

# Research into Use Programme Supporting innovation -Changing lives



## Research Into Use

### Malawi Strategy

15<sup>th</sup> December 2007

**Final**

This strategy has been prepared by a Malawi Strategy and Programme Design Team with input from participants during a Malawi Strategy Design Workshop, 5-7<sup>th</sup> December, and discussions with stakeholders undertaking RIU-type activities, 10-14<sup>th</sup> December, Lilongwe

*The identification of opportunities lies within the system*

# Malawi - Research into Use Programme (M-RIUP) Strategy

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## Malawi - Research into Use Programme (M-RIUP) Strategy

### 1 Background to the M-RIUP

#### Purpose of this strategy document

- 1.1 This paper outlines a strategy for the M-RIUP for the period 2008–2011. It summarises the overall purpose of the RIUP and its intended outputs, outlining how Malawi can participate and benefit from this initiative.
- 1.2 The purpose of the strategy is to build consensus around a 3-year M-RIUP and to obtain agreement in principle from key stakeholders in Malawi as well as RIUP Management. It sets out the rationale for M-RIUP and the strategic options available. As such it is intended to assist in structuring a process for focusing future action and defining key criteria and considerations on which the Programme can be implemented and assessed.
- 1.3 The strategy builds on a Country Assessment undertaken in early 2007<sup>1</sup> and will be supported by a more detailed implementation plan to be undertaken in early 2008.
- 1.4 It is intended that the M-RIUP will be implemented in ways consistent with the aims of Malawi's ADP and as well as the wider CAADP and SADC-MAPP and the aims of RIUP. As such the M-RIUP will add value to the ADP, CAADP and SADC initiatives.
- 1.5 The major part of the strategic objective of the M-RIUP is to identify, facilitate and provide support to key stakeholders seeking to ensure that research outputs are put into use.

#### Innovation systems

- 1.6 RIUP is intended to help address widespread concern that much NR research has not yet been utilised effectively. RIUP is guided by an "Innovation Systems" approach that has operated successfully in some countries in recent years. "Innovation" in this context is taken to mean the use of new technologies, new processes or new policy options by people where they have not been used before.
- 1.7 RIUP's main organising principle is that of an *innovation system* combined with the hypothesis that an innovation systems approach, described in Box 1 will prove more effective than linear approaches at getting research outputs into use for the benefit of the poor.

#### Box 1: Elements of an Innovation System

- It involves the suppliers and users of knowledge in some form of partnership or group on a common platform or networking arrangements.
- There is genuine and continuous involvement of suppliers of knowledge, policy makers, "enablers", "end-users" (producer, consumer or processor) to assist in the determination of innovation bottlenecks, putting as much emphasis on promoting technologies as promoting approaches and processes that have been proven to be effective in getting research into use.
- Investments in strengthening capacities where they are needed in the "innovation system" in particular in intermediary functions that enable communications between knowledge suppliers and users.
- It serves to financially develop sustainable delivery systems and viable business models often involving manufacturers, service providers, credit suppliers, and providers of technical assistance to users.
- Investment is an iterative process that enables the organisations within the system to learn from experience and improve their performance
- It introduces new technologies or new ways of doing things in a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable basis
- It often evolves new institutional arrangements by which the various organisations in a system can operate for mutual benefit.

<sup>1</sup> Malawi RIU Country assessment undertaken in February 2007 and widely distributed to stakeholders.

- 1.8 RIU has identified eight values that underpin its work: strategic focus; openness; transparency; fairness; innovation; accessibility; inclusiveness; and empowerment. As part of its focus on 'fairness', it will aim to promote access to knowledge, participation, equal opportunities and inclusive partnerships for all social groups with a particular focus on the disadvantaged. It will also work to value cultural diversity and to reduce exclusion and the disadvantages that many stakeholders face. The RIUP will promote environmentally sound management practices and improved stable livelihoods for a range of stakeholders including most importantly those of the vulnerable poor. This approach recognizes that environmentally sound management and sustainable livelihoods have a close relationship, in that one strengthens and reinforces the other.
- 1.9 RIU seeks to build effective and trusting links between components of the "innovation system", between 'suppliers' and 'users' of research-based knowledge and the many "service organisations" required to facilitate interactions within the system and to broker support services such as finance, technical advice, ICT and capacity building.

### **Purpose and Outputs of RIUP**

1.10 RIUP was commissioned by DFID in 2006 to capitalise upon the achievements of DFID's past research in renewable natural resources. Its purpose is:

- To maximise the poverty-reducing impact of the RNRRS and other research, and
- To increase understanding of how the promotion and widespread use of research can contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth as summarised by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

1.11 The RNRRS operated for 11 years between 1995 and 2006 with the objective of generating new knowledge and promoting its uptake and application so that livelihoods of poor people could be improved through better management of renewable natural resources. The RNRRS comprised ten research programmes<sup>2</sup> covering the needs of people dependent on agriculture, forestry, livestock and fisheries. Whilst the RNRRS offers an important knowledge source from which to draw, it is also acknowledged that research from other sources will add value to RIUP.

