NATURAL RESOURCES SYSTEMS PROGRAMME
FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT[1]

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Project Title

Policy processes and institutions in NRM: lessons from NRSP research

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Organisation

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NRSP Production System

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A: Policy processes and institutions in NRM - lessons from NRSP research

B: Linking research, policy and livelihoods: challenges and contradictions. NRSP Brief. March 2006.

C: Linking research, policy and livelihoods: a synthesis. Karen Brock and Elizabeth Harrison. Brighton, UK: University of Sussex.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CPR	Common Property Resource
CRD	Central Research Department
DFID	Department for International Development
FRP	Forestry Research Programme
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRSP	Natural Resources Systems Programme
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator

1   Executive Summary

The project **purpose** was to '*incorporate the policy development and policy implementation implications of NRSP's findings/ knowledge of the policy process and institutions in NRM into DFID's NRM research and development policy*'. This was in order to achieve enhanced understanding among policy makers and planners of the relationship between policy and NRM outcomes, as illuminated by insights and lessons from NRSP research projects, and to enhance the capacity of policy makers to effectively implement such policies.

The project had four **outputs**, three of which have been achieved. Achievement of the fourth output is dependent on interaction with DFID and other key stakeholders. The outputs were:

1. *Study framework established and agreed*. The study framework was established and agreed by the end of the inception phase, as planned. This included modification of the initial framework as described in section 4 below.

2. *NRSP research concerned with policy processes and institutions analysed and documented*. This was achieved, but not in the way that was anticipated. This is elaborated in more detail under 4. In summary, the major shift from initial expectations was that the great majority of projects did not in fact provide enhanced understanding of the nature of policy processes or the policy environment. Rather, they sought to influence policy before (or without) such an understanding. The implication for this project is that we have shifted our analytical focus towards greater reflection on the way that researchers conceptualise the policy process, as well on as the challenges and contradictions posed by the dynamic relationship between research and policy.

3. *Implications of these findings for specified and differentiated groups of policy-makers established*. The implications of these findings are elaborated in annex A, pp.68-69. Our findings regarding the advocacy role of research projects have led to a stronger emphasis on the implications of findings for donor policy makers and research managers than we had anticipated.

4. *Project findings and products promoted with priority sample of target audience*. This has not yet been fully achieved. During the project, contact was made with members of the Central Research Department (CRD) at DFID, Policy Team and other Synthesis Studies. However, feedback to date has been limited. Achievement of this output is now the principal objective of the next three months.

Project **activities** included:

*   An inception phase in which target projects were identified and key analytical themes refined;

*   Detailed synthesis and analysis of documentation from 35 projects across all of NRSP's uptake promotion nodes;

*   Secondary literature review;

*   Interviews with 10 Project Leaders (8 face to face, 2 email);

*   Iteration of project findings (detailed in annex A) with interviewees;

*   Liaison with DFID CRD and Policy Teams, and other Synthesis Studies.

Through analysis of the factors influencing the outcomes of policy-oriented research, and effective communication of this to research managers and funders, we expect this project to be making an indirect contribution to **NRSP's purpose:** *to deliver new knowledge that enables poor people who are largely dependent on the NR resource base to improve their livelihoods.*

The project had two **OVIs at purpose level**:

1. 'Enhanced understanding among at least two DFID policy division teams and two research managers of the relationship between policy and NRM outcomes by December 2005'.

2. 'One DFID NRM related policy statement/ initiative per team revised to improve probability of successful implementation by March 2006'

These OVIs will not be achieved in the time specified. However, we consider that OVI 1 is attainable during 2006, although with a slightly different focus. This is, that enhanced understanding is more likely to be of 'the challenges faced in moving towards policy-oriented research'.

2   Background

The role of policy processes and institutions in natural resources management (NRM) is a core thematic focus for the Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP). This study provides a synthesis of the findings across projects that have contributed to this theme. It was designed to extract insights and lessons for both NRSP and a wider policy audience.

The study analyses how a selection of NRSP projects have addressed the challenge of engaging with policy processes and institutions. Increasingly over the last five years, NRSP, like other programmes within the RNRRS, has begun to ask researchers to explicitly engage with policy processes. But what does this amount to? What are the key findings that may remain embedded in project literature? What do these projects tell us about the relationship between policy and NRM outcomes?

The synthesis sits within a broader context of an increasing interest in policy processes and the relationship between these, development practice and livelihoods. On the one hand, a growing literature questions the linear and technocratic approach to policy making that has characterised much development thinking (Keeley and Scoones 1999; Mosse 2005; Shore and Wright 1997). On the other, a search among donors (including the Department for International Development (DFID)) for ways to inform and improve policy-making, seeks to absorb the insights from the critical literature. If policy does not impact on livelihoods in the ways that have been assumed, analysis needs to focus on the ways in which policy is both generated and implemented. Underlying all of this is a concern with the ways that research influences – or should influence – NRM policy making.

