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NATURAL RESOURCES SYSTEMS PROGRAMME

Review of DFID's portfolio of outputs under the socio-economic methodologies programme

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1. Socio-economic methodologies (SEM) programme review background and objectives

Management of natural resource systems critically depends on a thorough understanding of the economic and social factors influencing individuals, households and communities. The DFID Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRRS) Methodologies (SEM) Programme was set up to support and inform natural resources research programmes on appropriate social science needs and methodologies.

The SEM Programme logframe specifies at purpose level the following OVI: “*a new [socio-economic] method [should be] validated and applied in 50% of RNRRS programmes by 2005*”. Furthermore, the NRSP logframe incorporates an activity that should strengthen the use of socio-economic methodologies in NRSP projects as follows:

“Combined work of NRSP programme management, Steering Group and Programme Advisory Committee to introduce measures in the project cycle that build a livelihoods focus into the NR management research that NRSP commissions”

A milestone for this activity was to conduct a NRSP PD review of SEM outputs during 2001 to identify findings that could be incorporated into NRSP's research calls and other activities.

The objective of this review is to identify useful SEM Programme outputs which can strengthen the quality of current research on natural resources management. In addition, it is expected that the findings can contribute to the revision of the CN and RD1 preparation guidelines.

We would like to stress here that the scope of this review covers the outputs of the SEM Programme only. There exists a range of other important sources for socio-economic methodologies which could potentially contribute to NRSP and other DFID research programmes.

2. Review steps

In order to be able to identify possible contributions of the SEM outputs to NRSP we decided to look first at socio-economic methodology needs arising from NRSP objectives and strategies, as reflected in CN and RD1 proformas and guidance notes.

A second step, which in reality took place simultaneously to the need assessment is the screening of available SEM Programme outputs. Here we focus on two major aspects which are:

- accessibility;
- relevance.

In undertaking these two steps we decided to not only rely on the written documents but also to make contact with key actors concerned with the SEM Programme:

- past leaders of the NRSP projects that have used SEM outputs to obtain feedback on their experiences;
- past leaders of SEM projects and other key persons;
- co-ordinators of the SEM Programme;
- RNRRS programme managers.

The information obtained enables us to compare in matrix form how needs and outputs match, leading to the identification of specific SEM contributions and existing gaps (see Annex 1).

3. Needs for socio-economic methodologies

3.1 Generic NRSP Needs

In order to identify possible contributions of the SEM Programme to NRSP we first have to look at socio-economic methodologies needs arising from NRSP objectives and strategies, and the process of implementing the programme through research projects.

It is important to realise that the present and future needs to the end of NRSP will have changed since the conceptual and early review stages of the SEM Programme. In accordance of the Government White Papers on International Development, DFID's strategies adopt a much stronger shift towards poverty reduction enabled through a sustainable livelihoods approach and an emphasis on policy influence at international level. This has influenced the recent strategies of the RNRRS and NRSP and has increased the relevance of socio-economic methodologies (DFID website).

The DFID strategies for renewable natural resources research emphasises key approaches to research in the development context:

- poverty focused and addressing knowledge needs of 'poor people' whose livelihoods are dependent on natural resources;
- demand led and responding to the clearly defined problems of a specified group of beneficiaries;
- must have the potential to deliver developmental benefits and show clear uptake among implementing institutions;
- show local participation and collaboration in research, through partnerships.

And more specifically relevant to NRSP:

- adopting a systems approach to management of natural resources that is holistic and integrated.

We will now examine in more detail the needs for socio-economic methodologies in relation to the approaches listed above. We acknowledge that the following needs identification is not fully comprehensive, as this would be a review project of its own needing a wider stakeholder assessment and consultation process.

3.1.1 Poverty focus and sustainable livelihoods strategies

The call for concept notes clearly states the researchable relationship between natural resources and livelihoods:

“The central focus of knowledge generation is on changes in the management of the NR base that can enhance the livelihood assets of the poor over a relatively long time frame, thus providing greater livelihood security and opportunities for advancement of poor individuals, households and communities” (NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001. 3.1).

Throughout the call documents, logframes and proformas, an understanding and analysis of the above is central to the Programme and the projects that are expected to arise from it. To address the poverty and livelihoods analyses the following methodologies are important (though not an exhaustive list):

- ◇ poverty asset and analysis, include tenure, health and other capital assets;
- ◇ equity analysis, including gender;
- ◇ economic resource flow and opportunities analysis;
- ◇ micro- and macro-economic linkages analysis;
- ◇ analysis of stakeholder group choice and constraints;

- ◇ participatory livelihoods analysis methods;
- ◇ local institutional analysis (for social capital and for policies and processes).

3.1.2 Target systems and use of systems approach

The NRSP Annual Report (p.I-23) clearly lays out the differences between production systems and a systems approach. The division of the NRSP into production systems is geared towards understanding particular features within ecosystems and the livelihood dynamics within them. A systems approach however goes further in looking at the detailed interrelations between resources, people, economics, institutions, and a recognition of the complexity in such an analysis:

“...’integrated management’ defines not only the adoption of a holistic view of the NR base.... but also appreciates the integrated and dynamic nature of people’s livelihood strategies and how these affect their decision making and capacity to use the NR base. Studies of the livelihoods of the poor and their interaction with other (less poor) sections of the society are an important part of NRSP’s research”

(NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001. 3.1).

For this, the broader linkages between systems provides additional specific needs:

- ◇ systems approaches, modellers (not just NR modellers), dealing with scale;
- ◇ stakeholder analysis;
- ◇ particularly strong interdisciplinary working ;
- ◇ cross-disciplinarians (e.g. geographers);
- ◇ institutional analysis of groups at different levels.

Integrated NRM encompasses a broad range of disciplines and a wide range of important analyses and methodologies, for example the policies and institutions around NR management. This is exemplified in the key future research areas under the *Forest Agriculture Interface* production system:

“...planned projects concern the assessment and further development of participatory approaches to CPR management, improved land use patterns, and strategies to improve the integration of livelihood perspectives into NR management policies”

(NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001. 3.1).

It is also clear that this systems approach is applicable and has to be understood throughout the conceptualisation and implementation of the research i.e. both in understanding the issues, as well as in how the research is carried out and fed back into the development process.

3.1.3 Delivering developmental benefits

NRSP seeks research outputs which could lead to developmental impacts:

*“It is intended that the research will deliver results that demonstrably indicate the **potential for developmental impact** in the medium term in a particular target site. In the longer term, wider impact in comparable environments is also expected. This context has a major bearing on project design, including the way in which research is transacted, conducted and communicated, in order to position it for development-related uptake and promotion after the project’s completion” (NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001. 4).*

Concurrently this development impact has to be strongly demand-led:

“Demand-led ...programmes must define research objectives that respond to the defined priorities, in respect of problems, opportunities and needs of defined groups of poor beneficiaries“ (NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001. 2.3.3).

Specific points highlighted in the ‘demand-led’ definition are:

- (i) *a development opportunity or strategic constraint... with explicit measure of the scale and nature of the benefit;*
- (ii) *the livelihood system of an identifiable community of beneficiaries can be described, representatives of which have participated in defining their needs;*
- (iii) *one or more target institution has been identified and explicitly agreed to be partners in uptake and application of new knowledge;*
- (iv) *...regional country priorities of DFID, or clearly within partner countries [development] plans;*
- (v) *...new knowledge to be created should have strategic value and capable of adoption more widely.*

(NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001, Annex A)

The above indicates a strong need to understand aspects which are often outside the scope of conventional NR researchers:

- ◇ the overall and local development context: policies, institutions, and macro-economic dynamics;
- ◇ the needs and demands of local stakeholders (see below);
- ◇ poverty impacts in livelihood terms (see above), and how to monitor and assess them;
- ◇ how and with whom, to link into concrete development activities.

3.1.4 Action research

Development impact is an increasing requisite for research. This is achieved through local action planning and/or identifying and feeding research outputs into specific promotion and uptake pathways. Action planning is particularly important in the remainder of the NRSP for some of the production systems, for example:

High potential production systems: ...emphasise.... participatory approaches to raising awareness of options for management..., and link these with identification and testing of rural services that can... reach specific groups of the poor.

Peri-urban interface:....new projectstest the validity and utility of the new knowledge in bringing about pro-poor changes... through the creation - using participatory processes - of action plans that will be implemented in pilot projects.

(NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001, 3.1)

Action research and planning indicate the need for methodologies such as:

- ◇ tools for the understanding of local development processes;
- ◇ partnerships with development institutions;
- ◇ organisational development and empowerment methodologies;
- ◇ participatory learning and action research, monitoring and evaluation.

3.1.5 Uptake and promotion

Even if there is not a specific requirement for immediate development impact through community activities in a NRSP call, the programme does insist on ensuring direct links and uptake with institutions who will have a development impact.

