches seem to have had a particular impact. Such approaches can be seen as especially important for research related to implementation on the ground – see the cases of DELIVERI in Indonesia (CS1), governance indicators in the Philippines (CS6), the watershed approach in India (CS10), and the Attapady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) in India (CS11). In the AHADS case, for example, money had been thrown at the problem before – the crucial issue in enhancing the impact more recently was to make the project implementation participatory. Participation also emerges as important for public policy-making, for example in the Kuppam case in India (CS4) using information and communication technology, and listening to the voice in the street in Romania (CS44). This reflects the discussion in the recent assessment of id21 about the importance of local research and community organisation (Coe et al., 2002).

Box 7 Demand, interaction and innovation: research influence on policy in Croatia (CS37)

In 1995, the Republic of Croatia instituted a new regional development classification of its territories with the aim of designing and implementing a more elaborate, growth-generating regional policy. The basis of any regional policy has to be an appropriate development classification and differentiation. However, in the mid-1990s, there were no research studies or academic foundations for conducting detailed regional development assessment, and rather ad hoc, arbitrary measures were taken. In 2000, the Croatian Ministry for Public Works, Reconstruction and Physical Planning commissioned an independent Croatian policy research institute – the Institute for Development and International Relations – to carry out a detailed scientific study of regional development in Croatia and develop research-based methodology for territorial development assessment. A multivariate econometric framework for assessing the regional development level was developed and applied on the available municipality-level data in order to rank the 545 municipalities according to development. The results of the research were used by the Ministry in designing a proposal for the new Law on Areas of Special Governmental Concern, which was adopted by parliament in August 2002. There are several likely reasons for adopting the recommendations of this study. First, there was a specific and urgent need for the drawing and adapting of the appropriate new legislation. Second, a close working relationship and cooperation was established between the research team and Ministry's staff. Third, the Ministry of Public Works needed a proposal that would be approved in the Parliament rather than an 'internal' document that would cause subsequent grievances among the MPs. Fourth, and most interestingly, a firm scientific basis (i.e. methodology), divorced from all political (mainly regional) biases, was needed as the only defensible argument immune to regionalisms and border-tailoring without objectively firm criteria.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_37_Intro.html

Another striking point the cases reveal is that providing solutions to problems is a successful way of ensuring that research has an impact. Indeed, Lambin (1996) suggests that people buy products that resolve a problem. The GDN case studies show that the same is often true of policy-makers. Cases like the regional development in Croatia (see Box 7), where the research solved policy-makers' problems, tended to be successful. This seems to apply across sectors and political contexts – from the Philippines to the Ukraine. Providing solutions was, not surprisingly, likely to lead to impact in situations where policy-makers had commissioned research. But it was also true where researchers had identified problems and developed responses, even though there was no initial policy-maker interest (CS42: rainwater harvesting in Tanzania). In the Group Approach to Locally Adapted and Sustainable Agriculture (GALASA) case in India (CS2), the irrigation for rice solution was adopted even though the approach was not widely applicable.

3.4.2 *Communication and packaging*

The second set of issues in the evidence section relates to how findings are communicated. It is useful to distinguish here between communicating the substantive findings of a project or programme and the issue of building advocacy coalitions. Regarding the communication of findings, the cases that suggest 'success' often stem from an initial desire to influence policy, and uptake is much more likely if there has been a clear communication strategy *throughout* the research process. This was certainly the case for DELIVERI (CS1) and SMI in Indonesia (CS21), rainwater harvesting in Tanzania (CS42) and remittances in Nepal (CS14).

Interestingly, the issue of credibility does not just concern the quality of the research but also the way that research is packaged to make it palatable to policy-makers (CS18: trade policy in South Africa). The evidence from the case studies does support much of the existing literature that the format of research output also matters for policy impact.⁹ For example, the Lithuania case (CS22) concludes, 'The format in which the results were produced made the recommendations attractive and ensured a greater policy impact.' Researchers in the case of education policy in Peru (CS45) have partly succeeded in influencing policy by making their statistical findings understandable to non-specialists. The case comparing research-policy links in Ghana (CS25) highlights the issue of segmenting an audience as key. The case regarding technical advice to the G-24 (see Box 8) highlights a way to segment an audience.

Box 8 Segmenting an audience: technical advice to the G-24 (CS36)

This case focused on a research programme known as the Technical Support Service (TSS) to the Intergovernmental Group of 24 (G-24), which was set up to support negotiations with developed-country counterparts. The study focuses on the various mechanisms and factors that tend to improve policy influence or distract from it. Reviewing these issues, the case puts forward a two by two framework of four policy-influence scenarios, based on positioning the research programme's target audience against its strategies for reaching it.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_36_Intro.html

Communications strategies are often based on linear communications models (sender-message-channel-recipient), despite the fact that they have been widely discredited in the academic literature (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998). The healthcare in the Caribbean case (CS8), among others, provides much evidence that interactive approaches – where researchers develop a two-way

⁹ Williamson (1996) suggests that people's reaction to a new product or idea is most often determined by the packaging rather than the content itself.

dialogue with policy-makers – are more effective. The cases also point to the importance of ‘translators’ between researchers and policy-makers. The trade policy in South Africa case (CS18) was most explicit about the need to interpret academic research for policy-makers. The G-24 case (CS36) came to the conclusion that in terms of engaging policy processes ‘the more academic the less useful’. In the fiscal policy reform case in Morocco (CS41), widespread belief was that policy research is extremely theoretical and vague.

Another point that becomes apparent from the cases is that strenuous advocacy efforts, often over the long term, are usually required to influence public policies. As the Indian watershed case (CS10) noted, ‘Those who set out to influence policy should be prepared for hard work ... Though difficult, almost torturous, the effort appears worthwhile.’ Similarly, the case of the Shiroro Dam in Nigeria (CS30) argues that ‘another important lesson of the case study in bridging the gap between research and policy-making in a context where the research is not commissioned by a policy organ, is a strong, purposeful and sustained advocacy, to not only make the policy-makers aware of the results and convince them to their validity, but also to ensure that they act on the basis of the research findings to initiate appropriate and relevant policy actions.’

Information technology is increasingly promoted as the solution to many information and communication problems today and it clearly helped with the regional (CS23: AFREPREN) and global (CS36: G-24) case studies, although it does not appear to have been a critical issue in most of the others.

Surprisingly, only a few of the cases involved the media. This may be to do with the lack of access to the media (supply side) or that there is little interest from the media on the issues (demand side). There are a few interesting exceptions, however. The comparative case of agricultural research in Ghana (CS25) highlights the engagement of the media playing a major role in enabling one project to have an impact on policy. This is also true for the case of the voice in the street in Romania (CS44), where the visual and popular impact of the research led to media coverage – including prime time news – which influenced the political environment. In the case of remittances in Nepal (CS14), the research team was effective at raising the issue of labour migration in the Nepali press. The case argues this was one way the research results had become ‘the new conventional wisdom’ on the issue.

A final point is that the case study experience suggests it is extremely rare that a single piece of research leads to a policy change. The case of measuring inflation in Peru (CS28) provides one interesting example – perhaps the only one in the sample – of this and even the key study in this case draws on extensive theory in this area. Much more common is where a programme of research and communication over a number of years leads to a policy change. This can be seen, among others, in the cases on SMEs in Ukraine (CS27), rainwater harvesting in Tanzania (CS42) and remittances in Nepal (CS14). As the WAPDA case in Pakistan (CS24) concludes, ‘research does not necessarily have to be demand driven – supply of research also creates its own demand in refining or designing new policies and laws when policy- and law-makers are confronted with new sets of problems and issues.’

The implications of the theory and case studies for those trying to inform new policy ideas are clear. It is imperative to establish a reputation for providing high-quality policy advice, based on long-term credible policy research. It is also necessary to be able to provide evidence-based solutions to current policy problems when policy-makers are looking for them, and then provide them in the right packaging.

3.5 Links: influence and legitimacy

The literature and case studies emphasise that the links between researchers and policy-makers are critical to bridging research and policy. These include feedback, dialogue and collaboration between researchers and policy-makers; the role of networks and policy communities; and issues of trust, legitimacy and participation. The case studies illustrate many of these, but many questions in this area remain unanswered.

3.5.1 *Feedback, dialogue and collaboration*

The cases emphasise particularly the importance of feedback processes between researchers and policy-makers – not just linked to a project, but continuous feedback loops between, research, policy, implementation and monitoring. This is highlighted in the watershed approach in India (CS10), clean air for Delhi (CS7), Tanzania poverty reduction strategy (CS26), and healthcare in the Caribbean (CS8). As the Indian watershed case noted, ‘There are always going to be hidden problems, gaps, shortcomings and inadequacies that are bound to reveal themselves as the programme implementation proceeds.’ The lack of interaction was also highlighted in some cases as one of the contributors to the lack of success. For example, the watershed case in India concludes, ‘Programmes should include a system of monitoring and review so that policy-makers receive continuous feedback for possible corrective action.’

Involvement of policy-makers in research came to light as a key issue in helping to bridge research and policy. The Caribbean healthcare case (CS8) highlighted that ‘successful bridging of the research–policy divide was largely due to the active involvement of policy-makers in all stages – from design through to the programme intervention and impact evaluation stages.’ This issue was also emphasised most strongly in the cases of trade policy in South Africa (CS18), poverty reduction strategy in Tanzania (CS26), DELIVERI (CS1), regional development in Croatia (CS37) and AFREPREN (CS23). The Croatia case attributed success to ‘a close working relationship and cooperation ... established between the research team and Ministry’s staff.’ This draws attention to a number of issues here about why interaction matters – first that interaction helps build the ownership of policy-makers and second that interaction can help make the research more policy relevant.

