

Crop Post-Harvest Programme

Regional Strategy for South Asia

2002 – 2005



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Crop Post-Harvest Programme (CPHP) is one of 10 renewable natural resources research (RNRRS) programmes of the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID). These programmes commission research on the natural resources systems that support the livelihoods of many poor people. The CPHP has concentrated its efforts South Asia and Western, Eastern and Southern Africa, and has established Co-ordination Offices in each region. CPHP projects are implemented by scientific and developmental organisations from partner countries, often in collaboration with counterpart organisations in the UK. In the South Asia region CPHP works in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

Over the past 7 years the CPHP has commissioned and supported nearly 130 research projects at an approximate cost of £16 million. These projects focused on:

- Food storage
- Processing
- Quality management
- Marketing systems
- Policy issues affecting the post-harvest sector

Earlier research commissioned on these issues concentrated mainly on the identification of constraints and the development of knowledge and technologies to resolve them.

The RNRRS and the CPHP that forms part of it is now entering the final 3 years of its 10-year lifespan. This is a phase during which priority is being given to:

- Bringing to closure major areas of research
- Capitalising on past research investments
- Ensuring that impacts reach both the poor and the systems that support their livelihoods

This is also a phase when thought is being given on ways of sustaining the capacity of partners to generate pro-poor post-harvest innovations in the future.

Partly as a result of these concerns, and partly because of the research and technology promotion lessons that the Programme has learned over the last 7 years, the strategy of the CPHP in South Asia (and globally) has made a significant shift. The new approach recognises that in the post-harvest sector, the relationships and partners involved in technology development, promotion and use, are complex and diverse. As a result, projects need genuine participation from a wider set of partners and stakeholders than those involved in conventional research projects.

This new approach involves establishing broad-based in-country coalitions around post-harvest thematic areas and using them as the planning and implementation focus for research and technology-promotion activities. While many research and development projects profess a partnership approach, CPHP is going to devote significant time and resources to establishing, nurturing and monitoring the relationships that will underpin its post-harvest coalition projects.

This means that CPHP will diversify to include project partners other than public scientific and developmental organisations, but it does not mean that CPHP has shifted its commitment to supporting the development plans of national governments. Instead, it suggests a more strategic relationship: one that recognises the emerging public policy issue of redefining appropriate roles for, and interactions between the public, private, non-governmental organization (NGO), and technology-user sectors.

The CPHP hopes to contribute to the development and testing of new organisational groupings that will generate pro-poor post-harvest innovations. The CPHP South Asia Programme has made explicit the need to address capacity building, practice, and policy, by structuring its activities around an overarching theme of supporting national post-harvest innovation systems. The synthesis of lessons learned by the regional co-ordination team, in partnership with key national policy organisations, is seen as the key interface between CPHP in South Asia and the national development plans of governments in the region.

This strategy document seeks to provide information on the following:

- The rationale for CPHP's regional and global approach
- Post-harvest themes that CPHP will address, and the justification for their selection
- The South Asia logical framework and a discussion of its purpose, expected outcomes, indicators of success, and implementation plans (including specific country activities)
- Key practical implications of the coalitions approach.

This document is intended as **an overview of the rationale, aims and implementation plans** of the CPHP in South Asia. Its audience is national governments, donor organisations (including DFID bilateral programmes in the region), the scientific and policy communities, development agencies, and project partners.

Its purpose is to:

- Promote an understanding of CPHP activities
- Inform others of its strategy and approach
- Stimulate dialogue on relevant strategic developments

The document does not provide an overview of the development and poverty context of the countries in the region. Nor does it provide detailed information on the post-harvest sector. These issues are adequately documented elsewhere.

2. A coalitions approach to strengthening post-harvest innovation systems in South Asia: rationale

2.1 Lessons from South Asia

For the past 4 years the CPHP South Asia Programme has made a concerted effort to organise its portfolio of projects around the theme of partnership in post-harvest innovation. The collective learning made possible by this clustering approach has contributed to research management thinking by CPHP in a global context, and by national and international partner organisations. The theme concerns understanding how the institutional context of the research process can contribute to the development, promotion, and use of pro-poor post-harvest innovations.

The term 'institutional context' means the embedded rules and norms of different organisations and the wider environment that governs the way partnerships between these organisations operate. Understanding this context is important, particularly for post-harvest research and for promoting a pro-poor agenda in the sector.

There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, post-harvest issues frequently involve a much wider set of partners and relationships than the conventional research–extension–farm model of technology development and promotion. These relationships include those with market actors, entrepreneurs, private industry, consumers, producer and policy advocacy groups, and the non-government and voluntary sectors. Important synergy can be exploited by strengthening the linkage of research with such groups. As a result, however, the institutional environment of post-harvest becomes complex, with different groups contenting to pursue their own interests.

