



PUTTING RESEARCH INTO USE:

**NEPAL TAKES UP THE
CHALLENGE**

The Research Into Use (RIU) Innovation Challenge Fund (ICF) 2008-2011 will distribute £4.6 million over the next three years to thirteen projects in South and Southeast Asia. The projects chosen will have innovative approaches to getting DFID funded natural resource research outputs¹ into use in order to reduce poverty (Box 1).

Box 1. Criteria used to select RIU Challenge Fund projects

- Activities relevant to RIU's purpose, for example maximising the impact of previous DFID natural resource research and, in so doing, learning lessons on how to get research into use
- Activities and outcomes feasible within 3 years
- Activities relevant to national poverty reduction policies and the international development agenda
- Benefit the poor and other vulnerable groups
- Add value to existing development efforts
- Effective exit strategies
- Track record of solid partnerships in up- and out-scaling development options
- Activities environmentally sustainable
- High quality communication/ engagement strategies
- Comprehensive and appropriate learning/monitoring and evaluation plans
- Appropriate capacity-strengthening initiatives
- Appropriate costs and spending

¹ DFID funded research under the renewable natural resources research strategy (RNRRS) 1995-2006

Four projects in Nepal get under way in mid-2008 (Box 2). Most projects will be led in-country and each emphasises the importance of learning by doing. Project teams draw together end-user groups and intermediaries, such as farmer organisations, extension agents, NGO networks, credit agencies and policy makers, as well as researchers. Each team has put forward strong communication strategies to encourage the knowledge flows between actors in the particular systems that are likely to be critical to success. The projects awarded funds have also considered the problems and aspirations of socially excluded groups (including women, tribal and/or ethnic communities) in the target locations to ensure that their needs are voiced and that they are not disadvantaged by scaling up activities.

Box 2. Innovation Challenge Fund projects in Nepal 2008-2011

- 1 New Seed from client-orientated methods
- 2 Poverty reduction through crop intensification in rice
- 3 Linking farmers with structured markets for rural prosperity
- 4 Reducing poverty through innovation system in forestry

Project 1: New seed from client-oriented methods

What? This project will set up community enterprises to trade seed of new varieties of rice developed by working with farmers, processors and consumers. New varieties bred by client oriented breeding (COB) and identified by participatory varietal selection (PVS) will be scaled out through delivery systems appropriate to agro-economic conditions in different rice growing areas. In the *Terai* and low hills (less than 800 m above sea level) scaling out will be by community-based seed production groups. In the middle hills (800-1,300 m above sea level) enterprises to scale up the high quality varieties will be based on a value-chain approach and, in the high hills (up to 2,000 m above sea level), seed will be spread through farmer-seed networks.

Why? The new varieties developed by RNRRS projects yield 20%-50% more grain and biomass than the ones farmers are using now. The higher productivity of the new varieties makes farming households more food secure, raises their incomes and improves their nutrition.

Improved seed is one of the cheapest and simplest means of increasing total returns on investment in agricultural inputs. The agronomic conditions in the *Terai* favour the production of seed, and good communications favour distribution, so community-based seed enterprises to spread the new varieties are likely to work well.

Who will benefit directly? Tens of thousands of farmers will benefit directly because they will be able to grow varieties of rice developed specially for the rice ecosystems in which they farm. Communities, marginalised groups and women will also benefit directly from involvement in seed enterprises.



Photo: J N Perrin

Who will benefit indirectly? Because the new varieties yield more grain than existing varieties it is anticipated that more rice will be produced. So, any slowing in the current rate of increase in the price of rice from the higher productivity of the new varieties should benefit poor consumers, landless labourers and the urban poor indirectly because they will be more food secure and better nourished. Farmers in adjacent states in India are also likely to benefit from spillover of seed through farmer networks.

Where? The project will cover rice-based farming systems in Nepal, mainly in the *Terai* lowlands, but also in rainfed upland and high altitude areas.

New seed from client-oriented methods project partners

Lead partner:

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

Coalition partners:

Centre for Arid Zone Studies-Natural Resources, Bangor University, Wales, UK

Forum for Rural Welfare and Agricultural Reform for Development (FORWARD)

Social Upliftment through Participatory Programmes, Research and Training (SUPPORT) Foundation

Department of Agriculture (DoA)

Nepal Agricultural Research Council

Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources

Seed Entrepreneurs Association Nepal

Pratigya Cooperative and Karmacharya Trading House

Bioversity International

Community-based seed producer groups

Association of Nepalese Rice, Oil and Pulse Industries

CONCERN Worldwide

International Development Enterprises (IDE) Nepal

Project 2:

Poverty reduction through crop intensification in rice fallows

What? This project will promote double cropping—growing a legume crop after the main rice harvest—to raise productivity and help reduce rural poverty. The project will release legume varieties developed especially for the *rabi* or fallow season using participatory research and development methods by previous RNNRS projects and promote agronomic practices for growing them.

Why? Farmers can earn more if they intensify production. One way they can do this is by growing legumes rather than leaving land fallow after harvesting the main rice crop. But crops for the fallow season need to have a short growing season and be adapted to drought. The new legume varieties are significantly better than those in use—they are disease and pest resistant, give high yields, have a short growing season, and are adapted to drought and low soil fertility. And, because the grain is better quality, they also fetch higher prices.