A challenging issue that emerges in this area is that of shared objectives or views. This was crucial in a number of cases. In the national economic planning in Iran case (CS3), the impact of research on policy lessened after changes in policy-making personnel (and thus priorities) led to a growing gap between the interests of researchers and policy-makers. While policy-makers were initially interested in health finance reform in the Caribbean healthcare case (CS8), the gap between research and policy grew once the implications (financial and political) emerged. In a comparative study of Dutch-funded research in Kerala (CS17), this again emerged as a key point: ‘Based on certain research projects where there is significant utilisation, the study argues that “convergence of ideas among institutions and between institutions and researchers could lead to success”.’

The case studies also expose individual contacts between researchers and policy-makers as an important aspect of bridging research and policy.¹⁰ For example, the SPEECH case (CS13) argues that it is important to work through the informal ‘shadow system’. It also appears to help to identify

¹⁰ In *The Tipping Point*, Gladwell (2000) describes why some individuals are trusted more than others, and are effective ‘salesmen’ of ideas, and how salesmen, networkers and ‘mavens’ (people who collect information) all contribute to the spread of ideas through ‘social epidemics’.

and work with ‘champions’. For example, the success of the DELIVERI project (CS1) in influencing policy is partly attributed to the fact that the project ‘had champions who were able to bring the results to the attention of policy-makers and senior managers.’ But individuals can also block reform – as demonstrated by the resistance of the Head of Veterinary Services in the Kenya animal health workers case (CS43). The cases of DELIVERI in Indonesia (CS1), public schools in Argentina (CS12), remittances in Nepal (CS14) and national planning in Lithuania (CS20) all emphasise the importance of such individuals.

It has become apparent that research units that are part of policy-making institutions can help research have an impact on policy (although there are not enough cases to make definitive statements). The trade policy case in South Africa (CS18) provides the clearest indication of this. This reflects the recent assessment of id21 regarding the importance of ‘insider influencing’ (Coe et al., 2002). However, the internal/external distinction is not clear cut. A number of cases indicate how Ministries seem to temporarily ‘internalise’ researchers or think-tanks. For example, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is helping the relevant government departments prepare draft legislation regarding transport in Delhi (CS35). In the case of educational quality policies in Peru (CS45), GRADE researchers worked as an advisory unit to the Ministry of Education. And the case of regional development in Croatia (CS37) highlights the close working relationship established between the research team and Ministry staff.

3.5.2 Networks and policy communities

Kickert et al. (1997) and Robinson et al. (1999) describe how networks play a vital role in policy change. They regard policy-making as a series for negotiations about competition, coordination and cooperation, which can be completed efficiently through formal and informal networks. The G-24 case study (CS36) illustrates this well. Broader ‘policy communities’, which include all the interest groups that have an interest or a stake in a particular policy area, are also important. Pross (1986) distinguishes between those groups that have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, and those that have a greater interest in challenging it. The case on fiscal policy in Chile (CS39) describes how the various interest groups interacted around the issue of ‘fiscal rule’, and the AFREPREN case (CS23) describes an emerging regional policy community concerned with energy policy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Building networks of researchers and policy-makers does help. Many of the projects in the cases involve an informal network around projects or programmes. For example, the DELIVERI case in Indonesia (CS1) ‘built on DFID relationships in the livestock sector at field, district, provincial and national level that had been established through collaborative work over the preceding 10 years.’ The AFREPREN case (CS23) is a good example of an institutionalised network that is successful, and the Joint Forest Management (JFM) case study in India (see Box 9) illustrates how multiple networks can contribute to the policy process over time.

The cases also reflect much of the literature regarding the ways networks can facilitate knowledge sharing, coordination and cooperation. But a key question remains: which characteristics best enable networks to act as a bridge between research and policy? Haas (1991) describes how ‘epistemic communities’ – colleagues who share a similar approach or a similar position on an issue and maintain contact with each other across their various locations and fields – create new channels for information and discussing new perspectives. Such communities are believed to be particularly effective if they include a few prominent and respected individuals. Epistemic communities were clearly important in the cases of healthcare in the Caribbean (CS8) and technical support to G-24 (CS36). However, it was difficult to assess, due to a lack of information, how important this issue was more generally.

Box 9 Networks can help influence policy and bring the voices of marginalised groups closer to decision-making (CS38)

Joint Forestry Management (JFM) in India: For any research to be able to feed into policy-making processes, the findings – besides being scientifically sound – need to be communicated and accepted in networks where policy-makers are not only members, but there is also the ‘factor of trust and respect’ between them. In fact, networks have played an important role in strengthening JFM in the country, by bringing the voice of the marginalised closer to the decision-making and policy levels. In the initial stage of JFM, national-level networks such as the Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development, the National JFM Network and the WWF-India Foresters JFM Network had provided direction by holding national-level discussions on JFM. These forums enabled local-level issues to be discussed and debated to strengthen JFM policies in the country. However, as there was no institutional ownership of this body by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), these institutions petered out after a while. Meanwhile, a wide range of marginalised stakeholders expressed the need for a neutral forum to influence policy-makers to come up with more people-friendly policies. The MoEF was also looking for an institutional mechanism to monitor the progress of JFM. Responding to these needs, a neutral stakeholders’ forum – Resource Unit for Participatory Forestry (RUPFOR) – was initiated with support from the Ford Foundation and is at present housed in Winrock International India. Since its formation in 2001, RUPFOR has had considerable success in making the policy-making process a more participatory and inclusive one. However, it cannot be ignored that it is a relatively new experiment that is still very much a work-in-progress.

Source: www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_38_Intro.html

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) describe ‘advocacy coalitions’, which generally include a wider range of individuals and organisations – including government agencies, associations, civil society organisations, think-tanks, academics, media institutions, and prominent individuals – on the basis of a shared perspective. Policy issues often attract competing advocacy coalitions, and academics and think-tanks have a far greater chance of being heard if they are allied with influential politicians in a dominant advocacy coalition. Few of the GDN cases describe advocacy coalitions, but similar institutions are mentioned in the Pak Moon Dam case in Thailand (CS31) and the Shiroro Dam case in Nigeria (CS30).

Informal networks are also important. Stacey (1995) draws on chaos theory to describe the ‘nonlinearity’ of networks and their impact on the policy process. Analyses of informal networks suggest that nonlinearity – for example, the spontaneous relations formed between people, the irregular sharing of information, the informal learning processes, the ‘unofficial’ policy interpretations – is precisely what makes networks such valuable sites for innovation. The policy ideas that emerge through informal networks may after a time become institutionalised and may even become ‘official policy’, and will then in turn be challenged by new ideas that are circulating informally. This constant interaction between stable institutional elements and unstable informal networks is considered vital in current literature on organisational change and policy innovation. Although a number of cases highlight the existence and relevance of informal networks, the cases of SPEECH in India (CS13) and SMEs in Ukraine (CS27) particularly emphasise their importance.

3.5.3 Trust, legitimacy and participation

The issue of trust between researchers and policy-makers is worth a brief mention here. In some ways, it would appear to be an overarching issue that many of the points above relate to. Overall, however, it is difficult to assess its importance. This is partly because trust is somewhat difficult to distinguish conceptually from other issues that may matter. There is also not enough information on issues of trust in the collected cases. In addition, the evidence from the cases is mixed. In some

cases, it seems to be important, although rarely a critical issue. The SPEECH case (CS13) indicates that its effective advocacy was facilitated by an institution's reputation as an honest broker. In many of the cases, this is not important to the issue of uptake – at least not explicitly. In the SME in Ukraine case (CS27), research influenced policy despite the explicit lack of trust. Results mattered more. In short, further investigation is needed.

The literature also suggests that 'downward' links to the populations and communities that will be affected by the policies are important to prove the legitimacy of policy advice based on research. Fine et al. (2000) argue that researchers who collect evidence in order to influence policy have an obligation to create and maintain a 'chain of accountability' with their sources. This will enhance the legitimacy of the evidence and make it more difficult for policy-makers to ignore. This is illustrated in the Shiroro Dam in Nigeria (CS30) and participatory eco-restoration in India (CS11) cases. The latter case notes that 'Action-oriented field research is a key factor of the project that has successfully adopted the principle of participatory development by creating and engaging a huge network of grassroots organisations for project execution.' Recent work by Figueroa for the Rockefeller Foundation (Figueroa et al., 2002) also emphasised that social change will be more sustainable if the affected community owns not just the physical inputs and outputs, but also the process and content of the communication involved.

In their analysis of how campaigns work, Chapman and Fisher (1999) identified three different mechanisms: 'pyramids', in which all stakeholders' efforts are directed towards a single top-level policy process; 'wheels', in which a single central hub organisation (usually an NGO) coordinates others engaged in a wider range of effort; and collaborative but relatively uncoordinated 'webs'. Few of the GDN cases involved campaigns, but the Pak Moon Dam case in Thailand (CS31) illustrates the wheel approach, whereas the Shiroro Dam case in Nigeria (CS30) is a good example of a web. Legitimacy was 'built in' to many of the cases that used participatory approaches. In the DELIVERI case (CS1), 'Researchers and other staff worked closely with all stakeholders, including farmers, community leaders, local, district, provincial and central government, and other organisations involved in livestock services.' The legitimacy this conferred contributed enormously to the project's impact.