The second reason for the institutional context's importance is that this is the arena in which the agendas of the poor can be negotiated and promoted. (Box 1 explains the role of a poverty-focused programme like CPHP in relation to the post-harvest sector, where the private sector has many incentives to innovate).

While it is now clear that post-harvest innovations need to emerge from the broad set of organisations, individuals and associated relationships that shape the sector, the nature of the partnerships involved has crucial bearing on the relative degree to which project outcomes are skewed in favour of the poor. In South Asia, complex social hierarchies and power structures tend to be replicated in the organisational culture of both public and private sectors. Assumptions about the nature of relationships among partners and the likelihood of these favouring pro-poor outcomes cannot be left untested in project design. They require explicit and transparent monitoring and management.

Box 1. The role of CPHP and poverty-focused research in near market domains

In many arenas the operation of post-harvest systems is such that the private sector (with or without inputs from others) develops new opportunities in product development, processing, and marketing on a self-generating basis. However, there are also a number of areas where research initiated by public funding can complement such activities, and do so in ways that help the poor. Examples of opportunities that arise include:

Pre-competitive research In the context of a long lead-time between initiation of research and achievement of research outputs, the private sector may be unwilling to invest because of its expectation, and/or need for relatively short payback periods. This component therefore includes elements of upstream/basic research that might stimulate further developments and applications by the private sector that are of relevance to the poor.

Coping with rapid and unforeseen change Resulting from the impacts of external factors and shocks, e.g., policy changes from liberalisation and shifts in environmental globalisation (particularly exposure to external quality and regulatory regimes), crop pest or disease epidemics, or new disease outbreaks, climatic change, or disasters, etc. The private sector will react to such issues and events, but publicly funded research can contribute both in making responses more rapid and more effectively focussed on the poor.

Skewing the enabling environment in favour of the poor To provide better access for the poor to livelihoods involving post-harvest components. These opportunities arise in the context of policies that may disfavour the poor and/or cause markets to function in ways that are unfavourable to the poor. For example, removing subsidies in production and marketing systems, and liberalising external trade regimes.

Generating an enabling environment Through improving the access to infrastructure both physical, e.g., transport systems and soft, e.g., accessible legal systems that enable the poor to claim their rights.

2.2 Partnership in CPHP's global programme

Of course, it is not just in South Asia that the importance of partnership has become apparent. Across the regions, CPHP's project leaders started to recognise that if post-harvest research was to be successful it needed the active participation of a wide set of partners. Furthermore this often meant the blurring of the conventional distinctions between research, technology 'extension' or transfer and rural development activities. As a result, projects have started to involve wider participation by stakeholders, with partnerships emerging as a key project tool Boxes 2, 3, and 4 provide examples of different ways in which post-harvest innovation has emerged from diverse partners and relationships.

Box 2. Controlled-atmosphere storage and shipment of mangoes

This work evolved over a number of short projects. It involved the development of export quality management protocols for mangoes through a partnership between a farmers' association, local agricultural research organisations and universities, a national export promotion authority, and a post-harvest science partner from the UK. It was the first project in CPHP South Asia to recognise that in addition to the technological focus of the project, the nature of partnerships involved was critical to achieving the project's purpose. This led to the final phase of the project concentrating on developing a manual to help farmers (through their association) and scientific organisations reflect on both the technical performance of quality management protocols and advice, and on the nature of relationships involved in developing and delivering them. The project has been successful in terms of widening the scope of investigation and support in the context of developing and implementing post-harvest quality management protocols.

Box 3. Environmentally sustainable tomato packaging technology

A project that introduced a replacement packaging technology for wooden tomato boxes through a total systems approach to technology development, production, and distribution. The project was managed by an Indian NGO and operated by applying and adapting protocols developed in other technological sectors to establish market-sustained technology systems. The entire project was implemented by concentrating on managing and co-ordinating a series of relationships with: net-works of scientific expertise, user groups through an NGO partner, market agents (including carton manufacturers and distributors), and a bank to pre-finance carton production. Project scientific partners undertook rigorous research to develop and adapt relevant packaging technology. Other partners facilitated the testing and introduction of the new cartons into the existing smallholder tomato production and marketing system. The project is still in progress, but looks set to introduce a major change in packaging technology in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

Box 4. Air pollution and food system integrity

This project involved an investigation of air pollution and the potential of market institutions as an approach to introduce self-regulation to the quality of vegetables produced in urban agricultural production systems. It involved a partnership between Indian universities, NGO's, marketing systems, and environmental management scientists from the UK. It built on a series of highly focused technical studies that had developed methods and used them to measure air pollution in Delhi and Varanasi. This part of the work was not funded by CPHP, who became involved at the stage at which the research team realised that there was a need to embed the scientific information it had generated into local organisations and institutions associated with the food chain. New institutional economic principles were adopted as a framework to investigate changes in market practice and the incentives for introducing change. The project recognised the need to develop coalitions policy advocacy and use it to operationalise the knowledge it had generated on food-chain contamination. This was envisioned as key way to leverage change in environmental policy and practice. The project has succeeded in building important relationships with relevant organisations.

