IPPG PROGRAMME

Strategy Paper on Communications and Influencing

Felicity Proctor NRI and John Harriss LSE
February 2006

The IPPG Programme - The Context

The Institutions and Pro-Poor Growth (IPPG) programme aims to identify historically and comparatively those institutional sets and contexts that enhance PPG and those that do not; how such patterns of institutional interaction change, or can be helped to change; and the conditions under which coalitions of stakeholders may be encouraged to adapt, adopt, negotiate and change institutional matrices for PPG, given different starting points, endowments, possibilities and constraints.

The programme will not provide blue prints for action but frameworks for analysis and for deeper understanding by and dialogue between policy makers, development agencies, academics and civil society. The demand for this work is evident through statements on the part of governments, policy networks and development agencies, all of which recognise that the Washington Consensus and Post-Washington Consensus blueprints do not work infallibly.

Building the capacity of both the demand and supply side of work on IPPG is integral to the implementation of the IPPG programme. Influencing policy through engagement with key stakeholder groups embedded within the programme of work and through strategic alliances and networks is central to achieving the wider programme objectives - contributing through a deeper understanding of institutions to change that will support ongoing efforts to deliver PPG.

This paper notes some of the current debate on bridging the research – policy divide and makes reference to key sources of material that may guide the IPPG phase 2 programme (section 1). Sections 2-4 present the proposed IPPG pathways of influence, the approach planned for capacity building and the communication strategy. Section 5 begins to point the way ahead.

Section 1   The challenge of bridging research and policy

Bridging research and policy is a topic of growing practical and academic interest in both the north and south. The idea of using evidence to inform policy is not a new idea. What is new, however, is the emphasis that both the developed and developing countries are placing on evidence based policy[1]. In developing countries, the demand is in part fuelled by the demand by funders of social science research to learn more about the impacts of policy-orientated research or at least the path towards impact, and by the demand from policy makers in both
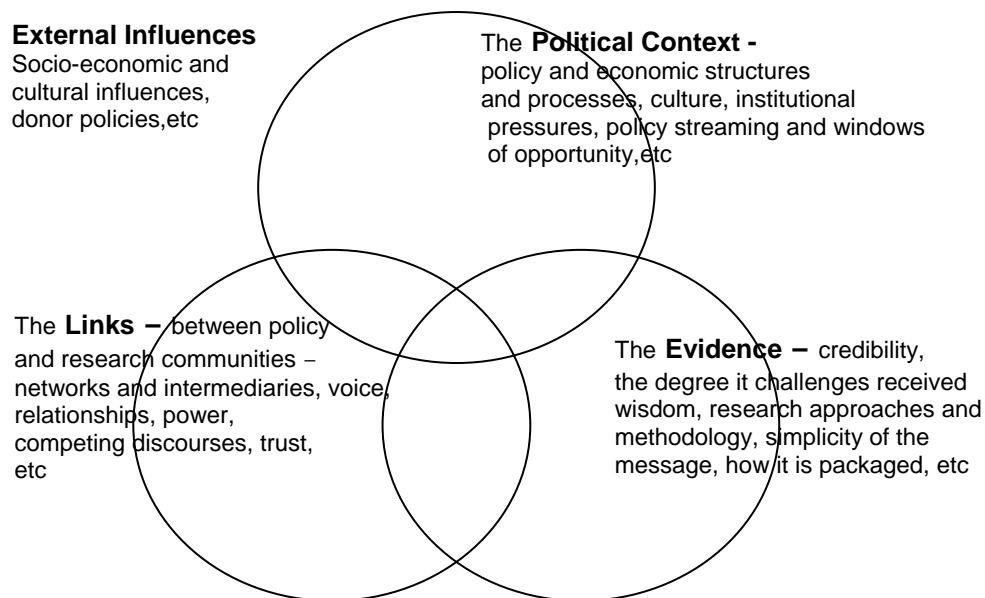
---

[1]   The British government has given emphasis to the Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) approach since 1997. As part of the Blair government's reforming and modernising agenda, the aim has been to try to shift away from ideologically driven politics and towards rational decision making. The *Modernising Government* White Paper in 1999 called for policies "that are forward looking and shaped by the evidence rather than a response to short-term pressures; that tackle causes not symptoms". The ESRC funded the launch of a network in 2000 that aims to bring practitioners together to share practice and foster communication see http://evidencenetwork.org/Mission.html A new journal was launched in 2005 - Evidence and Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice

the developing and developed world to have access to evidence based research in an ever changing world of development orthodoxy. The challenges of developing evidence-based policy are significantly greater in developing countries than in the north. Social and political environments are felt to be more difficult. Capacity is much more limited and resources are scarcer