Who will benefit directly? Tens of thousands of poor households across the *Terai* will benefit directly. Higher productivity could contribute to lower and more stable grain prices which will benefit consumers, including landless labourers and the urban poor.

Who will benefit indirectly? Community-based seed enterprises will benefit indirectly as demand for seed of the new legume varieties rises and brings in extra business. Extension workers, students, teachers, media professionals, community workers and policy makers will also benefit indirectly.

Where? The project will cover rainfed, rice-growing upland and lowland districts of Nepal, specifically Morang, Saptari, Siraha, Kapilvastu, Dang, Banke, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts.

Poverty reduction through crop intensification in rice fallows project partners

Lead partner:

Forum for Rural Welfare and Agricultural Reform for Development (FORWARD)

Coalition partners:

Centre for Arid Zone Studies-Natural Resources, Bangor University, Wales, UK

Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

Department of Agriculture (DoA)

Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC)

Social Upliftment through Participatory Programmes, Research and Training (SUPPORT) Foundation

Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)

The following, although not coalition partners as such, will be part of the initiative and the innovation system:

Association of Nepalese Rice, Oil and Pulse Industries

Seed Entrepreneurs Association Nepal

Community-based seed producers (CBSP) groups

CONCERN Worldwide

International Development Enterprises (IDE) Nepal



Photo: J N Perrin

Project 3:

Linking farmers with structured markets for rural prosperity

What? This project will promote new ways of marketing vegetables in Nepal and Cambodia, and pork in Vietnam. The project will link to the Rural Prosperity Initiative (funded by the Gates Foundation) and Smallholder Irrigation Market Initiative (funded by USAID) which promote horticultural value chains for smallholders and low-cost micro-irrigation technologies.

Why? Nepalese farmers realise that they need to learn to market their produce more effectively and have asked for help. Previous RNNRS projects have come up with an effective process to help farmers market their agricultural produce, plus successful ways of educating farmers about these.

Who will benefit directly? In Nepal, 5,000 smallholder households will directly benefit by earning more as a result of selling their vegetables in structured markets. In Cambodia, 2,500 smallholder households will benefit directly and, in Vietnam, 2,500 pig farming households will benefit from tapping into urban pork markets.

Who will benefit indirectly? Around 40,000 smallholder households in Asia and Africa are likely to benefit indirectly if they adopt the same ways of becoming integrated into commercial value chains. Other IDE initiatives and the seven partners in the project will also benefit indirectly as they learn from project experiences.

Where? In Nepal, the project will cover five districts in the *Terai* and tropical highlands. In Cambodia, the project will reach 40 communes in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng provinces and, in Vietnam, three poor upland districts.



Linking farmers with structured markets for rural prosperity project partners

Lead partner: International Development Enterprises (IDE) Nepal

Coalition partners:

Winrock International

Center for Environmental and Agricultural Policy Research, Extension and Development (CEAPRED)

The Agro Enterprise Centre (AEC)

In Cambodia:

International Development Enterprises (IDE) Cambodia

Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC)

Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK)

In Vietnam:

International Development Enterprises (IDE) Vietnam

Vietnam Women's Union

Agricultural University

Provincial Bureaus for Standards & Quality Control

District level local authorities

Project 4: Innovation system in forestry to reduce poverty

What? This project will promote community management of forests in Nepal. Communities will develop forest user groups involving all stakeholders and learn how to make better use of forest products. They will also learn how to take part in processes for reforming forest policies.

Why? Community forestry in Nepal has spread but the ability of communities to actively manage these forests hasn't kept pace. Community forest user groups only make use of a fraction of what could be harvested sustainably because they don't know how to assess forest resources or how to develop and implement forest management plans. They also don't know how to deal with land-rich elites who, unlike landless or poor farmers, are not dependent on community forests for their day-to-day needs.

Who will benefit directly? Around 20,000 households, including 4,000 of the very poorest, belonging to 60 community forest user groups, will benefit directly.

Who will benefit indirectly? Over 3.5 million people belonging to 15,000 community forest user groups will benefit indirectly from advocacy across the country and from changes in policies.

Where? The project will cover the *Terai* lowlands, and hill and mountain areas in Nepal.

Innovation System in Forestry to Reduce Poverty project partners

Lead partner: Forest Resources Studies and Action Team (ForestAction)

Coalition partners:

Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN)

Nepal Herbs and Herbal Products Association (NEHHPA)

Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ)

Department of Sociology/Anthropology (DoSA), Tribhuvan University



Photo: J N Perrin



The RIU Innovation Challenge Fund teams will share their experiences with other RIU components as well as with other ICF teams in South Asia (India, Nepal, Cambodia and Vietnam) and in Africa as the RIU African country platforms begin implementation.

Reading Statistical Services are supporting RIU and the Innovation Challenge Fund teams on data management issues.

The RIU database describing the wealth of technologies, policies and processes developed by DFID programmes can be found on the RIU website

www.researchintouse.com

For further information please contact: **Frances Kimmins** (f.kimmins@nrint.co.uk), Research into Use Programme (RIU), NR International, Park House, Bradbourne Lane, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 6SN, UK.

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