“Programmes must be proactive in promoting the use of the knowledge that projects deliver....and good communication with target institutions should be in place from an early stage of project implementation in order that an identified target group of poor people can derive benefits from the research products. In addition, a programme must ensure that knowledge generated by projects is made available more widely, and in various appropriate forms so that utilisation can occur elsewhere in comparable production system domains and beyond” (NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001, 2.3.3).

There is thus a need to have tools to:

- ◇ understand decision-making systems and institutions, including how services reach the community level;
- ◇ understand communication flows;
- ◇ ensure the use of appropriate media for decision makers and end-users.

3.1.6 Local participation and partnerships

Several of the above needs areas indicate the need for participatory methods and working in partnership with in-country institutions. They are also specifically mentioned in the NRSP calls, both in general terms as well as within systems logframes.

Participation

*“Use of a systems approach often requires the use of **participatory methods**. Concept notes should not assume that the word ‘participatory’ in anyway signifies a specific method. The method that is to be used should be briefly explained, particularly in respect of who participates, how they participate and how many will be able to participate” (NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001, 3.3).*

Projects are required not only to examine participation in relation to natural resources management, but also to be participatory, and hence possibly to be flexible processes in themselves. This indicates a need for:

- ◇ participatory project management in research context;
- ◇ awareness of a wide range of participatory approaches.

Partnerships

“In cases where the principal investigator is UK-based, it is expected that the proposed research will be implemented by working in partnership with one or more overseas organisations. It is essential that these partners are contacted during concept note preparation and that agreement is obtained from them for their inclusion in the proposal” (NRSP Information Pack, Aug. 2001, 4).

Bearing in mind the need for development impacts and appropriate communication channels, and the often relatively short time spans for project development, NRSP research proposers would need to:

- ◇ understand local development dynamics;
- ◇ negotiate and maintain partnerships, preferably with local policy intuitions, and development agencies;
- ◇ be able to monitor partnership progress and sustainability, as appropriate.

3.1.7 Summary of generic needs for socio-economic methodologies under NRSP

From the above analysis of the needs of the NRSP for socio-economic methodologies, the following analytical frameworks and tools emerge as important in strengthening a livelihoods perspective and pro-poor relevance of natural resources research:

- ◇ a systems approach where a detailed and holistic view of the dynamics and complexities within a particular system are explored and understood;
- ◇ livelihoods and poverty analyses, both from local and policy perspective;
- ◇ analyses of social and economic dynamics at various levels and from different perspectives;
- ◇ economic analysis (participatory cost-benefit analysis, contingent valuation, etc.);
- ◇ micro- and macro- economic analyses, and analysis of microcredit and rural finance in general;
- ◇ stakeholder and institutional analyses, in particular in relation to decision-making processes around NRM;
- ◇ analysing and linking into development processes: action research etc.;
- ◇ developing uptake and promotion of appropriate research outputs;
- ◇ flexible participatory research;
- ◇ building and maintaining partnerships;
- ◇ systems analyses, approaches and interdisciplinary working;
- ◇ monitoring development impact and process in relation to research outputs.

3.2 Specific programme management cycle needs

To structure the needs assessment and to identify the specific phases where SEM Programme outputs can contribute, we are using the NRSP project management cycle (PMC). The PMC consists of three stages:

Stage 1: Call for concept notes (CNs), their screening and selection;

Stage 2: Preparation and review of full proposals;

Stage 3: Project implementation.

Furthermore we distinguish two main potential user groups for the SEM outputs: the NRSP Programme Manager (PM), Steering Group (SG) and Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) on the one hand and the projects designers on the other.

Within the first group we will find two sub-types of users:

- (i) natural scientists with limited or no socio-economic background who will be sensitised by SEM outputs and made aware of relevant issues, and;
- (ii) socio-economists who will be guided by SEM outputs to relevant literature and approaches in the NRM context.

Tables 1a, b and c show a summary analysis of the relevant phases in NRSP research project development. We will use this to identify more specific recommendations on how the NRSP programme management can incorporate SEM outputs into the PMC.

In the following we look at the specific needs for SEM outputs in the different phases of the PMC.

3.2.1 Stage 1: Call for concept notes, their screening and selection

This stage consists of programme management developing a concept call, the advertising of the call and the development of concept notes by interested research project implementers, followed by the review of concept notes by the PAC and steering group (Table 1a, p8).

Programme Management has to make potential project implementers aware of existing socio-economic methodologies to address the needs identified above. Programme Management has to identify appropriate SEM Programme outputs for the specific research calls.

Recommendations for the use of these methodologies should not be too prescriptive and it should be indicated that there exist tested methodologies from various sources.

3.2.2 Stage 2: Preparation and review of full proposals

At this stage, project implementers have been short-listed for further development of project proposals to the RD1 stage. There will be a further refinement in the details of research approaches and activities which should be also be reflected in a more detailed assessment of team composition and interactions (Table 1b, p8).

Particular consideration and understanding of the following would be needed:

- the analysis of potential stakeholders and their role in policy development;
- the detailed understanding of communication pathways;
- the subtleties of the role and different aspects of participatory research, and how different stakeholder knowledge and perspectives are valued and incorporated;
- deeper consideration of economic aspects of livelihoods such as rural finance, gender differences and other community heterogeneity;
- understanding and combining different research approaches, particularly between more quantitative natural sciences and qualitative social and development methodologies.

Reviewers of RD1 will also have a chance to ensure that activities and formation of research teams are appropriate. They can suggest specific modifications and resource persons.

3.2.3 Stage 3: Project implementation

At the implementation stage of the research projects, project teams are expected to apply the socio-economic methodologies proposed and adapt them to changing needs (Table 1c, p8).

Towards the end of the project there will be an increasing emphasis on outputs and development impact. This implies an increasing emphasis on the following socio-economic methodologies:

- identification of livelihoods changes through the use of appropriate indicators;
- identification and analysis of change in policy processes;
- communication and dissemination of outputs;
- participatory monitoring and evaluation.

4. SEM programme contribution to NRSP

4.1 Overview of SEM outputs

The two main types of SEM outputs are:

- (i) Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs)
- (ii) Other SEM outputs consisting of Final Technical Reports (FTRs), manuals, workshop documents and published and unpublished articles.

An overview of the different contributions for both types of SEM outputs is provided on pages 9 and 10. FTRs and any other papers deriving from the above projects will not be considered in our analysis as the relevant information should be contained within the BPGs.

Table 1a Summary of steps in Stage 1: Concept note call, preparation and review

Phases	Socio-economic methodologies (SEM) need	
	Project designer	SG/PAC
Registration	Awareness on socio-economic methodologies focus within NRSP Methods (and time) to identify partners	Information package for registrants on socio-economic methodologies
CN call	Awareness of call cycle (relevant issues)	SEM best practice to highlight important issues (questions or criteria) and sources of information
CN preparation	Awareness of livelihoods and systems approaches, SEM resources and contacts	
CN review		Criteria on SEM e.g. economic analysis, gender analysis, participation
SG recommendation		Recommendation on appropriate “new knowledge” approaches (list)
PAC decision from CN-RD1		Explicit references to appropriate SEM outputs

Table 1b Summary of steps in Stage 2: Project memorandum preparation and review

Phases	Socio-economic methodologies (SEM) need	
	Project designer	SG/PAC
RD1 submission	Access to SEM outputs, strengthening of socio-economic methodologies background and applicable methods	Guidelines/ proforma revisions
RD1 SG review		SEM resources and SEM review criteria list with specific recommendations
RD1 revision	Contact and resource material	
RD1 approval		SEM criteria list Inception phase recommendations

Table 1c Summary of steps in Stage 3: Project implementation

Phases	Socio-economic methodologies (SEM) need	
	Project designer	SG/PAC
Inception	Sharing of SEM ideas resources with project partners	
Project implementation	Access to detailed methodologies	SEM resources Guidance on SEM Indicators for monitoring socio-economic methodologies in project implementation (MTR, FTR)
Project completion		Indicators for final socio-economic methodologies evaluation

SEM Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs) (R6800)

Participatory Research in Natural Resources: a good introduction into the topic. Checklist for project development and implementation is useful for CN and RD1 review. Literature overview well structured and accessible.

Addressing Gender in Renewable Natural Resources Knowledge Strategies: a good background and introduction to the topic. Concrete suggestions where the findings could be incorporated into existing CN proformas. Focus on project design and implementation including M&E. Literature overview well structured and accessible.

Stakeholder Methodologies in Natural Resource Management: a brief introduction to the topic without clearly making a link to project design and implementation. Some key issues are listed which are crucial in stakeholder analysis. Literature overview is limited.

GIS and Participatory Approaches in Natural Resources Research: a detailed introduction and overview to the topic. Provides key criteria to determine relevance of P-GIS in project contexts. Case studies summarised and further literature listed including contact names and details for key institutions.