The relationship between research and policy making has therefore been the subject of much recent analysis. Concerns have arisen in response to a sustained questioning of the impact and value of research for policy making, let alone development practice (Young and Court 2004). Earlier assumptions that research informs policy in a straightforward way have been replaced by arguments about the complexity of reasons for policy uptake of research messages.

Insights about research-policy linkages do not necessarily tell us anything about what happens with policies after they are formulated – and therefore little about the eventual

impact on livelihoods. A critical literature suggests that the relationship between policy and implementation is in fact strongly mediated by a range of factors that lead to unpredictability of outcomes. These include the role of politics, power and personal discretion; the implementation of policy is as much influenced by the internal dynamics and the structural positioning of institutions as it is by the merits or otherwise of the policies themselves.

This is the context in which the synthesis was initiated. Our purpose was to identify what further light research undertaken by NRSP could throw on the complex practices described and analysed by the 'policy processes' literature. Our expectations were that this would occur in analyses of institutions and their interrelationships, from the local through to the transnational levels. This might involve reflection on the politics of decentralisation; equally it might tell us more about the relationship between research, policy advocacy and practice.

3   Project Purpose

The project **purpose** was to '*incorporate the policy development and policy implementation implications of NRSP's findings/ knowledge of the policy process and institutions in NRM into DFID's NRM research and development policy'*. This was in order to achieve enhanced understanding among policy makers and planners of the relationship between policy and NRM outcomes, as illuminated by insights and lessons from NRSP research projects, and to enhance the capacity of policy makers to effectively implement such policies. The role of policy processes and institutions in natural resources management is a core concern for NRSP. This study was thus based on synthesis and analysis of a range of projects that were identified as contributing directly or indirectly to two of NRSP's nine cross-cutting research 'themes'. The themes specify the topics on which NRSP is contributing new knowledge. For this synthesis, the focus was theme 6,'links between households, communities and policy makers', and theme 7,'institutional constraints and options'.

The purpose level OVIs focused on changes within DFID Policy Division teams regarding policy initiatives and statements. In the light of research findings (elaborated in 4, below), we judge that these OVIs were somewhat misplaced. This is because our findings told us much more about the relationship between funded research and policy advocacy than it did about the policy processes themselves, especially those in developing country contexts. As a result, we are able to deliver more substantive reflections on the relations between research and development than we had anticipated. Nonetheless, the synthesis also yielded insights concerning the relationship between policy and livelihood outcomes, including how these are mediated by local and national level institutional factors. These are elaborated in detail in annex A, pp. 42-60.

4   Outputs

The project had four outputs. The attainment of each is elaborated below. We focus principally on the findings emerging from output 2, the analytical synthesis.

4.1   Output 1: Study framework established and agreed.

The study framework was established and agreed by the end of the inception phase, as planned.

In this phase, it became clear that our initial focus needed to be modified. In its initial conception, we suggested that:

> '....*an understanding of the interactions between different organisations and actors in the policy process is important. Analysis of policy is also relevant with regard to its influence on livelihoods of the poor. Such an understanding is gained through consideration of the operation of locally specific institutional structures governing access to resources, for example land tenure.....[and]... that through understanding the nature of the policy process itself, from the local to the national level, researchers are better equipped to suggest effective entry points for their research to have an impact on pro-poor change* (RD1.p.6).

However, review of documentation suggested to us that we were likely to gain fewer insights on these processes than expected, partly because projects themselves were more focused on influencing rather than understanding policy.

Initially we had identified a number of themes on which to focus our analysis. These were: decentralisation and representation; local control and the role of local professionals; the impact of policy on livelihoods; policy makers knowledge and understanding; and policy implications of local knowledge. In the light of our inception phase findings, our analytical framing was altered. The revised framing was focused on;

1. *Approaches to policy*. How have NRSP research projects approached policy processes? What is the range of NRM policies under discussion? How is policy conceptualised by researchers, and who are the policymakers? How have research projects linked researchers, policy actors and recipients? What methods and tools for engagement have been used?

2. *Contexts of NRM and NRM policy*. What are the patterns, background influences and drivers of policy? What is the role of decentralisation, and what are the structures and legal frameworks of rights that affect NRM? What are the spaces and opportunties for policy change suggested by these contexts?

3. *Role of local institutions in policy processes*. What is the range of local institutions involved in policy processes, and what are the functions of these institutions? How do they contribute to representation, collective action and capacity building? What assumptions are made in engaging with such institutions to catalyse change in NRM policy and practice?

