DFID Department for International Development

A DFID practice paper

How to note

JUNE 2010

CAPACITY BUILDING IN RESEARCH

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this note

The purpose of this **How to Note** is to provide guidance to DFID staff, Research Programme Consortia and multi–organisational research groups with partners in both the North and South, on the importance of Capacity Building (CB). It sets out a step by step approach on how it might be tackled, explains some tools and concepts that may be useful and includes good practice examples of CB which illustrate the richness and complexity of the process. However:

"…..capacity building is a risky, messy business, with unpredictable and unquantifiable outcomes, uncertain methodologies, contested objectives, many unintended consequences, little credit to its champions and long time lags" (Morgan, 1998, p6)

This Note aims to shed light on the Capacity Building process in the research context. And to show that despite Morgan's concerns progress is possible.

1.2 Who is it aimed at?

Improving the capability to do and use research is one of the four key priorities of DFID's Research Strategy (DFID Research Strategy 2008-2013).

"DFID will focus on improving research capability by supporting environments that encourage people to use research. This means improving researchers' skills, as well their access to research information and resources. It means supporting researchers in playing a more regular and effective role in policy-making. It also means paying special attention where there are skills gaps-for example in social sciences"

It is aimed therefore at research managers and at any team leaders and researchers who need to familiarise themselves with the concepts and practices of capacity building and organisational development. It is directly relevant to those running research consortia involving a range of partners; however the principles are relevant to a much wider audience.

The new Research Strategy provides an opportunity to change the 'rules of the game' with respect to collaborative international research and the Capacity Building which is a key part of it. Most DFID funded research consortia will be larger in scope, will have bigger budgets and will require consortia managers to spend more time and energy building longer-term sustainable research organisations as well as investing in the individuals who work in them. Some consortia may take advantage of new technology to enable developing countries to use, collaboratively, facilities in distant locations that would be impossible to finance in the developing country itself, thereby harnessing equipment 'downtime' in the North in the interests of supporting high quality research in the South. Between 8-12% (depending on countries, sectors and definitions) of DFID's £120 million budget on centrally-commissioned research in 2006-2007 was spent on capacity building and this is set to increase. It is important to make the most of this investment.

This How to Note should be read in conjunction with DFID's Guidance Note for RPCs (Annex 3) and Terms of Reference for bidders for research contracts which can be found at: www.research4development.info/dfidguidancenotes.asp

1.3 What do we mean by capacity building?

CB is a complex notion-it involves individual and organisational learning, is inevitably long term, and should be demand driven. If successful it contributes to sustainable social and economic development. Capacity Building within the context of DFID Research is defined as **enhancing the abilities of individuals, organisations and systems to undertake and disseminate high quality research efficiently and effectively**. There are 3 levels of Capacity Building:
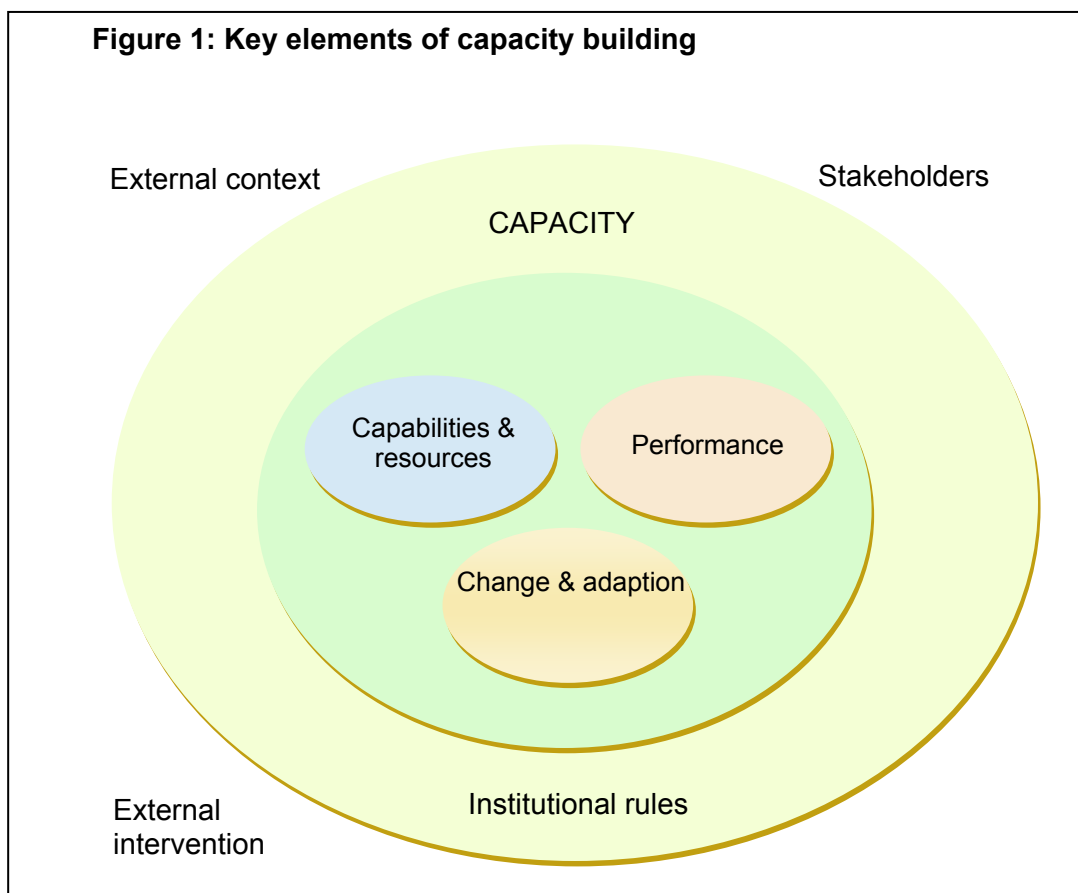
- **Individual:** involving the development of researchers and teams via training and scholarships, to design and undertake research, write up and publish research findings, influence policy makers, etc.

- **Organisational:** developing the capacity of research departments in universities, thinks tanks and so on, to fund, manage and sustain themselves.

- **Institutional:** changing, over time, the 'rules of the game' and addressing the incentive structures, the political and the regulatory context and the resource base in which research is undertaken and used by policy makers

Note 1: This distinction between "organizations" and "institutions" is derived from the work of Douglass North and the New Institutional Economics.

The goal of capacity building, for DFID, is **to facilitate individual and organisational learning which builds social capital and trust, develops knowledge, skills and attitudes and when successful creates an organisational culture and a set of capabilities which enables organisations to set objectives, achieve results, solve problems, and create adaptive procedures which enable them to survive in the long run.**

2. What is the conceptual framework underpinning capacity building?

CB is a dynamic process that is often part of a broader developmental or change process. As a consequence it is difficult to plan in advance which steps will need to be taken, or in which order. Research has not indicated any single model or framework or set of approaches which is guaranteed to succeed in building capacity and improving performance - which is not exactly helpful for practitioners! Nevertheless, recent research by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) has examined the factors that encourage it, how it differs from one context to another, and why efforts to develop capacity have been more successful in some contexts than in others. The research indicates the following analytical framework and elements - see figure 1 - which should underpin an understanding of and approach to capacity building.

Figure 1: Key elements of capacity building

2.1 Capacity

In the model above, capacity comprises the sum of the capabilities of a group, organisation or network; the ability of the group or organisation to learn and adapt, and the performance of the organisation in delivering good research and having an impact on policies and practice. Poor performance is often attributed to a lack of capacity. This usually leads to identification of technical and resource shortfalls, such as too few staff, lack of equipment, and out-dated systems and procedures. The ECDPM research encourages stakeholders to look beyond the formal managerial and systems capacities and identify other factors that drive organisation and system behaviour. It identifies five core capabilities which enable an organisation to perform and survive. These core capabilities are shown in Box 1. Exploring capacity through the lens of these capabilities

can help stakeholders diagnose capacity strengths and weaknesses and to monitor change over time.

Box 1: Five Core Capabilities (amended)

1. To commit, relate and engage: empowerment, motivation, confidence and the management of relationships

2. To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks: core functions directed at the implementation of mandated goals

3. To attract resources and support: resource mobilisation, networking, legitimacy building

4. To adapt and self-renew: learning, strategising, adaptation, managing change

5. To balance coherence and diversity: encourage innovation and stability, manage complexity, balance capability mix.

ECDPM: Policy Management brief 21: Capacity Change and Performance

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2.2 Institutional rules and levels

The assumption that capacity building at one level of intervention (individual or organisational) necessarily contributes to increased capacity at other levels is arguable. Training in particular may have only short term value unless it is accompanied by changes at other levels which enable the new skills to be used. The organisational level (university department, research centre etc) is commonly used as a site for intervention and may produce medium term changes. Interventions at the institutional level are harder and comparatively rare. However work on the informal institutions of leadership, culture, motivation and incentives are essential if we seek long term and sustainable CB. Interventions need to be systemic and an emphasis placed on activities which attempt to integrate the three levels.

2.3 Principles of good CB

Against this background, it is suggested that the following generic principles underpin successful efforts at capacity building:

1. Capacity building is a process:
CB is not a 'bolt on' extra, nor is there is there a simple 'tool kit' to make it happen. However there are a range of tools which, if appropriately applied, can make a significant difference. Effective CB is the result of the interplay between individual, organisational, network and institutional factors. It is difficult to plan in advance which steps will need to be taken or which dynamics will evolve, but planning is nevertheless essential to develop a shared vision and strategy. Its development can be pursued and facilitated by a process of action learning and continuous adaptation of interventions in the light of experience. At the practical level the issues will need to be identified, and a road map outlined during the programme Inception stage

2. Strengthen existing processes:
This suggests an iterative and flexible process that focuses on building on existing strengths and assets and enhancing local ability to solve problems, define and act upon development needs.