2.3 CPHP review and its findings

Recognising that partnerships were becoming important, and the need to strengthen this aspect of its approach, in August 2001 CPHP commissioned a review of partnership arrangements in its work, and the implications of this for the Programme's research management approach (Biggs and Underwood, 2001). This review made two main recommendations:

- Firstly, that CPHP should concentrate on establishing thematic projects implemented by coalitions of in-country partners.
- Secondly, that emphasis should be given to the nature of the partnerships involved and the overall project management framework. This was suggested as way to:
 - Make agendas of different stakeholders apparent
 - Manage these agendas
 - Ensure that a poverty reduction agenda does not become lost to other competing agendas.

2.4 The coalitions approach to research and technology promotion

The recommendations of the review have been adopted and have been implemented in all of the CPHP's regional programmes since April 2002. This involves implementing action through a coalitions-based approach to research and technology promotion that has four key elements.

In-country location The approach is focused on facilitating the establishment and development of in-country partnership groupings or *coalitions*. There are many good reasons for this emphasis on locally rooted partners and capacities. Partners bring with them formal and informal networks that can help support a coalition and promote its outputs and objectives. Equally important is that partners bring with them knowledge of research, client, and promotion contexts in a particular country setting. Rooting coalitions locally enables them to plan and operate in ways that recognise local norms and respond to emerging opportunities.

Partnership diversity The second element is that the the approval seeks to draw in the resources, skills and agendas of wide set of research and non-research partners from both the public and other sectors—private enterprises, NGO's, farmers, and consumer associations, etc. This is important in helping to bring different perspectives into the research process. But it is also important because projects are increasingly finding that to ensure the application and impact of their work, it is necessary to blur the distinction between research and development. So, while some partners need to be engaged in research activities, other partners will need to be involved with technology promotion, policy advocacy, information dissemination, or training. The coalitions approach seeks to exploit the opportunities for impact that such partnership diversity can bring.

Focus on the nature of partnerships The third element is the approach's explicit focus on the nature of partnerships in projects. In the past not all project partnerships have been successful. Problem cases have been those partnerships that are ritualistic, or that are characterised by strong asymmetry between partners in terms of:

- Access to resources
- Ability to participate in decision making
- Access to, and complementary resources to take advantage of project outcomes.

Successful partnerships have often occurred because the individual or the organisations involved have been able to establish implicit (and sometimes explicit) ground rules that make these partnerships work. This has often occurred where relationships have developed through previous interaction. Boxes 2, 3, and 4 illustrate some successful CPHP partnerships.

Coalition capacity development The fourth element of the coalitions approach is that by focusing on developing in-country coalitions, CPHP is supporting long-term capacity building. This not only refers to the development of disciplinary skills in different organisations, but also to partnership and networking skills that individuals and organisations gain from participating in research projects with new partners. It also relates to capacity that a coalition as a whole represents. It is anticipated that the coalition will act as a platform for the development of an evolving programme of research and technology promotion. This capacity will persist (in some form) after the completion of CPHP projects. The coalition will be a contribution to the national capacity to generate innovations that support poverty reduction. The CPHP now views these types of capacity building achievements as a project outcome of equal importance to the conventional technology outputs with which the Programme has been associated in the past.

2.5 Contribution to national development plans

While this does mean that CPHP will diversify to include project partners other than public scientific and developmental organisations, it does not mean CPHP has shifted its commitment to supporting the development plans of national governments. Instead it suggests a more strategic relationship, recognising the emerging public policy issue of redefining the appropriate roles and relationships between public, private, NGO, and technology user sectors.

This is a key area of public policy in an era when national governments are seeking to formulate new strategies by which to organise science and technology resources. Driving this is the now widespread concern that the conventional model of public R&D as the central source of innovation needs to be replaced with something more suited to contemporary development imperatives that include a greater emphasis on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. However, what is less clear is what these new arrangements, particularly in the post-harvest sector, might be?

The CPHP hopes that it will contribute to the development and testing of new organisational groupings that can generate pro-poor post-harvest innovations. The CPHP South Asia Programme has made explicit this need to address capacity building, practice and policy, by structuring its activities around an overarching theme of supporting national post-harvest innovation systems. The synthesis of lessons by the regional co-ordination team, in partnership with key national policy organisations, is seen as the key interface between CPHP in South Asia and the national development plans of governments in the region. This emphasis is reflected in the South Asia (and global) Programme purpose of:

'National and regional crop post-harvest innovation systems respond more effectively to the needs of the poor.'