3.6 Other issues, particularly the role of external influence and donors

Although the GDN cases confirm much of the existing theory about research-policy links, many of the existing approaches for promoting evidence-based policy are inadequate when focusing on developing countries. This is partly because the contexts (social, economic and political) are different, and partly because external actors play a much more influential role than in OECD countries – exerting major influence as well as providing a source of ideas and funds. The cases emphasised a number of these issues, as explained below. The first refers to the emergence of new players in the policy-making process over the last two decades. The second refers to issues of capacity and capacity-building in this area. The third, and perhaps most striking, refers to the importance of external influences and particularly the role of donor organisations.

New players in policy-making: The cases do give an indication that new actors are playing an increasing role in policy-making in developing countries. This includes NGOs, media and private sector actors (CS33: PRSPs in Ethiopia and CS16: minority policies in Eastern Europe). Many would argue that this is a positive step in its own right, facilitated by the fact that policy-making regimes are becoming more open. The cases suggest that the increase in actors tends to translate into greater use of evidence in development policy-making. But more work is needed to assess more accurately where, how and to what degree these new actors actually make a difference.

Capacity-building: A number of cases stressed that capacity is crucial in ensuring the link between research conclusions, policy development and policy implementation. The watershed approach in India (CS10) and the Franco–British case in West and Central Africa (CS9) demonstrate that if policy does change, capacity-building will need to be a focal part of programmes. The case of private sector development in Samoa highlighted that the success of a small grant scheme was due to the inclusion of a business training course for recipients and the availability of follow-up and advisory services. The Caribbean healthcare case (CS8) showed that capacity gaps in terms of actually carrying out relevant, high-quality, operational research exist in many countries. The case of domestic violence in Papua New Guinea (CS29) highlighted the lack of capacity as a key reason why policy recommendations were not implemented. The same is true of the case of fiscal policy in Morocco (CS41). The state planning case from Lithuania (CS20) underlined the fact that the lack of administrative capacities in the country (in terms of training and time) prevented bureaucrats from proposing alternatives to suggestions provided by external consultants.

External influences: Lindquist (2003) argues that external influences and forces play a significant role in shaping national policies, and can prevent local research from having any impact. In the cases from Lithuania (CS20 and CS22), and the PRSP-related cases from Tanzania and Ethiopia (CS26 and CS33), local research was able to overcome external pressures. In the Kyrgyz Republic and Iran (CS5 and CS3), however, external pressures prevented local research from influencing domestic policies. The cases demonstrate how external influences can significantly affect the context for research–policy links in developing countries. The cases on animal health workers in Kenya (CS43) and clean air for Delhi (CS7) were spurred by externally driven liberalisation efforts. A number of cases from Eastern Europe highlighted how the incentive of entry into the European Union (EU) – and funds available to support research and policy change – encouraged reform and research demand in Eastern Europe. Given this context, the findings of EU-supported reviews could not be ignored easily. For example, the case of audit reform in Lithuania (CS22) concludes that the SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries) review would have had much less impact if it had not been on the eve of the decision on whether to invite Lithuania to join the EU. The two cases on PRSPs (in Tanzania and Ethiopia – CS26 and CS33) indicate that this new process is having a substantial impact on way policy is made in heavily indebted poor countries and affecting the demand for research. As the Ethiopia case notes, the process affects not only the priority for policy (onto issues of poverty), but also the process of policy-making. The requirement of a more participatory policy making process is ‘perhaps the more emphatic aspect’.

Importance of donors: In addition to affecting the context, donor agencies also have a number of other impacts on research–policy links in development. A very noticeable issue was funding. In many of the cases received, bilateral or multilateral donors had supported the activities to a large degree – for example, CS15: SMEs in Samoa, CS26: poverty reduction strategy in Tanzania, CS6: governance indicators in the Philippines, CS20: development planning reform in Lithuania. Around half the cases involved substantial donor support for the research, and a few others also involved some donor funding.

However, while donors are an important source of funds for research, the existence of donor funding was not critical to success in terms of policy impact. In some cases it was crucial and, as in the case of G-24 (CS36), donors helped provide a ‘seal of approval’. But donor support alone did not mean that research had an impact on policy (CS5 in Kyrgyz Republic, CS22 in Lithuania, CS3 in Iran). In a comparative study of Dutch-funded research in Kerala (CS17), all studies were donor funded, but impact varied considerably.

Donors can influence agendas – in ways that were seen as both positive and negative. An example of a positive case was that of rainwater harvesting in Tanzania (CS42), where a 10-year research and communication programme led to a beneficial improvement in policy and practice. Other examples include the DFID-funded DELIVERI programme in Indonesia (CS1), the World Bank and Inter-American Bank for Development (IDB)-funded study of education in Peru (CS45). Conversely, a number of cases highlighted the lack of local capacity and the strength of external influences as a problem in developing transition countries. For example, if the Lithuanian public sector institutions (CS22) had more competent personnel, the government could have been willing to reject more of the research recommendations (from external reviewers).

Donors have also helped to build research capacity on important issues where there was little or none before. Assessment of the Dutch donor-funded programme in Kerala (CS17) concluded that ‘The study has rightly pointed out that even if a particular research output has not been used by policy-makers, the process of research could enhance significantly the capacity of particular researchers and this may have beneficial social externalities later on. This has occurred in a number of research projects funded by the Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development (KRPLLD), where researchers with basic training and little experience have transformed themselves through the process into competent action researchers who can conceptualise, formulate and execute research programmes, and are now in a position to respond effectively to the requirements of local governments.’ Donors were also seen to link researchers to latest international thinking.

Other cases present the negative side of donor influence. The comparative case of JFM in India (CS38) highlighted that ‘The funding source of research studies plays a major role in determining the recommendations that emerge. For example, a study funded by an organisation that is reviewing its programme is more vulnerable to bias particularly ... in some cases the funding agency has a tendency to control the research process and may even mould the findings to fit in with their own internal agenda.’ Another problem identified was that donor priorities change and therefore there is no follow-up on findings. The lack of coordination between donors was also brought to light as a problem.

4 Recommendations

The preliminary GDN case studies were self-selected, short and relatively unstructured. They were designed to map out existing experience in the field to inform further research, rather than form the basis for detailed analysis or definitive recommendations. This section will provide some preliminary recommendations for policy-makers, researchers and donors; some suggestions for improving the framework; and the key issues for further research in the next phase of the GDN project.

4.1 Preliminary practical recommendations for policy-makers, researchers and donors

Although too early to make extensive recommendations, the analysis of the theory and preliminary case studies undertaken so far already provides some useful pointers for policy-makers, researchers and donors to promote more evidence-based policy. As mentioned earlier though, policy-makers, researchers and donors are not distinct groups. They overlap, and some people have to adopt all three roles in different parts of their work, or at different times in their careers.

4.1.1 For policy-makers

Links between research and policy are influenced more by factors in the political context than any other domain, yet these are also the most difficult to change. Factors which can improve research uptake among policy-makers include the following:

- *Prevalent narratives*: Policy-makers base much of their decision-making on very straightforward narratives. New ideas need to fit within existing narratives or be very simple and convincing to replace them.
- *Political culture*: Research is most likely to influence policy in open, transparent, democratic contexts with strong academic and civil society institutions, free media and good information systems. Even in these environments, however, policy-makers may not be open to research. The recent DFID research review (Surr et al., 2002) found that policy-makers often view research ‘as the opposite of action, rather than the opposite of ignorance’.
- *Provenance of research*: The GDN cases show that research was more likely to influence policy if it was commissioned by the policy-makers themselves, and if there are good feedback loops between, research, policy, implementation and monitoring. Some cases highlight the value of research units within government, others the value of studies commissioned from independent research units.
- *Capacity and bureaucratic processes*: Policy-makers need skills and experience both to commission and interpret the results of research, and to put them into practice.
- *Incentives*: The incentives and constraints on the bureaucrats who actually have to implement policies (the ‘street-level bureaucrats’) can exert enormous influence on what actually happens when new policies are put into practice.

- *Participation*: Participation by all stakeholders – policy-makers, researchers and the community – is essential for evidence-based policy-making. Much more thought should be given to dialogue and discussion with members of the community rather than one-way transmission of policies and information. Practical participation in research itself guarantees access to early results and provides opportunities for policy-makers to ensure the research provides the most useful evidence.
- *Policy in practice*: New approaches that are popular with communities can spread like wildfire, even without an enabling policy environment.
- *Networking*: Much of the evidence needed for policy-making circulates in informal networks long before it appears in the public domain. Policy-makers (or their researchers) looking for new ideas should seek to engage in relevant networks.

4.1.2 For researchers

The quality of the evidence and how it is communicated, as well as relationships between researchers and policy-makers, are also important, and easier to address. But many researchers are not explicitly interested in changing policy, and academic incentives reward academic publications rather than policy influence. Much ‘blue sky’ research does not have an immediate policy objective, and there are inevitable tensions between the need to get useful information to policy-makers quickly in a rapidly changing policy environment, and taking the time to be rigorous and obtain reliable results. Preliminary recommendations for development researchers seeking policy influence include the following:

- *Understand the context*: Researchers need to be clear who they are trying to influence with their work. This affects not only what research to do, but also how to do it, and how to communicate the results. It is clear that researchers and think-tanks who aim to have an impact on policy should first look to the political context in which they operate. Who are the policy-makers? Is there policy-maker demand? What are the sources/strengths of resistance? What are the opportunities and timing for input into formal processes?
- *Get to know the actors*: Policy communities are broadening in many developing countries, with new entry points into the policy process. This implies it is important for researchers to assess the nature of the broader policy community. Researchers working on a policy issue need to be aware of the different actors in the policy community, their position within it and their relative influence.
- *Respond to demand*: Keep in step with current policy issues, and be ready to capitalise on opportunities presented by sudden ‘policy windows’. Policy-makers may suddenly be looking for analyses that are already ‘on the shelf’ or can be adapted very quickly. Thus, researchers should also focus on issues of importance to society – even if not a current priority. The cases suggest that single studies are unlikely to have much impact, but that long-term programmes of work can help create their own demand or help create policy windows. The cases show how these can help change policy narratives completely. But the cases also indicate that this often takes a long time.
- *Be practical*: Recommendations based on research must be operationally useful, not ‘talking to the sky’. Including policy-makers in the research process can help ensure topical and operational relevance for public policy. Including local people (as with participatory research) can help ensure topical and operational relevance for practice on the ground. A key issue that emerged from the studies was to provide a solution to a problem.