4. *The impact of policy on livelihoods*. How can understanding of the way that policies impact on livelihoods be improved? How are impacts mediated by wealth, gender, age, and other relevant aspects of difference?

4.2   Output 2: NRSP research concerned with policy processes and institutions analysed and documented.

Given the refocusing of analysis described above, it is fair to say that this output was achieved, but not in the way initially expected.

In discovering the relative lack of attention to understanding the policy process (there are notable exceptions, which are elaborated in annex A) we have shifted our analytical focus towards greater reflection on the way that researchers conceptualise the policy process, as well on as the challenges and contradictions posed by the dynamic relationship between research and policy (point 1 above). Information concerning the relationship between research, policy and livelihood outcomes, including institutional dimensions of these (points 2-4 above) provides the second main area of findings. These are elaborated in turn below.

4.2.1   Conceptualising the policy process

Managing the policy process?

While most of the projects reviewed nominally ascribe to a view of policy processes that see these as rooted in power relations, many have ended up seeking essentially managerial and technical solutions to the problems they identify. A strong sense emerges from the research reviewed that institutional change can be achieved through interventions designed to stimulate it. What is notably absent from most of the projects reviewed is an *analysis* of power relations between actors that animate institutions and shape their behaviour. While findings are presented that demonstrate power relations at work, the lack of systematic analysis of these means that they remain largely embedded in background information, and are not explicitly used in efforts to influence policy.

We considered what might lie behind this disjuncture. Two important factors are the pressure to see results, and questions of disciplinary orientation. NRSP has evolved within the wider context of shifts in thinking in DFID. In essence, this has involved a shift from technology and productivity increases, to a concern with poverty and livelihoods. This implies, perhaps demands, a disciplinary shift in research approach. Assessing the productivity impact of a particular technology is a somewhat less complex task than showing its pro-poor impact on livelihoods. But this is exactly what researchers were being asked to do. In the focus on uptake promotion and influencing policy, they have arguably been pushed to go beyond what they were best at.

In addition, for many researchers themselves, the notion that they should be ensuring the promotion of their work was problematic. Programme management stressed uptake and integration with policy and institutions increasingly strongly throughout the life of the NRSP. One result of these pressures has been the predominantly managerial approach to policy processes described above.

These findings provoke questions concerning what the role of outsider researchers in stimulating policy change should be. To what extent should this be informed by a more detailed understanding of what influences the relationship between policy and implementation, including the role of the researchers themselves? Research projects no longer simply produce 'new knowledge' which will (it is hoped) permeate through to policies, and in turn to livelihoods. Their outputs need to be more deeply entrenched in policy processes themselves. But can this take place if the complexity of policy-making and

institutions are not fully understood? We suggest that it cannot, and that the evidence presented above suggests that strategic attempts to influence policy are weakened by lack of such analysis. In addition, though, the different approaches of researchers show that understanding institutions and policy making can come as much from deep local engagement as it can from any particular analytical framing of what policy is, or is not. Ability to unpack the institutional context is therefore partly a matter of academic perspective; but reflexivity[2] and legitimacy, time, and the nature of local alliances are all also important.

Academic perspective: questions of discipline
The challenge of working in multidisciplinary[3] teams has raised many questions and challenges, magnified in the light of the increasing tendency to applied research. If we are not just doing research, but doing research in the service of catalysing positive social change – in the form of policy impact – then our assumptions about the management of social change become very important. If positive livelihood outcomes are to emerge from development research, the closeness of relations between the natural and social worlds, better communication, and transparency in addressing sometimes painful processes of inter-disciplinary jostling are all demanded.

Those few projects that explicitly engaged with policy and implementation as politicised and problematic processes were led by researchers whose primary academic training was in the social sciences. Articulating policy processes in terms of politics and power, context and contingency, is what they have been trained to do. And importantly, this is the language with which it is normal for them to report findings. For natural scientists or those with a background in management, the apparently more neutral language of linear cause and effect is more normal and acceptable.Where multi-disciplinary working has been most successful is when these different perspectives have combined in a degree of mutual learning, usually because of personal contact.

Reflexivity and legitimacy
There is more to being able to understand policy than disciplinary perspective though. One research team, working on Joint Forest Management in Madhya Pradesh, India, concludes that its research "can make no more than a limited contribution to on-going policy dialogue […] There are questions about the legitimacy and 'stake' of externally funded research projects as part of on-going policy dialogue." (Vira 2005:5,12)

This conclusion goes to the heart of the assumption that information from externally-funded research can and should have an influence on policy; and a similar assumption that such

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[2] We understand 'reflexivity' to refer to research practice in which the researcher recognises and explicitly analyses the impact of their own history, experiences, beliefs and culture on the processes and outcomes of the enquiry.