Rural Finance and Natural Resources: an introduction to rural finance mechanisms and outlines the links between research projects impact and rural finances. It shows interfaces between rural finances and project identification as well as uptake pathways during project implementation. Literature overview well structured and accessible.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) for Natural Resource Management and Research: a good overview of the topic including the rationales behind PM&E. It lays out the major steps involved and it lists critical questions to be asked before entering in a PM&E process. It provides examples for indicators and criteria development and refers to further literature in a well structured way.

Local Peoples Knowledge in Natural Resources Research: a detailed introduction to concepts and background of LPK before it considers the importance for development and contributions to natural resources research. It provides a useful set of questions which could be integrated into CN proformas and reviewers guidelines. There is a good list of references.

Improved Communication Strategies for Renewable Natural Resource Research Outputs: emphasises the importance for programme managers and project managers – links to the design stage of projects (CN, RD1). It provides useful key questions to be asked when developing a communication strategy and lays out an iterative process for creating a communication strategy. An extensive reference list is provided, including contact details. An annex provides an overview of different communication media use with advantages and disadvantages of each.

Dissemination Pathways for RNR Research: a short version of the above with the only difference that it emphasises the one-way flow of outputs to the end users, whereas the above stresses the importance to see the communities as generators, transformers and users of information, which makes a huge qualitative difference in terms of the approach. This publication provides a “if” -“then” flowchart addressing RNR researchers and their involvement in dissemination.

A Methodological Framework for Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Methods: a detailed introduction to the topic and could be a valuable resource if project survey activities are too biased to either side of the spectrum - depending on objectives and information needs.

Other SEM outputs

Participatory Farm Management methods for agricultural research and extension (R6730): extensive training manual covering four methods to access resource use and allocation on farms. Although a valuable contribution it is difficult to identify direct link to project proposal development and reviews in more general terms.

Indigenous knowledge and Natural resources research: Bangladesh floodplains (R6744): outputs listed in the FTR summary include recommendations for project leaders for project design and management when undertaking IK-informed NR research. Further outputs are a model of livelihood strategies for poor NR producers and the establishment of an informal network in Bangladesh for exchange of IK on local NRM practices.

Indigenous Knowledge Methodology (R6744): 300p document consisting of background information, conceptual analysis and practical application of approaches to indigenous knowledge utilisation in research processes

Methods of economic and environmental assessment of the on-site impacts of soil erosion and conservation - Sri Lanka. (R6252)(FTR): outputs of the project are a set of generic tools for the assessment of erosion and conservation combining information on biophysical and socio-economic impact.

Farmer Participatory Research Methodologies (R5214)(FTR): the FTR contains a more conceptual first part whereas the second part consists of four case studies. This project has fed into the BPGs 'Participatory Research in Natural Resources'

Analysing Changing Gender Relations for Monitoring and Evaluation in the RNR Sector (R7039)(FTR) and Guidelines for the Development of Gender-Sensitive Interventions by Agricultural Researchers ODG Publication: a conceptual framework based on contemporary understanding of how gender relations change was developed and piloted and the findings were translated into guidelines (not part of the "Best practice series). The guidelines aim at the mainstreaming of gender considerations in agricultural research.

Reaching the Poor? Developing a Poverty Screen for Agricultural Research Proposals (R7098), (ODI Working Paper): this paper provides a comprehensive overview of the issues and implications of a poverty focus. It also describes the role of NR research in poverty reduction and provides useful checklists for project leaders and programme managers to monitor and evaluate the enhanced poverty focus of NR research.

4.2 Accessibility of outputs

The screening of the SEM outputs has focused on the key documents that were available from the NRSP office. Some additional outputs have been tracked down by contacting SEM project leaders directly. We are aware that there might be other outputs which we have not been able to access. This in itself is an important finding for our study as it reflects the poor accessibility to the users. Particular outputs which were transferred to the DFID Policy Research Projectss which seem of high relevance to NRSP but which are not readily available are *Livelihoods Indicators (R7214)* and *Multi-Agency Partnerships (R7399)*.

4.2.1 Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs)

These Guidelines are written for natural resources researchers and are funded through the Department for International Development's (DFID's) Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRRS). They are designed to meet the needs of programme managers, production systems leaders and project leaders for readily accessible information on social science methods used in field-based natural resources projects. A secondary audience comprises those with specific natural resources sector research interests in DFID's bilaterally funded projects, and in other organisations. The BPGs were designed so that they can be easily copied and distributed to staff on DFID funded RNRRS projects and to their collaborating organisations.

“The overall aim is to inform research practice in order to focus outputs towards developmental objectives and, hence, to improve the relevance of natural resources research to target beneficiaries. Each Guide provides a brief synthesis of current research on specific social science methods, with an emphasis on practical aspects of applying such approaches in a natural resources context. For the preparation of the BPGs authors have been encouraged to consult with RNRRS managers to ensure that, as far as possible, material is formulated to meet their concerns” (Alan Marter 2001, Series Editor of BPGs).

The BPGs tend to be relatively short and explicit contributions, using a language which avoids jargon in order to cross the border between social and natural scientists. A good example is the BPG on *Methodological Framework for Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Methods*. The excerpt below shows how SEM project leaders were faced with the challenge to address a heterogeneous audience.

“The paper on ‘Methodological Framework for Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Methods’ is at a conceptual level and would I hope sensitise some people to an integrative approach. This would be useful to people who do not have a training or professional background where mixed methodologies are the norm. We tried in this paper to point out the merits of co-existence and indeed of interplay, but I think this is just one drip of information, not enough to wash away prejudice completely” (Ian Wilson 2001, pers. comm.).

The BPGs seem to be an important resource for project leaders and programme managers as most of them are relatively short, and provide a good introduction into important areas of SEM in natural resources research. However, there is considerable variety in the SEM papers, ranging from the well bulleted and short-paragraphed papers to the longer paragraphed and more discursive papers.

BPGs do not provide step-by-step guidance as one would expect to find in a methodology manual, but they make researchers aware of existing methodologies to address SEM issues in natural resources research. The role of the BPGs can be seen as a sensitisation document for project designers. This is especially true for collaborators in developing countries who are less likely to be in the position to keep up with evolving objectives and goals of donor organisations and research programmes.

From our discussion with some of the RNRRS Programme Managers it became evident that the PMs are aware of the existence of the BPGs and that they have achieved a wider distribution to regional partners.

However, it seems that there have been bottlenecks in the distribution of the BPGs. The PMs received only one copy of each of the BPGs and it was left to their individual initiative to request further copies for distribution. That led to varied success across the different Research

Programmes. In two of the interviewed cases the PMs requested a number of copies of the guidelines and sent them out to their regional officers, project leaders and collaborators. In one case a flyer announcing the existence of these publication was circulated and in another case no strategic action was taken to distribute the SEM guidelines, which led to a limited dissemination among project leaders within the specific programme. This became obvious during a recent programme workshop where the BPGs were displayed. Most of the project leaders were not aware of their existence.

Since April 2001 the BPGs have been listed in DFID's Rural Livelihoods Publications Catalogue (p. 24-25) and are available for ordering. However, for many people in partner countries it is less feasible to order and obtain copies through DFID or other sources in time for CN preparation.

4.2.2 Other SEM outputs

The second type of outputs are more difficult to identify and to access. They are either in very specific formats (ie. FTRs) which usually have a limited distribution, or they are not clearly labelled as 'SEM outputs' (although they are based on findings obtained through SEM financed projects). Two of these outputs are listed in DFID's Rural Livelihoods Publications Catalogue (p. 24-25) and are available for ordering. These are *Participatory Farm Management Methods for Agricultural Research (R6730)* and *Indigenous Knowledge Methodology (R6744)*.

The responses to our questionnaire sent to the Programme Managers indicate that there is less awareness regarding the existence of the second type of SEM outputs, which reflects the lack of a dissemination strategy.

Feedback from SEM project leaders show that there has been distribution and uptake of selected SEM outputs through training workshops, manuals, personal contacts, publication in books, journals, etc. This distribution has largely relied upon the individual initiatives of the SEM project leaders and their contacts to relevant partners in developing countries. This reinforces the conclusion that there is no overall strategy in place for disseminating the SEM outputs.

An example for an individual initiative is as follows:

"The Crop Post Harvest Programme paid for the production of 100 copies of the Participatory Farm management manual (R 6730) which was then distributed to regional offices and project leaders. As this manual was developed in close collaboration with one of the CPHP projects in Zimbabwe, the promotion and uptake of this output was of importance to the PM" (Donaldson, pers. comm. 2001).

Another examples for the dissemination of components of the SEM outputs are provided below:

"We have promoted, through training and actual practice in organisations, the outputs from this piece of work, fairly widely. The framework and the guidelines together have been used in Nigeria, Nepal, UK and Tanzania largely, but also in Egypt and other places where I have been involved in gender training" (Okali, pers. comm. 2001).

In some cases the SEM outputs can be accessed through the internet. For example, *A Methodological Framework for Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Methods (R 7033)* is accessible through the Reading Statistics website, which has led to a wide distribution.