A framework developed though the *Research and Policy In Development* (RAPID) programme [http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/] serves to capture the key elements of the research–policy linkages and suggests that successful evidence-based policy can occur when: the external environment is conducive; the evidence is credible and well communicated; the political environment is responsive to new research findings; and when there are effective linkages between research and policy makers through, for example, networks or intermediaries.

Figure 1   An Analytical Framework

External Influences
Socio-economic and
cultural influences,
donor policies,etc

The **Political Context -**
policy and economic structures
and processes, culture, institutional
pressures, policy streaming and windows
of opportunity,etc

The **Links –** between policy
and research communities –
networks and intermediaries, voice,
relationships, power,
competing discourses, trust,
etc

The **Evidence –** credibility,
the degree it challenges received
wisdom, research approaches and
methodology, simplicity of the
message, how it is packaged, etc

From: Court J and J Young (2004)

Young (2005) reflects on how researchers, practitioners and policy makers tend to live in parallel universes. He further highlights four sets of issues that characterise the policy making environment in developing countries:

- troubled political contexts: with challenges of vested interests, lack of policy maker demand and lack of government capacity;
- problems of research supply: the challenges of the supply – with declining higher education systems, a focus on theoretical rather than applied and practical research, lack of funding, and researcher-capture by international consultancy;
- external influence: in particular donor influence - giving rise to questions of priorities, legitimacy and ownership; and
- the emergence of civil society as a key player within the political context: with variable linkages with evidence based research and or with limited or mixed policy influence.

In most of the case studies and working meetings coordinated through the RAPID programme, the prevailing political culture was seen as the single most important challenge to

research uptake. Factors include: the extent of civil and political freedom in a country; political contestation; institutional pressures and vested interests; the capacity of government to respond; the attitude and incentives of officials, their scope for manoeuvre; history and finally power relations. 'Think Tanks' and networks were seen to be two models that foster the evidence based policy uptake.

Saxena (2005) calls for researchers to be committed to the policy process and to communicate better. He emphasised the linkages between researchers and civil society as a means to re-enforce and exert influence. Taylor (2005) places emphasis on the importance of understanding the specific question to be addressed and the importance of political opportunism in bridging research and policy. The importance of who might support and who might oppose a particular change needs to be understood. Start and Hovland (2004) offer a comprehensive assessment of a range of tools that can be used for supporting policy processes.

Section 2   IPPG - Pathways of influence for the reduction of poverty

The **IPPG strategy** is to ensure that

(i)   the research **contributes effectively to the global pool of new knowledge** on priority policy issues; and that

(ii)   the **research findings have maximum uptake to promote long-term pro-poor impact** and ultimately support the achievement of the MDGs.

This requires both (i) facilitating and deepening conceptual understanding of the focal issues; and (ii) advocating instrumental change through uptake of relevant innovations and revisions to policy and practice.

The programme will achieve this by using a holistic and systemic strategy involving interactive process-oriented engagement with three key groups

- academic and research community
- policy-makers and advocates
- interested groups in civil society

These groups will be engaged at international, national and sub-national levels as necessary.

The strategy will work to strengthen linkages within and between these groups and within and between levels, through developing broad-based and participatory learning platforms for dialogue and influence. Some experiences have been collated and reviewed on the establishment of learning platforms and alliances (Proctor 2005) and on networks and the policy process (Perkin and Court 2005). Work undertaken by IDRC on outcome mapping (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html) is particularly relevant to the second strategic objective of the programme where the programme seeks to foster changes in behaviour, relations and activities of groups and organisations with whom the programme has direct contact.

The academic and research community

This includes leading international and national academic thinkers who are setting the agenda in the relevant disciplines and debates. Such a group will be crucial to achieve credibility for the programme within the research community at large and for the new methodological approaches to this topic.

The strengthening of the social science research cadre in Southern countries by their engagement in research, dialogue and capacity-building activities will help sustain the development of research providers at the national level into the future.