[3] In multidisciplinarity, researchers from two or more disciplines work together on a common problem, but without altering their disciplinary approaches or developing a common conceptual framework. Interdisciplinarity happens when researchers from two or more disciplines pool their approaches and modify them to best address the issue to be researched. NRSP projects have tended to have multidisciplinarity as the norm, whereas interdisciplinarity is more elusive and tends to be an ideal or objective rather than common practice

research should be 'demand-led' by southern policy makers. Crucially, it is not the quality, accuracy or robustness of the information that determines its possible contribution to policy processes, but far more political questions of legitimacy and 'stake'. This requires more reflexive researcher practice. If, as we have seen, researchers are increasingly becoming directly engaged in the processes they seek to influence, then it is equally important for them to consider their own position, and the implications this has for what can and cannot be done with the findings of their research. If research is really to influence policy, researchers need to become less invisible, and clearer about the kind of changes they are aiming, and able, to achieve. Those projects in which researchers reflected directly and explicitly on their own role in the process, were also those in which engagement with policy makers appeared most deeply and successfully embedded.

Local alliances: issues of time and personal relationships
As we have said, very few of the projects reviewed directly engaged with policy processes as part of their researchable questions. Rather, they saw policy as part of the landscape of NRM, and policy actors as the targets that their research aimed to influence. Despite – or perhaps because of - this indirect approach, what emerges from the research is a sense that there are many potential interfaces between policy and practice at which policy change can be catalysed, at different levels. Selecting entry points that optimise the potential for change should rely on an understanding of the range of possibilities, rather than being predominantly driven by external demands

An important implication here is that when considering policy-directed research, or in planning research on policy directed at a particular question or issue of NRM, it is important to ask not only "which policy process?" but also, "which policy makers?" Which policy makers matter most is a particularly difficult question for those engaged in donor-funded processes. Donors themselves are policy makers, open to influence. They are also heterogeneous actors. DFID at its headquarters in the UK is very different to DFID in its country offices, just as the national office of a key ministry is very different to its decentralised branches in rural areas. Each requires different approaches if influence is to be achieved. And the development of such approaches needs to be built on explicit recognition of the factors that influence their priorities. In the synthesis study we have come across some consideration of the role of DFID, particularly the country offices, with both positive and negative comment. Equally, a few projects have endeavoured to ensure that policy influence takes place at all levels, including the highest. The majority of projects reviewed however, have focused their activities on local institutions, and understanding what needs to happen at this level if positive changes in NRM practice are to emerge.

In those projects where change has been managed through the process of the research, significant investments of time and the construction and maintenance of local alliances have proved essential. This implies meaningful ownership of research agendas by locally based partners, and often a long-term commitment from the research funding body. Individuals have had a key role in catalysing and inhibiting institutional change. While this may seem self-evident, it does have implications for understanding what is needed for positive change. The pivotal role of individuals demands a focus on the micro-politics of how decisions are made and the bases of different kinds of action. Trusted individuals are key to effective communication and learning processes. But change initiatives that come to over-rely on individuals may become fragile and vulnerable. Several research teams that had developed good relationships with key actors and began to build constituencies for change, experienced problems when those actors were posted to other areas in the case of government staff, or left

their institution to find other employment. On the other hand, when researchers engage, not just with individuals, but with the factors influencing their actions and priorities, there are better chances that positive change may be sustained.

4.2.2   Research, policy and livelihoods

It was not the aim of this synthesis to assess the impact of policy on livelihoods; causation is too hard to trace, and our primary focus was anyway on the nature of policy processes and institutions themselves. Nonetheless, the projects do provide some limited information on impact which suggests that policies do not always have an impact on livelihoods, either positive or negative; and where there is impact, it is as often unintended as intended. Beyond this though, the research reviewed also presents considerable insights concerning the local contextual factors that influence livelihood outcomes. These exist regardless of what researchers do, but they are an important part of the picture with which policy makers need to engage.

Of these, the most salient considerations appear to be the role of social factors of difference such as economic status, age and gender. These in turn influence the outcomes of managed processes of social change such as decentralisation and the ways in which representation may or may not be achieved. Research findings point to the need for caution to ensure elite capture is avoided, and the critical importance of building on existing collective arrangements rather than necessarily developing new ones. A common finding across the research is that many local institutional actors lack capacity to implement sustainable and equitable NRM policies and practices. These findings are elaborated in greater detail in parts 3 and 4 of annex A and summarised below.

The relationship between policy and management at micro and macro levels may be strongly linked, their co-evolution shaping responsive and accountable policy and sustainable institutions for NRM; or they may be almost completely disconnected, with national policies virtually unimplementable, and local NRM processes influenced by local politics and governed according to local power structures. The different between these two scenarios depends partly on the social, political and economic context, and the existing policy culture.