“We certainly have users in USA, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Spain and suchlike places as well as in places that might qualify as DFID targets e.g. Cameroon, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Tunisia, Vietnam, Zimbabwe. These are in very varied institutions but as you might imagine include CGIAR Centres, UN agencies, Universities (researchers, advisers, students), National Research Institutes, and “unknown” (Wilson, pers. comm. 2001).

The findings of *Improved Communication Strategies (R7037)* contributed to the Crop Protection Programme (CPP) commissioned work on the factors affecting uptake and adoption of research outputs. This was reported on in the *Sustaining change* workshop (Hainsworth and Eden-Green, 2000).

There are many more examples of the contribution of SEM outputs to training events, workshops, publications, etc, which are listed in the Methodologies Programme Report 1995/2000 (DFID, 2000). Within the scope of this review we have not considered these documents as their immediate contribution to NRSP is impossible to assess.

4.3 Relevance of SEM outputs

The SEM Programme prioritised and selected relevant topics for future SEM projects during a workshop in 1996 which was attended by research project leaders, programme managers and other representatives of the UK research community (Farrington, 1996). This process was meant to assure the relevance of the SEM outputs for their clients, who at that stage were mainly UK based researchers. Overall, the SEM workshop was considered as a positive starting point for the development of a relationship between programme managers, project leaders and the SEM Programme.

Our analysis of existing NRSP needs for socio-economic methodologies and the outputs provided under the SEM Programme led to the identification of some major methodological gaps. Methodologies for economic analysis have not been covered at all by the SEM Programme portfolio. Another weak area is the coverage of methodologies for improved identification and management of partnerships. In Annex 1 we provide an overview of the gaps identified and suggests possible alternative sources of relevant information.

Despite the attempt to involve PMs in the selection and prioritisation of socio-economic methodologies, informal interviews with the PMs showed that there was a perceived lack of coherence in mechanisms and entry points for SEM outputs into the different research programmes.

The relationship with the SEM Programme or perceived ownership with specific SEM projects has influenced the uptake and dissemination of different SEM outputs within the research programmes. For example, the outputs of the SEM Programme used most in the Crop Post Harvest Programme (CPHP) are the gender work from R7039, funded 15% by CPHP, and the participatory farm management from R6730, where the elaboration of the manual took place in direct collaboration with a CPHP project in Zimbabwe.

A recent review by Biggs and Underwood recommends the uptake of gender work in the CPHP Information pack. Okali’s work has already contributed to the current version. (Tim Donaldson 2001, pers. comm)

For the Forestry Research Programme (FRP) major relevance was seen in the BPGs on *Communication Strategies* and *Dissemination pathways (R 6800)*. The findings of these projects have been incorporated into the standard FRP briefing notes and guidelines for project designers and in supplementary instructions for project leaders.

Another important SEM output for this programme is *Combining Quantitative and qualitative survey methods (R6800)* which responds to the concerns of the PM about the often poor quality of household livelihood and other social surveys which have been undertaken to provide baseline information from which research-instigated change may be assessed.

As the scope of this review is to identify the contributions of the SEM Programme to NRSP in particular, we will now look at the socio-economic methodology needs as identified for NRSP in Section 3 of this document and to what extent the existing SEM outputs respond to these needs.

Most of the BPGs contain recommendations which are directly relevant to research project design and management, as well as to the screening of project proposals. They can contribute to update existing CN proformas in order to enhance the quality of research projects with regard to socio-economic aspects. In the overview of existing BPGs we have highlighted the projects which provide direct input into project design and screening procedures. One of the Guidelines (*Addressing Gender in RNR Knowledge Systems*, Meddows and Sutherland, part of R6800) contains specific recommendations on how the findings could be included into CN and RD1 preparation.

The following excerpt is used as an example on how specific recommendations arising from the SEM guidelines can be of relevance for researchers as well as for programme managers in their respective tasks of developing project proposals and research calls.

At project memorandum stage the following gender issues may be addressed under Section B (on demand, uptake and geographical focus):

- *identification of the gender categories expected to benefit from the proposed research. This should be in relation to an understanding of general gender involvement in the enterprise/commodity or biophysical process being addressed; and*
- *on the basis of current understanding of livelihoods and social groups, a qualitative assessment of any potential negative impact of the research on gender categories.*

Source: Addressing Gender in Renewable Natural Resources Knowledge Strategies (R6800)

In Table 2 we summarise the specific contributions the different SEM outputs make to the identified needs. The table also provides an indication of the specific recommendations for the revision on CN and RD1 which we present in Annex 2.

Table 2 Contribution of SEM outputs to improved programme management cycle documents

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs	Specific contribution	Recommended application
Livelihoods and poverty analyses, both from local and policy perspective.	Reaching the poor? Developing a Poverty Screen for Agricultural Research Proposals (R7098)	Annex 2 (p 44- 49, Table A2.1-A2.4) ‘Towards a toolkit for assessing the poverty focus of NR’ provides a set of checklists and questions which are relevant to PM/PAC and project designers	RD1 Review: Familiarisation with toolkit. Implementation: Poverty screening process
Systems analyses, approaches and interdisciplinary working	(i) BPG Combining Quantitative and qualitative survey methods (ii) BPG GIS and Participatory Approaches in NRR (iii) Participatory Farm management Methods (R6730) (iv) Indigenous Knowledge (R 6744)	(i) Section on ‘Practical aspects of the selection of survey techniques’ (p. 3) provides key issues to consider in terms of ‘objectives’ and ‘constraints’ for survey technique selection. This section is relevant for project designers of interdisciplinary research teams as well as for PAC/PM review process. Furthermore there are two key tables (p. 9-10) which provide an overview of ‘Types of formal and informal combinations’ and ‘Information objectives, approaches to data collection and researcher- researched relationship’. (ii) Section on ‘Importance of multidisciplinary approach and participatory planning’ (p. 10) contains a list of key criteria for determining the relevance of GIS in a given institutional context. Section on ‘Integration and analysis of social and biophysical data’ (p. 16-18) addresses project designers and introduces key features of a combined approach. (iii) Gives methodology on how to combine various factors in a participatory systems approach in relation to on-farm trials. (iv) Looks at different scenarios in combining Indigenous Knowledge and natural science.	CN Guidance: Greater emphasis on systems multi-disciplinary RD1 Review: Appropriate mix of methodologies and sequencing.

Table 2 (continued) Contribution of SEM outputs to improved programme management cycle documents

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs	Specific contribution	Recommended application
Incorporating analyses of social dynamics at these levels.	(i) BPG Addressing gender in RNRRS (R 6800) (ii) Analysing changing gender relations (R 7039)	Section on Project design (p 8-10) are relevant for project designers and PM/PAC especially for the revision of concept note proforma (Section B and D). Key gender issues are identified which need to be considered in the project design phase.	CN general reference to gender concerns, analysis and expertise RD1 and review: Suggestions on gender analysis expertise and participation of women. References to tables on 'pitfalls'
Economic analysis (participatory cost-benefit analysis, contingent valuation, etc.)	(i) BPG Rural Finance and Natural Resources (R 6800) (ii) Participatory Farm management methods (R)	(i) Section 'Rural Finance and the Research Process' (p 10) explains the link between information on rural finance and research identification. On page 11 the document explains the main link between rural finance and technology uptake, an area which has been left out in the other uptake material provided by SEM. The information provided is relevant for PM and project designers as rural finance is a neglected area across research programmes. (ii) Three methods are described in detail for practical application. Method 2 (p. 28 ff.) Participatory Budgets; Method 3 (p. 43 ff.) Resource Allocation Maps; Method 4 (p.48 ff.) Resource Flow Diagrams.	General references, especially in relation to technology uptake. RD1 Review: Check if any issues relating to technology uptake, capital and credit needs, or change in resource as form of household insurance. Participatory methods available for farm budgets, etc.

Table 2 (continued) Contribution of SEM outputs to improved programme management cycle documents

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs	Specific contribution	Recommended application
Stakeholder and institutional analyses	(i) BPG Stakeholder Methodologies in NRM (R 6800) (ii) BPG Local Peoples Knowledge in NRR (R 6800)	(i) Section ‘Stages in Stakeholder Analysis’ (p 4-8) provides a short description of the essential steps involved in a stakeholder analysis. (ii) Section ‘Contribution to NRR’ (p. 7-10) provides key questions to be asked by project designers for the development of an research approach which is based on locals peoples knowledge.	CN: General references on stakeholder analysis and using local people’s and indigenous knowledge.
Understanding decision-making processes around NRM	Participatory Farm management methods (R)	Needs and suitability assessments are described.	RD1 Guidance: Reference to various methodologies available.
Linking into development processes: action research etc.	(i) BPG Local Peoples Knowledge in NRR (ii) BPG Participatory research in Natural Resources	(i) Section ‘Importance for Development’ (p. 6) provides a list of key areas in which LPK is important for development. This list can be used for the revision of CN proformas and as a resource for project designers. (ii) Describes levels of research and applicability of different modes of participation: e.g. Downstream applied research.	CN: Working with participation and local knowledge links into existing processes, conditions, perceptions, builds capacity and empowerment. Links with appropriate research. RD1 Review: Reference to appropriate methodologies.