3. Post-harvest themes for coalition projects in South Asia: scope and constituency

CPHP South Asia has tentatively selected four major themes to structure its research and technology promotion activities. These themes arise from a number of sources:

- Regional consultation undertaken in 1999 and 2000 during the development of country framework documents
- On-going dialogue with project partners and post-harvest stakeholders
- Past research investments, accumulated learning, and established relationships.

Evolving agenda These themes may, and are likely to evolve. Their aim is to help focus the South Asia Programme on arenas in which knowledge and relationships have been built up over the past 7 years. The intention is not to be too prescriptive. It is anticipated that further prioritisation and selection of partnerships will take place in the process of establishing coalitions in these broad thematic areas. (This is discussed in greater detail in Section 5). The past investments and project partners described below do not represent all those with which CPHP has been associated with in South Asia, as both partners and the Programme have not found it relevant to take forward all areas of research. The agendas of these themes will be broadened by supplementing core partners through the development of a broader post-harvest constituency in the region. This will be achieved through the development of a post-harvest network and an associated inventory of activities (see discussion in Section 5).

3.1 Horticulture/diversification/value addition

Opportunities exist for poor households to access new and existing markets. This may involve technical, institutional, and/or organisational considerations about quality management, storage, packaging, and consumer preference. Past investments focused on the development of export protocols for mangoes and the establishment of production and distribution systems for tomato packaging in India. In Bangladesh, a new project is seeking to identify which mixture of local market actors, development and technology backstopping organisations and institutional arrangements are required for the poor to participate in agro-processing/value-addition activities.

Core partners

International Development Enterprises (India) [IDE(I)]
 Vijay Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, India
 Agricultural Products Export Development Authority, India
 Natural Resources Institute (NRI), UK
 Independent consultants, UK and India

3.2 Food safety

Poor producers and consumers lose income and face health risks from microbial contamination and pollution of the food chain. Past investments have focused on understanding the technical and social context of aflatoxin contamination of groundnuts, and the impact of air pollution on urban agriculture, including marketing approaches to its reduction. New emphasis in this theme is on integrating food safety concerns into wider (agricultural) production and development agendas, generating both technical and institutional innovations, and the organisational arrangements, networks and partners needed to implement them. Past investments have been in India, although the theme has

generic relevance across the region. New investments must address ways of reducing the vulnerability of the poor to health and market shocks resulting from food contamination.

Core partners

Banares Hindu University (BHU), India
 Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU), India
 National Research Centre on Groundnuts (NRCG), India
 Agriculture Man and Environment, India
 International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), India
 Imperial College, UK
 University of Reading, UK
 Queens University, Belfast, UK

3.3 Decentralised food security systems

Access and entitlements to food remain a critical concern of the poor. The Indian Public Distribution System (PDS) has been an important food security mechanism, but recent policy imperatives suggest a shift towards the development and promotion of decentralised alternatives. Past investments have explored the feasibility and underpinning principles of one such approach. Other relevant experiences exist in India and across South Asia. Past investments in Bangladesh have examined the efficiency of rice marketing systems after price support and public distribution of food grains was abandoned.

Core partners

Centre for Environmental Concerns, India
 Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Ministry of Food, India
 Indian Grain Management Research Institute, India
 Mymensing Agricultural University, Bangladesh
 Institute of Development Studies, UK
 NRI, UK

3.4 Policy and capacity development of national post-harvest innovation systems

This theme will be coordinated by the South Asia Programme Office of CPHP as a way of building an interface between the lessons emerging from thematic coalition-based projects, research-management procedures within CPHP, and relevant public policy debates in the region. Partnership with key policy organisations and an explicit networking agenda will help promote relevant institutional and organisational developments and support capacity development in national post-harvest innovation systems. Past investments have helped develop the innovation systems framework and its application in the coalitions-based approach. Much of the earlier work on this theme has focused on developments in India. This it will increasingly shift to a regional outlook. Planned research in Bangladesh seeks to analyse the emergence of new hybrid organisational types consisting of NGO-managed, stakeholder-owned enterprises with agro-industrial processing, seed supply and banking interests, with wide public and private alliances.

Core partners

National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP), India
National Institute for Science, Technology and Development Studies, India
ICRISAT, India
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, Bangladesh
NRI, UK
University of Strathclyde, UK

An overview of the way the South Asia strategy will be implemented and monitored to achieve its purpose of '*National and regional crop post-harvest innovation systems respond more effectively to the needs of the poor*' is summarized in the logical framework presented in Section 4.