3. Ensuring full local ownership:
Local ownership of any externally-driven CB intervention is crucial. The preparation process for any new initiative is, therefore, critically important. It must be designed and implemented by national actors and not dominated by Northern researchers. At the same time, there must be a rigorous focus on the quality of research, and the international community can do much to help this process.

4. Role of external expertise:
To catalyse and support internal change agents and leaders in developing expertise. It will, for example, be designed to build research skills through mentoring and joint processes of analysis and reflection. Overall responsibility for the process and control over resources should lie within the organisation or system being strengthened.

5. A different way of working:
Capacity building should become an overt and intrinsic part of designing and carrying out all research and communications activities. This will require a particular set of skills and expertise not normally found in research institutions. Every aspect of organisational and institutional capacity development, from the capacity assessment and organisational analysis onwards, requires involving Organisational Development and change management specialists as full members of the team.

6. Skills and resources:
There are some core research capacity building blocks (of skills and resources) that need to be in place, such as academic writing skills, exposure to new research methods , IT infrastructure which need to be assessed early on. Gaps and shortfalls are generally identified at an early stage and can often be speedily addressed with a modest financial resource allocation. Capacity needs for skills and resources need to be regularly assessed and this activity forms an early and essential activity for any capacity building intervention.

7. Group development:
Just as most people are reluctant to admit to weaknesses, most teams, especially their leaders, are convinced that they work well. The reality is often different. Generally groups, particularly those with multi-cultural memberships, develop through four stages:

> **Forming**---establishing the ground rules,
> **Norming**—developing shared values,
> **Storming**—dealing with conflict/misunderstandings as values are debated,
> **Performing**—efficiently and effectively carrying out the groups objectives.

The development through these stages is never linear. Norming and storming in particular can be a lengthy and circular process. It is an axiom of group development that most groups prefer to avoid the difficult bits of norming and storming and claim that they have moved effortlessly to the 'performing' stage. However, unless the difficulties or tensions (about resources, responsibilities, leadership) are addressed the group will operate at a sub-optimal level because the level of trust and confidence necessary to perform well will be missing.

8. Collaboration and partnership:
Multi-stakeholder research requires not only technical and social knowledge, but also leadership, facilitation skills, the ability to manage partnerships, and to use and communicate knowledge and research outputs widely. Guidance on communication of research is contained in the DFID publication **Communication of Research: Guidance**

Notes for Research Programme Consortia (2005). It is also important to ensure representation and involvement in decision making of stakeholders at different levels, including those whose voice is not usually heard. Dealing with these personal and group dynamics is a core skill for OD professionals.

A list of resources and reference materials on CB is attached at Annex 2.

3. Capacity building process

This section is the core of this **How to Note.** It sets out the key issues and steps which need to be considered in any CB process as well as guidance on the key tools and techniques which can be used. This section and the notes above should make it evident that the CB issues in multi-partner research consortia cannot be undertaken by Research Directors with a few hours to spare. Professionals in the field need to be involved from the outset. How much time is needed will, of course, depend on the size and complexity of the partnerships.

We suggest that a four-step approach be considered which is based on the Kolb learning cycle. The key steps are as follows:
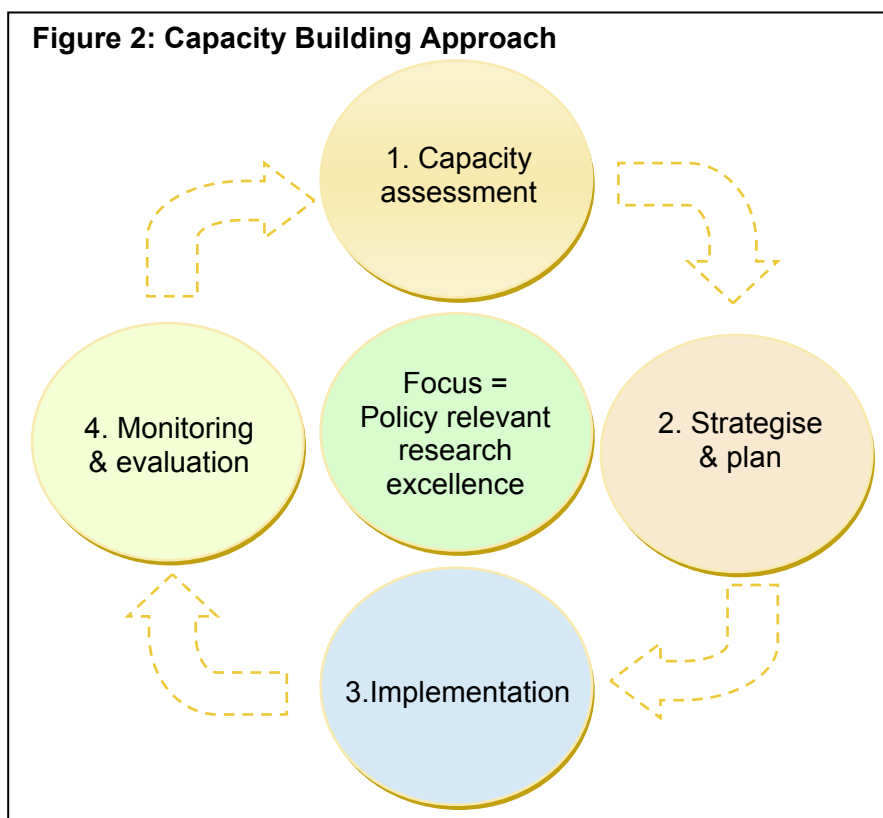
1: Capacity assessment: this step is primarily concerned with identifying the main strengths and weaknesses of the research and institutional framework at the individual, organisational and institutional levels.

2: Strategise and plan: this step involves planning the detailed activities required to deliver the programme outcomes; costs and timescales and monitoring and evaluation arrangements which will include organisational mapping and establishing a capacity baseline. Steps one and two would normally be undertaken and reported on during the inception stage of a (DFID) programme.

3: Implementation: this section sets out the key roles of the research partners in supporting CB processes and highlights some examples of actions at each of the three levels-individual, organisational and institutional-which can contribute to effective CB.

4: Monitoring and evaluation: this section sets out the key principles to be followed in monitoring and evaluation, as well as some examples of indicators which may be used to judge the effectiveness of CB.

The proposed cycle is illustrated in figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Capacity Building Approach

3.1 Step One: Capacity assessment

This first stage must start with an appraisal of the current research and institutional framework; it is an essential part of the inception phase. Such an analysis should focus as much on identifying assets, or areas of relative strength, as weaknesses. In general, it is easier to build on the former than to transform the latter. This analysis should include an assessment of the position at the three levels: individual, organisational and institutional, and should, as far as possible, be conducted as a collaborative exercise with key partners. Capacity building begins with a shared and explicit awareness of individual, organisational and institutional strengths and weaknesses in <u>all</u> partner teams and organisations.

Scope
It is suggested that the following elements should be assessed as part of this stage:

Individual
- Training needs—skills and knowledge gaps
- Quality of research output

Organisational
- Systems and resources
- Core capabilities defined by ecdpm research in box 1 above

Institutional
- Stakeholder analysis
- Incentive structure and "rules of the game"

A description of how to carry out assessment at each level and of some of the methods and tools that may be used is as follows:

Individual
Training needs analysis
To undertake the research to which the Research Consortium is committed will require a multinational and multicultural team (or teams) with a wide range of academic, language, IT, and managerial skills. It is not safe to assume that every member of each research team is familiar with different approaches to developing hypotheses, the full range of quantitative and qualitative methods, the difference between writing for academic publication and policy papers. Nor can it be assumed that every country has substantial groups of fully trained field workers, interviewers, lab technicians and applied statisticians - all ready to operate in the local languages before reporting in English.

To get the right people with the right skills in place is more than a managerial or logistical problem. It will need a review of the skills needed to achieve the research objectives and a skills audit (what skills do the team have). The difference between the two is the Capacity and Training Gap. A Training and Development Plan will need to be designed to close this Gap - and will be presented as part of the Inception Phase Report.

The diagnosis of capacity needs will involve gathering data and dealing with questions on several fronts. The following questions need to be answered:

1) What are the knowledge and skills needed to conduct the research to which we are committed (And to what extent do we have these skills)?

2) How many individuals / teams need to have these skills (And how many currently have them)?

3) At what level are these skills needed - 'Apprentice'; 'Craftsman'; Master'? It is possible that only one person in a team needs to be a 'Master'-someone who can lead the research, mentor others etc.

4) Are the gaps identified best dealt with by training or by some other intervention such as internal mentoring or seconding someone from another part of the consortium or by buying in a technical specialist?

Organisational
There are a number of possible approaches to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the organizations involved and advisers and consultants will have their own preferred methods. A suggested methodology which captures all the main dimensions involved is as follows:

- Collaborative SWOT analysis using the open systems or European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) models (which provide a checklist of points such as systems, culture and resources to consider). Self appraisal using the same model should give a comprehensive map of strengths and weaknesses The models are shown in DFID's publication: **Promoting Institutional and Organisational Development: A Source Book of Tools and Techniques** - referred to in this Note as the **Source Book**)
- Self appraisal using the ecdpm core capabilities set out in Box 1.
- Self appraisal using the individual steps of the research process as the main criteria. This is attached at Annex 1.
- The 7 'S' Model. This looks at the organization's structure, systems, skills, style, strategy, staffing and shared values (see **Source Book**). A simple variant of this is the COPS model-Culture, Organisation, Systems and People.

Institutional
This level of analysis is less susceptible to standard methodologies but it is suggested that the following approach should capture the main issues:

- **Stakeholder** analysis at country or sector level should aim to clarify the key actors involved (government, universities, research institutes, civil society, private sector, international community) in research processes and their degree of influence and impact on the consortium's objectives. It will also clarify how these actors make decisions. A stakeholder analysis tool is included in the **Source Book**.