Table 2 (continued) Contribution of SEM outputs to improved programme management cycle documents

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs	Specific contribution	Recommended application
How to ensure uptake and promotion of appropriate research outputs	<p>(i) BPG Communication Strategies (7037)</p> <p>(ii) BPG Dissemination pathways (6800)</p>	<p>(i) Section on ‘Developing a communication strategy’ lists (p 4) and describes (p 5-16) a number of key steps to be considered during project design and implementation. The list is useful for revision of CN/ RD1 proformas as well as a checklist for project reviewers and designers. Annex: Practical aspects of communication media use provides a good overview of different communication media, their strengths and constraints for project designers.</p> <p>(ii) Section on ‘Synthesis of recent research’ (p 3-4) provides a list of factors influencing the intermediate user uptake and another list for the end user uptake. Section on ‘Implications’ (p. 7-8) summaries key considerations to be taken into account by project designers. These considerations are also useful for PAC/PM review processes.</p>	<p>General references to integrating communication and uptake promotion</p> <p>RD1 Guidance: Refer to appropriate methodologies</p> <p>RD1 Review: Points to take into account.</p> <p>Specific reference in case of dissemination projects.</p>
How to do research in a flexible participatory way	<p>(i) BPG Participatory Research in Natural Resources (6800)</p> <p>(ii) Participatory Farm Management</p>	<p>(i) Section ‘Checklist for formulating new projects’ (p. 8-10) provides key points to consider as project designer to ensure the participation of stakeholders. It can also be used as a checklist for the project review process and for M&E purposes. Section ‘Checklist for implementing existing projects’ (p 10-11) contains a set of key questions which are useful for MTR and project managers of ongoing research projects. Table 1 relating objectives with types of research) and Table 2 (activity options and considerations) provide useful entry guidance.</p> <p>(ii) Tools for involving beneficiaries in analysis and groups decisions.</p>	<p>CN review: Checks on appropriate type of participation.</p> <p>RD1 Guidance and review: Guidance on appropriate participatory methodology.</p> <p>Implementation: Reference to checklist.</p>

Table 2 (continued) Contribution of SEM outputs to improved programme management cycle documents

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs	Specific contribution	Recommended application
How to build and maintain partnerships	Indigenous knowledge	Recognises and provides recommendations on the need for coherent and mixed teams covering both local and UK collaborators of various skills and disciplines.	CN and RD1 review: References to appropriate discipline.
Monitoring development impact and process in relation to research outputs	<p>(i) BPG Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for NRM and Research (6800)</p> <p>(ii) BPG Addressing gender</p> <p>(iii) Analysing changing gender relations (R7039)</p> <p>(iv) Participatory Farm Management</p>	<p>(i) Section ‘Carrying out participatory M&E’ (p. 8-10) provides a list of critical key questions to be asked before commencing a participatory M&E process. These questions are a useful resource for project designers as well as for PAC/PM to access the feasibility of a suggested approach. Furthermore it provides an introduction to the selection of indicators (p. 13-14), which is relevant for project designers.</p> <p>(ii) Conclusion section (p 13) contains relevant information on monitoring gender inclusion in project implementation.</p> <p>(iv) Section 3.5 on M&E of on-farm trials.</p>	<p>CN guidance and review: General references to incorporating M&E in research projects, what it is for.</p> <p>RD1 Guidance and review Reference to PME and its appropriateness, covers also genders.</p> <p>Implementation: M&E coverage and appropriateness.</p>

5. Recommendations for the enhancement of use of SEM

In general terms we have received positive feedback regarding the need for SEM and we have shown in our NRSP need assessment that there is an increasing scope for the application of such methodologies. In this sense the SEM outputs offer a valuable resource that can be used more effectively in the future.

The recommendations will be directed towards the following stakeholders, aiming at the enhanced use of SEM by:

- ⇒ drafters of projects in their proposals
- ⇒ NRSP-PM in the review and selection of projects
- ⇒ collaborating researchers in project implementation

5.1 Increase the accessibility and relevance of SEM outputs for drafters of project proposals and their collaborators

Major concerns among project drafters and implementers are the overload of information and having to cope with existing reading material. We are aware of this problem but we would strongly recommend that extracted key sections from the BPGs are not the solution to this problem. In our opinion this bears the risk of encouraging the use of methodologies without the sufficient capability and understanding to successfully implement them in the project context.

- There can be no standard recommendation as to which BPGs would be most relevant to a project. Table 2 does provide an indication of the applications of specific SEM outputs. However, final selection of methodologies will depend on the project context and the knowledge base of the stakeholders involved.
- BPGs need a summary that would enable project drafters and researchers involved in project implementation to identify the relevant issues for their particular situation. In Annex 3 we provide an example of how this summary could be presented. This summary should form a standard part of the BPGs.
- In terms of increasing the accessibility and timely availability of the BPGs we recommend to make the BPGs available on the internet. This would help project leaders to share the resources among the stakeholders involved and in many cases would facilitate the accessibility for overseas partners. A relevant and convenient location for the SEM outputs could be on the DFID Livelihoods Connect website (http://www.livelihoods.org/info_toolbox.html) as this would enable project drafters and project managers to obtain additional relevant information on the sustainable livelihoods approach and related methodologies.
- In many cases it is not enough to facilitate the access to written resources. In order to successfully learn the application of new methodologies in-country ‘On the job’ training should be considered. Project leaders and programme managers should consider this in the formation of appropriate project teams with complementary skills.

- Although the SEM Programme can be considered as demand-led in terms of prioritisation of issues addressed, there is a scope to revisit the process by inviting stakeholders from target countries to identify their needs in terms of SEM.

5.2 Contributions of SEM outputs to NRSP-PM in the review and selection of projects

- CN and RD1 proformas should provide a link to the SEM BPGs in order to facilitate the dissemination of this resource. To this end an overview document of existing outputs and their link to livelihoods and poverty should be provided. The idea is not to try to oblige project drafters and collaborators to read the whole material but rather to enable them to do so if they perceive a need for specific information. Annex 1 could be seen as a starting point for this.
- Furthermore the PAC can refer project drafters to specific BPGs if a need is identified in the review of CN and RD1.
- The BPGs can contribute to the revision of the CN and RD1 proformas. In Annex 2 we provide specific recommendations on where to potentially include information from the BPGs into existing proformas.
- The PM should consider identifying funding for relevant outputs such as *Livelihoods Indicators (R7399)* and *Poverty Screen for Agricultural Research Proposals (R7214)* to be produced as BPGs.
- We also recommend to plan a workshop with PM and PAC members to promote existing outputs and to discuss the possibility of continuing the Best Practice Guideline series as part of the research programme activities.
- Indicators to monitor the successful application of SEM in projects will be necessary. Some of the BPGs mention indicators to monitor the gender, participation and poverty impact. At this stage we recommend that the PAC should make sure that there is consistency in terms of SEMs proposed in CN and RD1 and their implementation and reporting/ documentation. Annex 4 outlines possible indicators to monitor improved application of SEM outputs.

References

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Hainsworth, S.D. and Eden-Green, S.J. eds. 2000, Sustaining change: Proceedings of a workshop on the factors affecting uptake and adoption of research outputs.

Quin, F.M., 2001. Natural Resources Systems Programme - Annual report 2000-2001. Part 1 Narrative. HTS Development/MRAG/DPU.

NRSP Documents for preparation and review of project proposal and implementation:

Call specific information for concept notes (LWI, September 2001 used).

Supporting Information for Concept Note Preparation - NRSP Information Pack, August 2001

Concept Note Format and Preparation Guidelines, August 2001

Review of NRSP Concept Note by SG/PAC member, May 2000.

Notes on completion of project application /memorandum form, January 2001.

Criteria for External Review of NRSP Project Memoranda (RD1), January 2001.

NRSP Mid-Term Project Review - Terms of Reference (no date)

Criteria for External review of NRSP Final Technical Report (no date)

Socio-economic Methodologies. Best Practice Guidelines. Chatham, UK: Natural Resources Institute. (R6800)

Garforth, C. (1998) Dissemination pathway for RNR research.

Gordon, Ann (2000) Rural finance and natural resources.

Grimble, R. (1998) Stakeholder methodologies in natural resources management.

Guijt, I. (1999) Participatory monitoring and evaluation for natural resources management and research.

Marsland, N., Wilson I., Abeyasekera S., and Kleih U. (2000) A methodological framework for combining quantitative and qualitative survey methods.

Meadows, Kate and Sutherland, Alistair (2000) Addressing Gender in renewable Natural Resources Knowledge Strategies.

Norrish, P., Lloyd Morgan, K. and Myers, M. (2000) Improved communication strategies for renewable natural resources research outputs.