4. Logical framework

Super goal	Indicators of achievement	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
Poverty eliminated in poorer countries through sustainable development			
Goal			
Livelihoods of poor people improved through sustainably enhanced production and productivity of RNR systems			
Purpose			
National and regional crop post-harvest innovation systems respond more effectively to the needs of the poor	By 2005, an evolving range of different institutional and organisational arrangements improving access to post-harvest knowledge and/or stimulating pro-poor post-harvest innovation emerged and recognised in South Asia	Project evaluation reports Regional Co-ordinator's reports CPHP Annual Reports CPHP Review 2005 Partners' reports	National and regional crop post-harvest innovation systems have the capacity to develop and promote innovations that support the livelihoods of poor people during and after programme completion Livelihood analysis provides accurate identification of researchable opportunities that lead to poverty reduction
Outputs			
1. Strategies that improve food and livelihood security of poor households through increased availability and improved quality of food crops and better access to markets developed	<p>1.1 By end 2002/3, nationally located coalitions established (including management structures, priority areas, monitoring procedures and work plans) in at least three out of four focus research and promotion theme areas</p> <p>1.2 By end 2003/4, coalitions start to implement research and or promotion work plans</p> <p>1.3 Through 2002/3–2004/5 institutional assumptions, priorities, and coalition composition are reviewed, and used to inform research and/or promotion work plans</p> <p>1.4 By end 2005, for each coalition at least one technical and/or institutional innovation that sustainably improves food security and/or the livelihoods of poor people developed, adapted and/or promoted</p>	<p>Annual Research programme reports</p> <p>External refereeing</p> <p>External output-to-purpose reviews</p> <p>Partners' reports</p>	<p>Enabling environment that allows coalition partners to develop, adapt, and/or promote innovations relevant to the livelihoods of poor people exists, or can be created</p> <p>Coalitions and/or coalition partners develop skills and institutional/organisational characteristics that lead to the development, adaptation, and or promotion of innovations after programme implementation</p>
Outputs			
2. Strategies to improve food security of poor households effectively promoted	2.1 By end 2005, research identified and promoted strategies and policies in which post-harvest interventions can be developed and applied by national/ regional post-harvest innovation systems that interface with, and/or respond to		

	livelihood agendas of the poor		
<p>Activities</p> <p>2002/3</p> <p>1. Conduct workshops for coalition and partnership building and to identify priorities, develop work plans and project proposals in research and technology promotion theme areas</p> <p>i. Decentralized food security systems</p> <p>ii. Food safety</p> <p>iii. Horticulture and rural diversification</p> <p>iv. Capacity-building in national innovation systems</p> <p>2. South Asia Programme commissions activities identified by the coalitions</p> <p>3. Regional Advisory and Promotion Committee established</p> <p>2003/4–2004/5</p> <p>1. Annual poverty relevance review of the South Asia Programme commissioned</p> <p>2. Post-harvest stakeholder constituency network formed</p> <p>3. Cross learning and promotion through annual conference facilitated</p> <p>4. CPHP policy brief series established to identify, synthesise and promote key institutional lessons and innovations</p>			

5. IMPLEMENTATION, OUTCOMES, AND INDICATORS

5.1 Implementation

The implementation of the coalitions approach in South Asia will involve six central elements.

i. Establishment, commissioning and support of coalitions projects

Activities in 2002/3 will concentrate on the establishment of coalitions. This will involve workshops for coalition and partnership building and priority setting, development of work plans and project proposals in the selected post-harvest theme areas discussed in Section 3. CPHP will assist project partners to develop and negotiate management framework for projects. It will also assist partners in the use of stakeholder and livelihood analysis in the formulation. Facilitated workshops will use regional and international resource persons. Additional information on project development and management tools can be found in the CPHP starter pack (2002 revision).

Core and other partners will be invited by the Regional Co-ordinator to develop concept notes and full project documentation for 30 June and 31 August 2002 deadlines, in anticipation of new projects being commissioned for the start of the financial year 2003/4. Modest funds are available for projects requiring inception activities in the financial year 2002/3.

Once projects are commissioned, the role of CPHP will be to:

- Monitor and facilitate coalition development and progress
- Help network the projects to relevant regional and international sources of knowledge
- Facilitate cross-learning between different coalition projects. The modus operandi for these tasks will be developed, as required, on a case-by-case basis (see also annual post-harvest conference).

ii. Regional Advisory and Promotion Committee

The decentralisation of the CPHP associated with its adoption of the coalitions approach and the stronger in-country focus that this implies, means that the role of the UK Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), alters and needs to be supplemented (see discussion Section 6). A feature of the coalitions approach is that it involves a facilitated process of project development based on existing relationships and concept development within this context. At the regional level a need is therefore recognised, not for an expert body to screen potential proposals, but rather for one that can be truly advisory.