Policy makers and advocates

This group is composed of the practical 'users' of the research: those who make, influence and implement policy, as well as other relevant development practitioners and their professional networks. The policy communities with which the programme will engage will span several layers of decision-making: local, national, sub-regional, regional and international:

International:

- international financial institutions,

- relevant agencies of the United Nations family of organizations,

- key multilateral and bilateral development cooperation agencies, and their programmes

- important international non-governmental agencies;

- International cooperation / regional integration organizations (Regional: African Union, UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank, South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, and Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR); New Partnership for Africa's Development Secretariat; Sub-regional: such as Southern African Development Community, Economic Community Of West African States);

National and Sub-national:

- government bureaucrats, policy makers and local administrative units

- Political organisations and democratic representatives

- civil society actors (from social movements, CBOs and NGOs), and local-level community networks, including traditional institutions of governance, socialization and social welfare,

- journalists and the media (print and electronic),

- the private sector,

The consortium recognizes that **policy influencing** is highly contingent, subject to the chaotic nature of the policy process itself, and that policy makers and influencers have their own priorities and timetables. It would therefore be complacent to assume that findings and recommendations will lead unproblematically to changes in policy and practice to improve the prospects for pro-poor growth. The influencing strategy takes account of this by putting serious effort into building close long-term engagement, based on trust, primarily through facilitation of multi-stakeholder learning-group meetings, and by promoting a 'learning environment', where necessary, at national and sub-national levels.

Some aspects of this work will inevitably be politically sensitive, yet it is hoped that through careful confidence-building activities during the programme they will be perceived to be of value and interest, and received with respect.

Interested Groups from wider civil society / the general public

This group is generally seen as being on the 'receiving end' of policy and practice, yet plays an increasingly active role in negotiating and influencing both. We expect to work in particular with associations of business people – including those of agricultural producers – since they are the key players in developing the enterprises that deliver economic growth.

Section 3   Capacity-building and knowledge enhancement

Capacity building should take place at a number of different levels and between levels or stakeholder groups.

Within the partner institutions, the research work and approach is innovative, inter-disciplinary, and combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Skills gaps within and between institutions identified in relation to these new approaches need to be addressed through "learning by doing", in joint multi-disciplinary north and south research teams. The early stage of programme development requires considerable dialogue and formal and informal information exchange.   Particular emphasis is placed on fostering South:South linkages.

As the southern partners are themselves ***network organisations,*** and in recognition of human capacity shortfalls in the social sciences and economics, particularly in SSA, the consortium members will aim to strengthen younger staff members' capacity through a PhD and research fellows' programme directly associated with programme activities. The networks and their members will be offered wider capacity-building support through formal training (for example, through an extension of AERC's on-going training programme to include theory and methods for institutional research to build a cadre of resource persons. It will be necessary in this, to find means of reaching the wider community of social scientists, beyond the economists).

The third level of capacity building is with the ***wider group of potential clients or programme output users*** of this work including policy makers, civil society, donor agencies, etc. The capacity and tools to forge alliances and to influence the wider political and institutional agenda are integrated in the capacity building of consortium members as a programme objective.

Through building space for shared learning within the consortium members and their networks, increasing the numbers of research active staff and through re-enforcing user demand, it is anticipated that both the supply and demand side of the work can be ***sustained after the life of the programme***.

Materials will be developed and shared for incorporation within university teaching programmes. PhD and research fellow schemes are already in place within AERC and CODESRIA and thus the programme will fit within existing structures and processes.

Embedding

The 'policy and practice' target groups will be incorporated into the research process primarily by identifying interested actors from this group and inviting them to be associated as participants in an ***interactive policy dialogue process***, throughout the life of the programme. Engagement by the Consortium with policy makers will be intrinsic to the programme and it is intended that over the five years some of these will have developed a sense of co-ownership of the programme and its findings, and so become 'champions' of its findings, helping to promote their wide dissemination and uptake. The key mechanisms for involving the academic and research community will be the conduct of technical workshops and support for research studentships/ postdoctoral fellowships. For the wider civil society, collaborating institutions will organise stakeholder consultation with CBO representatives at the local level.