Quan, J., Oudwater, N., Pender, J., Martin, A. (2001) GIS and Participatory Approaches in Natural Resources Research

Sutherland, A. (1998) Participatory Research in natural resources.

Warburton, H. and Martin, A. (1999) Local people's knowledge in natural resources research.

Other SEM Outputs:

Cox, Aidan, John Farrington and Jim Gilling (1998) Reaching the Poor? Developing a Poverty Screen for Agricultural Research Proposals. ODI Working Paper 112. ODI. (R7098)

Galpin, Mark, Peter Dorward and Derek Shepherd. (2000) Participatory Farm Management methods for agricultural research and extension: a training manual. University of Reading. (R6730)

Okali, C., Locke, C., and Mims, J. (2000) Analysing Changing Gender Relations for Monitoring and Evaluation in the RNR sector. ODG, University of East Anglia. (R7039)

Sillitoe, Paul, Peter Dixon and Julian Barr. (2000) Indigenous Knowledge Methodology - Discussion Paper. University of Durham. (R6744)

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Gaps in SEM Programme outputs

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs providing some coverage	SEM Gaps and possible further resources
Analytical tools		
Livelihoods and poverty analyses.	Reaching the poor? Developing a Poverty Screen for Agricultural Research Proposals (R7098)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable livelihoods approaches and analysis • Livelihoods indicators <p>Possible Sources: ⇒ Livelihoods Connect Guidance Sheets</p>
Systems analyses, approaches and interdisciplinary working	BPG: Combining Quantitative and qualitative survey methods BPG: GIS and Participatory Approaches in NRR BPG: Stakeholder analysis Participatory Farm management Methods (R6730) Indigenous knowledge (R6744)	Not covered comprehensively <p>Other sources: ⇒ Scaling-Up ⇒ Farming systems experiences ⇒ CGIAR Integrated NRM initiative ⇒ Systems analyses using qualitative data</p>
Incorporating analyses of social, especially gender dynamics.	BPG: Addressing gender in RNRRS (R 6800) Analysing changing gender relations (R 7039) Indigenous knowledge (R6744)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other anthropological approaches. • Intellectual property rights <p>Possible sources: ⇒ PRGA.org has many further resources and links. ⇒ Various IK sources</p>
Economic analysis (participatory cost-benefit analysis, contingent valuation, etc.)	BPG: Rural Finance and Natural Resources (R 6800) Participatory Farm management methods (R 6730)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodologies for cost-benefit analysis. • Macro-economic analysis. • Commodity analysis. <p>Possible sources: ⇒ Livelihoods guidance sheets a good entry point. ⇒ DFID ESCOR projects</p>

Annex 1 continued

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs providing some coverage	SEM Gaps and possible further resources
Stakeholder and institutional analyses	<p>BPG: Stakeholder Methodologies in NRM (R 6800)</p> <p>BPG: Local Peoples' Knowledge in NRR (R 6800)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional analysis not covered • Extensive work exists on stakeholder and NRM <p>Possible sources and links:</p> <p>⇒ Livelihoods Connect.</p> <p>⇒ BPG Institutional Analysis, H Matsuert, 2001, forthcoming ??</p> <p>⇒ IASCP: CPR sources and links</p> <p>⇒ Other stakeholder analysis sources available: e.g. Links from Capacity.org</p>
Understand-ing decision-making processes around NRM.	BPG: Local Peoples' Knowledge in NRR (R 6800)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and policy implementation analysis. • Political economics • Environmental politics <p>Possible sources and links:</p> <p>⇒ DFID PRP, Livelihoods Connect</p>
Linking into development processes: action research etc.	BPG: Participatory research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade-off analysis • Institutional development processes. <p>Possible sources:</p> <p>⇒ DFID PRP.</p> <p>⇒ Other NRSP projects</p> <p>⇒ Various other NGO.</p>
How to ensure uptake and promotion of appropriate research outputs	<p>BPG: Communication Strategies (R7037)</p> <p>BPG: Dissemination pathways (R6800)</p>	Well covered but needs linking into development processes and partnerships (see above and below)

Annex 1 continued

SEM Needs	SEM Outputs providing some coverage	SEM Gaps and possible further resources
How to do research in a flexible participatory way	BPG: Participatory Research in Natural Resources (R6800). Participatory Farm Management Methods (R 6730)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of wider participatory approaches (PLA, community development) Other possible sources: ⇒ PRGA.org ⇒ Ileia.org ⇒ ID21 website ⇒ Other NRSP projects
How to build and maintain partnerships	BPG: Communication Strategies (R7037)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional analysis; • partnership building Possible sources: ⇒ DFID PRP ⇒ NRM Changelinks website
Monitoring development impact and process in relation to research outputs	BPG: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for NRM and Research (R6800) BPG: Addressing gender Analysing changing gender relations (R7039)	Good coverage and overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives to logframes • Sustainable development indicators Other sources: ⇒ NSSD website ⇒ Livelihoods Connect website ⇒ ID21 website

Annex 2 Recommendations on changes to project preparation guides and proformas

Specific recommendations in Programme Management Cycle

Stage 1 – Concept Note calls, guidance and submission

Call specific information for concept notes (LWI, September 2001 used).

Recommendations will be specific to call. The systems logframe should provide guidance. Systems PM may have to consider checking relevant socio-economic methodologies needs by referring to overall recommendations of this report.

There will be some need for Systems PMs to emphasise appropriate socio-economic methodologies according to NRSP's present and future thrust (NRSP Annual Report 2000-2001, p.I-21):

Presently: developing management options, understanding livelihoods

- understanding participation and institutions;
- what are key links to livelihoods approach and analyses;
- projects looking at uptake of technical options need to address rural finance aspects;
- communicating to policy users.

Future: integrated management strategies, demonstration and testing, influencing policy and decision making, promoting uptake of new technologies and appropriate management options

- communication tools and methodology;
- identifying context for uptake promotion, e.g. rural finance;

Supporting Information for Concept Note Preparation - NRSP Information Pack, August 2001

This is a good entry point to provide an idea of socio-economic methodologies requirements as it introduces generic requirements for concept calls. A summary is available on the NRSP website (www.nrsp.co.uk/Nrspweb/NRSP_researchprops.htm). Registrants can access it and familiarise themselves with NRSP and its emphasis on systems and interdisciplinary approaches. This could be extended to provided a summary of useful SEM and other methodological outputs.

The sustainable livelihoods approach [section 2.2] is emphasised and is particularly relevant to NRSP, with which it has particular interrelationship. Provide links to the relevant summaries that introduce livelihoods approach in the SL guidance sheet that are on the web (sections 2 and 3, www.livelihoods.org).

2.3 DFID's RNRRS.

More specific references could be made to strategy papers, such as research relationship to white paper (links to relevant DFID web-pages).

(Indicate the DFID also has country strategy papers, which may be relevant for specific systems. [2.3.2.]. These could help provide institutional context)

[Section 3] NRSP.

Integrated management emphasises a holistic systems approach encompassing livelihoods, away from narrowly natural science approaches. For this it may be useful to encourage project teams to familiarise themselves with DFID's sustainable livelihoods approach and related methodologies [links to SEM summaries].

Under 3.2 Future NRSP projects

Indicate where present and future emphases are (see above). Say that this has implications in shifting methodologies into a broader sphere, with less emphasis technical NR aspects and more on development and communication. This should prepare project leaders to seek out appropriate collaborators and research approaches.

Section 3.3. Research Methodology.

Elaborate: 'The systems approach lies at the heart of NRSP Programme. This means looking at the complex linkages between natural resources and people and the factors that influence this relationship. Careful thought should be given to ensuring the appropriate balance of approaches and methodologies, to achieve a proper analysis and research outcomes'.

Here indicate that there has been SEM outputs which may provide useful entry points. Summary given on web. Reference to be made to other useful research methodology outputs which have been produced through NRSP.

Further emphasis on development impact at this stage in NRSP and that this may affect project design, especially how it is transacted and should result in uptake. Refer to appropriate approaches and methodologies such as participation, participatory monitoring and evaluation and communication that are available (see SEM summaries).

Concept Note Format and Preparation Guidelines, August 2001

Introduction

Introduction discusses holistic research plans, systems approach. There is reference to web-based logframe guidance module, and requirement for environmental screening summary note (ESSN). While note in a same way specify requirement, maybe NRSP should 'strongly advise' Pls to familiarise with SEM via summaries.

Proforma

2. Background:

While SLA only provides guidance, and should not be followed slavishly, it nevertheless goes to the heart of NRSP purpose and link should be made. Familiarisation with SL guidance sheets and poverty analyses and reduction strategies may be useful, links to these have to be made.

3. Purpose and 4. Outputs:

'Demand-led' and 'uptake promotion' emphasis indicate a need for clear understanding of and building on local knowledge and development dynamics, exploring policy pathways, institutions and participation in decision-making. Appropriate outputs to communicate and influence end-users is central. References should be made to these concepts.