- *Establish your credibility:* A reputation for rigorous research over a long period is more important than the scientific credibility of a specific piece of research. Relatively weak evidence can have a major impact in a sudden policy window, especially if the source individual or institution is well respected.
- *Legitimacy enhances impact:* Research-based evidence and policy advice that is clearly endorsed by the communities that will be affected by it carries greater weight with policy-makers than the evidence alone.
- *Real communication:* The way research is communicated is vital. ‘Seeing is believing’ – actual demonstration of the benefits of policy options through action research was shown to be particularly effective. Short, clear, jargon-free documents are more effective than academic papers. Interactive dialogue is better than one-way communication. Use good networkers and ‘salesmen’ to spread the word. Find and cultivate ‘champions’ among policy-makers who will pass on the evidence, and who will secure its credibility among other policy-makers.
- *Build networks:* Formal and informal networks are an essential component of the policy process. Anyone who wishes to influence the policy process needs to engage with the relevant official or unofficial networks, find similar-minded actors to cooperate with, and then strive to influence the agenda-setting process.

4.1.3 For donors

It is estimated that donors spend perhaps up to US\$2 billion per year on research¹¹ – often with the explicit or implicit aim of improving policy and practice. From recent efforts to review and improve performance, it is clear that there is a desire to improve the impact of research funding. The cases do provide some insights into what is working. The DFID-funded projects in Tanzania (CS26: poverty reduction strategy) and Indonesia (CS1: DELIVERI) were particularly effective in very different contexts. The Open Society Institute International Policy Fellowship programme in Lithuania (CS20) is another example of a donor that is not just focusing on research but also trying new mechanisms for policy impact. A developing-country example is provided by the IWMI-Tata Water Policy Programme (ITWPP) – a joint undertaking of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Sri Lanka, and Sri Ratan Tata Trust, India to help policy-makers and water managers address water-related challenges (CS48). More work is needed in this area, but some lessons are emerging already:

- *Policy-makers need incentives to be evidence-based:* World Bank, IMF and bilateral donor insistence on broad-based evidence in PRSPs for debt relief, loans and grants has stimulated new evidence-based development policies in many countries.
- *Clear objectives are essential:* ‘Blue sky’ research, capacity-building and policy influence require different approaches in different contexts.
- *Partnerships:* Alliances with local organisations can increase policy relevance and impact.
- *Coordination:* Much energy is wasted through poor coordination between research programmes.
- *Long-term support:* Long-term research programmes have greater policy impact than short-term projects. Research institutes need long-term funding to develop strong programmes.

¹¹ Calculation based on the emerging ‘rule of thumb’ estimate that research comprises c.5% of total official development assistance flows. The exact level of funding for development research is unknown.

4.2 Adapting the framework

ODI's framework focuses on three broad, overlapping domains: political and institutional context; evidence, research and communication; and links between researchers and policy-makers. Analysis of the case studies revealed a wide range of external forces that affect research–policy links in developing countries, including the effect of international politics, agreements and policy; the effect of donor development policies; and the effect of donor research funding and priorities. Although logically a part of the political and institutional context, it may be worth focusing on these issues separately in the next phase of research in the GDN project.

4.3 Key issues for further investigation

While the current work is useful, there is need for more systemic research to advance knowledge on research–policy dynamics. Such research should also aim to investigate the issues from distinct directions. First, there is a need for comparative analyses of factors in each of the three main domains in the research–policy framework, plus the role of external influences. Second, the study should carry out analyses of specific examples where research has influenced policy to assess the relative impact of factors from all three domains, as well as from external forces. Synthesising these different perspectives would enable researchers to draw robust and consistent conclusions and make practical recommendations. Below are some key questions for which research could provide more systematic evidence, organised according to the domains.

4.3.1 *Political and institutional context*

In general, there is a need to identify what affects the demand for, and uptake of, research by policy-makers. It is clearly a complex arena and there are many issues to work with. Analysis of the literature and results of the case studies has highlighted the need for further investigation into the following questions:

Policy formulation

- How can we characterise different policy contexts – across countries and within countries – over time?
- Which social and economic country characteristics, if any, matter in promoting the uptake of research into policy? How do cultural attitudes help or hinder research uptake?
- Do countries or organisations with good governance (accountability, transparency, and responsiveness) use research more than others? Which specific governance issues are most important? How important are academic and media freedom? To what extent is there an informed public debate?
- How do research–policy processes work in situations with democratic deficits?
- What are the sources of resistance to reforming policy and practice (interests, ideology or cost of reform) when evidence is clear? Where, when and how have the barriers been overcome? Where have they not been overcome and why? In what ways can research help overcome resistance to reform, unhelpful ideology or inaccurate policy narratives?
- Can we investigate empirically whether evidence-based policy-making enhances the developmental process?

Impact on practice

- What institutional incentives and pressures lead to use of research?
- Does greater autonomy (political and administrative) of policy-makers make for greater use of research?
- Where and how have researchers engaged directly with street-level bureaucrats? What impact has this had?

Decisive moments in the policy process

- What are the best ways of engaging different types of policy process (incremental, etc.)?
- In what ways can research help to create policy windows?
- Are there any systematic ways of effectively identifying and responding to policy windows?

In practical terms, the challenges here are to identify: (i) how best to operate to influence policy in different types of context; and (ii) what can realistically be done to try to improve the context for the use of evidence-based research in policy-making and practice.

4.3.2 Research characteristics: relevance, credibility and communication

In this domain, there is still need for work on how researchers can try to ensure their work has a greater and faster impact on policy. In particular, what is the role of research units – either independent or inside government? What institutional characteristics and activities help foster research impact on policy? And what practical advice can we provide to researchers on what could work most effectively in different contexts? Some of the issues here are outlined below:

Relevance and credibility

- What mechanisms help ensure topical relevance? What are the ways researchers ensure operational relevance for policy-makers?
- What counts as credibility in different areas? How can research credibility overcome contestation?
- Do participatory methods and local involvement lead to greater policy uptake?
- Does international research-based evidence convince policy-makers?
- What incentives to researchers make a difference in terms of the policy impact of their work?

Communication

- How has research-based evidence been communicated in different contexts? How much effort do researchers put into communication – and does it make a difference?
- What are some key issues for packaging? What impact do relatively ‘simple’ communication tools have, such as visual aids, stories, or role play?
- What are the best ways that research institutes in different contexts can communicate their findings to have an impact on policy? Have different types of social marketing been used – and with what impact?
- How do interactive approaches work in different contexts? To what extent has this been ‘horizontal communication’? Where, when and why has this been successful?

- What are some key issues for targeting? How do institutes segment their audience – for example in terms of government, parliament, media, networks, NGOs?

Specific institutional characteristics

- What characteristics of research institutes are critical for policy input? (Among others, this could include relationship with government, funding, structure, quality-control mechanisms, incentives to staff, and the different capacities of staff in an institute.)

4.3.3 Links: networks, legitimacy and trust

There remain large gaps in understanding in this domain. The overarching questions here are: how do different types of network- and policy-research communities influence policy-making? Do different sorts of policy networks work better in different environments? Do legitimacy and trust make a difference, and how can they be strengthened? Answers to some of these questions would provide practical advice to researchers and research institutes on what could work in different contexts. Specific issues for investigation in this area could include the following:

Networks and influence

- How do networks vary across issue and across country? Do they have an impact on bridging research and policy? What characteristics of networks allow them to have a greater impact on policy? Does openness and transparency make a difference?
- How do the types of community vary across issue and across country? What characteristics of different types of community facilitate the use of research in policy-making?
- Are there champions attempting to bridge the research–policy gap? What impact do they have? How can more be encouraged?
- Are there certain types of policy-maker who might be more receptive to research inputs?
- Does mobility between research and policy arenas make a difference for bridging research and policy?

Legitimacy and trust

- Does the legitimacy of research institutions help with policy influence? What are some of the ways to build legitimacy?
- How does trust between researchers and policy-makers vary within and across countries? What difference does this make? If valuable, how can a climate of trust be built between researchers and policy-makers?

4.3.4 External influence, resources, and funding

There has been relatively little work done on these issues, yet they clearly have a major impact on the links between research and policy in developing countries. Research might address the impact that international issues in general and donors in particular have on bridging research and policy. How can different actors respond to the changing context? Key questions include the following:

International politics, agreements and policy

- In what ways have changes at the regional or international level had an impact on the context for bridging research and policy in developing countries? In what ways have countries responded? What issues have led to greater or less use of research-based evidence in policy-making?
- Policies are increasingly made at the regional and global levels. How have researchers in developing countries engaged with these processes? Are there any examples of best practice we can learn from?
- How have the advances in technology (specifically the internet and email) had an impact on bridging research and policy?