- **Institutional** analysis will examine the "rules of the game", especially those informal rules which govern how resources are allocated, decisions made, incentives tailored, in the sectors involved. This analysis will also aim to unpack the role of policy makers in the research process and the use of research evidence by policy makers. It should also provide information about the key networks, learning alliances and knowledge hubs in the sectors concerned. Some guidance on how to conduct this analysis is included in the *Source Book.*

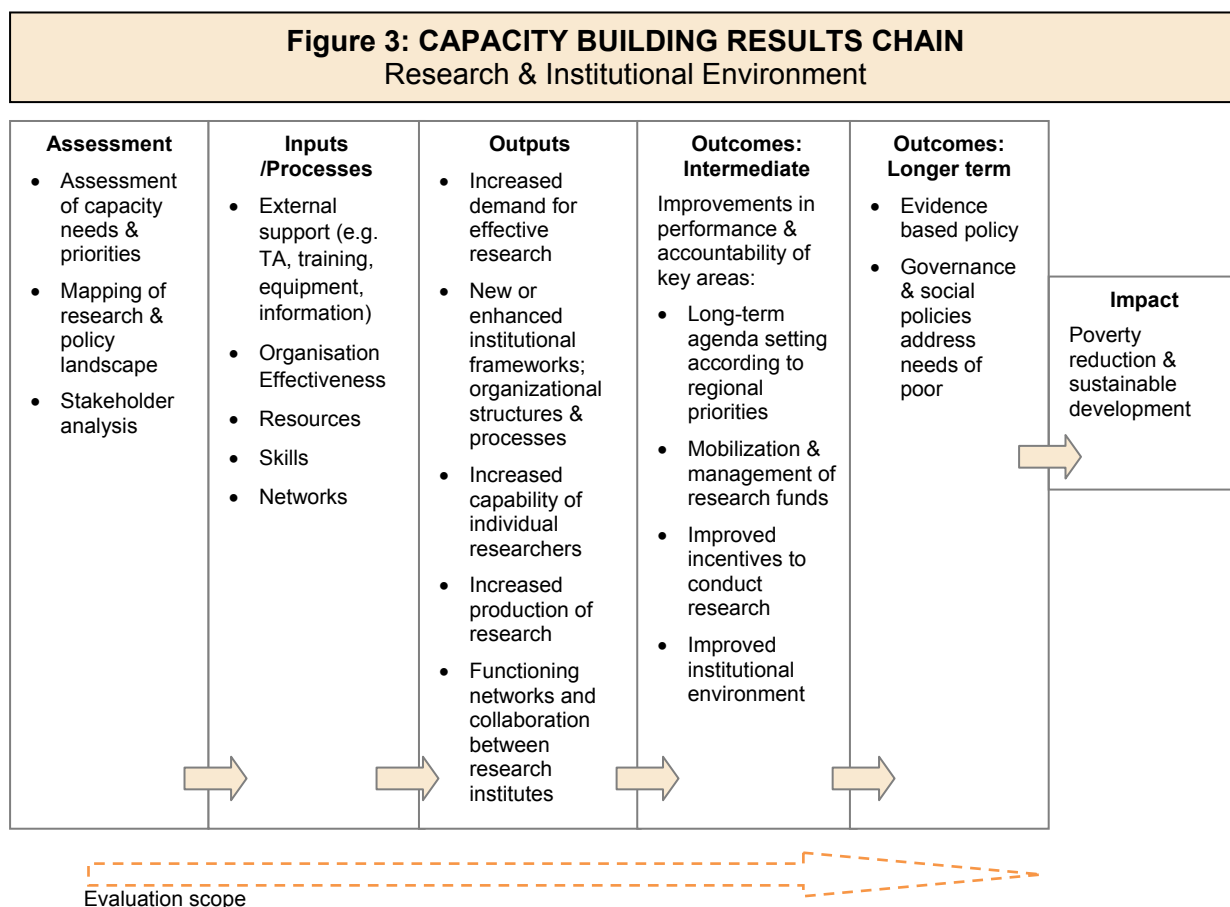This stage should also include **baseline and mapping studies.** Mapping the research and policy landscape will help both to lay the foundations for the operational plan (Step Two) and also provide the baseline for subsequent monitoring and evaluation (Step Four). Mapping studies should develop a deeper understanding of the political and research environment, for example, through examining the demand for research by

examining the policy process and identifying the barriers to greater use of evidence by policy makers. Attempts should be made to develop a database of research institutes and researchers and the quality of research produced in the countries in question.

The outcome of this stage should be a comprehensive picture of strengths and weaknesses at all three levels which permits the identification of priorities, with partners, to tackle in Step Two. Other key outcomes of this stage should be: a shared understanding of the meaning of CB with partners; and a review of the relevant part of the 'Logframe' and the key criteria for assessment as an introduction to Step Two.

3.2. Step Two: Strategise and plan

Planning a CB intervention in a research environment should initially be structured around the desired outcomes from the programme. This requires taking each programme outcome and constructing a list of key activities to deliver the outcome. This approach is illustrated diagrammatically in figure 3 below:

Figure 3: CAPACITY BUILDING RESULTS CHAIN
Research & Institutional Environment

Assessment	Inputs /Processes	Outputs	Outcomes: Intermediate	Outcomes: Longer term	Impact
• Assessment of capacity needs & priorities • Mapping of research & policy landscape • Stakeholder analysis	• External support (e.g. TA, training, equipment, information) • Organisation Effectiveness • Resources • Skills • Networks	• Increased demand for effective research • New or enhanced institutional frameworks; organizational structures & processes • Increased capability of individual researchers • Increased production of research • Functioning networks and collaboration between research institutes	Improvements in performance & accountability of key areas: • Long-term agenda setting according to regional priorities • Mobilization & management of research funds • Improved incentives to conduct research • Improved institutional environment	• Evidence based policy • Governance & social policies address needs of poor	Poverty reduction & sustainable development

Evaluation scope

Balance between results and process

This note has emphasized the importance of a process approach to building capacity. While we must recognize the centrality of learning, adaptation and power relations in CB processes, we must also recognize the need for performance. Performance is an indicator of capacity and without performance capacity building is rather pointless. It is therefore necessary to seek a balance between the importance of process and the critical nature of results and outcomes in the approach.

Plan at individual, organizational and institutional level: it is widely recognized that the building of policy relevant research capacity needs to focus on all three levels to be effective. Most effort has traditionally been focused on individuals, for example through training and scholarship programmes. Interventions which increase the skills base of individuals and the resources of organizations are necessary but not sufficient. It is also necessary to encourage the development of an environment which both rewards and values research and also encourages the development of an environment in which evidence contributes to national policy debates. Support should also extend beyond the technical skills necessary to conduct quality research, to cover the full research cycle from fund raising and project planning through research design and delivery, (including writing up the research), to dissemination and policy engagement.

Some examples, drawn from a group of research consortia based at IDS Sussex, are given below:

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1. The (consortium) on Future Health Systems' capacity building activities have included several research methodology workshops, and collaborative activities in the writing of project proposals, executing research studies and writing for publications. Methods workshops have occurred (at least partially) in response to partner demand.

2. Many of the research centres at IDS have held 'write- shops'. For some the focus has been writing for international publications, for others writing for policy and still others were strengthening capacities to write collaboratively. These specialised training events have generally been focused on the capacity of individuals.

Build on existing assets: planning should aim as far as possible to build on existing assets for research, including: human capital, organizational infrastructure and research networks and communities of practice. Thus assessment and planning should not just focus on weaknesses, but must also build strengths and support broader change in the research environment. This requires an approach which involves extensive peer collaboration to identify priorities for action.

Build an enabling research environment: high quality and policy relevant research emerges from organizational and institutional environments that encourage and facilitate good academic practice. This involves three main activities: research; professional training that leads to intergenerational transfer of research capacity; and participating in the life of a research community and in public debate. Each of these components requires organizational underpinning and institutional incentives. These might include resources such as libraries; and professional rewards such as international recognition.

The Output of this stage should be an Inception Report which must be approved by DFID (or other donor/sponsor) prior to the continuation of the research programme. In this report, programme managers will be expected to outline a capacity building strategy for the programme. This should:

- Spell out key activities at each level over the time period of the programme, including how the consortium will undertake individual and organisational training needs in their partners. Needs assessment will include Northern partners.

- Identify which people and organisations in the consortium will be responsible for which aspects of skills training, management development and organisational change. This is in addition to the development of the more traditional research/methodology skills.

- State which training methods will be used (i.e. distance, classroom-based, open access) for which part of the overall capacity building plan.

- Spell out how the consortium will ensure that all partners are fully engaged in the process so that their concerns are dealt with at an early stage. This will be more difficult to achieve with late joining members of the consortium and those working in fragile states and disruptive environments.

- Identify key risks and a plan to mitigate them.

- Produce costings and timescales for key activities.

- Explain how they will undertake or up-date a baseline survey against which to measure progress and describe monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

A word of caution. It is easy to get carried away in producing a highly logical plan relying on prediction, goal setting, hierarchical structures and top-down strategy. And, in order to produce a 'Logframe', you will need to do this - and there is no doubt that it provides an excellent starting point. But, few capacity building strategies work well as 'blueprints'. There is no tool box which can guarantee effective capacity building. Partners need to think carefully about the appropriateness of different strategic approaches as stakeholders become more aware of the nature of their capacity challenge, the demands of different stakeholders and the dynamics of their own organization or system. Plans need to be updated regularly to reflect the changing reality and the growing awareness of stakeholders.

3.3 Step Three: Implementation
Capacity building is often thought of in terms of "machine building" – the bolting on of different parts to form a whole. Some elements of capacity (formal training, equipment, even managerial mentoring) can be supplied in this way, other less tangible elements such as ownership, identity, legitimacy and values cannot. Because CB has to take account of politics and power relations, the process is as much about negotiation and accommodation as it is about the supply of resources and tangible assets. Thus in seeking to support CB processes, it is vital that external actors are able to identify the factors that can stimulate or inhibit CB; and which will differ from one context to another and which will evolve over time. The implementation stage must balance the requirement to build ownership, motivation, professional pride and respect for high research standards with the specific inputs and outputs identified in the planning stage.