1.12 Following RIUP's inception it has developed a programme of action aimed at achieving the following expected outputs:

Output 1: Significant use of DFID's RNRRS and other NR research outputs for the benefit of poor men and women.

Output 2: Research-into-use evidence generated with evaluation partners.

Output 3: Policy processes enabled by research-into-use principles, lessons and discourse.

With regard to Output 1, RIUP will use an innovation systems approach that

- Improves access to RNRRS and other research outputs (Component 1.1)
- Enhances demand for RNRRS and other research outputs (Component 1.2)
- Leads to development of enterprises using RNRRS and other research outputs (Component 1.3)

1.13 The main focus of M-RIUP will be to strengthen the demand for research-based knowledge and to strengthen those organisations and enterprises able to provide services between the suppliers of knowledge and those that need to use it for innovation (Component 1.2). The M-RIUP strategy is designed to build on already existing RIU-type activities and promote these over the life of the programme.

1.14 At the same time M-RIUP may also be able to participate both in Component 1.1 "Challenge Programme" activities on a regional basis and Component 1.3 activities.

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<sup>2</sup> These ten programmes were concerned with five strategic areas including: crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and natural resource management

## The process for developing an M-RIUP strategy

- 1.15 A process approach to build local ownership was initiated in early 2007 when over 80 stakeholders were consulted and opportunities for RIU engagement were identified. This was followed by a stakeholder workshop<sup>3</sup> in Lilongwe over the period 5-7<sup>th</sup> December 2007 during which a report back was provided on the country assessment and a participatory process used to agree an outline M-RIUP strategy with over 40 participants. The workshop included the following programme:
- What is RIUP about and what has happened so far?
  - What are the systemic bottlenecks we need to address?
  - How can the RIUP address these in a synergistic value adding way?
  - Who are the champions and partners already working in RIU-like activities in Malawi?
  - What functions need to be in place to integrate RIU into these activities?
  - What arrangements are then required?
  - What is the way forward?
- 1.16 Further discussion with key RIU-stakeholders immediately following the workshop provided further opportunity to validate and develop the strategy as it is presented in this report.
- 1.17 The CSPD Team (Annex 2) who drafted this report consists of members with expertise in programme management, innovation systems, relevant NR capabilities and an understanding of the national context with support from specialists in information markets, monitoring, impact and learning and process facilitation. Their work would not have been possible without the workshop and subsequent follow up discussions. The team acknowledge with thanks the time provided by individuals and organisations in developing this strategy document.

## 2 The Malawi Context

### The agricultural sector

- 2.1 Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy employing over 80% of the workforce, and contributing over 80% of foreign exchange earnings. The agricultural sector accounts for 39% of gross domestic product and contributes significantly to national and household food security. Development strategies and policies in Malawi since Independence have been heavily biased towards agricultural development, but the implementation of these policies has not yet yielded sustainable outcomes.
- 2.2 The agricultural sector in Malawi remains confronted with the problems of low yields, over dependence on rain-fed farming, low level of irrigation development, and despite a seed and fertiliser subsidy programme, low use of improved farm inputs<sup>4</sup>. As a result smallholder agriculture remains largely unprofitable. This low profitability has been exacerbated by weak links to markets, high transport costs, and few functioning farmer organisations at grass roots level, poor quality control and lack of information on appropriate technologies, markets and prices.
- 2.3 The MoA&FS has recently embarked on process to agree an ADP which has three Focus Areas: i) Food Security and Risk Management; ii) Agribusiness and Market Development; and iii) Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. It is intended that these are supported by two cross-cutting support areas: a) Research, Technology Generation and Dissemination; and b) Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building. It is recognized that the success of the ADP will depend on services provided by the research and extension systems and on the capacity of the implementing agencies. At the same time

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<sup>3</sup> Proceedings from this workshop will be made available to stakeholders as a separate document.

<sup>4</sup> In the 2006-7 season, Malawi achieved its best ever maize harvest attributed largely to a targeted seed and fertiliser subsidy programme

HIV/AIDS and gender are intended to be mainstreamed during ADP implementation activities.

- 2.4 At the same time it is intended that donors align themselves with and contribute to the ADP.
- 2.5 While the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is taking the lead in the ADP at central Government level, District Assemblies are the highest policy making bodies at District level.