Donor policies and national contexts

- Has donor emphasis on democracy, human rights and good governance affected the context for bridging research and policy? Have there been instances where evidence-based research is increasingly used in policy-making because of such shifts? Are there any lessons that can be drawn from this experience?
- How has the new poverty reduction strategy paper process had an impact on bridging research and policy? Have researchers contributed to the strategies? Has it generated new research demand?

Donor research funding and priorities

- How do donor research funding priorities affect research agendas in developing countries? How do these feed through into policy? Do donor-funded programmes focus on the most pressing issues?
- How is donor-funded evidence viewed – by policy-makers and by different groups within the local population (with suspicion or as credible)?
- What donor research funding practices best help research feed into policy? What impact does the use of external consultants have on research–policy links?
- Does donor funding skew communication away from efforts to enhance local policy impact? How can donors best help to build local capacity for research and policy advice?

5 Conclusions

Although the importance of bridging research and policy is widely accepted, there has been surprisingly little work on understanding how, when, and why policy is influenced by research in developing countries. The case studies described and analysed above were part of the first phase of the three-year GDN project undertaking a systematic investigation of these issues. One of the key gaps identified in the literature was the lack of case studies on issues of bridging research and policy in the area of development. The first steps of the GDN project have started to fill this gap.

The process of case study collection was transparent and bottom-up – local insights have helped inform a global project. It has helped bring a new perspective to researchers around the world. It has also helped to generate a network of people interested in the topic of bridging research and policy.

The cases covered an impressive range of situations and locations, and the approach has gathered an interesting range of evidence and experience about research–policy links from around the world. The cases also included examples of where research had not had an impact. Such cases are often not considered in studies, yet they generated as much interesting information as ‘successful’ cases.

The literature review and the case study analysis have already generated some practical suggestions – although this was not the intention. Many of the individual cases are very instructive and could provide ideas and approaches of use to others interested in bridging research and policy.

The cases highlighted the complexity of research–policy processes, and the comparative analysis enabled us to draw out a number of themes and issues for further research. These fall into the domains listed below:

- *Context*: This emerged as the most important domain, with the key issues relating to the extent of policy-maker demand (by policy-makers and society more generally) and the degree of political contestation. The degree of openness is also significant in enabling the use of research in development policy-making.
- *Evidence*: A key issue was whether research provided a solution to a problem. In addition, policy uptake was affected by relevance (in terms of topic and operational usefulness) and credibility (in terms of research approach and method of communication).
- *Links*: The extent of links between researchers and policy-makers is clearly important. But there were no clear conclusions about the nature of the links. Issues of trust, legitimacy, openness and formalisation of networks emerged. This arena in particular needs further investigation.
- *External influences*: The impact of external forces certainly enabled research to have an impact on policy, as did donor funding. But more systematic evidence is needed.

We have examined the cases in the light of the main streams of theory in this area. It is clear that there is no single theory that can explain the diversity of experience, although some streams do appear to be more useful than others. It is also apparent that there are major gaps and that developing countries provide a broader range of contexts than the theory. There is a particular lack of work on the impact of macro-political factors at the national level and the influence of external actors on developing countries.

It is also clear that current understanding in this area remains thin. The second phase of the GDN Bridging Research and Policy project will undertake more thorough systematic research on the issues identified in this paper.

Appendix 1 The Case Studies

No.	Title	Country
1	Livestock service reform in Indonesia: the DELIVERI experience The DFID-funded Decentralised Livestock Services in the Eastern Regions of Indonesia (DELIVERI) was a programme of action research to make livestock service institutions more responsive to the needs of small-scale farmers. It was remarkably successful, with clear impact not only on service provision but also on livestock service policies and practices at field, district, provincial, and national level. A key factor was the project's engagement with contemporary policy issues of decentralisation, privatisation and participation, which became politically urgent after the downfall of Suharto midway through the project. The project's participatory, inclusive and collaborative approach, and explicit influence strategy from the start, also contributed.	Indonesia
2	Easy acceptance of incomplete research: a case from Kerala GALASA (Group Approach to Locally Adapted and Sustainable Agriculture) is an action research programme started in Kerala (India) in 1998–9 to increase the productivity of paddy in the state. It aims to popularise rice production technologies through field-level training by agricultural scientists, and encouraging group action among the farmers. The first-stage experiment – in 560 acres in one part of the state – showed an increase in yield rates. The policy-makers of the state government accepted the idea and considered it a success after the experiment, and declared plans for expanding it to 0.18 million hectares. Thus, as a research programme, GALASA was very successful in gaining the attention of policy-makers. The case study argues that this incomplete research programme was easily accepted because it fitted well with the interests and ideological viewpoints of the policy-makers.	India
3	Reforming planning systems towards socio-economic structural change in Iran: the influence of policy research on a policy document The Institute for Research on Planning and Development in Iran launched a joint policy research project with Iran-UNDP from 1996 to 2000. The aim of the project – the Public Management Improvement Programme (PMIP) – was to influence the formulation of Iran's Third Development Plan for 2000–4. Initially, PMIP had a substantial impact on the plan within the area of national economic management. Recently, however, the influence of the PMIP has declined dramatically, and a gap has opened up between researchers and policy-makers. The reasons for this are judged to be the present lack of vision consistency between researchers and policy-makers, due to political interests and personnel changes, and also the lack of fundamental knowledge for development in the research community.	Iran
4	Micro-level participatory planning for poverty reduction: rural hinterland information and communication technology (ICT) applications in Kuppam This case study discusses the link between a broad state-managed development initiative and a comprehensive study of a range of development indicators. Conducted by the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, Osmania University, the work took place in Kuppam – an agricultural area at the meeting point of three state borders: Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. The experience provides interesting lessons for understanding the link between policy and research. Congruence between perceived needs and the actual action plans of the government improved as a direct result of the database generated through the study. This is related both to the importance of the study at different levels and stages of the policy process and the participatory ICT medium used.	India
5	Support to governance strengthening and public administrative reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic The creation of an effective public administration and civil service has been one of the key priorities of the government and of the international community supporting reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic, with donors funding a range of relevant short- and long-term projects. Although several important recommendations have been produced as the result of research undertaken within these projects, the most essential ones have never been implemented. The reasons for this included (i) lack of a well-defined overall national reform programme and an institutional framework for its execution; (ii) lack of vision of	Kyrgyz Republic

the role and place of technical assistance projects; and (iii) lack of an effective, continuously acting institutional framework for coordinating donors' intervention. In other words, there was no systematic designation of government responsibilities for managing recommendations, and this limited the impact of the projects.

6 Indicators for good governance and local development project Philippines

Implemented by the Philippine Center for Policy Studies and funded by the Ford Foundation, the Indicators for Good Governance and Local Development Project is a policy research and advocacy project. It aims to promote good governance at local government level through the development of a set of simple, understandable and useful indicators to assess the performance of local governments along three fundamental aspects: provision of basic services, development orientation, and people's participation. So far, the project has yielded two desirable outcomes: the improvement of fiscal and decision processes resulting from the adoption of a Governance for Local Development index, and the enhancement of transparency and accountability, as well as heightened level of social awareness, induced by the participation of the stakeholders in the project.

7 Clean air for Delhi: introduction of compressed natural gas (CNG) as a single mode of fuel for public transport India

In the early 1980s, various studies had begun to show that water and air pollution was increasing at rapid pace in Delhi, and there was a growing view among environmentalists that the government was not doing enough. An environmental group filed an appeal in the Supreme Court in 1985 asking it to issue a writ of mandamus to the various authorities to implement the laws enacted to prevent and control pollution of air and water in Delhi. The Court order resulted, among other things, in the government of India appointing an Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for the National Capital Region, whose advice would be mandatory. The debate was joined by the representatives of three technical research institutes, who influenced the debate and the outcome to a varying extent, as outlined in the case study.

8 Research–policy links in the health sector: case study of two Caribbean experiences Caribbean

This case study examines two attempts to link research to policy in the Caribbean. One is in the area of maternal health care in Jamaica; the other is in health finance reform in two eastern Caribbean countries (St Lucia and St Vincent). Comparison of these two experiences is instructive. While both research efforts enjoyed political legitimacy and were actively supported by the policy-makers, research clearly influenced policy in the former case, but in the latter, relevant research results were ignored, or at least not implemented. The main conclusions from this comparative exercise were that successful bridging of the research–policy divide was largely due to the active involvement of policy-makers in all stages – from design through to the programme intervention and impact evaluation stages.

9 Adapting agricultural research and extension to the changing rural development context in West and Central Africa: lessons from the Franco–British Initiative West and Central Africa

The questions of how agricultural services should adapt in the face of the changing development context in sub-Saharan Africa, and how they can become more demand driven, lay at the heart of research carried out in 1998–9 by a multidisciplinary team of French, UK and West African researchers on research–extension–producer organisation links. The study was one of three policy studies in the Franco–British Initiative to promote closer cooperation between Anglophone and francophone countries in West Africa. It was undertaken in an evolving policy environment in the sub-region marked by a number of different factors. In addition to detailed country-specific analysis, policy conclusions of broader relevance emerged from the six-country study. Unfortunately, adoption of these conclusions by decision-makers in the region was hampered by a number of factors, commented on in the case study.

10 Good policy that can work better: watershed approach in India India

As irrigation development is reaching near saturation in India, a watershed approach has emerged as the main programme for agriculture development in dryland areas. Drawing on past experiences, a new scheme was launched in April 1995. Part of an international research project, the objective of the case study was to find out how good watershed policy was actually implemented. Field research found that although the new scheme attained decisive gains, a project is bound to contain inadequacies that surface

as it is implemented. Programmes should include a system of monitoring and review so that policy-makers receive continuous feedback for possible corrective action.