Central to the overall influencing strategy, and specifically in order to involve the wider policy-making and advocacy community, interactive dialogues will be developed, based in each of the main study countries on multi-stakeholder ***national 'learning group' fora***. These will continue throughout the programme - and beyond if, as we intend, they are felt to be of value to participants. It will involve close, on-going interaction between the Consortium research team and the various policy and practitioner communities.

The learning groups will forge close collaborative relationships between the research teams and the policy and practitioner communities, building on existing relationships and access to policy circles. Activities will develop shared understandings, explore conceptual advances across stakeholders, and promote recognition of potentials for improvements. The programme will necessarily be highly responsive and adaptive to country-level conditions, opportunities and constraints. Given this, it may, in some cases, even have to help build policy capacity for uptake purposes, or advocate the development of the 'enabling environment' as a precondition for uptake. As an interactive activity, the entire policy dialogue process will be structured in order to facilitate mutual learning between the researchers and the policy makers involved.

Responsiveness The national learning group *fora*, as the main focus for interaction with policy-makers and influencers, will review the research agenda on an ongoing basis i.e. from inception through implementation, in conjunction with the research teams. The interactive policy dialogue made possible through the learning groups will help assess the ongoing information and research needs of the different stakeholders as expressed or as reflected in the gaps evident in their existing practices. The research programme can then be revised accordingly.

Selected representatives of policy institutions will also be invited to the research review meetings of the programme, in order to present the work of their institutions, and comment on the results of the research obtained at different stages of the programme, thus enabling the relevance of the research to key policy actors and their institutions to be reviewed. Such links and closer long-term relations with relevant policy communities will be established through later stages of the programme.

Use and feedback. The programme will produce **programme briefings** in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish which will be distributed widely to targeted policy makers. The briefings will serve as an initial sensitization tool which will also convey the basic objectives of the programme and the expected outcomes, and invite their participation.

The national learning group *fora* will be the main means for involving research 'users'. Over the lifetime of the programme it is anticipated that as many of the 'users' as possible will become closely involved in the research activities, and thereby develop a sense of co-ownership' so as to communicate and promote its findings.

The promotion of broad-based platforms, through public seminars, media events and other outputs should raise awareness and promote debate, leading to a momentum for policy review.

Feedback will be elicited through the learning group meetings, which will be held at the appropriate times between the research phases, allowing recommendations to be incorporated into programme planning processes.

Section 4   Communication strategy

The central reference point for the programme is through a **website** which will keep all partners, stakeholders and other interested parties updated on the latest developments, via news releases and through maintained mailing lists. The website will comprise: outline of the research programme and wider activities; programme brief (translated into key languages); working papers; short policy notes and policy note series; an access and circulation point for documents and data; discussion groups; and electronic conferences on key issues.

- The **academic and research community** will be engaged, on an interdisciplinary basis, to strengthen the analytical rigour and relevance of the research, to develop the

conceptual basis through dialogue and to share findings, particularly focussing on North-South exchange. Building the profile and credibility of the programme will help to strengthen its 'platform' for contributing to policy debates (see below). Methods will include: i) the presentation of findings in workshops, symposia and a final conference; ii) publication of findings, in working paper series, peer reviewed journals, monographs, books; iii) study groups based around the southern research institutions, to promote 'epistemic communities' in the new areas of research, and iv) e-bulletins summarising latest findings (primarily through existing networks such as *eldis / id21*).

- **The 'sphere of policy and practice'.** This group will be engaged over the long term through the development of *national 'learning group' forums* in those countries where there will be intensive research. Here key actors will be identified and closely involved in the research process from the start and at each stage of the research (planning, analysis, findings and policy implications). Larger multi-stakeholder working meetings will also be held for dialogue with the wider policy and stakeholder community. Overall the main outputs will be in the form of presentations, policy briefing papers and working papers.

- **Interested groups from wider civil society / the general public:** A *broad public platform* for communication and influencing will be developed in selected study countries using a range of media and methods. This platform will involve wider civil society in discussion of institutional change and policy debates and hence help to contribute to the change processes. Methods will include: i) public meetings and seminars; ii) press news releases and newspaper/print media articles; iii) radio interviews and discussions; iv) documentary film making and broadcast through public and commercial channels; iv) alternative methods including street theatre, village level film production. In the mid-late stages of the programme, process-oriented action research will directly engage local communities in the research process itself.