### **Innovations systems in Malawi**

- 2.6 A preliminary diagnosis of the Innovation System in Malawi indicates uncoordinated and sometimes confused interactions of stakeholders. However this is changing as Malawi develops its ADP with goal-oriented policies and learns from past experiences. There is a growing understanding of what can be accomplished using innovation systems approaches. Even so 62% of the population still live below the poverty line of less than US\$1 per day.
- 2.7 The "supply side" of the knowledge system is dominated by many CGIAR centres and a national system struggling for resources. On the other hand the "demand side" represented by farmers and farmer organisations remains extremely weak. At the same time it is recognised that alleviating this constraint is key to poverty reduction, improving livelihoods and reversing environmental degradation. Many organisations, including the MoA&FS, FUM, NASFAM, TAMA and many NGOs recognise the need and in many cases are making admirable effort in support of strengthening grass roots farmer organisations. Already AICC has played an important role in building private-public partnerships in support of small growers in the cotton, tea, sugar and coffee industries through its small agriculture business initiative.
- 2.8 Both FUM and NASFAM have recently undertaken strategic planning exercises. FUM is in the process of restructuring concentrating on core functions of, business organisation and market development, research policy analysis and advocacy as well as information and communications aimed at smallholder farmers. NASFAM is establishing "Rural Food and Innovation Centres" at District level. Both organisations have been supported by the SCC with support from Swedish and Norwegian Governments but acknowledge lack of capacity in some areas.
- 2.9 It is recognised that over 80% of farmers have little organised voice and many farmer organisations exist in name only. Human and material resource constraints, particularly at the local level, mean that the needs of many rural households have not been translated into an "effective demand". At the same time Government is committed to community participation in decision-making and is taking action to strengthen decentralised institutions and enhance the role of local actors.
- 2.10 Strategic weaknesses, gaps and market failures between demand and supply provide many opportunities for RIU to strengthen the demand side. A key role identified for M-RIUP is to facilitate a process of farmer organisation development and help create an environment in which information and knowledge flows effectively between stakeholders. This requires a facilitation process of capacity building so that the voice of the excluded majority is heard and demand for information is enhanced and effectively used in increasing productivity and improving livelihoods.
- 2.11 Malawi has plans to promote the use of ICT and many actors including MoA&FS, IDEAA, ACE, NASFAM, FUM, TAMA, Bunda, CISANET, the I-Life consortium and the private sector are active in these areas. Already progress has been made in providing commodity prices available by mobile phone with regular updating on blackboards in rural areas. However communication between actors remains weak and relevant information is rarely shared. While this offers important opportunities, internet use in rural areas is negligible with connectivity costs being unaffordable by most people, exacerbated by problems of language, culture, literacy and lack of reliable power supplies.

### **Positioning of the M-RIUP relative to the ADP**

- 2.12 The ADP aims at harmonising investment and support programmes in agriculture that have the highest potential for significantly contributing to food security and agricultural growth over the next five years. Within the planning horizon of the ADP, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and the Agricultural Policy Framework provide the national policy context while CAADP and SADC-MAPP provide the regional context of achieving sustainable agricultural growth and development.
- 2.13 Given the large number of programmes and initiatives envisaged in the ADP, it is essential that M-RIUP adds value to other development initiatives rather than duplicate them. This includes ARDEP and SCC support to FUM and NASFAM, as well as EC support to IDAF in the MoA&FS.
- 2.14 M-RIUP expects to add value by offering an “innovation systems perspective” that goes beyond support to research and extension systems. It aims to do this by i) providing support to those who are working to build farmer organisation capacity, ii) strengthening the information/knowledge/communications sector to support innovation and iii) facilitating the strengthening of commodity-based value chain innovation platforms. If M-RIUP can be effective in articulating and empowering the demand for scientific and technical knowledge, there should be a measurable change in the demand for and hence the supply of outputs from the research system.

## **3 M-RIUP vision, challenges, strategic priorities and approaches**

### **Key factors in innovation and strategic priorities for strengthening demand**

- 3.1 Experience of successful innovation places high value on balancing the “supply and demand” for new knowledge. Although the supply of research-based new knowledge tends to be weak in many SSA countries, the demand side is even weaker. This is true of Malawi.
- 3.2 The main focus of the M-RIUP will therefore be to strengthen “demand” for new research-based knowledge and to strengthen those organisations and enterprises able to provide support services between the suppliers of research-based knowledge and those that need to use it for innovation.
- 3.3 Effective learning groups and platforms require a range of formal and informal support, including the formation of interest groups, the encouragement of new forms of collaboration and incentives to promote easy communication and information exchange. This network building is made considerably easier and cheaper by advances in ICT, although it is acknowledged that face to face communication is vital in building understanding and trust.
- 3.4 Key factors to improve the innovation system in Malawi were identified as being access to information, dialogue, building trust between individual and organisations, transparency and knowledge sharing, farmer organisation development, marketing to create demand for products and champions to promote the approach and encourage people to work together.
- 3.5 As a result of this analysis three interlinked strategic priorities were identified during the workshop.
- The need to facilitate farmer empowerment, improved farmer organisations and their capacity to demand information.
  - The need to facilitate information and knowledge access and sharing and advocacy.
  - The need to facilitate a number of commodity-based value-chain innovation platforms
- 3.6 Capacity development, early learning from success and failure and promoting lessons across these three priority areas were identified as being essential to support these priorities and if necessary adjust M-RIUP as it matures.

### **Strategic priority 1: Facilitating farmers' empowerment to participate in innovation systems**

3.7 Strong farmer organizations at all levels have a critical role to play in increasing smallholder's productivity and livelihoods, improving competitiveness and increasing bargaining power for markets, services and improving the policy environment..

3.8 **The vision for M-RIUP** includes the empowerment of farmers through strengthening of smallholder farmer organisations to become truly representative of their members

- Providing equal opportunities and benefits for all members.
- Playing an effective role on commodity-based innovation platforms negotiating as equal partners, articulating their demands and holding other stakeholders accountable.
- Providing greater benefits to members than operating individually.