11 Participatory eco-restoration: the AHADS model India

The Attapady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS) is engaged in implementing a massive eco-restoration project in the buffer zone of the renowned Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in Kerala, India. In implementing the US\$45 million project, AHADS seeks to address the twin crises of environmental degradation and loss of livelihood. Action-oriented field research is a key factor of the project that has successfully adopted the principle of participatory development by creating and engaging a huge network of grassroots organisations for project execution. This approach marks a remarkable shift in development delivery in an area that has been mired in social misery and environmental degradation.

12 Self-managed public schools in San Luis, Argentina: case study Argentina

This case study can be considered a successful example of ‘policy transfer’. It reveals the extent to which a think-tank can contribute to improve the state’s intervention in designing and implementing social policies. The research carried out by the Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC; Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth) was fundamental to convince the Ministry of Education of the convenience of implementing self-managed public schools. CIPPEC first introduced the idea of self-management to the Ministry through papers and comparative research, studied the feasibility and diagnosis of its implementation, and provided technical assistance. How did CIPPEC do this? Through lobbying and advocacy, based on the presentation of the findings of its research on self-management.

13 Reconciling local activism with the policy process in southern India India

SPEECH (Society for the People’s Education and Economic Change) is a medium-sized NGO that has worked on local development issues in southern Tamilnadu since 1987. Recent research by the organisation has highlighted a gap between sustainable, equitable outcomes and the paradoxes inherent in the vast number of programmes and initiatives sponsored by the state, some of which contradict stated policy objectives. This case study examines the lessons arising from the organisation’s experience of policy work. It focuses on the ‘shadow system’ – the network of informal relationships that pervades organisations and social institutions. SPEECH’s success in policy work rests on its ability to be a trusted broker between communities and the state.

14 Action research on foreign labour migration and the remittance economy of Nepal Nepal

This case study focuses on a programme of action research into foreign and domestic labour migration and ‘the remittance economy of Nepal’. The programme explicitly adopted a combined lobbying–action–dissemination–research approach from the outset and appears to have been remarkably successful in getting the key policy issues raised and debated at national and international levels. Various concrete measures can be identified where the programme contributed directly to new policies and practices introduced by the government of Nepal between 1998 and 2002. It has also been effective in raising the issue of labour migration – particularly foreign labour migration and remittances – in the Nepali press and with political actors.

15 SME development in Samoa Samoa

Research in 1992–3 identified small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as crucial to economic development in Samoa, a small island-country in the South Pacific. In 1994, the government requested the assistance of New Zealand Overseas Development Aid (NZODA) to develop an initiative to encourage the growth of SMEs. NZODA provided a guarantee scheme, administered through a Small Business and Enterprise Centre, so that people with no income could apply for bank loans to start a business. An evaluation of the programme, and further research into SMEs in 2001, verified the approach and identified the key factors for success. Presentations of these results to key policy-makers convinced them of the need to promote this approach further, and the central recommendations were incorporated into a new policy for SME development in Samoa.

16 The Soros Network and Roma policies in Central and Eastern Europe **Central and Eastern Europe**

This case study examines the role of the Soros Network – a network of non-governmental organisations – in influencing the process of defining and shaping policies to improve the situation of the Roma minority in countries of the Central and Eastern European region. The network complements the activity of the state by sponsoring policy-oriented research; funding the establishment of innovative practices and their dissemination; and providing research and expert knowledge for the definition of government policies. The case study shows, through the example of a number of Soros Network programmes, a possible path for the civil sector to become an influential actor in the policy process.

17 Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development (KRPLLD) **India**

The Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development (KRPLLD), sponsored by the multi-annual, multi-disciplinary research programme of the Ministry of Development Cooperation, has funded about 270 research projects. These are expected to have an impact on policy-making for local development. In order to assess the use of knowledge generated by these research projects, KRPLLD carried out an analysis of 10 selected projects, as reported in its annual report for 2001. Local governments have not used research suggestions in a number of cases, citing lack of financial support from higher governments or other agencies. Vested interests, corrupt bureaucracy, and conflict among implementing agencies are also found to obstruct the use of research knowledge. Research was however used successfully where there was convergence of ideas among institutions and between institutions and researchers. This case study summarises the insights of this analysis, and makes a few comments on its approach.

18 Research and trade policy in South Africa **South Africa**

The South African Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat (TIPS) has now been in existence for about six years. TIPS is widely perceived to have had a significant impact on policy and policy research in South Africa. The aim of the study, however, is to take a more sober look at some difficulties underscoring policy research and not to exaggerate the role that we play in the policy-making arena. The performance of TIPS is highly dependent on the perceptions of the people it is designed to serve – the policy-makers in the South African Department of Trade and Industry. The case study explains that external research agencies help policy-makers to make more informed decisions, but that that is as far as it goes.

19 Research, policy and implementation links in biodiversity management in Saudi Arabia **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia has a rich and varied biodiversity but it has suffered degradation during the second half of the last century. Conscious of the erosion of biodiversity, the government embarked on a vigorous programme to reverse the trend. The National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD) set out to do this by undertaking and promoting a number of research studies to plan its conservation and sustainable development programmes. Over the years, NCWCD has established a large network of protected areas for biodiversity management, modelled largely on the traditional pattern, and significantly restored populations of critical species. Research outputs have played an important role in shaping the modern conservation regime in the country. The case analyses the key studies in this respect and the impact these had on the implementation.

20 National and regional development planning reform in Lithuania **Lithuania**

This case compares four projects in public investment management reform in Lithuania in 1999–2001. The projects consist of the research recommendations of the Canadian consultants (a strong policy linkage), the research recommendations of the EU PHARE Special Preparatory Programme for the EU Structural Funds (a medium policy linkage), the research recommendations offered in the framework of the Open Society Institute, Budapest and the Open Society Fund, Lithuania (a medium policy linkage). The comparative case studies reveal that research recommendations are avidly accepted and followed when there are specific political pre-conditions and when the authors are closely affiliated with the government.

- 21 Development of small- and medium-scale industries (SMIs) with a cluster approach** **Indonesia**
- This was a policy research project under a United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) programme to support the restructuring and competitiveness of small and medium industrial clusters in Indonesia. The main objective was to help the Indonesian government cooperate with the private sector in the formulation and organisation of a national programme to support the restructuring and competitiveness of industrial clusters, with emphasis on agro-based SMIs. To support the UNIDO programme, an overall review of SMI-based clusters in Indonesia was conducted, and then field studies (cluster diagnosis) were conducted on four clusters in four different sub-sectors in four different provinces. The programme has had an impact on existing policies, as the government has revised its industrial policies and introduced new national industrial strategies based on a cluster approach in 2000.
- 22 The impact of the European Commission and OECD-SIGMA research on public sector internal audit in Lithuania** **Lithuania/ Central and Eastern Europe**
- This case study summarises the policy impact of research and recommendations presented in the peer review of the Lithuanian public system of internal audit, carried out by OECD-SIGMA in 2002, and of research and recommendations formulated in the EU-PHARE funded twinning project to strengthen the system of internal financial control in Lithuania, implemented in 2000–2. The study concludes that both projects have had a considerable impact on policy outcomes, but for different reasons.
- 23 Case study of the African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN)** **Africa**
- AFREPREN was established in 1987 and has involved over 300 researchers and policy-makers from over 19 African countries. The network's key objective is to strengthen energy policy research capacity in the region, as well as have an impact on energy policy formulation and implementation in Africa. To date, AFREPREN has been evaluated by international external evaluators three times (in 1995, 1999 and 2002). The three evaluation reports assessed in great detail the network's impact on energy policy formulation and implementation in the region. They provide advice on how the network could better attain its policy impact objectives. These issues are summarised in the case study.
- 24 Research for improving policies and laws: the case of Shehla Zia versus WAPDA in Pakistan** **Pakistan**
- The case of Shehla Zia versus the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) in Pakistan is the most celebrated case where scientific research contributed to widening the scope of Article 9 of the Constitution of Pakistan – for improving environmental pollution control and laying a foundation for further growth of environmental case laws. In this case, residents in Islamabad protested to WAPDA against the planned construction of a grid station in the area, with major concerns about health hazards. The court ruled that WAPDA relied on sources of research and opinions that were outdated and not authentic. Discussion in the case implies that research does not necessarily have to be demand driven – supply of research also creates its own demand in refining or designing new policies and laws when policy- and law-makers are confronted with new sets of problems and issues.
- 25 Agricultural research and policy change in Ghana: comparing effectiveness of two research projects** **Ghana**
- Many developing countries, including Ghana, have a fairly established institutional set-up for agricultural research. However, many policy-relevant research results end up on the shelves of researchers and policy-makers without being considered for implementation. This case study discusses two research projects from Ghana undertaken by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research institutes (one dealing with the water hyacinth problem, and the second, on introducing soil and water conservation methods) but which met with different levels of success in implementing the results. Key factors affecting the varied relative success included differences in the significance of the problem; the nature of short-term versus long-term gains; social relevancy; project consultation and formulation process; networking and partnerships; level of public education and awareness about the problem; ownership of the identified problem and building of commitment; available research capacity; availability of financial resources and researchers remuneration system.

26 The Tanzania Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA): deriving short-term, local benefits from a long-term, wide-scale research programme **Tanzania**

The government of Tanzania has recently established a poverty monitoring system to provide timely, reliable data to inform its poverty reduction strategy and other public policy initiatives. The system incorporates both participatory and survey-based research methodologies. As part of this system, routine participatory poverty assessments are being implemented in two-year cycles. Although their main purpose is to improve medium- and long-term development planning, stakeholders also hoped that the PPAs would lead to timely, direct benefits at local level. This case study looks at how the PPA was designed to maximise the likelihood of such benefits and at early results. In doing so, it touches on issues of methodological credibility and the role of information in policy-making fora.