At **national, regional and international level** the programme will also contribute to existing discussion groups, and to international events, conducting side events where appropriate. At **sub-national level** engagement with civil society organisations and movements, local governance bodies, intermediaries, poor people and their local knowledge networks will occur mainly though stakeholder workshops, and later process-oriented action research activities.

The communication and influencing strategy itself will be subject to review and revision at the junctures between programme phases, in the light of experience and the evolving policy environment.

Implementation The communication and outreach will be centrally coordinated and steered to ensure consistency, but **implemented** in a devolved manner through and by the southern research partners and their networks, who will evolve specific strategies appropriate for the different local conditions. Intermediary organisations will be involved in communication and influencing as far as possible where they demonstrate strengths and comparative advantages.

Building wider partnerships and the use of unconventional methods. Broad ranging partnerships already exist between the consortium partners. These will be built up and new partnerships developed as necessary: Proposals include:

- *Networks and alternative media groups* include: in South Asia: South Asia Watch on Economy and Environment (SAWTEE), Kathmandu, Journalists for Democracy and Human Rights: in Latin America: Acosiacion Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promocion (ALOP), Centro Latino Americano de Desarrollo Sustentable (CLADES), Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana (CLAEH), UN Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), Consorcio para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Ecorregion Andina (CONDESAN), Seminario Permanente de Investigación Agraria (SEPIA), Red de Instituciones Vinculadas a la Capacitación en Economía y Políticas Agrícolas en América Latina y el Caribe (REDCAPA): and internationally: Consumers International, Oxfam, Bretton Woods Programme, Organisation for Economic Co-

operation and Development Development Co-operation Directorate (OECD DAC), Povnet group, UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Oneworld, Fair Trade Federation

- *News media, Journals, journalists, journalism organisations, Radio / Broadcasters:* include in South Asia; Economic and Political Weekly, Mumbai, Frontline journal, Chennai, Asian School of Journalism, Chennai; in Latin America; Boletín InterCambio

- *Filmmakers, TV programmers and Channels;* In South Asia: Deccan Development Society Community Media Trust Hyderabad, Moving Images Delhi and Internationally: BBC News 24

Non-conventional dissemination methods: Street theatre / Boalian theatre groups – Jana Sanskriti Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed, India, Interactive Resource Theatre, Pakistan, Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
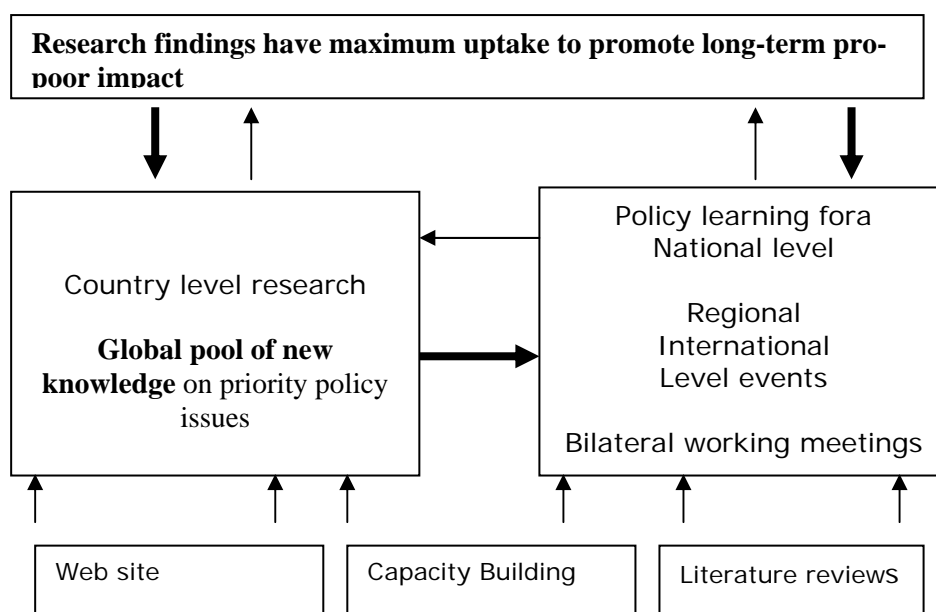
Section 5   Work plan