3.9 **Key Challenges** include how to:

- Build trust between and within farmer organizations to establish a common voice and build competencies to mobilize farmers for knowledge and self-organization.
- Harness the enthusiasm, sense of fair play and energy of different actors to ensure improvement in productivity and livelihoods of smallholder farmers. (There are cases that show that this can be done through inspired political leadership and gradual processes of cultural and political change or through markets in the case high value crops!)
- Build and expand more representative groups with a membership base for active engagement in smallholder sector and its value chains.
- Achieve economies of scale that create real benefits within the smallholder sector.
- Improve access to markets and services for the smallholder producers.

3.10 To meet these challenges, M-RIUP will focus on two interlinked approaches:

- **Establishing a learning group** of organisations whose mandate includes empowering farmer organisations. M-RIUP can facilitate this group focusing on attributes that enhance trust, dialogue, build leadership and promoting group activities where demanded. Key actors include FUM, NASFAM, TAMA, MoA&FS, SCC, the I-life NGO consortium and other NGO's working on empowering and transformation approaches. Activities will include: reviewing and sharing best practices; building a culture of learning and mutual accountability; development of core-competencies in farmer self organization, tools and frameworks for policy negotiations, sharing of governance best practices, establishing common positions on issues affecting the smallholder sector, and building understanding of the conditions necessary for integrating smallholder farmers into the market.
- Use of this increased capacity to **facilitate effective farmer representation on commodity-based innovation platforms**. Commodities with potential for wide impact include cotton, dairy, seed systems, agri-input supply systems, as well as maize, legumes and high value crops. These all require farmer representation with capacity to interact effectively with other stakeholders such as agro-processors, input and output agencies, extension and research agents. This process should strengthen specific commodity associations as well as the apex farmer organisations.

### **Strategic priority 2: Supporting Information marketing and communication and advocacy**

3.11 Malawi in common with most other SSA countries suffers from poorly developed information infrastructure, especially in rural areas. Since agricultural value chains are poorly developed, opportunities to use and create value from new technical knowledge are limited; farmer demand for information is also limited by capacity to engage with 'formal' sources of new knowledge including those increasingly available via the internet. Therefore the second strategic priority is to strengthen information marketing, communication, and advocacy.



3.12 Although many organizations and initiatives are already working to improve the supply of information to farmers but efforts are uncoordinated, often with very limited reach, and are hindered by lack of technical know-how and access to high-quality information. Examples being promoted by various NGOs and government agencies include: establishing district and community information centres, facilitating farmer to farmer learning, and use of ICTs (radio, mobile phones and internet) to promote demand-led information provision. The opportunity for M-RIU is to facilitate improving interaction and knowledge sharing, encouraging a systemic approach, and helping to identify and fill gaps.

3.13 **The vision for M-RIUP** includes

- Farmers who value information as a vital productivity enhancing input and are able to demand and access appropriate information;
- Service organisations, including farmer and private sector organisations, who are able to source, package and deliver information to fulfil demand;
- Use of this information to strengthen commodity-based innovation platform (farmers, buyers, processors, agri-input input-output agents, extension agents, credit institutions, research organizations) through effective communication that assists to identify and remove blockages and identify opportunities for innovation.

3.14 **Key challenges** in this area identified by stakeholders include:

- Harmonising the efforts of numerous donors, NGOs and government institutions.
- Making more efficient use of existing expertise and information.
- Increasing the capacity of farmer organizations and the private sector to market information to farmers and articulate farmer demands to information providers.

3.15 To meet these challenges, M-RIUP will focus on three areas of activity:

- **Facilitation of a Learning Group** to increase awareness of the importance of information marketing, communication and advocacy; to forge linkages between information suppliers and users; and to bring together the numerous organisations working in these areas to share lessons and identify opportunities for collaboration. This group could include information suppliers (such as Bunda College, MoA&FS Agriculture Communication Branch, and CGIAR centres), information intermediaries such as BC Africa, IDEAA, ACE, input suppliers such as AISAM, RUMARK as well as larger private sector wholesalers and ADMARC, relevant staff from FUM, NASFAM, TAMA and NGO networks such as I-Life.
- **Building the capacity of farmer organisations and other actors on commodity-based innovation platforms for information marketing, communications and advocacy.** Based on an assessment of existing capacities, M-RIUP will facilitate links to partners, service providers, and wider capacity-building opportunities to support commodity innovation platforms and farmer organisations to articulate the information needs of their members.
- **Creating a virtual information marketplace** focusing on exchange of information and services. Currently information service providers have difficulty accessing high-quality information to meet specific farmer needs and for their part, farmers are unaware of the range of information services available to them. M-RIUP opportunity is to support development of a virtual “one-stop shop” for agricultural information, including a database of “best-bet” technologies and practices as well as a listing of information-related service providers (market, business practice, etc.). This marketplace, initially a platform for the free exchange of information, can serve as a resource for farmer organisations, extension agents, input suppliers, farmer information centres, and numerous agricultural radio shows and dramas. However until internet connections become cheaper and more pervasive, regular provision of CD copies and print directories will be necessary to avoid widening the “digital

divide". The intention is that once other preconditions are met, a market can evolve into a self-sustaining information market.