27 SME cluster approach for bottom-up national economic reforms **Ukraine**

This case study reviews the implementation of a cluster model for small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development in Ukraine. From 1998 to 2002, Podillya Pershyi NGO initiated the formation of five industry sector clusters that have developed into strong, competitive, innovation-driven unions of SMEs. The case study describes how the research pre-determined the formation of clusters, ensured their success, helped secure national attention, and, eventually, fostered adoption of new policies at national level. This occurred despite a general lack of trust between researchers and policy-makers.

28 Measuring inflation under hyperinflation: the impact of research on improving the way the Peruvian Statistical Agency calculates consumer price indexes (CPIs) **Peru**

Until very recently, most, if not all, statistical agencies in the world relied on Laspeyres indexes formulae to construct CPIs. The shortcomings of such a method of aggregation are widely known but the impact is especially evident in high inflation regimes. Despite the solid evidence put forward by GRADE (the Group of Analysis for Development), the Peruvian Statistical Agency disregarded their advice and publicly criticised their research contribution. Eight years after the research was published, the Peruvian Statistical Agency introduced methodological changes to the CPI. This was enabled by the regime change in Peru.

29 Domestic violence: research and policy in Papua New Guinea **Papua New Guinea**

This case study explores the link between research into domestic violence and relevant state policy and practice in Papua New Guinea. Throughout the 1980s, the Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission undertook extensive research into the nature and extent of domestic violence in Papua New Guinea. In 1992, a final report was published, in which a plethora of recommendations for legislative reform, and law and justice sector practice were made. The commission initially implemented several recommendations from the research. However, in 2002, criminal justice sector personnel have reverted to inappropriate practices, legislative reforms suggested by the commission have not been undertaken, and there is no overall policy framework within which government and non-government organisations can work to address domestic violence. In this case study, critical factors contributing to the state's failure to translate research outcomes and recommendations into improved law and justice sector policy and practice are delineated.

30 Inserting the dam communities into the development agenda: a case study of Shiroro Dam communities **Nigeria**

Nigeria relies for its power supply on two main sources: thermal and hydro sources. Hydropower is derived mainly from three dams – Kainji, Jebba and Shiroro – all in Niger State. In 1996, the Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), an NGO, organised a workshop for fishermen in the Shiroro Dam area. CAPP thereafter decided to undertake a study of the problems of the dam communities to establish a firmer ground for advocacy around these problems. The major outcome of the study is a publication entitled *Damned by the Dam: The Story of Shiroro Communities* (CAPP, 1998). CAPP and the community organisation it assisted in establishing in the area, Nychesa, used this document along with other publications by the organisation in their advocacy efforts. From 1999, the focus of the advocacy – which has now been embraced by other communities in the dam areas covering five states – has expanded to include the setting up of a Hydropower Producing Areas Development Commission. This case documents the research-driven advocacy for policy reform in Nigeria.

31 Pak Moon Dam: displaced villagers and World Bank-sponsored researchers force the government to change its policy – but for how long? Thailand

The Pak Moon Dam in Thailand has for more than a decade been a source of protest and controversy. However, the need for the dam has not been as great as hoped and, perhaps more importantly, hundreds more people had to be resettled since the effect on local fisheries was much more severe than anticipated. Many villagers initiated a lengthy and often physically confrontational protest against the dam, which was mostly ignored by the government. Eventually, a report published in 2000 by the World Commission of Dams, partly sponsored by the World Bank, reported that the villagers' concerns were largely substantiated and that the benefits of the dam were outweighed by its costs. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra ordered eight sluice gates to be opened on a trial basis and this decision has been applauded by citizens' rights groups worldwide. This case study focuses on the role of local people and their campaign, as well as international support, in persuading the World Bank to sponsor the research report and the prime minister's decision to accept it.

32 Starter packs in Malawi Malawi

This case study looks at a large-scale monitoring and evaluation programme in Malawi between 1999 and 2002. The focus of the research was the Starter Pack programme and its successor, the Targeted Inputs Programme, which aimed to increase food security by giving rural smallholders small packs of fertilizer and seed. It involved 13 integrated 'modules' – comprising nationwide surveys, participatory research exercises, and a set of case studies – and produced a large body of evidence on a range of key issues. Many of the findings challenged previous assumptions. The government adopted part of the research findings where the evidence fitted neatly with political imperatives. But the government has so far ignored the other findings – those which raise serious questions about the desirability and viability of current agricultural policies. The donor community has also ignored much of the evidence. The reasons why the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the donors have ignored the evidence are different. This case study highlights the key findings that should have been taken on board, and analyses why government officials and donors have not done so.

33 The role of civil societies in informing policy: a case from Ethiopia Ethiopia

The experiences in preparing poverty reduction strategies have broken new grounds in the history of socio-economic policy-making for developing countries. The two important new elements in these strategies are the prerequisites for the inclusion of the poor in the formulation of the programmes and that they are result oriented. During the preparation of Ethiopia's poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), the Ethiopian Economic Association embarked on a major project entitled PRSP Advocacy, Training and Civil Society Participation Enhancing Project. It involved surveys as well as several consultative processes that enabled people to have their voices heard. Furthermore, a number of programmes were arranged to allow the inclusion of other sections of society, such as journalists and parliamentarians. By submitting its findings as a summary report to the policy-makers, it has made significant contribution in bridging the gap between policy and research. Its experiences provide a good example for a smoothing the link between research and policy.

34 Public administration in Ukraine Ukraine

Between 1998 and 2002, the Odessa Branch of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Ukraine conducted research into the *Contradiction between the executive authority and local government at a level of region and mechanisms of their coordination*. Copies of the paper were sent to the Administration of the President of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council), and to the Cabinet, as well as to all scientific libraries in the country. The research contributed directly to new policies and practices introduced by the government. The case study concludes on why and how research contributed to these changes and analyses the factors that led to this success.

35 Restructuring the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) India

Until the mid-1980s, public bus services in Delhi were largely operated by the loss-making state-owned DTC. Economic liberalisation in 1990 in India led to a growing emphasis on fiscal discipline, leading to freezing of subsidies to the corporation. Simultaneously, there was more general concern about the transport context in India. Given the above situation, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) developed reform strategies for restructuring the DTC to ensure that service delivery matched

consumers' expectations and that the decline in the share of public transport could be stopped. The recommendations made by TERI were presented to the Delhi government. The principles of reform and the strategies outlined were accepted and are currently being implemented.

36 Technical Support Service for the G-24

G-24

As part of a strategic evaluation, Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has commissioned external studies of various IDRC-funded projects to review the influence of research on public policy. As one of their programming initiatives, the Technical Support Service (TSS or the research programme) to the Intergovernmental Group of 24 (G-24), which was set up to support negotiations with developed-country counterparts, has recently been reviewed in this context. Relevant findings include: (i) a more direct attempt to plug research into global policy-making; as well as (ii) an indirect or gradual process in which research findings trickled into common knowledge and informed policy through 'enlightenment'. The study also highlights various factors that lead to improved policy influence or distract from it. Reviewing these factors, four scenarios of policy influence are offered by positioning both internal and external factors against the proximity to policy decision-making.

37 Regional development-level assessment in Croatia: the influence of academic research on policy and legislation

Croatia

Croatia recently adopted a new (more fragmented) territorial division based on 545 municipalities. An assessment of development level was necessary to widen the span of territorial units which are currently receiving national subsidy funds under the Law on Areas of Special Governmental Concern. However, commonly-used GDP per capita criteria could not be applied due to a complete lack of municipality-level GDP data. An alternative route was offered by an Institute for Development and International Relations research study carried out in 2001–2, where a multivariate econometric framework for assessing the regional development level was developed and applied on the available municipality-level data in order to rank the 545 municipalities according to development. The results of the research were used by the Croatian Ministry of Public Works in designing a proposal for the new law, which was adopted by parliament in August 2002. This case demonstrates a direct research–policy link and it is a rare example of an important policy closely following guidelines set out by an independent academic research study. The case discusses the likely reasons the recommendations of the study were adopted.

38 Implications of research on policy reforms in the forestry sector in India: the case of Joint Forest Management (JFM)

India

The evolution of forest policies in India and its changing orientation is a story in itself. There has been a complete shift from pure revenue-oriented policies towards people's need-based (subsistence-based) forestry – from commercial and forest department-governed forest management techniques to Joint Forest Management with the people. This changing orientation over time can be attributed to number of factors. One factor is research and its influence in facilitating this changing policy direction. Besides external assessments, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has commissioned many studies to assess and suggest methods to improve JFM in India. This case study examines two important studies – one conducted as an external research study (Khare et al., *Joint Forest Management: Policy practice and prospects*, IIED) and the other commissioned by the MoEF (TERI, *National study of JFM*, New Delhi). It compares if and how the recommendations arising from these two studies have/have not led to policy-level changes in the forestry sector in India.