5A Research Plan:

This will be very specific to the call, but should show need for and clear application of appropriate socio-economic methodologies. It is worth emphasising to potential implementers of the importance of understanding:

- socio-economic analyses
- livelihoods, poverty and appropriate gender analysis
- in the case of projects with technology uptake, assessments of rural finance links
- participatory research, indigenous knowledge
- institutional analyses
- understanding and linkage with development processes
- integrated communication strategy

5B Research Team:

This should clearly reflect the needs of the research activities indicated above, for example gender specialists. Link to potential contacts?

3. Outputs, 5A Research Plan, 6 Contribution of outputs, 7. Beneficiaries

Methods for Participatory M&E and livelihoods indicators will be important for learning lessons. M&E at least should be stated as an important part of research design. Appropriate gender analyses have to accompany this to ensure sub-groups are considered, and if necessary included in project.

Review of NRSP Concept Note by SG/PAC member, May 2000.

The SG/PAC review of concept notes has to ensure that key considerations relevant to socio-economic methodologies are considered.

Expand following criteria in particular [in square brackets relevant question]:

[1] Livelihoods understanding and poverty in location:

Is there a clear conceptual understanding of the importance of livelihoods? A preliminary livelihoods analysis, in effect.

[2] Systems context:

Are the linkages between the socio-economic aspects, such as social capital, rural finance, understanding of different stakeholder positions and power relations, institutional and policy dynamics clearly related with the more technical natural resources management issues, both conceptually and from a practical implementation viewpoint?

Will the project build on appropriate local knowledge?

Is there a reflection here of awareness of systems complexity?

[5b] Promotion pathways:

have uptake and communication strategies been integrated throughout cycle rather than tagged on at the end and that these are appropriate?

[6b] Explanation of methodology:

Are new socio-economic methodologies being suggested where it could be appropriate? Most of the following could be expected:

- stakeholder, institutional and policy pathway analyses
- gender analysis

- economic (both micro-and macro) where appropriate and rural finance; analysis of transaction costs
- methodologies for building on indigenous knowledge
- participatory GIS for any mapping, spatial, land-use analysis

[6c] Participatory elements detailed:

Participatory research maybe not only to get information but in a context of a wider stakeholder group to achieving participation and ownership, and so increasing likelihood of change. Is there an indication that PIs are aware of this?

Check BPG Participatory Research Table 1. for guidance on indicating appropriate participatory research in relation to research objectives and levels.

Involvement of particular disadvantaged groups and women, when this is relevant should be indicated.

[7] Team composition:

Is it adequate in terms of covering the socio-economic methodology needs indicated in the activities section, for example in participation, gender analysis. Is there an indication that such institutional partners and team member skills are seen as integral rather than add-on?

[11] Beneficiaries well described:

Is nature and scale of potential impact clear?

Does this reflect awareness of role of

- gender and stakeholder analysis?
- poverty screening?

'Additional comments':

- These should give guidance if necessary on strengthened systems approach, i.e. holism and linkages between socio-economic and natural science research elements, and/or
- suggestions on methodology and team composition consequently needed.

Stage 2 – RD1 Preparation, Guidelines and proforma

It is not fully clear to what extent RD1 guidance and proforma can be modified. If this is fairly constrained due to ToR with DFID, overall guidance can be provided in a cover letter and specific guidance can form part of review notes. In all cases clear reference to SEM BPGs needs to be made.

Notes on completion of project application /memorandum form, January 2001.

It is recommended that there is an introductory section on overall guidance at RD1 stage. This should be a note to reiterate some crucial points relating to expectations of NRSP projects and especially at this stage of project development. These are covered within proforma guidance points, but have to be consistent overall:

- Systems approach by understanding overall system and interrelationships within systems and complexity - hence the need for appropriate SEM.
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Impact or indirect impact, and very careful assessment of stakeholders, levels of target groups and nature of impacts and research results.
- policy influence and so Uptake pathways
- Participatory methodologies and building on existing local knowledge
- developing monitoring and evaluation process from an early stage that takes in to account appropriate participatory approaches.

Reiterate again that:

NRSP project build on previous projects as well as tapping into processes, methodologies and knowledge generated through the SEM Programme. It may be useful in project preparation to explore relevant documents through SEM guide and appropriate skills and contacts (leading also to Livelihoods Connect and NARSIS).

16a Briefly summarise project's purpose.

It should be re-emphasised that project teams should indicate a systems approach. This could be spelled out.

In specific cases it may be relevant to indicate target groups who play key roles for example women's fish processing groups in coastal communities.

16c Target institutions

Should reflect ideas from 16d below

16d What are the proposed strategies and methods for promoting uptake of the project outputs.

Can either be covered in preliminary note (see above suggestion), or here sentence highlighting that

- experience has shown that this needs consideration with target stakeholders
- early integration into whole project development cycle
- involvement of particular marginal groups, say women, in promotion of new technology.
- more details on this can be found from BPGs (SEM Programme outputs), such as appropriate planning, media, costs, reviews process, indicators.

16e Are any groups disadvantaged.....?

Add line indicating that

- stakeholder, poverty and gender analysis can help with ensuring the further identification of such groups (guidance provided in BPG).

18a .. Relevance to... SL

Additional emphasis should be given to considering

- gender related impacts.

18b Previous research

Additional points:

....livelihoods dimensions ..

- and systems approach.

.....establish that previous knowledge ...and gaps...

- the importance of appropriate new methodologies recognised, as well as building on existing local knowledge (see BPG).

20a Describe project activities

Additional points to include:

- Those preparing memoranda (RD1) may want to refer to Guide on methodologies, especially with regards to livelihoods analysis, institutional analysis.

Paragraph on participation:

- if relevant how indigenous knowledge will be explored and incorporated within research framework (BPG Participatory Research in NR).
- How technical information will be handled in a participatory manner (e.g. participatory GIS (various BPG consider participatory methods)
- How research will engage stakeholder and support them in local development process. Who is likely to participate (especially in gender terms) and what barriers to this participation for disadvantaged groups.
- Consider carefully the appropriateness of different participatory approaches. The BPG on Participatory Research in NR gives guidance on methodologies, as well references useful in specific sectors.

Paragraph on data collection and analysis:

- Respective importance of interrelationship between different disciplines, especially socio-economic methodologies.
- Use of appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods (BPG)
- If mapping GIS techniques, please consider how appropriate systems and participation will be incorporated (BPG guidance on this is available).

Identifying and developing promotion pathways:

- Awareness and consideration of existing research on communication and uptake should be reflected in proposed activities (BPG and see also 16d).

Add section on *Monitoring and Evaluation*

- Essential in linking logframe to programme management: active monitoring and assessment of progress, review and re-planning of research project, and learning from research outputs.

- Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) should be considered. There is available guidance on what type and level of PME is suitable, how it can be done, and possible indicators (BPG on PME).

20b Brief profile of team members

Additional points:

- Appropriate complementarity between natural, social and economic scientists, and relevant development managers and institutions is expected. Where appropriate (especially directly livelihood and commodity related projects) is there a gender specialist. Gender 'sensitised' staff may not be enough.
- Suggestions on team composition is available in the SEM Programme Indigenous Knowledge research [needs to be made accessible].

20e Has specialist biometrics advice been sought?

This should be replaced by

- Have appropriate quantitative and qualitative statistical services been consulted?.....
- A rigorous scientific approach is sought which recognises a wide range of statistical methodologies. Appropriate specialist need to be on the team, or clearly consulted at an early stage of the research process. The guide on methodologies has reference to statistical considerations.

RD1 Format

Reference to be made to guide, above. Little scope for additions to text, except recommended addition of section on:

20a. Monitoring and Evaluation

Criteria for External Review of NRSP Project Memoranda (RD 1), January 2001.

Largely reference to should be made to RD1 Guidance above, with key considerations on the following:

- Subjective assessment of systems approach throughout logframe and narrative of the Goals, purpose and outputs.
- Gender analysis expert on the review team to make assessment on how far and in what way a gender perspective can be incorporated.
- Appropriate pathways and media (to end user and level) considered and costed, planned in early on. If an essentially uptake promotion project, careful assessment has to be made (Guidance provided in BPG). Existing promotion channels should be maximised.
- Use of a simplified poverty screening toolkit:
 - mechanism through which impact is mediated
 - conditioning factors (enabling environment)
 - scale of likely uptake
 - summary type and degree of impact

- Monitoring and Evaluation: has appropriate participatory methods been thought out for level of capacity and information needs. Have methods for refining and communicating indicators been identified.

Stage 3 – Implementation

NRSP Mid-Term Project Review - Terms of Reference (no date)

To assess rigour of project's methodology

- To assess the systems and participatory approaches. Refer to checklist on participation in research implementation.
- BPG provide guidance on methodologies.
- Is PME integrated into the project management cycle and appropriate to level of research output: usability of indicators, not too burdensome data collection, learning oriented.