Successful implementation requires considerable skills, particularly in the field of Organisation Development (OD). **Organisation Development may be defined as the**

systemwide application of behavioural science knowledge to the planned development, improvement, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures, and processes that lead to organization effectiveness (Organisation Development and Change by Cummings and Worley. Pub: Thomson Learning, 2000). It is not possible to do justice to the full range of activities required but particular attention needs to be given to the following:

- **Programme management:** programme managers and advisers will not be active players throughout the change process but will have critical roles, for example, in nurturing ownership of the process by the organization, including establishing a relationship with the change sponsor; and in ensuring there is an adequate implementation plan.

- **Support for sponsors/champions and change agents:** the sponsor's role is critical. This is a person at the top of the organization who undertakes leadership of the change programme; secures public and political commitment; deals with critics and decides how to solve problems. Supporting the sponsor is one of the programme manager's most important tasks.

- **Skills and resources:** it is vital to establish early credibility by taking action to help remedy the skills and resources priority gaps identified in step one. This might range from support to individuals to help on curriculum development for University based partners.

- **Develop the interface between policy and research:** three key points emerge from research: first, investment in rigour and quality is a necessary if not sufficient condition for helping ensure that research can contribute to evidence informed policy making. Secondly, "impact" may often result, over the longer term, through the growing professional stature and mobility of gifted and committed individuals. Thirdly, a range of mechanisms, not necessarily integrated directly into a particular research program, can prove cost effective in linking research to public policy. (i.e. Academics writing articles for local newspapers)

- **Consolidating change:** this involves ensuring that the motivation for change is maintained and, later, advice on mainstreaming the new way of working as part of normal procedure. It should also involve supporting networks and partnerships by creating incentives for inter-organisational collaboration. Networks should include not only universities and research institutes, but all relevant actors, such as consumers/users, including policy makers, and the private sector.

- **Using outside expertise:** many definitions of OD emphasise the need to involve outside specialists who can facilitate and steer the change processes objectively and sympathetically. Being independent they are not seen as agents of any particular agenda. A serious, programmatic approach to organisational and institutional CB requires engaging an Organisational Development specialist as a fully-fledged partner. Guidance on a set of criteria for the assessment of research bids, focusing on the requirement for CB, is contained in the DFID publication: "Developing the Capacity of Research Systems in Developing Countries: Lessons Learnt and Guidelines for Future Initiatives" (September 2005). An abridged version is attached at Annex 4.

- **Developing an enabling environment:** it is crucial to foster an environment which supports the production of high quality research and, typically this will involve addressing the incentive structure which supports the production of high quality research. An example of how this might be fostered is given in the following example from the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) introduced a cycle of biannual workshops, featuring new proposals, work in progress, and final reports. These have been a major factor in shaping the community of professional economists in the region. Their specific objectives were:

- First and foremost was the need to assemble, especially for those economists working in isolated settings, a critical mass of fellow professionals able to critique their work.
- Second was the desire to establish a tradition of peer review.
- Third, to encourage joint learning, through personal exposure to other ongoing research and commissioned surveys of various topics.
- Fourth, to circumvent the "godfather system". In some instances, proposals submitted by an established scholar were actually presented by a more junior colleague, and the resultant grant was then redirected to the individual(s) who were the ones responsible for it.
- Fifth, the need to meet the deadline of a biannual 'call' proved a very strong inducement for researchers to produce.
- Finally, repeated exposure to a large audience of fellow economists and leading international experts significantly improved the communication and presentation skills of researchers.

Further guidance on implementation is contained in the DFID publication: Promoting Institutional and Organisational Development (2003).

Finally, it is important to ensure that certain core building blocks are put in place to promote CB at each of the three levels: individual, organizational and institutional. An example of these is shown below.

Approach: Interventions at three levels

Individual	Organisation	Institutional
Scholarships programme	Research grants directed to identified resource needs	Review incentive structure to encourage research
Training in research methods	Develop and build mentor programmes for post graduate students	Change dynamics of North/South partnerships and build South/South partnerships
Research grants directed to promising individuals	Build capacity to review and develop curriculae at university level	Establish networks of and greater interfaces between policy makers and researchers
Build research, research management and writing skills	Facilitate better access to bibliographic resources	Support change leaders seeking to change perceptions of value of research
Facilitate the engagement of southern researchers in international debates	Advice on the provision of a research management office	Encourage more attention to QA/standard raising process

3.4 Step Four: Monitoring and Evaluation

The same balance to be struck between "process" and "performance", hat was highlighted in the planning and implementation stages, also needs to be present in Monitoring & Evaluation. CB is not a stable target: people change and contexts change. The approach to M&E for CB must be flexible enough to adapt to all the changes inherent in CB, and must ensure that learning is captured. Thus consideration must be given to both organizational learning and external accountability requirements. M&E systems should be able take account of process as well as outcomes. At the same time, M&E systems need to be kept simple in order to avoid burdening organizations with complex and time consuming demands that may lose support. M&E must start with the logframe.

There are four key principles of this stage to appreciate from an M&E perspective.

1. **Logframe outcomes and indicators** must include "process" as well as "product" indicators to reflect desired changes in attitudes and behaviour as well as more tangible results.

2. There should be a clear link to the **baseline mapping studies** (i.e. what level of capacity existed when we started) carried out at the assessment stage. It must be possible to track changes in key indicators over time, even if direct causal links cannot always be made.

3. The **logframe outcomes and key indicators** should be reviewed as part of the inception phase and adjusted as necessary in the course of interventions. The iterative nature of CB must be reflected both in implementation and in a greater degree of flexibility in M&E approaches.

4. Methods of M&E should be evolved which respect the **partnership and ownership** ethos of the CB approach. This means helping to develop a local M&E capacity and using methods which, as far as possible, involve internal actors as active participants in the M&E process. At the same time, participation is costly in terms of time, resources, skills and leadership; this dilemma leads to trade-offs between respecting the process and getting things done.

Methods

• Guidance on conducting monitoring and evaluation in research has been issued in a report: **"Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for DFID Research: CNTR 20080542"** by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) (April 2009.) This report highlights the problems of attributing outcomes to specific DFID inputs: **"there is the difficulty of relating relatively modest inputs to outcomes that are subject to a very large number of other influences".** This is particularly true in the area of capacity building. Nevertheless, the report has developed "generic" indicators for the three "strategic results areas" of DFID Research, including **"capability to do research strengthened".** The indicators for this result area are 'work in progress' and insufficiently specific (and SMART) to be to be of direct relevance for CB evaluation. Both DFID and research managers will need to work together to improve the quality and relevance of the M & E indicators. However, the report on "Developing the Capacity of Research Systems in Developing Countries" referred to earlier, highlights a number of generic indicators that could, when developed, form the basis of M&E of the CB component of a research programme. These are attached at Annex 5.

The OPM report emphasizes the difficulty of measuring the **impact** of expenditure on research activities. There are a number of reasons for this. They include the perennial problems of causation and attribution as well as the length of time that may elapsed

before any particular activity will result in impact. However possible ways of assessing impact include:

- **End user surveys**: these could be carried out at key points in the programme to collect opinions on research outcomes and CB impact from key stakeholders. Electronic means of collection should facilitate this process.
- **Case studies**: case studies and other qualitative processes such as interviews and story gathering are an important complement to quantitative monitoring, and can be a useful tool in demonstrating the effective use of research funds. They also provide learning for donors as well as evidence about the effectiveness of certain processes and activities.
- **Self assessment**: encouraging the recipients of research funding to conduct their own rigorous assessment of impact is an important step in capacity building. This could, for example involve a repeat of the baseline and mapping studies carried in step one. As long as the criteria were established and updated in the inception phase, this should provide a view of impact over the life of the programme.

Attempts to ascertain whether, in fact, capacities were developed through participation in research programmes have so far been inadequate. As the recent IDS study points out:

A few of the new RPCs have identified indicators for capacity development but they have not yet evaluated their efforts (Standing and Hunter, 2006). The 2004 mid-term review of the Citizenship DRC did assess the centre's capacity development initiative as well as research and dissemination and policy influencing programmes. There is a lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation systems that can assess the extent to which capacity has been developed at the level of the organisation and enabling environment.

The UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS) have synthesized a number of the lessons learned on M&E into the following key points:

Summary of key points:

- **Developing a clear understanding of the change to which an organization or programme is hoping to contribute, will enable better design, implementation and evaluation.**
- **The vision of success for a programme represents the world view of those who designed it. Involving groups at whom the programme is targeted could improve the chances that the programme will support outcomes that are meaningful to those groups.**
- **The questions of why are you evaluating and for whom are fundamental questions that need to be addressed at the start of the programme.**
- **If the purpose of the programme is to support and strengthen local capacity, then determining if the capacity strengthening is meaningful to the actors whose capacity is being supported should be a significant part of the evaluation.**
- **The imperative to demonstrate impact to funders or governing boards can result in a focus on success stories, neglecting the useful lessons that can be learned from failure.**

3.5 Reporting Arrangements for DFID consortia

The analysis, the plans, the implementation and the M and E of the CB plan need to be written up in Reports. All DFID Research consortia are required to submit an Inception Report and Annual Reports. In addition to the traditional requirements, Annual Reports should include a capacity building section providing:

- An update on progress of the Capacity Building Strategy, and reporting against the Capacity Building Plan which derives from the Strategy.

- An update on progress measured at the Individual and Organisational levels (and as far as possible the Institutional level).

- Reporting of South: South linkages and networks which assist with the sustainability of the organisations and institutions whose capacity has been built.