39 Fiscal policy: the Chilean 'fiscal rule'

Chile

The current Chilean government announced (as had the previous two governments) the importance of fiscal sustainability for development purposes. This particular government applied a policy innovation previously imbedded at international research level – that of a fiscal rule. This rule requires, by law, that the central government post a structural (cyclically adjusted) surplus equivalent to 1% of GDP every financial year. However, due to slow recovery of the economy, different sectors of society (media, political, academic) started to make their points about the significance and impact of the fiscal rule in the first place and, secondly, about the odds of 'living' with a potential GDP that has not been well estimated and thus gives less space than it should for fiscal expenditure. The government called for an independent panel of experts to help establish the structural budget for 2003 (this will be done every subsequent year). This case study is insightful in signalling the relationship between research and fiscal policy at different

levels. One of these levels has to do with theoretical–academic research at international level (for example IMF, OECD) and its power to influence policy. The other has to do with research conducted for the purposes of motivating policies by media pressure. A third type of link that has a major impact on policies is that which the government orders to commit ex-ante to use its results to perform policy. All these types of link are present in this case study.

40 Illegal slate-mining mafia operations in Dhauladhar Himalayas India

Assessments and satellite-based GIS (geographic information systems) mapping gave a very clear indication of illegal mining in the ecologically fragile Dhauladhar range of hills in the sub-Himalayan mountains of India's northern state of Himachal Pradesh. This practice was illegal, and the inspection reports led to an outcry from the people, press and activists. However, following a change in government, the mafia-led mining restarted, despite standing orders from regulatory authorities including the courts. Although high priority is accorded to environmental protection, forest conservation and scientific mining, in practice, political and vested interests take the front seat. The entire research-led effort, policies, action and administrative framework fails against the vested interests backed by political abettors.

41 Why the Moroccan government does not use reliable research when implementing fiscal policy reforms: the driving role of governance and interest group pressures Morocco

This case is an extension of research financed by the Ford Foundation under the Middle East Research Competition programme, managed by the Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies. The case aims to understand why the Moroccan government does not rely on comprehensive policy research when implementing fiscal policy reforms and continues to conduct inefficient fiscal policy reform. Recent survey investigations highlight one set of issues – inadequate knowledge and training of decision-makers; the widespread belief that policy research is extremely theoretical and vague; and dissemination is inadequate. However, the case reveals that the government often relies on generalising policy research that is politically feasible and easily practicable. More comprehensive and reliable research is often rejected because of the lack of governance and the impact of rent-seeking groups.

42 Rainwater harvesting (RWH) in Tanzania Tanzania

Smallholders who farm in the tropical drylands of Tanzania have to cope with two realities of their natural environment: they live in dry places and their rainfall is unreliable. Both have negative impacts on human well-being, livestock condition, the productivity of crops, and livelihoods. While policy-makers recognise this, and few doubt the critical importance of rainfall, they have not previously considered the importance of using run-off for increasing water supply. Indeed, the overriding view was that run-off is a hazard rather than a resource, and leads to soil erosion. This perception has driven government policy for many years. The research and communication activities of an inter-disciplinary research team over a 10-year period, led by the Sokoine University of Agriculture, has informed policy-makers at national and district levels on the benefits of managing rainfall by harvesting run-off. Interestingly, the adoption of RWH by smallholder farmers in Tanzania is significant, and began well before an enabling policy for its promotion by planners and development workers was in place.

43 Community-based animal health workers in Kenya: the long and complicated process of policy reform Kenya

In the early 1990s, many NGOs and some government field veterinarians established very successful small-scale decentralised animal health programmes, where trained livestock keepers provided clinical veterinary services, for a fee, to their neighbours. These programmes were the subject of much research by the NGOs, donor agencies and academics. But despite good evidence that they provided an effective, cost-efficient and safe service, the veterinary profession remained unconvinced and reluctant to change policies to promote the expansion of these approaches (which were actually illegal). A full page newspaper advertisement by the Kenya Veterinary Board, threatening to expel veterinarians involved in such projects from the profession, sparked a multi-stakeholder process including an influential study by government, university and external livestock service experts. This has resulted in the development of a new policy framework to legalise decentralised animal health services in Kenya, although this has not yet been passed by parliament. This case study identifies the critical factors in the evolving livestock service policies in Kenya, and the relevance of research-based evidence of their effectiveness.

- 44 Listening to the voice in the street in Romania** **Romania**
- In order to facilitate better communication between the citizens and the political candidates wishing to represent them in Romania's 2000 general elections, a local public policies think-tank – Initiatives for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE) – undertook to shift the electoral debate from the experts and politicians to the people in the street. For this purpose, IDEE launched qualitative research which identified 17 characteristic types of electorate. Creating an unconventional communication environment, IDEE gave all subjects the opportunity to 'speak out' about what they truly believed, without the constraints of question-and-answer interviews. The feedback received was considerable: over 8000 citizens expressed their views. As a result, important trends (for example, why and how many youths will vote for extremist parties), which went unnoticed in conventional opinion polls and assessments, were uncovered, and were later confirmed by the general elections results. The event was covered intensively by the national media and its impact on both the authorities and the electorate was enormous. The results of the research clearly influenced electoral policy since they prompted an extensive debate on possible modifications to the related legislation (the uninominal vote, the proposed dissolution of parties not elected for two mandates, etc.).
- 45 Public-private collaboration to measure student achievement, disseminate the results and develop national educational quality policies in Peru** **Peru**
- Group of Analysis for Development (GRADE) researchers have been working as an external advisory unit to the Peruvian Ministry of Education to help design, administer and prepare two rounds of national evaluations of student achievement and associated factors. As a result, several publications and models of workshops were developed and disseminated. Later, one of the researchers from GRADE was hired as a consultant by the Education Committee of the National Congress to prepare a section on the new Law of Education. This section deals with assessing educational quality by creating a National Institute devoted to measuring achievement, accreditation of higher education institutions and certification of professional competencies. The law is currently under revision at the Congress, and should be approved in the near future. The case looks at how the research influenced policy.
- 46 Policy research, international organisations and global health: towards a Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)** **Global**
- The member states of the World Health Organisation (WHO) are currently negotiating a Framework Convention on Tobacco Control – WHO's first attempt to develop an international public health treaty. This case study addresses two examples of research that have had a direct impact on advancing the FCTC and that will influence its implementation at national level. Firstly, analysis of internal tobacco industry documents disclosed via litigation in the US fulfilled multiple functions in support of the FCTC. Secondly, research by the World Bank into the economics of tobacco use added momentum to, and ensured support for, the FCTC process by highlighting broader potential gains from tobacco control. It provided a credible evidence base for the FCTC, and reversed the longstanding perception that the tobacco industry was economically beneficial. It also enhanced political support for comprehensive national and international tobacco control by targeting its findings at officials in low- and middle-income countries.
- 47 Measuring farmers' agro-ecological resistance to Hurricane Mitch in Central America** **Central America**
- A study using a participatory action research approach found significant differences in agro-ecological resistance between plots on conventional and sustainable farms in Central America after Hurricane Mitch. On average, agro-ecological plots had more topsoil, higher field moisture, more vegetation, less erosion and lower economic losses after the hurricane than control plots on conventional farms. After analysing the results of the study, agro-ecological and conventional farmers designed strategies for participatory, sustainable reconstruction and identified the factors limiting the development of sustainable agriculture. Although the study was influential in reconstruction activity in villages and programmes where the farmers' movement for sustainable agriculture was already present, it had negligible impact on national policies for reconstruction. This is largely attributed to missed opportunities owing to the focus of the study, institutional rigidities, diversity of interests and lack of coordination among the multiple actors involved.

48 Transferring research knowledge into policy action: a review of Indian research projects in water management **India**

Initiated in 2001, the IWMI-Tata Water Policy Programme (ITWPP) provides practical and science-based information and perspectives to help policy-makers and water managers address water-related challenges. The specific programme components are: (i) to provide grant financing to researchers and institutes interested in cooperating in research on water resources; and (ii) to translate research into those practical solutions to water problems that add to the policy debate and encourage action. This case study analyses four selected research projects – and associated policy implications – under the programme. The ITWPP experience offers interesting information on research–policy links. There were instances when research outputs influenced the corresponding changes in policies. On the other hand, there are examples of indifference to this transformation process due to several factors.

49 Regulation of prices: an academic intervention with real world implications **Peru**

Peru's telecommunications market is presently going through a period of fundamental change. Some of the principal forces behind these changes are market liberalisation, privatisation, technical progress and changes in consumer demand. These forces have direct, long-term effects on consumers and providers. Recent research by the Group of Analysis for Development (GRADE) has concentrated on one of the greatest changes to affect Peru's telecommunications industry in the last four years: the privatisation of the Compañía Peruana de Teléfonos and the Empresa Nacional de Telecomunicaciones, which were purchased by Telefónica de España in 1994. The findings of GRADE studies on the topic have been concluded and the result has been lower prices for consumers (and potential savings for consumers of around US\$26 million after three years).

50 Research on forming a strategy of economic cooperation between Slovenia and the Russian Federation **Slovenia and Russia**

As a part of a broader strategy on how to promote economic cooperation between Slovenia and Russia, a study was completed to identify the benefits of cooperation between Slovenia and Russia (which is considered a relatively high-risk country in economic terms). It also aimed to advise the Slovenian government and chamber of commerce and industry what further steps should be taken. A survey was conducted on the institutional support that Slovenian companies needed to perform better in the Russian market. The research findings were one of the pillars on which the Slovenian government decided to sign an agreement to promote and protect the foreign direct investment and an agreement on cooperation of customs with the Russian Federation. Other agreements (such as cooperation in transportation) are in preparation. The Slovenian chamber decided to open its representative office in Moscow in the following months. This decision is important – so far only two representative offices of the chamber have been established abroad. Furthermore, the analysis is the basis for forming the government's strategy on cooperation between Slovenia and Russia, which is an ongoing project. The case study discusses the extent to which the research influenced policy and the reasons for this.

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