### **Strategic priority 3: Development of commodity-based innovation platforms**

3.16 The success of commodity-based innovation platforms require farmers to be able to negotiate as equal partners with other actors. At present farmers are often unable to express their concerns or demands as an organized voice. While Strategy 1 is designed to build capacity in this area and Strategy 2 is designed to ensure effective communication of information, Strategy 3 is designed to align other stakeholders, particularly processors, input and output marketing agents and other service organisations around a particular commodity to analyse and identify actions to relive systems constraints.

#### **3.17 The vision for M-RIUP includes**

- A number of contrasting functional and sustainable commodity-based platforms that will be role models within Malawi and more widely in the region.
- A number of innovations assimilated and used by smallholder farmers in their farming practices as a result of their participation in a commodity-based innovation platform. Such farmers should include young people, female farmers and other marginalised groups.
- A significant reduction in poverty as a consequence of platform activities, resulting from increased production, productivity, incomes and more sustainable livelihoods derived from strengthened access to information, and improved input and output markets.
- Farming practices making a positive contribution to reversing environmental degradation

#### **3.18 Key challenges** identified by stakeholders include how to:

- Build new relationships between private and public sectors and farmers for mutual and sustainable benefit.
- Build on the strengths of emerging commodity-based platforms that have the capacity to understand and articulate key issues while ensuring that all stakeholders are adequately represented.
- Encourage platform participants to work together towards a common goal even when they may have potentially conflicting agendas.
- Ensure inclusiveness and eliminate marginalisation within the platforms
- Building farmer capacity to understand and articulate key issues

#### **3.19** To meet these challenges, M-RIUP will focus on three areas of activity:

- **Facilitating the development of emerging or new commodity-based platforms** to analyse and address systems constraints along a value chain through interaction between platform members.
- **Facilitate the building of trust and alliances** between institutions to build platforms to identify innovations that have a high likelihood of success where all participants are able to benefit.
- **Acting as a catalyst for collective action** in clear areas of opportunity for smallholder farmers in the creation of viable business enterprises.

3.20 A number of potential commodity based platforms were identified in the CA, including: input and output marketing, seeds, dairying, fruit, cotton and roots and tubers. Other opportunities have now been added to this list including sugar, tea, coffee, paprika, chillies, groundnuts, land and water management around issues of small irrigation or soil fertility. The opportunities are many, with a need in the early stages of the programme to match M-RIUP resources to national priorities and contrasting platform types to ensure maximum lesson learning. Priorities include:

- **A cotton platform** providing opportunity for M-RIUP to add value to activity already initiated by the ACCI-SABI's public-private partnership initiative encouraging use of a stronger knowledge and science base in support of smallholder farmers.
- **An input-output supply platform** providing opportunity to support farmer learning and improved use of agri-inputs such as seeds, agro-chemicals and inorganic fertilizers supported by improved market links for improving agricultural productivity as well as and poverty reduction. This would support activities of CNFA/RUMARK, AISAM, private sector distribution networks (RAB, Farmers' World, Farmers' Organisation, Chemical and Marketing, the Grain Traders Association) and ADMARC.
- **Seed platforms** providing opportunity to improve seed systems and ensure greater use of improved varieties. Priority would be given to legume crops (groundnuts, beans and soybeans) with initial priority given to groundnuts. Platform members would include SMAGS, ASSMAG, seed companies and agri-input dealers as well as research organisations.
- **High value crops' platforms:** A number of high value crops are grown in Malawi. Borrowing from experiences of such groupings as the Smallholder Coffee Authority, Smallholder Tea Growers Association, Paprika Growers Association and others, vibrant platforms could be established around several high value crops

### **Initial innovation platforms that can be supported**

3.21 It is recognised that improved understanding of an innovation systems approach will grow when there are clear examples of learning groups and commodity-based platforms successfully operating and multiple stakeholders are benefiting. For this reason a number of interventions have been identified for which there are immediate opportunities<sup>5</sup>, which can i) quickly produce tangible results on the ground, ii) act as a demonstration and learning tool and iii) act as an initial focus for the evolution of a M-RIUP coalition.

3.22 As a result initial focus for M-RIUP should be:

- Facilitation of a farmer empowerment and organisation strengthening and a support group that will provide input to a number of commodity-based innovation platforms
- Facilitation of a knowledge, information and communications learning group which would also strengthen commodity-based innovation platforms
- Facilitation of at least two contrasting commodity-based innovation platforms, to include cotton, agri-inputs and if initial resources allow groundnut seed.

### **Principles for the support and selection of innovation platforms**

3.23 It is however envisaged that during the period 2008-2011 M-RIUP will support a greater range of innovation platforms. Each platform would provide a focus for facilitation, learning, decision making and management as well as identifying the necessary funds, skills and knowledge. Support would be provided by members of individual platforms, as well as the M-RIUP.

3.24 The choice and design of platforms would be driven by the need to balance a portfolio between actors, areas, and segments of a value chain as well as a need to test different approaches and methods of intervention. After the initial interventions this would include a transparent perhaps competitive process against a set of previously agreed guidelines such as those shown in Annex 4.