Further guidance on the role of DFID or other donors in supporting CB and in fostering local ownership and good communications is attached at Annex 6.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Lessons learned

It follows from everything that this HTN has covered that effective CB depends on the relationships between the actors, the context and the measures chosen. What works in one context will not necessarily work in another. However, there are a few generic recommendations from the ECDPM report and the data gathered as part of the background to the Research Strategy 2008-13 that highlight some of the critical lessons learned for development agencies and which are summarized below.

Box 3: Lessons learned:

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1. **Find ways to unleash the potential for capacity building:** This means paying less attention to gaps, and more to building on strengths and developing commitment.

2. **Effective leadership is critical**: at the core of effective capacity building is personal energy, motivation, commitment and persistence.

3. **Emphasise learning and adaptation**: the process of CB needs to be shaped by adaptation, experimentation, learning and adjustment.

4. **Put more emphasis on understanding country context, identifying appropriate partners and building relationships**: by finding the right balance between coordination of the research, engaging in policy dialogue and in the acquisition of knowledge through interpersonal contacts and field experience.

5. **Develop the 'capabilities' or skills required to address capacity issues**: addressing the implications of capacity development outlined in this Note will require increased investments in the issue by outside facilitators and greater emphasis on the development of in-depth cultural understanding of partner countries.

6. **Ensuring full local ownership:** local ownership of any externally driven CB intervention is crucial. It must be designed and implemented by national actors and not dominated by Northern researchers.

7. **Develop the interface between policy and research:** investment in rigour and quality of research is a necessary if not sufficient condition for helping to ensure that research can contribute to evidence informed policy making.

8. **Develop an enabling environment:** and examine the incentives and constraints influencing the production of high quality research and its use by policy makers.

4.2 Practical Examples

These lessons are illustrated by a number of examples of good practice, drawn from a variety of sources-the African Economic Research Consortium, IDS research and various RPCs-which help to illuminate the variety and richness of the approaches which can be taken to develop capacity in the research context.

The examples provided in Annex 7 cover:

- **Interface between policy and research.**
- **Curriculum Development**
- **Collaborative Learning and Practice**
- **Developing Southern Leadership/Ownership**

To comment on this 'How to Note' please get in touch with the authors. Dr R Thomas (rht2010@onetel.net) or David Wilson (davidw1@btinternet.com)

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LIST OF ANNEXES

1. **The research process**

2 **Resources and reference materials**

3. **Research Programme Consortia: Guidance Note on Capacity Building (DFID publication, June 2009)**

4. **Criteria for assessment of CB proposals.**

5. **Monitoring and evaluation generic indicators.**

6. **Role of DFID or other donors**

7. **Examples of good practice**

Research Process Flowchart

1. Make ideas into a researchable question
Is it new/interesting
What is the hypothesis

2. Systematic Review of the Literature

3. Design the Study and identify/develop the appropriate Methods
Identify collaborators
Case Studies/Multivariate Analysis/mixed methods

4. Develop research proposal
Including objectives, methods, hypotheses, staffing, etc

5. Funding Issues,
Sources of Funds and threats to independence
Cost of Staff, Equipment, Travel etc

6. Research Governance, ethical and other approvals
Visas, security in Conflict States
Data Protection

7. Collect and Collate the Data

8. Analyse the Data and Interpret Findings
Use of Quantitative and Qualitative approaches

9. Implications of the Research for Theory/Policy/Practice
Evidence based Policy
Commercial Implications

10. Write up Research and Disseminate Findings
Communications Strategy

(Source NIHR/RT)

Resources and Reference Materials

Below are a list of web resources, books and reports on capacity building, higher education and monitoring and evaluation. This is not a comprehensive list, but a selection of reports that may be of interest. This list is heavily indebted to the work of UKCDS. Web links are provided to most reports.

Reports

M&E Capacity building
Davies, R. and J. Dart. (2005) The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use. http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

*Engel, P., N. Keijzer & T. Land. (2007) A balanced approach to monitoring and evaluating capacity and performance: A proposal for a framework. Discussion Paper 58E. European Centre for Development Policy Management: Maastricht, The Netherlands. 17 pages www.ecdpm.org/dp58E

Hailey J, James R, Wrigley R (2005) Rising to the Challenges: Assessing the Impacts of Organisational Capacity Building INTRAC http://www.intrac.org/pages/PraxisPaper2.html

Horton, D (2002) Planning, implementing, and evaluating capacity development. ISNAR Briefing Paper No. 50. 8 pages www.ifpri.org/isnararchive/publicat/bp-50.pdf

Horton et al. (2003) Developing and evaluating capacity in R&D organizations. ISNAR Briefing Paper No. 62. 8 pages. www.ifpri.org/isnararchive/publicat/bp-62.pdf

Horton, D., A. Alexaki, S. Bennet-Lartey, K. Noële Brice, D. Campilan, F. Carden, J. de Souza Silva, L. Thanh Duong, I. Khadar, A. Maestrey Boza, I, Kayes Muniruzzaman, J. Perez, M. Somarriba Chang, R. Vernooy, J. Watts. (2003) Evaluating Capacity Development: Experiences from Research and Development Organizations around the World. ISNAR, IDRC & CTA. 170 pages. www.idrc.ca/en/ev-31556-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

James, R (2005) Praxis Note 15 'Quick and Dirty' Evaluation of Capacity Building INTRAC http://www.intrac.org/pages/PraxisNote15.html

James R (2000) Practical Guidelines for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity Building INTRAC http://www.intrac.org/docs/Ops36.pdf

Mayne, J. (2001) Addressing attribution through contribution analysis: using performance measures sensibly. Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation (Vol. 16 No. 1).

Ogiogio Gene (2005) Measuring Performance of Interventions in Capacity Building: Some Fundamentals The African Capacity Building Foundation http://www.acbf-pact.org/knowledge/documents/Occasional_Paper_4.pdf

Patton, M.Q. (2002) Utilization-focused evaluation (U-FE) checklist. Evaluation Checklists Project. www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists

Thiele, G., A. Devaux, C. Velasco, and D. Horton (2007) Horizontal Evaluation: Fostering Knowledge Sharing and Program Improvement within a Network. American Journal of Evaluation (28,4) Pp. 493-508.

Research Capacity Building

Chataway, Smith, and Wield (2005) Partnerships and Building Capabilities for Science, Technology, Innovation and Development in Africa
http://www.open.ac.uk/ikd/workingpapers/workingpaper_02.pdf

Gaillard, Zink, and Furo Tullberg (2002) Strengthening Science Capacity in Tanzania – An Impact Analysis of IFS Support International Foundation for Science
http://www.ifs.se/Publications/Mesia/MESIA_4_Tanzania_Report.pdf

Kaufmann (2008) SCARDA briefing papers – Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa – volume 3 Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) http://www.fara-africa.org/media/uploads/File/FARA%20Publications/SCARDA/SCARDA_Volume_3.pdf

Jones, N and Young J (2007) Setting The Scene: Situating DFID's Research Funding Policy and Practice in an International Comparative Perspective. ODI
http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/consultation/Setting_the_Scene.pdf

Jones, N Bailey and Lyytikäinen (2007) Research Capacity Strengthening in Africa: Trends, Gaps and Opportunities (A scoping study commissioned by DFID on behalf of IFORD) ODI
http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/Research-capacity-strengthening-in-Africa.pdf

Nuyens Y (2005) No Development without Research – A Challenge for Research Capacity Strengthening Global Forum for Health Research
http://www.globalforumhealth.org/filesupld/RCS/RCS_Nuyens.pdf

Pound B and Adolph B (2005). Developing the Capacity of Research Systems in Developing Countries: Lessons Learnt and Guidelines for Future Initiatives. Study commissioned by DFID and produced by Natural Resources Institute
www.gre.ac.uk

DFID (2005). Communication of Research: Guidance Notes for Research Programme Consortia

Capacity building (general) and Organisation Development

Baser, H. & P. Morgan. (2008) Capacity, change and performance. ECDPM Discussion Paper No 59B. European Centre for Development Policy Management: Maastricht, The Netherlands. 157 pages (www.ecdpm.org/dp59B)

French W and Bell C, *Organisational Development*, Prentice Hall

Beckhard Richard and Pritchard Wendy (1992). *Changing the Essence: the art of creating and leading fundamental change in organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Cockman, Peter, Evans, Bill, and Reynolds, Peter (1992) *Client-Centred Consulting: a practical guide for internal advisers and trainers*. London: McGraw-Hill

Oomkes F and Thomas R*. Cross cultural communication*. Gower

Senge, Peter. *The Fifth Discipline: Fieldbook*. Strategies and tools for building a learning organization. Nicholas Brearley Publishing

Schein, Edgard. *Process Consultation: its role in organization development*. Reading Ma. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Cummings T and Worley C (2001). *Organisation Development and Change*. South Western, Thomson Learning

Wilson, D and Gill, S (2003). *Promoting Institutional and Organisational Development*. DFID

Wilson D (2003). *Promoting Institutional and Organisational Development. A Source Book of Tools and Techniques.* DFID

Clarke, P and Taylor, P (2008) *- Capacity for a change*
http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.cfm?objectid=455012CB-5056-8171-7B162C3FBE381BDF

Land, A. (2000) Implementing Institutional and Capacity Development: Conceptual and Operational Issues (ECDPM Discussion Paper 14). Maastricht: ECDPM.
http://spiderman.ecdpm.org/Web_ECDPM/Web/Content/Navigation.nsf/index2?readform&http://spiderman.ecdpm.org/Web_ECDPM/Web/Content/Content.nsf/80ba021853007405c1256c790053145c/ca6836bb566e9fdec1256c6f005cc67c?OpenDocument

Morgan (2008) Capacity, Change and Performance – Study Report
http://www.ukcds.org.uk/_assets/_downloads/CapacityChangePerformanceReport.pdf

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Carlos Lopes, and Khalid Malik(2002) Capacity for Development – New Solutions to Old Problems Earthscan and UNDP
http://www.energyandenvironment.undp.org/index.cfm?module=Library&page=Document&DocumentID=4997