This is viewed as a task that would draw on relevant disciplinary skills, but would additionally include an intimate understanding of national/regional institutional, and organisational contexts, leading to advice on the 'art of the possible', i.e., how to realistically achieve outcomes given partners, resources, and the wider environment. To this end a Regional Advisory and Promotion Committee (RAPCO) will be established with two members from each of the three countries covered by the Programme in the region. This will be a key way of providing transparency to the Programme's governance.

Looking beyond the commissioning of projects, a second and more pro-active role is seen for RAPCO. This will involve acting as ambassadors for CPHP, tasked with promoting project and Programme outcomes. RAPCO members will be selected based on their professional standing and their access and ability to participate in national-level debate and interface with national government development planning processes.

iii. Annual poverty relevance and impact review of the South Asia Programme

Enhancing poverty focus and impact is now a non-negotiable aim of all DFID development assistance, including research programmes. In the CPHP South Asia Programme it is recognised that there have been conceptual, human resource, and institutional reasons why stronger poverty focused approaches have not been adopted either projects, or CPHP. This will, to a large extent, be addressed by the coalitions approach whereby institutional leverage will be used to introduce a stronger pro-poor focus agenda into project processes. This is necessary, but not sufficient.

It is recognised that for many of our partners, who rely on funding from a resource-constrained aid environment, there are organisational imperatives that encourage over-reporting or unfounded reporting of poverty focus and impacts. For CPHP, and indeed for partner organisations, this restricts lesson learning and the development and promotion of more poverty-focused approaches to project implementation. The Programme also has its own need to report to DFID and other audiences on its relevance and contribution towards poverty impacts in a way that it feels accurately reflects achievement.

To this end CPHP South Asia will commission an annual poverty relevance and impact review of its projects and of its regional management strategy. The review will report on progress towards a more poverty-focused approach and poverty impacts. This will form a key component of the Programme monitoring system in the region, providing lessons on which both the projects and the Regional Co-ordinator will be required to act.

iv. Development of post-harvest constituency

While CPHP has been fortunate in building strong relationships with its partners in the region, it recognises that these partners form a relatively small representation of the post-harvest stake-holder constituency. This is particularly so for India, where the numbers of relevant, organised sources of knowledge and stakeholders is very large indeed. In India and Bangladesh an organisational focus for post-harvest issues is less well-developed.

The development of a post-harvest network across the region, starting in 2002, will be used as a way to supplement and consult beyond the current core group of partners. It is anticipated that this will contribute to the evolving focus of themes and to the specific research and technology promotion activities within such themes. It will also be used as a mechanism to facilitate cross-learning between coalitions and stakeholders, and to promote lessons to a wider post-harvest audience. This network will feature an annual conference on post-harvest innovation.

The approach to developing the network will be slightly different in each of the three South Asia region countries. In India it will focus on linking together scientific organisations with relevant post-harvest expertise to organisations engaged in rural

development/enterprise development with a focus on poverty reduction. It is also viewed as a necessary pre-cursor to the development of a coalition project in the horticulture rural diversification theme area, because of the restricted scope of the core partner group. Such a network will form the basis of a coalition in this theme.

In Nepal the approach will focus initially on developing an inventory of individuals in the scientific and development community with experience and disciplinary knowledge of post-harvest issues, or who have relevant networks. This may then lead to a Nepal-based coalition project.

In Bangladesh a similar inventory process will be adopted, but using the coalition-scoping project currently in progress as a means of drawing together relevant expertise and resources.

v. Policy and capacity development of national post-harvest innovation systems

A unique feature of the CPHP South Asia Programme has been its combination of technical projects connected to a policy project synthesising institutional and process lessons. With the CPHP's shift in purpose towards contributing to '*National and regional crop post-harvest innovation systems respond more effectively to the needs of the poor.*' This synthesis and policy role becomes critical. The implementation of the lesson-learning and policy role will be projectised, but located in the Office of the Regional Co-ordinator and will be implemented by a coalition of the South Asia Programme's core partners in this thematic area (capacity-building and policy for post-harvest innovation systems).

There are two reasons for this:

Firstly, to remedy a failing from past arrangements whereby lessons learning by the policy project could not impinge on the project, or CPHP research management strategy and approach. With decentralisation of the Programme and its coalition approach there will be a stronger iteration between the institutional and process lessons learned and synthesised by the Regional Office and by the project and programme management approaches. This is in line with the Programme's adoption of an action-research orientation in its work.

Secondly, drawing core partners in the management team of CPHP South Asia allows access and participation in national debates and in the development of national development plans.