### **Socio-economic considerations**

3.25 Incorporating gender and issues around marginalized people in agricultural development initiatives poses a challenge that often receives little attention in planning processes. This will require mainstream activities that specifically target females, youth and vulnerable people (such as orphans and those living with HIV/AIDS), the elderly, and the rural landless, where this is feasible and other safety net approaches are not available.

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<sup>5</sup> These are aligned with the RIU hypothesis, purpose, and outputs

#### 4 Malawi RIUP expected outputs

4.1 By 2011, the M-RIUP is expected to have produced the following:

- i) Increased capacity of those institutions whose mandate is to empower farmers and strengthen farmer organisations.
- ii) Increased capacity of farmers and farmer organisations to demand information and of “infomediaries” to supply appropriate information.
- iii) A number of successful commodity-based innovation platforms strengthened by empowered and effective farmer organisations whose members are benefiting from the use of research knowledge.
- iv) A number of poverty reducing innovations as a direct result of M-RIUP intervention that includes poor and marginalised households as partners and as beneficiaries of platform activities.
- v) A number of lessons learned and shared on strengthening farmers’ organisations and improving communication approaches that have resulted in improved productivity and sustainable livelihoods across a range of commodity-based innovation platforms.
- vi) The establishment of a “Malawi Coalition for Innovation in Agriculture” that continues to support improvement in the capability of individuals and institutions in the use of innovation systems approaches including the demand for effective use of NR research.

#### 5 M-RIUP Monitoring, Impact and Learning

5.1 The initial emphasis of the MIL component in M-RIUP will be on Monitoring and Learning activities, with impact evaluation being undertaken a later stage. Both activities will follow the broader M-RIUP capacity building strategies which aim to build capacity by involving in-country organisations and individuals in a design, implementation, analysis and reporting process. The MIL strategy will follow a participatory process working with M-RIUP partners undertaking the following activities prioritised within a “Performance & Learning Framework”. These will be determined in close consultation with M-RIUP staff and key Coalition members:

- i) **Documenting a baseline:** once individual innovation platforms have been prioritised, a number of tightly focussed studies will be commissioned. These may include reviews of relevant national secondary data, organisational assessments, and studies of how different actors interact at present. The key findings of these studies will then be shared with platform members at different learning events with their synthesis into a brief summary document to act as a baseline for later evaluation, impact and lesson learning.
- ii) **Learning from without:** working through a Process Facilitator, MIL will need to ensure that M-RIUP stakeholders have access to relevant experience, especially technical information and experience from other RIU focus countries.
- iii) **Learning by doing:** This will include monitoring aimed to ensure the effective and efficient management of RIU activities. To the extent possible it will be undertaken by the Platforms themselves, which will be supported to monitor their own activities against their Performance and Learning Framework. This will include a small number of agreed indicators for each innovation platform, which will be reviewed either on a quarterly or six monthly basis

5.2 As an integral part of the M-RIUP these activities will be managed by the M-RIUP team, with support from an MIL Link Manager. It is expected that much of the monitoring and evaluation work will be undertaken by national organisations or individuals. In line with RIU’s capacity building principles, the M-RIUP will aim to i) build capacity by working with evaluators and researchers, ii) maximise use of existing capacity and iii) Involve in-country evaluators and researchers throughout.

## 6 Institutional context and programme management

### Innovation learning groups and commodity based innovation platforms

- 6.1 Fundamental to the development of M-RIUP will be adding value to existing innovation activities through working with, facilitating and strengthening the capacity of existing organisations.
- 6.2 Implementation of M-RIUP activities would therefore initially be undertaken through “**Innovation learning groups and commodity-based platforms**”. This will be achieved through working with those organisations assessed as having the vision and mission that embrace the principles and objectives of RIU as well as possessing strong links with local level innovation initiatives capable of demanding and using research outputs.
- 6.3 At the same time, M-RIUP will need to operate in ways that are consistent with RIU objectives, hypotheses, principles and output requirements in order to ensure RIU funding. This will include requirements for financial and technical reporting.

### A “**Malawi Coalition for Innovations in Agriculture**”

- 6.4 M-RIUP would be implemented in a step-wise process initially working with an interim group of 5-10 innovation champions (individuals and institutions) who are already involved with RIU-like activities and should include some members of the CSPD team on an interim basis to provide continuity.
- 6.5 RIU would facilitate a consolidation of these innovations champions into a “Malawi Coalition for Innovations in Agriculture” (Annex 4) to develop a common M-RIUP agenda
- 6.6 An M-RIUP coordinator and facilitator would be appointed responsible to the Coalition. They will be supported by a Southern Africa RIU task coordinator.

### M-RIUP secretariat

- 6.7 M-RIUP would contract with an organisation to provide secretariat-type functions ensuring accountability and reporting through which RIUP resources would be provided. This will be undertaken through a transparent process of inviting expressions of interest against agreed criteria from appropriate organisations.