The features of a resource itself partly define the kind of policies that govern its management. For example, managing water of any kind presents particular challenges for management and institutions because of the multi-use nature of the resource, and because of the complexity of ownership, rights and responsibilities (Barr 2001). Similarly, research from the high-value forests of the Nepali Terai region concludes that forest *value* is an important driver of forest management (Seeley 2003).

Elements of economic, social and political processes are all reflected in legal frameworks of resource access. Many research projects found overlapping and unclear legislation on property and access rights for natural resources, especially in the case of common property resources (CPRs). Systems of land tenure in particular were found to be extremely complex in many areas. In many studies, the complexity of legal frameworks and weak implementation means that there is a strong difference between *de jure* and *de facto* natural resource tenure systems.

Several research projects report institutional fragmentation and testify to a dislocation

between policy on paper and in practice. Narratives of environmental policy at the national level endure, even when they are clearly at odds with the lived realities of natural resource management. For example, in Ghana, frameworks of natural resource tenure largely exclude villagers from ownership rights; the legislative system criminalises their use of tree resources; and environmental policies tend to equate off-farm natural resource based incomes and 'environmental degradation' (Brown and Amanor 2002). In Bangladesh, dislocation between policy and NRM practice is just as marked, but has different characteristics. Here, partly in response to shifting international conservation narratives, the government has changed the formal basis under which it allocates rights to water. This has led to confusion, with some water stakeholders legitimating their claims according to the new regime, and some according to the old (Barr 2001).

Democratic decentralisation provides an opportunity for NRM policy and practice to become more accountable, and to increase chances of greater community control over processes of planning and management. Positively, decentralised natural resource management could make good use of local knowledge and insights, and the impact of policies on livelihoods would be less likely to be ignored or discounted. However, decentralisation *can* lead to uncoordinated and incoherent policy, made without adequate information or analysis, based largely on the interests of local elites. It can involve the establishment of institutional mechanisms that exist on paper only, and in reality have no resources or influence (Brook 2005). Decentralisation processes are variable in their structure and intent, and involve central government institutions giving up powers which some are not happy to relinquish; this can result in central policy actors digging in their heels and blocking the progress of decentralisation (Brown and Amanor 2002, Brown *et al* 2001).

The design of NRM policies and interventions must therefore take into account the status and form of decentralisation if they are to be successful. Communities may need support in building the skills and capacities to effectively occupy the opportunities that decentralisation offers, just as government officials at lower levels may need support to make policy which relies on local problems rather than central narratives.

The research findings present many examples of institutions that do not necessarily do what they were designed to do. In some contexts, most notably in South Asia, government institutions are profoundly mistrusted, and dealing with government officials is seen as a matter of corruption, patron-client relations, failure to deliver and an encounter with attitudes of indifference (Brook 2002, 2005).

Another important consideration is the difference between indigenous institutions and those that have been created by outside interventions. Across many contexts, there has been a relatively recent proliferation of new resource management institutions. In part, the success of policy initiatives rests on the relationship between indigenous and these externally induced institutions.

Wealth and gender mediate access to institutions – as do age, caste, political identity and ethnicity. This observation is far from new, and it challenges us to do more than simply label institutions and describe their different patterns and categories, but rather to move towards considering how to build NRM institutions which are less rigidly exclusive of key stakeholders in management. One key insight here is that those who are socially marginalised have restricted access to the kind of institutional networks that allow them to move beyond the boundaries of their own locality. This restricted access is a key mechanism in broader processes of marginalisation of particular groups of stakeholders from policy processes.

Capacity-building interventions to address institutional weaknesses differ in approach, but those that build ownership of the learning process, engaging participants in learning activities over a long period of time appear to offer the greatest chances of sustainable institutional change. In this, individuals have a key role in both catalysing and inhibiting change.

In many countries, a growing diversity of actors perceive that they have a right to be involved in processes of NRM planning and policy, and amongst them are those who in turn represent those normally marginalised from such processes. A common finding in different contexts was that local institutions which are designed or mandated to ensure the representation of different stakeholders in NRM processes are frequently captured by elites, and many others are excluded from participation along reinforced lines of social difference such as gender, ethnicity or age.

Learning from examples where successful representation of marginalised groups has taken place suggests not only the need to build new resource management initiatives on existing foundations, but the importance of collective action at the village level as a prerequisite to successful representation of villagers in local processes of resource management.

4.3 Output 3: Implications of these findings for specified and differentiated groups of policy-makers established.

The implications of these findings are elaborated in annex A, pp. 68-69. Our findings regarding the advocacy role of research projects have led to a stronger emphasis on the implications of findings for donor policy makers and research managers than we had anticipated. Implications distinguish between those for research funders and managers and researchers themselves:

4.3.1 Implications for research funders

- The dynamics of politics and power in policy processes are often overlooked in research on natural resource management. And an understanding of institutional complexity cannot easily be bolted on to approaches that have emphasised technical and managerial dimensions.

