

# A review of national research programmes on water, science and technology for development

## Introduction

The eleven European countries involved in SPLASH aim to strengthen research in the water sector focused on developing countries in order to reduce poverty and contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As these countries each provide financial support for relevant research activities, it is important for the members of SPLASH to know what research is being done by whom, and where. Therefore, one of the first activities of the SPLASH programme was to carry out a review of such research activities, which are funded or co-funded by the SPLASH partner national governments.



## The purpose

The review aims to support coordination, avoid duplication of research effort between the countries concerned, and help identify opportunities for future collaboration. It is not comprehensive as it only covers countries which are members of the SPLASH Consortium and does not include water research for development which is funded from non-governmental sources. However, the review provides a wealth of information for partner programme managers, and for those designing and implementing water supply and sanitation programmes in developing countries. It is an important resource for managers tasked with future research programming or partnering in the water sector.

## Headline facts

- There is significant variation in the aims, objectives and focus areas – both thematic and geographic – across the programmes surveyed.
- Overall, there is a good spread of support across the thematic areas, and all countries are involved in the Mekong region and in Africa, suggesting that these offer the greatest potential benefits for future collaboration between SPLASH partners.
- Existing programmes show common characteristics:
  - capacity development is an important element of research
  - dissemination is also key to research
  - collaboration between programmes and other national or international organizations is already underway to some extent.
- Future opportunities for joint programmes may not, therefore, represent a significant shift in existing research culture or behaviour.



## Conclusions

- Policy makers, civil society, NGOs and practitioners are the main target groups in developing countries for research programme outputs, while other communication activities are aimed at scientists, policy makers and practitioners. However, communication is rarely focussed on the intended target group.
- Dissemination of research results is predominantly in English, and does not consider local languages, potentially reducing their impact at a local level.
- Stakeholders and beneficiaries have little input into programme planning, as the dominant players in both European and developing countries are donor country government ministries and research institutions (Figure 1). Public participation and the demands of stakeholders and beneficiaries should be integral to international water research planning.
- Partners who are interested in taking part in future joint research programmes may offer support in terms of human resources or of data, information and knowledge. Capacity building is already supported by most of the SPLASH partner countries. The feasibility of implementing joint research activities within the existing programmes therefore has to be seen on a case by case basis. (Figure 2).

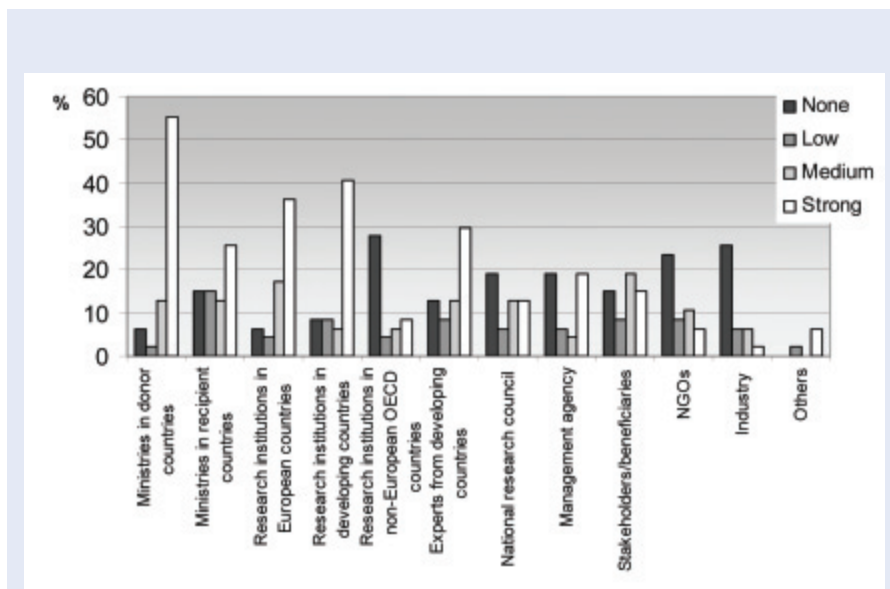


Figure 1. Level of involvement of agencies in defining the programme

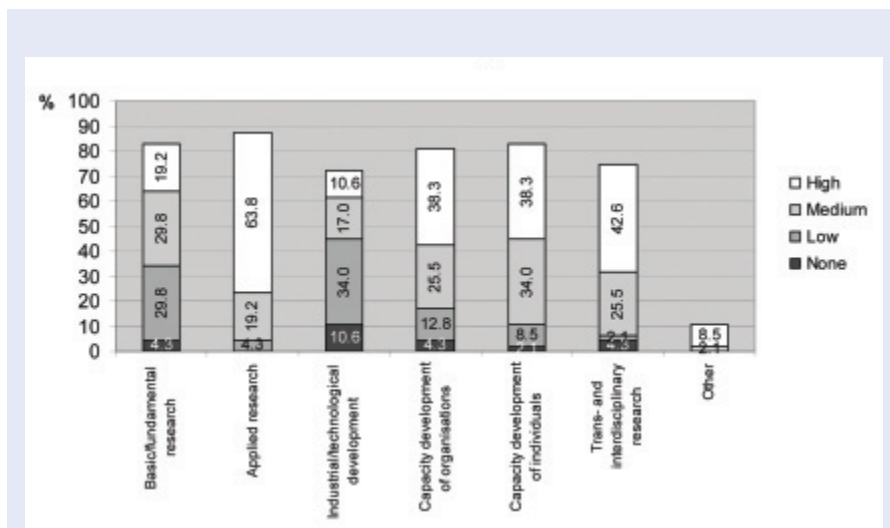


Figure 2. Level of importance given to activities supported by partner country programmes

## Further information

This is one of a series of SPLASH fact sheets available on the SPLASH website [www.splash-era.net](http://www.splash-era.net)

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