### M-RIUP funding

- 6.8 RIUP will provide sufficient resources to initiate the M-RIUP but supplementary fund raising will be required as the programme matures. This will be the responsibility of the RIU country task manager assisted by the M-RIUP coordinator and Coalition.
- 6.9 M-RIUP would then provide its financial support in ways necessary to achieve the programme's overall objectives. While the main instrument is initially likely to be grant funding from RIU some form of competitive funding will need to be considered. At the same time every effort will be made to leverage funds from elsewhere.

### M-RIUP Capacity Building

- 6.10 The M-RIUP strategy has placed emphasis on the need for capacity building, particularly the capacity among stakeholder groups to interact and link productively, as a necessary aspect integral to all interventions; M-RIUP will be responsible for ensuring that regular capacity building events take place.
- 6.11 The Coalition will be tasked with both identifying opportunities for M-RIUP support and helping to promote the formation of innovation learning groups and commodity-based platforms around them. Technical assistance and support will be provided to assist in these activities and writing associated funding proposals. Assistance will also be provided to ensure a balance of activities to include disadvantaged groups and to seek opportunities that can be based around the outputs of DFID funded research RNRRS.

## **7 Sustaining M-RIU activities and innovation systems beyond 2011**

- 7.1 M-RIUP needs to be owned by existing institutions in Malawi. Creation of a new organisation is not an option. Malawi is already over-full of consortia, networks, and partnerships often as a result of donor initiatives. To add to this list may undermine the objectives of RIUP.
- 7.2 At the same time there was support during the workshop for M-RIUP to build and become an initiative of a "Malawi Innovations Coalition for Agriculture" provided such a coalition has the resources to continue after RIUP funding has ceased. This will depend on the ability to leverage funds from other sources. Institutional sustainability may require that the Coalition becomes embedded within an existing like minded institution as M-RIUP matures.
- 7.3 The MIL process needs to provide positive evidence of the effectiveness of the Coalition and its ability to leverage additional funding.

## **8 Development of a detailed implementation programme**

- 8.1 It is intended that this M-RIUP strategy be agreed by those stakeholders already working in RIU-type activities and RIUP management by the end of December 2007. Following this, the CSPDT will complete an M-RIUP Implementation Plan in close collaboration with stakeholders.
- 8.2 It is envisaged that implementation will initially require a period of capacity building including the provision of support for the farmer organisation and communication learning groups and to stimulate the first commodity-based platforms so that they can become operational by mid 2008 and effective during the 2008 rainy season.
- 8.3 During the capacity building phase it is expected that M-RIUP will identify, and design actions to use RIU seed funding to support:
  - Facilitating the creation of a learning group amongst those organisations involved with empowering farmers and strengthening farmer organisations
  - Facilitating and strengthening a knowledge-information-communication learning group including associated knowledge gathering activities.
  - Assistance in building capacities within at least two contrasting commodity-based innovation platforms, including cotton.
  - Organising RNNRS and other research output show-casing events directly related to these sets of activities. This could coincide with an MCCI fair in Blantyre where emphasis is placed on cotton and provide opportunity to launch M-RIU.

### **Scheduling**

8.4 The suggested time schedule for M-RIUP initiation of activities is:

31 <sup>st</sup> December 2007	M-RIUP Strategy agreed
31 <sup>st</sup> January 2008	M-RIUP Programme plan completed
28 <sup>th</sup> February 2008	Commitment by RIUP of resources for M-RIUP activities Establishment of an M-RIUP Innovations steering group
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2008	Appointment of a Malawi RIUP Coordinator, Facilitator and secretariat Initiation of capacity building capacities and innovation platform formation
May-June 2008	Reporting schedule introduced in line with RIUP requirements RNNRS and other NR research show casing events organised around innovation platform requirements Launch of M-RIUP during the show casing events
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2009	Transformation of M-RIUP Innovations steering group into a "Malawi Coalition for Innovations in Agriculture"

## Annex 1: Acronyms

ACE	Agricultural Commodity Exchange of Africa	I-Life	Improving livelihoods through increased food security (an NGO consortium)
AICC-SABI	African Institute of Corporate Citizenship-Small agro-business initiative	MCCI	Malawi Chamber of Commerce and Industry
AISAM	Agri- Input Suppliers Association of Malawi	MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
ARDEP	Agricultural and Rural and Development Programme	MoA&FS	Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security
ASSMAG	Association of Smallholder Seed Multiplication Action Group	MoLG&RD	Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development
CAADP	Coordinated African Agriculture Development Programme	M-RIUP	Malawi Research into Use Programme
CBOs	Community based organisations	MRFC	Malawi Rural Finance Company
CISANET	Civil Society Agriculture Network	MUSSCO	Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research	NASFAM	National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi
DARS	Dept. of Agricultural Research Services	NEPAD	New Partnerships for Africa's Development
DFID	UK Govt Department for International Development	NGO	Non governmental Organisation
EC	European Community	NR	Natural Resources
FARA-SSA-CP	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa- sub Saharan Africa-Challenge Programme	RIUP	Research into Use Programme
FUM	Farmers' Union of Malawi	RNNRS	Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy
GTPA	Grain Traders and Processors' Association	RUMARK	Rural Market Development Trust
ICRISAT	International Crop Research Institute for the semi-arid tropics	SADC-MAPP	Southern Africa Development Community-Multi Country Agricultural Programme and Projects
IDAF	Institutional Development across the Agri-food sector	SCC	Swedish Cooperative Centre
IDEAA	Initiative for Development and Equity in African Agriculture	SMAGs	Seed Multiplication Action Groups
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	SWAP	Sector Wide Agricultural Programme
		TAMA	Tobacco Association of Malawi