- Interdisciplinarity and strong partnerships between researchers in the North and South are essential for infuencing national policy. These need to be supported in research design and built upon where they have already been shown to be effective.

- Research has been most successful in creating local impacts and working upwards and outwards where funding has been available for successive, rather than one-off, projects. Researchers need resources to invest in building their own networks and alliances over the medium to long term if they are to successfully influence policy.

- Influencing policy may take at least as long again as conducting research. This needs to be reflected in funding and in the expectations placed on individual research projects.

- Institutional awareness of research and an institutional memory for research findings is lacking amongst donors. A better relationship between centrally funded research and regional offices would be one way of developing these.

4.3.2 Implications for researchers

- To ensure that research influences policy, analysing how policy makers learn is as important as providing them with information.

- The outcomes of natural resource management policy often do not match the policy's objectives. For policy analysts, it is therefore necessary to consider the unintended as well as the intended consequences of policy implementation.

- Factors such as gender, wealth, age and place of origin infuence access to natural resources. Awareness of these factors should be reflected in the formulation and implementation of policy.

- Research findings point to the critical importance of building on existing collective arrangements for natural resource management, rather than necessarily developing new ones.

- Decentralisation of government is often seen as an important step towards pro-poor natural resource management, but research shows that this is by no means always the case. As with any change in representation, the possibility of capture by elites must always be considered.

- Tenure and property regimes are likely to be critical factors in determining the outcome of natural resource management policy.

- Disconnections between different institutions and different levels of the policy process are as important as connections in understanding how policy works or fails to work.

4.4 Output 4: Project findings and products promoted with priority sample of target audience.

This has not yet been fully achieved. During the project, contact was made with members of the Central Research Division at DFID as well as team leaders in the Policy Division for Institutions and Political Systems and Renewable Natural Resources and Agriculture. In addition, we have liaised with Forestry Research Programme, the lead Programme with regard to Policy synthesis. However, feedback has been limited. We do not see this as a significant problem as it is reasonable that interest was less likely to be generated before the project had generated findings and products. Further implementation of the communication strategy, is thus an essential next step. This is in hand, and described under 7 and 8 below.

5   Research Activities

5.1   Inception phase

- Five analytical themes were initially developed to form the basis for a working template for categorising projects. These were refined for the implementation phase of the research, as described in 4 above.

- After an initial review of all projects stated to be relevant to NRSP's Themes 6 and 7, and various selected additional projects, we decided to analyse projects by node suites. This was because of the cumulative nature of many of the node suites, with current projects frequently arising directly from the findings and activities of those preceding them.

- Each reviewer then read documentation in order to both identify key relevant projects, and to refine analytical themes. In this, choice of documentation was based largely on accessibility on the NRSP project database. HTSPE also supplied material electronically on request. This first reading amounted to 42 documents in fifteen node suites

- As part of the Communications Plan, contact was made with DFID policy team advisors in Renewable Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Institutions and Political Systems, and Head of Profession, Governance. Some interest was expressed, but there was no specific feedback on our proposed framework.

- Contact was also made with Liz Betser, who was undertaking synthesis work for the Forestry Research Programme.

- Research themes were discussed with members of the NRSPSteering Group also conducting synthesis studies.

5.2   Implementation phase

- A total of 35 projects were selected for documentary review, covering all of the NRSP uptake promotion nodes. The list of projects consulted is supplied as appendix 1, annex A. This documentation was acquired from the NRSP project database, from NRSP management, and directly from Project Leaders

- Secondary literature was reviewed (see bibliography, annex A)

- Interviews were conducted with 10 project leaders. Eight of these were face-to-face interviews, and 2 were conducted by email. The interviews were semi-structured, covering questions relating directly to our analytical framework, as well as those specfically arising from project documentation itself. A list of interviewees is supplied as appendix 2, annex A

- After drafting of the main report (annex A), this was sent to all interviewees for checking and comment.

- On the basis of these comments, shorter summary versions of annex A are now being prepared, including a 3-4,000 word briefing (Annex B).

6 Environmental assessment

6.1 What significant environmental impacts resulted from the research activities (both positive and negative)?

The project is unlikely to have had any significant direct environmental impact.

6.2 What will be the potentially significant environmental impacts (both positive and negative) of widespread dissemination and application of research findings?

It might be anticipated that longer term effects of improved policy making arising from the study would include environmental benefits.