Universities and higher education

Bloom, D, D. Canning, K. Chan (2005) Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa, World Bank, Washington
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079956815/HigherEd_Econ_Growth_Africa.pdf

Holtland, G. and A. Boeren (2006) Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Sub-Saharan Africa: the role of international capacity building programmes for higher education and research, NUFFIC, The Hague www.nuffic.nl/pdf/os/Achieving-millennium-goals.pdf

Jones, N., J. Young (2007) Research Funding Policy and Practice in an International Comparative Perspective. A scoping study commissioned by DFID Central Research

Department, ODI, London
www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/Setting_the_Scene.pdf

Kapur, D and M. Crowley (2008) Beyond the ABCs: Higher Education in Developing Countries, Center for Global Development, Washington
www.cgdev.org/files/15310_file_HigherEd.pdf

Manuh, T., S. Gariba, J. Budu (2007) Change & Transformation in Ghana's Publicly Funded Universities, James Currey, London. (also available at http://www.foundation-partnership.org/pubs/ghana/ghana_2007.pdf)

Musisi, N.B., N.K. Muwanga (2003) Makerere University in Transition, 1993-2000: Opportunities and Challenges, James Currey, London (also available at www.foundation-partnership.org/pubs/makerere/uganda_2003.pdf)

Saint, W. (1992) Universities in Africa: Strategies for Stabilization and Revitalization (World Bank Technical Paper no. 194, Africa Technical Department series)
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRREGTOPTEIA/Resources/Universities_in_Africa_Saint.pdf

Sawyerr, A. (2002) Challenges Facing African Universities: Selected Issues, Association of African Universities, Accra www.aau.org/english/documents/asa-challenges.pdf

World Bank (2002) Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education, World Bank, Washington http://go.worldbank.org/GX5J0A0KK0

World Bank (2003) Improving Tertiary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Things that Work! Report of a regional training conference held in Accra, Ghana on September 22-25, 2003
http://go.worldbank.org/O7WCUFC4I0

Resources

MandE
A news service focusing on developments in monitoring and evaluation methods relevant to development programmes with social development objectives
http://mande.co.uk/

Capacity Development Network (Capacity-Net)
An informal and external network open to development practitioners engaged in capacity development work. It is a moderated e-mail network hosted by the UNDP Capacity Development Group. The main objective of the network is to create an environment that is conducive to exchange knowledge and experiences between people working on capacity development issues. To request membership, send an e-mail to the Network Facilitator, Jayne Musumba or to capacity-net@groups.undp.org.

Institutional Learning and Change Initiative (ILAC)
An evolving community of individuals committed to increasing the contributions of agricultural research to sustainable poverty reduction. The group uses innovation systems thinking and

tools to understand agricultural change processes and guide interventions to stimulate pro-poor innovation.
www.cgiar-ilac.org

Capacity.org Newsletter A web magazine-come-portal intended for practitioners and policy makers who work in or on capacity development in international cooperation in the South.
www.Capacity.Org

European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)
This centre helps countries in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean to build effective partnerships, including strengthening their institutions and capacities to develop policies for development and poverty reduction. It includes a knowledge and innovation section.
www.ecdpm.org

International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC)
This centre provides advice and training on strengthening management and organisational effectiveness under its capacity building area, focusing on strategies for organisational capacity building through practice and research; and working in partnership with local support organizations.
www.intrac.org

Simon & Schuster International.
Probably the biggest supplier of OD diagnostic and reference materials in the world.

DFID RESEARCH

Guidance Note on Capacity Building

This note should be read in conjunction with the Research Programme Consortia (RPC) Terms of Reference and other RPC guidance that can be found on the DFID website: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/guidance.asp

Definitions

1. The need to build Research Capacity in our Southern research partnerships features strongly in DFID's Research Strategy (2008-2013 http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/Research-Strategy-08.pdf). In addition to six focal research areas defined in the Research Strategy there are four strategic results areas, one of which is that **we will seek to strengthen capacity to do and use research**.

2. DFID recognises that the ability to plan, undertake, access and use research is interrelated. The Research Strategy commits DFID to a focus on improving research capability by supporting environments that encourage people to use research. This means improving researchers' skills as well as their access to research information and resources.

3. Capacity Building within the context of DFID Research is defined as **enhancing the abilities of individuals, organisations and systems to undertake and disseminate high quality research efficiently and effectively.** There are 3 levels of Capacity Building :

   - **Individual:** involving the development of researchers and teams via training and scholarships, to design and undertake research, write up and publish research findings, influence policy makers, etc.

   - **Organisational:** developing the capacity of research departments in universities, thinks tanks and so on, to fund, manage and sustain themselves.

   - **Institutional:** changing the 'rules of the game' and addressing the incentive structures, the political and the regulatory context and the resource base in which research is undertaken and used by policy makers.

The goal of capacity building, for DFID, is **to facilitate individual and organisational learning which builds social capital and trust, develops knowledge, skills and attitudes and when successful creates an organisational culture which enables organisations to set objectives, achieve results, solve problems, and create adaptive procedures which enable them to survive in the long run.**

The Current Situation

4. It is accepted that many existing Research Programme Consortia have expended a great deal of time and effort in capacity development and have, for example, delivered short courses in research design, writing for academic purposes and so on. Some have encouraged extensive South-South engagement and ensured that the partnership has been as equal as possible .However, much of the capacity building work has been done at the individual level and some has not gone much beyond the traditional level of

scholarships and attendance at conferences. The consultations on the new Research Strategy noted a measure of short-termism and identified too many relationships based on extraction rather than collaboration.

The Future

5. The new Research Strategy provides an opportunity to change the 'rules of the game ' with respect to collaborative international research. Most RPCs will be larger in scope, will have bigger budgets and will require consortia to spend more time and energy building longer-term sustainable research organisations as well as investing in individuals who work in them.

6. This approach carries at least three risks

    *   **That capacity building diverts attention away from the primary purpose of delivering high quality research**:   There can be tensions between these two objectives and in general the research objectives take priority. However in some contexts, such as fragile states where academic and research capacity has been severely undermined for various reasons it may not possible or desirable for foreign researchers to operate without local counterparts. In some cases these counterparts will need more support than their equivalents in less damaged environments. This will need to be explained in the partnership arrangements and included in the work plans which accompany the first year Inception Report. The incorporation of a one year inception phase to prepare the ground for the five year RPC research programme will provide more time to develop and initiate a successful capacity building programme.

    *   **Academic and research staff from the lead organisation (contract holder) may feel that they do not have the skills or experience to do effective capacity building.** This is often the case but the enhanced budget and priority for capacity building means that 'traditional ' research leaders may look to work together with other organisations such as business schools or consultancies specialising in organisational development and change management to deliver the capacity building aspects of the programme. These organisations may be based in the north or the south and would include all the RPC partners in their programmes.

    *   **Institutional Rigidities.** Perverse incentives may encourage dysfunctional organisational structures and 'rules of the game'. For example senior academics may not wish to empower their junior colleagues or share consultancy opportunities; younger colleagues might wish to protect their familiarity with new technology or new research methods, and University administrators might make it difficult for favoured faculties to benefit directly from regional and international networks. These concerns and the related one that some researchers might join a consortium primarily to obtain funding for their own pet topic rather than join in with the broad purposes of the programme have been mentioned in the Research Strategy consultations. While these problem can be overstated, they are examples of a range of cultural/attitudinal issues which can only be addressed if the partnerships are open and trust-based and if the RPC leadership is quite explicit about their interest (if necessary) in changing the rules of the game in the interest of better research. The area is a complex one and will need a high degree of expertise and sensitivity. It will be necessary to guard against negative unexpected consequences.

Managing Capacity Building

7. In the new RPCs we will expect the RPC management to be explicit about the steps they will take to assist in the development of sustainable capacity at the **Individual** and

Organisational levels. These should be summarised as a Log-Frame Output. As with other Outputs, these should be outlined in the initial proposals and filled out in more detail in the Inception Report. The Annual Reports will contain a section on capacity building. The issue of facilitating and reporting on changes at the **Institutional** level is more problematic. We cannot force cultural and attitudinal changes nor expect the rules to change because we wish them to. However, an awareness of these issues and a willingness to discuss them with partners and take joint action where appropriate is something we will look for in our RPC managers and their partners.

Operational Steps

8. All RPCs will submit an Inception Report towards the end of the inception phase which must be approved by DFID prior to the continuation of the RPC programme. In this report RPCs will be expected to outline a **Capacity Building Strategy** for the programme. This will:

- Spell out how the RPC will undertake individual and organisational training needs in their partners. Needs assessment will include Northern partners.

- Identify which people and organisations in the RPC will be responsible for which aspects of skills training, management development and organisational change. This is in addition to the development of the more traditional research/methodology skills.

- State which training methods the RPC will use (i.e. distance, classroom-based, open access) for which part of the overall capacity building plan.

- Spell out how the RPC will ensure that all partners are fully engaged in the process so that their concerns are dealt with at an early stage. This will be more difficult to achieve with late joining members of the RPC and those working in fragile states and disruptive environments.

- Explain how they will undertake or up-date a baseline survey against which to measure progress.

9. All RPCs will submit Annual Reports to DFID. Annual Reports will include a capacity building section and RPCs will be required to provide:

- An update on progress of the Capacity Building Strategy, and reporting against the Capacity Building Plan which derives from the Strategy.

- An update on progress measured at the Individual and Organisational levels (and as far as possible the Institutional level).