Key areas presented within indicative budget for IPPG submission

Activity	Who	When – programme year
Communication		
Web, media and publications	LSE	throughout
Developing guidelines and tools for policy makers		Years 3-6
Publications		throughout
Capacity building		
PhD programme	5 persons -south	Years 2-5
Post -docs	7 persons -south	Years 2-5
Staff exchange – network managers, media training etc	X6	Year 2-4
Technical workshops for researchers	X2	Year 2
Bilateral meetings	North and south consortium members	Years 1, 2 and 4 and 6 X5 / year north– X12/year south
Workshops to present findings		Key stages years 3, and 5

Assumptions – that there would be co-support through the wider work of direct consortium members in particular south networks for such activities as information sites within own websites. Wider outreach and innovation on capacity building and policy uptake as limited funds allocated – policy uptake will require to be embedded within the research processes.

Figure 2 presents the interactions between the policy research and the policy processes and sets out the two strategic objectives of the IPPG programme.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Research findings have maximum uptake to promote long-term  │
│  pro-poor impact                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
      ↓   ↑                                      ↑      ↓
┌──────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│                          │  ←   │   Policy learning fora    │
│   Country level research │      │      National level       │
│                          │      │                           │
│   Global pool of new     │  →   │        Regional           │
│   knowledge on priority  │      │      International         │
│   policy issues          │      │      Level events         │
│                          │      │                           │
│                          │      │  Bilateral working meetings│
└──────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘
   ↑        ↑        ↑                 ↑        ↑        ↑
┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ Web site │  │ Capacity     │  │ Literature reviews│
│          │  │ Building     │  │                  │
└──────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
```

Taking the process forward

At **country level** as soon as the key countries for study have been identified, the next step will be to identify interested and sympathetic actors in the research and policy communities, and in civil society, in each of these countries, and to initiate discussion with them. The formation of learning groups/policy fora in each country will be undertaken towards the end of the first year of the Programme. Southern partners may call upon support from the Northern partners in initiating the groups. One way of launching the process is through conducting workshops about institutions and pro-poor growth with potentially interested actors. Such workshops will be supported by the provision of accessible materials, in the form of short briefing papers, and possibly video lectures/conferencing.

A further early step will be for the IPPG Consortium to provide training workshops, for academics, researchers and policy actors, in each of the key countries selected for work and research. These will also be helpful in identifying suitable candidates for IPPG Research Training Awards.

A provisional time table for these suggested priority actions is:

1. Identification of researchable problems and countries for study (by end February 2006)

2. Preparation and publication of background papers and briefing notes based on literature reviews (by end March 2006)

3. Hold workshops in selected countries including training workshops for researchers (April – June 2006)

4. Form country learning groups/fora (June – August 2006)

These activities will be carried on alongside the initial stages of the IPPG research programme. The relationship between the generation of research outputs and the policy processes needs to be explored -

- What are the best modes (partnerships, learning networks and alliances, stakeholder reference groups) within which research can be undertaken that are best likely to have secure uptake pathways?
- What are the types of policy tools that are most applicable to the different groups of stakeholders engaged with the IPPG agenda?
- How to link the policy process and learning fora with the research activities?

The programme will need to understand/consider:

- What are the models and examples of effective policy influence through networks etc that can guide the IPPG programme at the different levels international, regional with different stakeholder groups etc?
- How can we best apply the skills and resources of the southern based network members in outreach and policy dialogue?
- How to link the M and E framework with the wider IPPG framework?

References

Court, J. and J. Young (2004) Bridging Research and Policy in International Development: an analytical and practical framework. ODI RAPID Briefing Paper no1 3pp

Perkins, E. and J. Court (2005) Networks and Policy Processes in International Development: a literature review. Working paper 252, 36pp. ODI UK

Proctor F.J.(2005) Guidelines on building multi-stakeholder policy platforms around private sector driven agrifood restructuring. Resource Paper the Regoverning markets programme www.regoverningmarkets.org Learning Alliances and Policy Dialogue 21pp

Saxena, N. (2005) Bridging research and policy in India. J.Int. Dev. **17,** 737-746

Start, D. and I. Hovland (2004) Tools for policy impact: a handbook for researchers. ODI working paper.

Taylor, M. (2005) Bridging research and policy in India: A UK perspective. J.Int. Dev. **17,** 747-750

Young (2005) Research, policy and practice: why developing countries are different. J.Int. Dev. **17,** 727-734