Within this projectised activity emphasis will be placed on networking the experience of post-harvest innovation systems into the wider debate on agricultural research and extension management and planning. Synergy is envisioned with other research programmes in this area. A programme-level policy brief series will be used to communicate the institutional, process and policy lessons emanating from the South Asia Programme. Other regional programmes and research programmes may want to take advantage of this outlet for case histories of post-harvest innovation processes and related relevant experiences.

vi. Cost sharing

CPHP in South Asia has modest resources for programme development and project commissioning. The South Asia strategy is committed to making investments in programme infrastructure—a Regional Co-ordination Office, a regional team including RAPCO, and regional and international resource persons. Investments are being made in capacity development of partners (in terms of partners and project management skills). Promotion and networking systems are also being created.

The CPHP South Asia hopes to leverage this investment in three ways.

1. By seeking alliances with other DFID research programmes to jointly fund coalition projects. There is already an ongoing relationship with the Crop Protection Programme in India (on aflatoxin) and potentially in Nepal (on chickpea storage). The South Asia Programme anticipates that project partners will play a pro-active role in pursuing joint funding opportunities, and will be supported by the UK team.
2. The South Asia Programme sees potential cost-sharing opportunities for in-country project co-ordination and for promotion and dissemination activities. Opportunities for this will be actively sought in both DFID and other research programmes.
3. Starting 2003/4, the South Asia Programme will seek professional assistance to develop business plans and raise private-sector financing for a crop post-harvest innovation forum.

5.2 Outcomes

Over the next 3 years the South Asia Programme will deliver and be judged on the following outcomes. Commissioning and support of at least three coalition projects with wider participation of thematic stakeholders that contribute strategies to support food and livelihood security of poor households in South Asia

- Collation, documentation, and synthesis of knowledge on institutional and process arrangements that underpins pro-poor post-harvest innovation, and the communication of this knowledge to key practitioner, research manager, and national policy bodies
- Commissioning and support of networks underpinning the development and promotion of pro-poor post-harvest innovation systems
- An annual poverty relevance and impact state and action plan.

Indicators of progress towards these outcomes will be developed in annual work plans and milestones for CPHP South Asia.

5.3 Ownership and exit

The CPHP and its regional programmes are, and must be, transitional and transient structures. In the past the role of such research programmes was viewed as filling technical knowledge gaps that were preventing the development of the post-harvest sector. With the shift towards a coalitions approach the scope of the knowledge being generated is institutional, and organisational as well as technological. In addition, the CPHP increasingly sees its role in terms of contributing to capacity development in the post-harvest innovation system. In other words, it is generating processes rather than concentrating only on process outcomes. This is achieved both through building skills in

partnership processes, and by strengthening linkages between different organisations and individuals in post-harvest innovation systems.

Following from this is the fact that CPHP is adopting a role where catalysing and sustaining relationships becomes central to its agenda of commissioning the creation of new knowledge. Embodied in the coalitions approach is the notion that this catalytic role will be adopted by national bodies and alliances. Over the next 3 years CPHP South Asia Programme is committed to developing such a role in national post-harvest innovation systems, so that initiatives do not halt at the completion of the current phase of CPHP funding. The main avenues by which this can be achieved are:

- Development of an organised post-harvest constituency through network development
- Participation in programme co-ordination of core partners from the research management research policy arena
- Development of a business/funding plan for a post-harvest innovation forum beyond 2004/5

CPHP will be proactive in communicating research strategy design ideas arising from its experiences with the innovation systems approach to the Rural Livelihoods Department of DFID. The South Asia Programme is committed to strengthening its relationship with DFID bilateral programmes. Again it hopes that its potentially unique experience in research management approach will contribute to on-going debates on the convergence of research and development interventions.

6. Key operational implications of the coalitions approach to research management and project implementation

6.1 In-country led projects

The adoption of the coalitions approach quite clearly marks a significant departure from past practice. It has implications for the management of the programme and particularly for the way that projects are developed and implemented. At the heart of the change has been a shift towards developing and sustaining in-country led initiatives.

6.2 New role for regional co-coordinators

To manage and support this new in-country focus has required considerable decentralisation of the Programme. CPHP already had in-country based regional co-ordinators in South Asia, but, the role of these coordinators has had to change, with much greater decision-making responsibility being shifted from the UK CPHP management team to the regional offices. The Regional Coordinators now take direct policy and implementation responsibility for developing regional strategies, establishing theme-based coalition projects and supporting them over the next 3 years.

6.3 Project initiation

The adoption of the coalitions approach has also had implications for the way projects are developed, and by whom they are managed. In the past, projects were developed in response to a 'call' for proposal issued in the UK and sent to UK and in-country partners. UK partners, familiar with proposal-development procedures, tended to emerge as the

project leaders. This inevitably lead to a degree of inequality in the consequent partnerships.