- Reporting of South: South linkages and networks which assist in the sustainability of the overall objective of Capacity Building

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Ten Steps to Good Capacity Building

1. Identify, with partners, what knowledge and skills will be needed to undertake high quality research.
2. Ensure that all partners/team members understand the implications for Capacity Building at the 3 levels - Individual, Organisational and Institutional - and understand that this goes beyond skills training and PhD programmes.
3. Undertake a Training Needs/Gap Analysis and Organisational Assessment of programme partners and key stakeholders to identify capacity building requirements. Use the data to construct a baseline for M&E purposes
4. Develop a Capacity Building 'plan of action' which is realistic in terms of inputs, time frame, methodology and cost. Ensure that it is focussed on research excellence.
5. Undertake Risk and Sensitivity Analysis of the Capacity Building plan to ensure it is robust, flexible and not excessively optimistic
6. Identify providers with the necessary expertise to deliver the Capacity Building programme from within, or if necessary outside, the consortium
7. Get agreement on the Capacity Building plan from partners and donors via the Inception Phase Report. This Report should also include the M&E arrangements for the capacity building activities over the life of the programme. Risks/Methods/Focus will be reviewed annually.
8. Identify networking and South-South opportunities to support capacity building, particularly at the Individual and Organisational levels
9. Initiate the Capacity Building Plan
10. Monitor and report on progress regularly. Look particularly for ways of facilitating change and development at the Institutional ('rules of the game') level, so that good research is produced by sustainable organisations.

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Selected Websites and Publications

10. The following is a small selection of publications recommended for further reading on capacity building:

- Many of the ideas leading to the change of approach to CB are summarised in <u>DFID's Research Strategy on Capacity Building</u>,(2008).

- The best of the recent attempts to provide useable definitions of capacity building are provided in a series of Papers from the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). The ECDPM studied the capacity of organisations, mainly in low income countries, assessing development over time and the relationship to improved performance. The key document in this series is *Capacity, Change and Performance* (H. Baser and P. Morgan , ECDPM, April 2008 (pp100+)).

- DFID funded a series of research papers by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) pertaining to capacity building: (i) *Building Capacity in Southern Research: A Study to map existing Initiatives* (ODI, London, 2001); (ii) *Setting the Scene: Situating DFID's Research Funding Policy and Practise in an International Comparative Perspective*, (ODI, London, June 2007).

- Horton, Douglas, 2003. *Evaluating Capacity Development: Experiences from Research and Development Organizations around the World*. IDRC, Canada.

11. **The following is a selection of website resources on capacity building including tools and training:**

- The **European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)** helps countries in Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to build effective partnerships, including strengthening their institutions and capacities to develop policies for development and poverty reduction. It includes a knowledge and innovation section that consider capacity development and hosts news and reports on the issue: http://www.ecdpm.org/

- **Capacity.org** is a web-based magazine and portal for practitioners and policy makers who work in or on capacity development in international cooperation in the South. It includes quarterly journal and a sections on tools, methods and practice reports: http://www.capacity.org

- The **International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC)** provides advice and training on strengthening management and organisational effectiveness under its Capacity Building area, focussing on strategies for organisational capacity building through practice and research; and working in partnership with local support organisations. It incorporates a strong focus on participatory development: http://www.intrac.org

Criteria for the assessment of capacity development proposals

This set of criteria for the assessment of CD proposals is based on the report by Barry Pound and Barbara Adolph: **Developing the Capacity of Research Systems in Developing Countries: Lessons Learnt and Guidelines for Future Initiatives. (September 2005).**

To what extent is CD integrated into the overall research proposal?
- Does the overall research proposal contain a CD strategy and implementation plan
- Will the CD proposed lead to the research system being more able to contribute to the reduction of poverty and progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals
- Will the capacity development proposed lead to an increased and sustainable improvement in national research capability
- Does the proposed CD plan meet the needs of the research programme (N.B. there must be clear research objectives and clear CD objectives)
- Are CD outcomes included in the logframe as an Output
- What proportion of overall budget is allocated to CD. Does the CD plan have sufficient flexibility to cater for CD needs that arise in the course of the programme

Is the CD plan based on adequate analysis of the situation?
- What evidence is there of the analysis (done or proposed) of the regional, national or sectoral innovation system and its CD needs
- Does the proposal demonstrate an understanding of existing capacity and future requirements; is there an agreed strategy between stakeholders for, and commitment to, meeting these requirements
- Does the proposed capacity development programme have an appropriate balance between human resource development, improving the internal organisational environment and enhancing links between local, national and international stakeholders (see Figure One)
- Does the proposed CD take full account of the national or regional innovation environment (Figure One). Where the internal or national environments limit the impact of CD, what mitigation mechanisms are proposed
- Is there evidence that the proposers understand the differences in agendas and working practices between public and private stakeholders in an innovation system and how this will affect CD activities

Is the CD strategy likely to contribute to a significant shift towards an Innovation Systems approach?
- Will the CD initiatives proposed contribute to an IS approach being mainstreamed by national research systems
- Does the proposal balance the need for technical excellence with the new demands for a shift towards an innovation system approach (e.g. building and maintaining partnerships, developing linkage mechanisms, involvement of non-traditional research partners, facilitation, negotiation, conflict management etc.)
- Are Southern partners included in the planning, delivery and assessment of the CD programme
- Are CD interventions off-the-shelf or tailored to the specific circumstances and development needs of the IS partnership
- Does the CD involve only research staff from formal research organisations, or does it also involve actors from different parts of the innovation system

- Is there an appropriate balance in the CD proposed between technology generation, dissemination and use

How strong will ownership of the CD plan be by developing country partners?
- Was the proposed CD programme developed with national IS partners in a participatory way
- Is there "buy-in" (leading to material and systems support) from the heads of the organisations involved
- To what extent is the CD proposal North (supply) driven and to what extent is it South (demand) driven
- Is there representation and involvement of in-country stakeholders in CD decision-making
- Are there national forums to oversee research and CD activities (e.g. Steering Committees)
- Does the proposed CD reflect the perspectives and perceived needs of developing country stakeholders
- Do proposals show how organisations, groups or individuals will be selected for CD
- How is equitable access to CD opportunities safeguarded

How sustainable will CD initiatives be?
- To what extent will the CD create a dependence on external support, and to what extent will it empower local self-reliance or self-determination
- Will the CD lead to long-term changes in: a) attitudes and behaviour, and b) systems and processes in developing country research systems
- Does the proposal show how capacity will be retained
- What provision is there for backstopping, support and follow-up of CD activities
- Are the conditions in place for the capacity developed to be fully utilised in the short and medium terms
- Is there institutionalisation of the CD measures (vertical scaling up of the capacity)
- Is building local training systems (including curriculum development) part of the proposed CD (part of horizontal scaling out)
- What provision is there for "multiplication" of the capacity within country; e.g. through ToT schemes (part of horizontal scaling out)
- Is there a risk that the CD programme proposed will lead to an isolated cadre of national scientists, causing jealousy and resentment
- If the CD is within a finite project or programme situation, what provision is there to continue or to support the CD effort after the end of the project

Do the proposed CD initiatives complement existing initiatives/capacities?
- Does the proposal relate to and complement other CD initiatives (local, national, international) that apply to its technical and geographical mandate (including DFID bilateral programmes)
- Does the CD build on existing capacities, existing CD initiatives and facilities, and existing knowledge and skills

Are the tools and methods suggested appropriate?
- Is there evidence of systematic thinking behind the choice of capacity development activities
- Are appropriate CD tools and methods (see Figure Two) used in an imaginative way
- Have clear roles, responsibilities and timetables been identified for CD activities

How will the CD plan be monitored and evaluated, and lessons learned?
- What M&E mechanisms are proposed to see if the CD programme is achieving its objectives
- Is M&E a joint activity with IS partners
- Are there reflection and learning events programmed to evaluate how CD is working during the course of the project or programme
- Is the proposed CD likely to be relevant, effective and efficient in meeting its CD objectives and in contributing to the research and development objectives of the programme
- Are there plans for documenting and sharing lessons learned

Can the proposers implement what they propose?
- Do the proposers or their partners have the relevant skills and experience to provide relevant, high quality CD in the time available
- Do the proposers signify that they expect to learn and change as a result of facilitating the CD process
- Will the CD plan proposed require heavy monitoring by DFID

Generic Indicators for monitoring the success of capacity building components of research programmes

This Annex is based on the report produced by Barry Pound and Barbara Adolph: **Developing the Capacity of Research Systems in Developing Countries: Lessons Learnt and Guidelines for Future Initiatives (2005).**

It is assumed that monitoring and evaluation will be done jointly with developing country stakeholders, and that project-specific indicators will be developed with or by them.

Specific indicators will be needed that relate to the objectives of each individual programme and project, and separate indicators might be needed to represent the interests of different stakeholder groups (donors, governments, NGOs, communities, private enterprise). The generic indicators suggested here will need to be applied selectively, and supplemented with others that respond to specific circumstances and aspirations.

A non-exhaustive list of indicators is suggested below. This is based partly on the evidence gathered and presented in the report referred to above, and partly on the author's working knowledge and experience. Further development of the indicators could divide them between "monitoring" indicators, "milestones" within a CB strategy, and "evaluation" indicators that could be used as part of mid-, end- or post-project evaluation.