Assess the research in respect of the following criteria

- poverty screening toolkit (see SEM output)
- *Benefits to women.....* disaggregating data for gender (see BPG)

Criteria for External review of NRSP Final Technical Report (no date)

6. Is a systems approach evident.....

- and building on local knowledge?

11. Proposed means of further promotion

14, 16 ..distribution.... dissemination....

- Reference to sustainability of promotion (BPG available).

Annex 3 Example of guide to SEM and resources

Addressing Gender in RNRKS. Kate Meadows and Alistair Sutherland. BPG.

Provides overview of :

- concepts of gender and gender equality
- gender analysis and its use. Its integration rather than compartmentalisation
- gender roles and their dynamism
- mainstreaming gender analysis and avoiding gender bias

Provides recommendations on:

Gender in research programme development (useful for PAC)

Project design:

- Elements relevant for programme managers (PMs) to develop CN Calls
- Guidance for PMs and project developers at the diagnosis and needs assessment stage.
- Pitfalls in only examining issues with only gender 'sensitised' approach, without deeper gender analysis. Gender relations are dynamic and complex, and important issues may be not addressed.
- Steps that are helpful in needs assessment exercise: team balance, practical steps on how to engage with women, and maintaining continuity between design and implementation.

Project implementation:

- Have to ensure that whole team is aware of relevant gender considerations, otherwise this may be sidelined
- Need to recognise barriers to participation by women in specific cultures, for example in the design of field trials at the household level.

Project monitoring and evaluation:

- There should be careful desegregation of data.
- Involvement of women in review rather than possibly physically separated collaborators
- Specific suggestions on how to ensure gender consideration can be practically taken into account.

Further reading through web-pages on concepts and methods, as well as relevance to different sectors.

Annex 4 Indicators for monitoring application SEM Outputs

- Website hits on SEM guide and BPGs
- Requests from PM for further information on SEM and contacts
- Regular use of SEM resources by reviewers
- Improved project design formulation. Measured by reduced number of concept notes RD1, turned down or needing improvements because of inadequate:
 - systems approach (NR linkages to livelihoods approaches and analysis, interdisciplinarity)
 - consideration of poverty impact
 - participatory approaches and methodologies, clear perspective on who stakeholders are
 - gender analysis, and appropriate specialists
 - integration of communication and uptake pathways in whole project cycle
 - or missing micro- and macro-economic analyses, policy and institutional analyses (once these have been incorporated into guides and resources on SEM)
 - consideration of monitoring and evaluation throughout project cycle, and appropriate participatory approaches used.
- Improved project implementation and outcomes should show an improved livelihood focus:
 - Systems linkages between natural resources management with livelihoods and context better understood and engaged with, through
 - projects clearly defining their relationships with development processes and appropriate uptake institutions, through a systems approach to research (more participatory, holistic and using a balance of different perspectives, local institutional and disciplinary).

Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP)

PD103 – Review of outputs of DFID’s portfolio of socio-economic methodologies (SEM) projects (June 1996 to December 2000) to strengthen the quality of current research on natural resources management

Terms of Reference

The aim of the assignment is to contribute to the introduction of measures in the NRSP project cycle that can further strengthen the livelihoods focus of the NR management research that NRSP commissions. PD103 will conduct a review of SEM outputs to identify findings that could be used in NRSP’s commissioned research.

Specifically, your tasks for the socio-economic methodologies (SEM) assignment are:

- 1) To conduct a review of NRSP documentation to identify the research needs, in terms of socio-economic methodologies, of NRSP’s constituents (including NRSP-PM, drafters of concept notes, and project researchers).
- 2) To provide a critique of the contribution of SEM to recent NRSP concept notes, project (RD1) proposals and research projects.
- 3) To recommend mechanisms to promote the use of SEM by NRSP-PM, by those preparing concept notes and RD1s, and by researchers in the field, in order to strengthen research quality with respect to building the livelihoods of specific groups of the poor.
- 4) To provide NRSP-PM with indicators by which to monitor research proposals and projects with respect to the efficacy of the use of SEM.

PD103 – Logframe

Review of outputs of DFID’s portfolio of socio-economic methodologies (SEM) projects (June 1996 to December 2000) to strengthen the quality of current research on natural resources management

Narrative	OVIs	MoVs	Risks
GOAL			
<p>Effective means to undertake research and deliver new knowledge relevant to poor people applied (extract from prog logframe, Output 1)</p>	<p>In all NRSP commissioned projects, onwards from 2000: Research undertaken in an inter-disciplinary mode¹ with appropriate methodologies</p>	<p>NRSP records of CN and RD1 screening and selection PAC minutes SG mid-term review reports</p>	
PURPOSE			
<p>To ensure the required focus on poverty and livelihoods in NRSP’s research and communication activities through the incorporation of good socio-economic methodologies (SEMs)</p>	<p>Use of SEMs to strengthen livelihoods and poverty focus evident throughout the whole of NRSP by April 2002, as witnessed by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drafters of project proposals incorporate specifications to strengthen livelihoods focus (target – 90% of CNs and RD1 have SEMs directed to livelihoods). 2. NRSP Programme Management team (NRSP-PM) selects projects that include robust ways to assess practicable means to strengthen livelihoods focus (target – NRSP-PM reports enablement) 3. NRSP-PM assisted to review projects for use of SEMs (target – all members of NRSP-PM report being assisted) 4. Collaborating researchers enabled to use SEMs in project implementation (target – all collaborators report using and/or recognising importance of SEMs) 	<p>Reports of the NRSP-PM Concept notes and RD1s post-April 2000 SG and PAC minutes SG and PAC CN and RD1 review reports NRSP-PM survey report Project MTRs</p>	<p>NRSP continues. DFID-imposed budget cuts do not affect SEM capability of the NRSP and its projects.</p>
OUTPUTS			
	By end of project:		
<p>1. SEM needs for NRSP-PM, drafters of projects and collaborating researchers identified</p>	<p>A review of NRSP documentation completed, especially proformas and guidance notes for CN and RD1 preparation and screening, and a review of MTR and FTR procedures, identifying SEM needs</p>	<p>SEM ‘requirements’ review report based upon forms, documents and other NRSP material SEM outputs review report based upon the documents of the former NRSP/SEM component PD103 Final Technical Report NRSP CN and RD1 review forms and MTR TORs, Nov 2001 onwards</p>	<p>SEM outputs found that are sufficient for and satisfactory enough to meet Purpose requirements</p>

OUTPUTS continued			
2. Critical contributions of the former NRSP/SEM to drafting, reviewing and selecting projects identified	By end of project: A review of the former NRSP/SEM outputs relevant to drafting, reviewing and selecting projects completed		
3. Mechanisms identified for enabling the use of SEMs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drafters of projects in their proposals • NRSP-PM in the review and selection of projects • Collaborating researchers in project implementation 	Recommendations to NRSP-PM on the use of SEMs in the drafting, reviewing and selecting of projects formulated		
4. NRSP-PM provided with SEM assessment criteria and indicators to monitor SEM efficacy in NRSP's commissioned projects*	* due to time constraints this output will not be covered in detail		
ACTIVITIES	Milestones and budget		
1.1 Review NRSP documents (as for Output OVI1) (SG/JH)	<i>Budget Summary</i>		
1.2 Consult with NRSP-PM to identify needs (SG)			
2.1 Review SEM outputs against identified needs, noting gaps and other aspects relevant to the drafting, reviewing and selecting of projects (SG/JH)	<i>Milestones</i> 1. Review of NRSP documents and NRSP-PM consultation completed by 15 September 2001 2. Review of SEM outputs completed by 10 October 2001		
2.2 Contact PLs who have used SEM outputs to identify critical contributions from their perspective (SG)	3. Interim report produced by 14 October 2001 4. Gap identification and formulation of specific recommendations completed by 16 November 2001		
2.3 Discuss with NRSP-PM how SEM outputs (could) have contributed to the screening of proposals and reviewing of projects (SG)			
3.1 Review accessibility of existing key SEM documentation to proposal drafters and collaborating researchers, identifying barriers to accessibility and the means to overcome them (SG)			
3.2 Identify ways of filling SEM information gaps found in 2.1 (SG/JH)			

<p>3.3 Formulate recommendations on general mechanisms for enabling the use of SEMs in NRSP, covering all stages of the research call cycle and the project commissioning and monitoring process (SG/JH)</p>		
<p>3.4 Formulate specific recommendations for the various media of NRSP (forms, guidance notes, review reports, web site etc.) to implement the recommendations in (SG/JH)</p>		

SG = Sabine Guendel; JH = Jim Hancock

Brief note on the former SEM/NRSP aims:

1. To provide socio-economic tools for biophysical scientists undertaking NR research
2. To enable biophysical scientists to identify where a socio-economic input is required
3. To generate interest among social scientists to work on natural science led projects on NR management issues