## **Annex 2: M-RIUP Strategy and Programme Design Team**

### *Core team*

1. Team Leader and Programme management specialist (Jim Ellis-Jones)
2. Natural Resources and Innovation Systems Specialist (Ebbie Dengu)
3. Socio-economist (Alex Phiri, Bunda College)
4. Country resource person and acting M-RIUP coordinator - NR extension (Christine Mtambo, MoA&FS)
5. Country resource person - NR research (Ronnie Mwenda, MoA&FS)

### *Support team*

6. Communication/Information/Knowledge Access Specialist (Sarah Carriger)
7. MIL Specialist (Hugh Goyder)
8. Workshop facilitator (Jurgen Hagmann)
9. RIU Southern Africa task manager (Ben Sekamatte)
10. Workshop secretariat (Towera Jakalasi, AICC-SABI)



## **Annex 3: Guidelines for a “Malawi Coalition for Innovation in Agriculture”**

### **Purpose**

- To provide the energy, stimulus, resources and critical mass of effort to facilitate the greater use of research-based knowledge in the agricultural and wider natural resource sector to reduce poverty, improve livelihoods and sustainable use of the environment.

### **Functions**

- Lead, coordinate and be a driver of the M-RIUP initiative.
- Mobilise the resources required by innovation networks and platforms including those leveraged from other stakeholders including the RIU Programme and other development partners and agencies.
- Provide leadership in the effective use of knowledge in agriculture and natural resources, including facilitation of farmer organisational development, knowledge sharing, and networking around commodity based innovation platforms.
- Facilitate effective trust, communication, advocacy and lobbying between partners in the agricultural innovation system.
- Provide a mechanism to leverage the resources necessary for successful innovation.
- Improve the physical and policy environment to enable innovations to thrive.
- Ensure transparency and accountability for M-RIUP.
- Define a programme and budget.

### **Membership**

The Coalition would comprise a group of interested individuals and institutions committed to promote innovation in agriculture and related sectors with the ability and the institutional and human resources and financial capacity to make a valuable contribution to M-RIUP. It would include dynamic innovative individuals high personal integrity with an understanding of and empathy for small holder agriculture, knowledge about local, regional and international initiatives, and private sector marketing and entrepreneurial skills with ability to influence decision and policy makers. It would include youth and have an appropriate gender balance. These are M-RIUP champions.

In addition the Coalition should represent an even balance between the suppliers and users of research-knowledge including farmers’ organisations, processors, input-output agents and other entrepreneurs) as well as organisations that provide support services such as business development, financial institutions, extension agencies, ICT, CBOs and NGOs with a presence rural areas. Mechanisms will need to be put in place to ensure that the Coalition continues to represent these stakeholders.

### **Governance**

The Governance of the Coalition will comprise an easy and flexible framework under which the MoA&FS will be asked to recognise and endorse the principle of establishing the Coalition as a tool for promoting innovations in agriculture.

### **Secretariat**

In addition to Governance, MRIUP requires the effective use of RIU funds in an effective and business-like management structure. It is therefore proposed that a secretariat would provide management and support services to M-RIUP and the Coalition. The secretariat should be well respected, legally registered organisation with effective functioning infrastructure based in Lilongwe. In addition the secretariat should have a proven track record, be reputable and trusted with good linkages to the agriculture sector and empathy for small holder farmer problems with previous experience of working across public, private and NGO sectors in RIU-like activities. It should be neutral without vested interests and willing to be guided by the Innovation Coalition.

#### **Annex 4: Guidelines for the selection of Innovation Platforms**

- i) The M-RIUP funds are to be used to fill identified gaps in innovations systems and to supplement and not duplicate or replace existing programmes and funding.
- ii) The selection of platforms will be guided by the need to test different approaches and the need to learn from different experience (and thereby test the RIU hypothesis).
- iii) All platforms supported by the M-RIUP will be encouraged to adopt environmentally sound management practices as well as the promotion of improved, stable livelihoods for a range of stakeholders including those of the vulnerable poor.
- iv) Preference will be given to platforms that are perceived to have the greatest chance of producing financially sustainable results (innovations) and are judged to have the greatest prospects of reducing poverty.
- v) Preference will be given to platforms that effectively involve traditionally excluded groups such as vulnerable households or people in harsh physical environments or remote locations.
- vi) Preference will be given to platforms that strengthen the demand for research-based knowledge and other resources by both the final users (enterprises, farmers groups) and service providers in organisational development, finance, business development services, information marketing, communication and extension.
- vii) Preference will be given to platforms that are specifically designed to enhance the natural environment.
- viii) The portfolio of supported Innovation Platforms will need to balance the needs of different agricultural sub-sectors, locations and social groups.