Indicators of capacity leading to high quality research outputs relevant to developmental needs
- Researchers (in developing country research systems) able to work with a range of IS partners to identify needs and possible solutions relevant to societal needs
- Researchers able to implement research with appropriate partners that leads to tangible, versatile, viable outputs that can be adopted, adapted and used, and have measurable developmental impact within a specified time period.
- Researchers able to document advances appropriately for different audiences, including peer review journals, extension materials and communications between IS partners
- Policy decisions are influenced by research outputs
- Increase in number of lead authorships of accepted papers and articles from Southern researchers
- Increase in the number of successful research bids from southern organisations (in a non-discriminatory assessment process)

Indicators of capacity leading to effective and efficient organisational systems
- Organisational structures, systems, procedures, incentives and values are able to encourage and support innovations systems research
- Attitudes and behaviour are conducive to working effectively in partnership towards developmental goals
- Facilities and infrastructure are appropriate to research needs and the expression of researchers capacities
- Effective linkage and learning mechanisms are in place
- There is effective collaboration between IS partners

Indicators that capacity development has resulted in the implementation of an innovation systems approach

- Involvement of a range of actors involved in all stages of research, dissemination and use
- Grassroots issues and perspectives included in research agenda
- Use of up-to-date information, references, methodologies and approaches by IS partners
- Equitable access to knowledge and experience across IS partnerships
- Disadvantaged groups included in decision-making at all stages of research
- Incorporation of research outputs into local, national and international policy
- Incorporation of research outputs into training curricula

Indicators of a creative, dynamic, sustainable developing-country research system

- Shift of power and decision-making towards southern partners in research consortia
- IS representative fora formed (e.g. local Steering Committees) and taking decisions
- Reduced brain drain from developing country research systems
- Increased number of innovative research proposals being successful from developing country research systems
- Greater S-S respect between organisations leading to S-S learning activities

Role of DFID (or other Donor)

During implementation, DFID staff have a vital role to play in:

- Ensuring that the consortium leadership understands and responds to the challenge of CB. **The level of engagement and resources** to be spent on CB will vary enormously. For the majority of consortia, who work with southern colleagues to assist in the building of organizational capacity and who are attempting to build sustainable institutions and an international profile, the figure has been typically between 7-12 % of the programme budget (DFID Research Strategy Working Paper Series: Capacity Building). The figures for RPCs which work mainly in Africa are likely to be higher because the capacity problem is likely to be more profound.

- Encouraging the consortium to find appropriate **consultants** to facilitate the CB assessment and implementation of work plans. A core skill for consultants and others involved in technical assistance in CB is that of facilitation: the skill to recognize and create learning opportunities for the organizations and stakeholders involved.

- Facilitating the building of **alliances and networks.** Networks can promote the exchange of knowledge, strengthen fields of research, and enable shared agendas to be developed, help to train new researchers, and help to counter the isolation experienced by many researchers. Effective networks tend to arise organically around shared interests amongst a community of researchers. Thus mapping existing networks and deciding which might be encouraged to evolve is a crucial task for the inception phase. CB efforts should focus therefore not on research institutions in isolation, but on partnerships and building the institutional links between organizations. The following examples illustrate the importance of this activity.

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1. **The (consortium) on Pathways on Women's Empowerment emphasises building both individual and organisation capacity to network, with an explicit interest in widening the capacity development multiplier efforts to engage groups outside the formal RPC structure (e.g. students, women's organisations, civil society groups).**

2. **The later stages of the consortium on Citizenship have also prioritised mobilising the network's experiences and learning so that these can help to develop the capacities of other networks, organisations and individuals who are associated with the partners. Thus the development of the organisational and network capabilities of consortium partners has a multiplier effect on the enabling environment.**

- Ensuring the effective **communication** of research and hence facilitating research up-take. This involves:
    - Helping individuals and organizations to more effectively communicate research. Consortia should aim to spend a minimum 10% of the overall budget on helping researchers communicate more effectively, strengthening the enabling environment for uptake and strengthening southern research through better access to information.

- Making high quality and innovative research accessible to southern researchers through information services such as ID21, Eldis, Scidev.net and www.researchfordevelopment.info
- Supporting and strengthening an "enabling environment" in which research can be accessed, tailored for effective uptake, and developed to shape development processes. This should involve engaging policy makers in the South to help set the research agenda and to influence the direction of research.
- See the DFID publication **Communication of Research: Guidance Notes for Research Programme Consortia**, Pub: 2005.

DFID staff also have a role to play in **creating space** to allow change agents the time and opportunity in which to experiment and establish an identity. Operating space can be critical for CB for two reasons: first, it creates the conditions that allow a psychological sense of ownership to take hold. Second, it allows the key process of CB to evolve, especially at the middle and lower levels of the system. External development partners need to read situations carefully to ensure that any support provided contributes to experimentation and learning while also ensuring that mechanisms of local accountability are reinforced. DFID staff should appreciate that during the implementation stage, there is constant tension between first, the need to point to results and improved performance and the "process" and learning nature of much CB; and second, the recognition that while outsiders can help facilitate processes, CB is essentially an internal and personal process.

Careful attention also needs to be given to **governance arrangements** for research consortia. The 'usual model' for recent (2010) RPCs is to have a management committee of key partners and team leaders and also a CAG (Consortium Advisory Group) to give strategic oversight and advice. The CAG will include specialist from northern and southern organizations, (including other donors) and representatives of other research bodies. A similar model has been used by the multi-donor funded AERC (African Economic Research Consortium).

AERC decided deliberately to delink the Board from the actual implementation of the Consortium's research activities. Whilst their overall thrust, rationale, and size would be determined by the Board through its approval of a three year strategic plan and annual program of work and budget, an Advisory Committee was specifically mandated, in the AERC's Articles of Incorporation, to set the detailed agenda for research. Furthermore, no member of a donor organisation represented on the Board could serve on the Advisory Committee.

DFID staff are also well placed to ensure **that policy makers are linked up with the research** being undertaken by consortium members in the UK and among southern partners. DFID staff in-country can facilitate workshops to discuss new ideas and can not only help policy analysts gain access to government but can also play their role in helping to generate more informed demand for research outputs from government officials.

Examples of Good Practice

Interface between policy and research

A key aspect of the **AERC's** approach has been the evolving interface between the research and policy communities. The AERC formally endorsed the need for policy relevant research in its selection of areas for thematic research. The AERC has also attempted to strengthen the interface, not by introducing a specific transmission mechanism, but through "senior policy seminars", intended to acquaint decision makers with ongoing research and emerging research capacities, and to raise the sensitivity of academically situated economists to policy concerns in their immediate environment. These have helped to improve the focus of the research programs. However, they cannot substitute for investment in one or more transmission mechanisms, be they the development of proper career tracks for economists in public sector agencies, or strong policy institutes playing this intermediating role.

Curriculum development

Many research consortia have southern partners based in academic institutions and some move beyond a strict interpretation of their terms of reference to help build the teaching capacity and develop the curriculum of the academic departments within their partner organisations. Several centres support the design and implementation of training by partners in their regions. This is sometimes aimed at an academic audience but more often at policy makers and practitioners. This focus on curriculum development can be seen as an attempt to support research capacity beyond the level of the individual and support organisational capacity to develop new materials and curricula.

One workshop for the **Centre for the Future State** piloted a new training module with DPhil students and then invited two of those students to assist with the training for partners. The two students were then able to provide ongoing support through email and Skype.

Collaborative Learning and practice

From the start, there was an emphasis in the consortium on **Pathways on Women's Empowerment** on collaborative practice. All partners were engaged from the outset in framing and setting research agenda and methodology of the consortium as a whole. The 'Global hub' at IDS acts like another region, not a top-down structure. The management group consists of the director and five hub convenors. This group meets every six months and has worked on developing skills of mutual reflective practice. The group committed to include a discussion of capacity development at each management meeting, regularly assess needs and resources, share learning, annual planning to prioritise capacity needs and allocate resources. Furthermore, theme and hub meetings follow a similar process. Hubs enable work across region, thematic groups strengthen South-South and South-Global exchange. Emphasis is on building trust, high quality relationships, valuing all partners' skills and contributions equally. Mid-Term reviewers remarked that high quality of research outputs are due at least in part to mechanisms embedded from the outset, including mentoring and capacity building.

Developing Southern Leadership/Ownership

1) Recognising the need to support more inclusive disability research and to ensure the full involvement of disabled persons as researchers, DFID has partnered with the Southern African Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) in implementing (2007-12) the **SAFOD Research Programme (SRP).** This programme is specifically designed to be participatory and demand-led, supporting capacity building through training and practice. Development of training content and delivery are the responsibility of SAFOD and its key partner, Stellenbosch University.

This capacity building programme demonstrates commitment to the social model of disability and reversal of North-South imbalances in the management and conduct of research. SRP is mainly about putting Southern partners at the forefront of the relationship building process and recognising full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in the research process. So far, local disabled persons' organisations (DPOs) have been carrying out their own organisational assessments building up a regional database of DPOs. Gaps in information on the scope of DPO's work and incidence of barriers to access are gradually being filled. Skills and confidence are being acquired through learning-by-doing.

SRP has been ground breaking in that it is not externally managed, and is allowing SAFOD and the 10 Federation member countries in Southern Africa to articulate their own vision for disability research and needs more clearly. As it strengthens its presence and role in disability research networks, SAFOD's advocacy efforts are being supported and this will feed into attempts to drive policy change.

2) The **Citizenship RPC** is another example of how to build successful transnational research partnerships and networks. The following lessons are adapted from a working paper by David Brown and John Gaventa: Constructing Transnational Action Research Networks: Observations and Reflections from the case of the Citizenship DRC, IDS Working Paper 302:

1. **Articulating shared values and purposes:** shared visions and values were created through ongoing reflection and debate that enabled adaptation and learning from experience. These must be renegotiated with external institutions such as donors.
2. **Developing relationships and trust:** frank discussions of critical issues as priority setting, research approaches and budget allocations were central to building trust. It is also important to provide time and space for partners to engage with each other in personal learning and development and to encourage activities such as workshops and field visits that enable intensive interaction.
3. **Creating network architecture:** networks often begin with architectures based on general agreements on goals and informal relationships rather than formal structures and systems.
4. **Distributing formal and informal power:** attention must be paid to processes of decision making, or there is a risk that formal power allocations in networks may be subverted by informal control over key resources and decisions, relationships and communications. Sharing power does not require equality when levels of responsibility and accountability vary, but it does imply some degree of mutual influence.

Write-shops

The **Citizenship RPC** helped to pioneer the use of write-shops to help Southern researchers write about their research for a Northern academic audience. The RPC organised a number of workshops, lasting for 4 days, and aimed at producing a specific publication. All researchers submitted a written draft in advance, and the facilitators arranged that each participant received detailed comments from at least two other researchers. Recent write-shops have also been combined with field visits to research sites and seminars or meetings with local policy makers and other researchers. These help ground the discussions about research results in a particular context and provide a valuable link to the policy process.