Recommendations for improved uptake of research in policy and practice

Introduction

The degree to which research findings are used by policy makers and practitioners in their work could be greatly increased. SPLASH has focused on this issue in many of its activities and has developed a number of lessons learned relating to all aspects of the research cycle which would improve usage in policy and practice. Associated with these lessons, are a number of strategic recommendations relating to partnerships, processes and products.

The purpose

The recommendations aim to improve the design, management, communication and evaluation of water research to increase the use of research results. These actions are relevant to research funders, managers and potential users.

Headline facts

The actions required that are key to improving the use of research relate to research partnerships, processes and products.

Getting the partnerships right

Recommendations:

- Funders play a part in designing long term research partnership funding. This could be through implementing national funding and co-funding schemes for low-income countries, and through supporting dialogue platforms for programme formulation.
- Funders require that research proposals include a stakeholder analysis and show evidence of engagement of national researchers as a condition of acceptance. Proposals show clear collaboration between research organizations in the North and the South.
- At the beginning of the research planning process, funders and researchers define the principles and criteria to identify who is a stakeholder.

Getting the processes right

Recommendations:

- An interdisciplinary approach is applied by funders when setting criteria for funding schemes, time planning and monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Research is commissioned which anticipates strategically important areas of research in advance of political decisions. Long-term relationships through multi-stakeholder and dialogue platforms can provide the knowledge required to do this.
- Independent policy research institutions in developing countries are strengthened, e.g. through Think Tanks.

Getting the product right

Recommendations:

- Funding schemes require the inclusion of a communication and dissemination strategy (with at least 10% of the total budget allocated to this).
- Reporting systems require evidence of dissemination progress, based on effective monitoring and evaluation of how well the information needs of target groups are met.
- A requirement of funding schemes is that findings are published and can be downloaded free of charge.
- An additional funding requirement is outcome planning as a monitoring component.

Further information

A series of SPLASH fact sheets are available on the SPLASH website **www.splash-era.net**

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