6.4 Facilitated approach to project development

In the coalitions approach, proposals will be developed through series of discussions and workshops that will focus on prioritised research and technology-promotion thematic areas. In other words, the proposal- development process will be much longer, will be more strongly facilitated by the Office of the Regional Co-ordinator and will focus more explicitly on the capacity development of in-country partners. This capacity development will be in terms of both skills to develop project proposals, but perhaps more critically, in the development of partnering and coalition management/ participation skills.

6.5 New role of UK partners

An implication of developing projects in this way is that there will be a shift away from projects managed by UK partners, with new coalition projects being managed by in-country partners. The role of the UK will also shift from that of developing project ideas and implementing them through in-country partners, to a more demand-driven role. In other words, the need for UK partners and their role in coalitions will be determined by the nature of the in-country coalition, the thematic area it is addressing, and the skills and resources that are required to allow the coalition to achieve its stated aims.

6.6 Project governance

In the coalitions approach the development of these critical partnering processes will become an explicit activity, with testable assumptions about roles and performance. The CPHP is implementing this by making it mandatory for projects to develop a transparent management framework so that:

- Dominant agendas can be balanced by wider coalition agendas
- Priorities and progress can be set and monitored by consensus
- A voice can be given to the agendas of the poor.

There will still be a need for a managing partner, but this partner must now be accountable to the coalition as a whole. The nature of the management framework of projects will be a central component of project design, and will form a major component of project proposal documentation. The operation of this framework and its relevance to the poverty-reduction goal of the Programme will be subject to annual programme-level review.

6.7 Choosing project partners, strengthening partnership

CPHP recognises that developing these partnering skills and management frameworks will not be easy. The Programme is going to devote considerable resources to this task as part of project development and support. There has already been a considerable amount of work done around the world on identifying what makes a good partnership. For example:

- Formulation of joint objectives
- Development of mutual trust
- Sharing information and networks

- Creation of transparency
- Joint evaluation of partnership success
- Sharing and joint ownership of project outcomes
- Developing joint capacities and building on past achievements.

These are broad principles. The specific details on how partnerships are managed and sustained will, of course, have to be worked out on a case-by-case basis. The Regional Co-coordinator, in consultation with partners and regional stakeholders and advisory teams, will use his discretion to judge the viability coalition project partnerships.

6.8 Governance and advisory functions in the regional programme

In the past, the project-approval process has involved the screening of projects by a UK-based PAC. This procedure will remain, as it is a DFID stipulation to ensure programme transparency. However, the regional offices will establish its own Regional Advisory and Promotion Committee (RAPCO). As the name suggests this will have a wider and altered role to its UK-based counterpart. Clearly with the coalitions approach to developing projects in prioritised thematic areas, the roles of PAC and RAPCO will be more as advisors to assist in the development of robust project proposals, rather than screening for promising proposals. UK-based PAC this will involve a disciplinary advisory role. RAPCO's role will also concern advice arising from the familiarity of RAPCO members with the institutional, and organisational context of coalition projects, and its implications for the viability of partnerships and approach proposed. In addition RAPCO, consisting of senior sector specialists will play a stronger promotional and advocacy role in national and regional public policy and strategy debates. The roles of these advisory committees remain important as ways of ensuring that themes and projects are identified and promoted in a transparent and competitive fashion.

6.9 Implications for the project cycle and research approach

The adoption of the coalitions approach has implications for the nature of the research process itself. In the earlier way the project cycle operated, the objective of projects and the partners involved were determined before the project began and remained fixed throughout the project's life. Evaluation and changes in direction only took place at the end of the project cycle. In the coalitions approach because project implementation and management are much more consensual, there is scope for both the priorities and objectives of the project to change and for the partners to change. This will involve the adoption of an iterative action research approach.

Evolving membership of coalitions Following from the adoption of an action research approach, project partners are likely to evolve in both composition and role. It is possible that: different partners may be needed to address different objectives; partners may need to play different roles as the project progresses, or it may become apparent that partners cannot play their designated role and contribute to the coalition in the way that it was initially anticipated.

6.10 A new role for monitoring and evaluation within projects

The potentially evolving agenda of the coalition projects that may, by the adoption of an action research approach, mean that much more emphasis will be placed on regularly reflecting on progress of the project and the performance of partnerships involved. These activities become the focus of project monitoring, with such monitoring changing from an accountability (to the donor) task, to a learning (by the coalition) task to support project management. This also provides the opportunity to both respond to new opportunities that are encountered and/or to drop dead-ends. The CPHP recognises that administratively an action research project can be difficult to manage, not least because there is a need to set some limits to the scope and cost of work to be undertaken. The CPHP hopes that it can establish flexible approaches that will allow this action research framework to be exploited for the benefit for the coalitions approach.

7. REFERENCES

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