6.3 Has there been evidence during the project's life of what is described in Section 6.2 and how were these impacts detected and monitored?

n/a

6.4 What follow up action, if any, is recommended?

n/A

7 Contribution of Outputs

7.1 NRSP Purpose and Production System Output

NRSP purpose: *to deliver new knowledge that enables poor people who are largely dependent on the NR resource base to improve their livelihoods.*

This project has not developed new knowledge that relates directly to NRM and thus its contribution to the NRSP purpose can only be indirect. In its critical analysis of the ways in which NR researchers have approached policy processes, particularly their tendency to influence rather than understand these, the project may contribute to policy regarding research that better engages with the less easily managed aspects of policy. This is dependent on the production of accessible and persuasive documentation and the successful interaction with communications stakeholders.

In addition, while findings concerning the policy and institutional context may themselves not be new, the project has compiled considerable evidence and illustration of key factors that need to be considered by policy makers. These concern the nature and functioning of local institutions and their relationships with other levels in the policy process. The also relate to considerations of elite capture and representation, and the role of decentralisation. To the extent that this evidence is taken on board by policy makers, the project may in turn succeed in contributing to NRSP's purpose.

7.2 Impact of outputs

The OVIs at purpose level of this project are:

1. 'Enhanced understanding among at least two DFID policy division teams

and two research managers of the relationship between policy and NRM outcomes by December 2005'.

2. 'One DFID NRM related policy statement/ initiative per team revised to improve probability of successful implementation by March 2006'

These OVIs are not likely to be achieved in the time specified. However, we consider that OVI 1 is attainable during 2006, although with a slightly different focus. This is, that enhanced understanding is to be of 'the challenges faced in moving towards policy-oriented research,' more than the relationship between policy and NRM outcomes. The research reviewed provided relatively little information regarding policy and NRM outcomes, if these are considered to be the impacts of policy. However, it did tell us quite a lot about the issues arising in conducting research that intends to inform policy and about the contextual factors that shape policy.

The achievement of the second OVI depends very much on the extent to which our findings resonate with the kind of policy considerations that are of central importance to DFID NR policy advisers. This will be determined during the implementation of the Communications Strategy

7.3   Uptake Promotion

Further uptake promotion will take the following forms.

1. A seminar/presentation at DFID in order to gain feedback on findings and best presentation formats for project products.

2. On the basis of this, finalisation and production of a booklet, summarising the main findings of the project and their policy implications. This will be widely circulated, but the principal audience is DFID CRD and Policy Teams. In addition, research managers and research partners will be important recipients, as will policy makers in developing countries.

3. Dissemination of a policy briefing with other synthesis studies. This briefing is appended as Annex B.

8   Publications and other communication materials

8.1   Books and book chapters

8.2   Journal articles

8.2.1   Peer reviewed and published

8.2.2   Pending publication (in press)

8.2.3   Drafted

8.3   Institutional Report Series

8.4   Symposium, conference and workshop papers and posters

8.5   Newsletter articles

8.6   Academic theses

8.7   Extension leaflets, brochures, policy briefs and posters

Brock, K and Harrison, E 2006 *Linking research, policy and livelihoods: challenges and contradictions*   6pp

8.8   Manuals and guidelines

8.9   Media presentations (videos, web sites, TV, radio, interviews etc)

8.10   Reports and data records

8.10.1 Project technical reports including project internal workshop papers and proceedings

Brock, K and Harrison E. 2005. *Institutions and policy processes: lessons from NRSP research* University of Sussex 75pp

8.10.2 Literature reviews

8.10.3 Scoping studies

Brock, K and Harrison, E. 2005. *Policy Processes and Institutions in NRM – Lessons from NRSP Research* University of Sussex 8pp

8.10.4 Datasets

8.10.5 Project web site, and/or other project related web addresses

9   References cited in the report, sections 1-7

Barr, J.J.F. 2001. Methods for consensus building for management of common property resources. Final Technical Report for project R7562. Newcastle: Centre for Land Use and Water Resources Research, University of Newcastle.

Brook, R.M. 2002. Natural resource management action plan for Hubli-Dharwad peri-urban interface. Final Technical Report for project R7959. Bangor: School of Agricultural and Forest Sciences, University of Wales.

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Brown, K., Adger, W.N. and Tompkins, E. 2001. Building consensus amongst stakeholders for management of natural resources at the Land Water Interface. Final Technical Report for project R7408. Norwich: Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia.

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Shore, C. and Wright, S. (1997) *The Anthropology of Policy: Critical Perspectives on Governance and Power,* London: Routledge.

Vira, B. (2005) Incorporating stakeholder perceptions in participatory forest management in India. Final Technical Report for project R8280. Cambridge: Department of Geography, University of Cambridge.

Young, J. and Court, J. (2004) "Bridging Research and Policy in International Development: An Analytical and Practical Framework," *RAPID Briefing Paper* No.1, London: ODI.

10   Project logframe

Project Number (leave blank)	Log frame and Production System reference number (complete from tender document)
	Programme logframe, output 2, activity 2.1.3 (a)

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumptions
Goal			
Contribute to realising improved integrated NR-management strategies for specific groups of the poor identified, tested and promoted with target institutions that are stakeholders in the various projects in NRSP's portfolio	Options and programmes for improving integrated NR management relevant to the poor in at least two target audiences or institutions enhanced as a result of engagement with study products	Project FTRs and peer-reviewed publications NRSP Annual Reports Target institution reports	
Purpose			
To incorporate the policy development and policy implementation implications of NRSP's findings/ knowledge of the policy process and institutions in NRM into DFID's NRM research and development policy	Enhanced understanding among at least two DFID policy division teams and two research managers of the relationship between policy and NRM outcomes by December 2005. One DFID NRM related policy statement/ initiative per team revised to improve probability of successful implementation by March 2006	DFID policy division policy team statements and documents Records of DFID research strategy discussion / debate	Appropriate policy makers and planners and research managers receive and engage with project products. NRSP research on policy processes and institutions yields significant findings
Outputs			
Use one row for each output and keep OVIs, MoVs and Assumptions for each Output within the same row			
1. Study framework established and agreed	Study analytical framework, themes and material for analysis agreed by end of June 2005	Project Inception Report	Adequate available project documentation, and co-operation of project

	end of June 2005		of project leaders
2. NRSP's research concerned with policy process and institutions in NRM synthesised and analysed	Project findings established and documented by early September 2005.	Project internal findings report	Ditto
3. Implications of these findings for specified and differentiated groups of policy-makers and research managers established	Implications of study matched with relevant extant DFIDNRM policy initiatives and research strategy by end of October 2005	Project FTR Project policy brief(s)	
4. Project findings and products promoted with priority sample of target audience	Priority sample of DFID NRM policy makers and research managers aware of study findings and their implications by end of October 2005	Project FTR Follow-up queries or request by target audience to promotion fora	
Activities	**Milestones (and budget if budgeting by Activity)**		
Output 1: Study framework established and agreed			
1.1. Identify potential projects and assemble project documentation and contact information			
1.2. Contact other NRSP synthesis projects and FRP to check overlap and synergy	MS1a By early May 2005		
1.3 Contact relevant DFID Policy team leaders and CRD for interaction on scope and format of synthesis study			
1.4. Develop and agree template for scanning projects and recording information			
1.5 Completion of summary templates concerning the nature and form of project material available	MS1b Summaries completed as input to Inception meeting by early June 2005		
1.6. Inception meeting to	MS 1c Inception Report (and CP) by end of June 2005		
• Select projects, project documents and target interviewees	ditto		

• Develop analytical and synthesis framework and reporting outline	ditto	
• Develop generic interview framework	ditto	
• Discuss literature	ditto	
• Complete plan of work	ditto	
Output 2: NRSP's research concerned with policy processes and institutions in NRM analysed and documented		
2.1. Analyse and synthesise NRSP project documents according to agreed framework		
2.2 Interview project leaders		
2.3 Selected project leaders prepare requested written 'case study' material or other responses		
2.4. Analyse material from activities 2.1 – 2.3 to extract study findings	MS2a Analysis complete by late August 2005	
2.5. Write report of findings	Ms 2b Report of findings by early September 2005	
Output 3 Implications of study findings for specified and differentiated groups of policy-makers and research managers established		
3.1 Interact with DFID Policy Teams to assess which implications of study could be related to identified target policy and initiatives	MS3a Characterise priority policy areas by end of August 2005	
3.2 Interact with research managers to assess which implications of study could be related to identified target research themes	MS3b Characterise priority research themes by end of August 2005	
3.3 Draft project research products (policy brief)	MS3c Final draft complete by end of September 2005	
3.4 Prepare project DFID CRD summary document	MS3d draft included as draft in FTR by end of October 2005	
3.5 Write and submit FTR	MS3e FTR submitted end October 2005	
4. Project findings and products promoted with priority sample of target audience		

4.1 Identification and characterisation of target audience	MS4a Findings and implications included in project communication plan by end of June 2005	
4.2 Validate project analytical framework, scope and proposed products with priority sample of target audience	MS4b Email or telephone responses by end of June 2005	
4.3 Promote study findings, implications and products with priority sample of target audience in appropriate fora	MS4c Promotion seminar undertaken by mid October 2005	
Add rows as needed		
	Pre-condition	

11   Keywords

Institutional process; policy and policy process; power; poverty; rural livelihoods; scaling up; socio-economic