

**A REVIEW OF DISSEMINATION
PATHWAYS WITHIN THE DFID
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION
PROGRAMME**

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Natural Resources International Limited

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION PROGRAMME GUIDELINES ON THE DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH

Introduction

LPP wishes to fund well-planned projects that clearly specify:

- their research outputs
- the users of those outputs, and
- effective strategies for disseminating outputs to the users.

LPP recognises that many factors encountered during research will affect the choice of dissemination media used. LPP therefore does not intend to monitor projects mechanically against dissemination strategies specified at project memorandum stage, and it expects projects to adapt their dissemination strategies as research progresses. LPP is however committed to basic principles of promoting uptake by well-focused cost-effective dissemination adapted to the likely users of research. These guidelines are intended both as advice for project applicants in planning dissemination strategies for inclusion in draft project memoranda, and as advice on good dissemination practice for existing project-holders.

Dissemination strategies and logframe conventions

The majority of LPP outputs, which will be the purposes of individual projects, commit LPP to promoting its research products. This promotion will take place if individual projects disseminate their research outputs (information, technologies, methodologies) to *target institutions*. These institutions may themselves:

- disseminate outputs to farmers as end-users of research outputs (as with extension agencies in adaptive projects)
- themselves act as end-users (as with projects targeted on policy-makers, or those producing specialised extension tools)
- act as intermediate-users (as with research organisations using or modifying the findings of strategic research).

Projects are required to specify at least one target institution by name and demonstrate its commitment to the project, but should in most cases also indicate a broader category of institutions that can act as dissemination pathways, end-users or intermediate users as appropriate.

By *research output* is meant the information, technologies or methodologies that the project plans to deliver. These are included in the first column of the logical framework in the output row. It should be taken as implicit that projects should deliver these outputs to the specific and the generic target institutions. Delivery should be through *dissemination outputs*, which can also be regarded as the

Extension

LPP is aware that the extension services in many developing countries are underperforming, and that research-extension linkages are problematic. For adaptive projects, LPP wishes to see evidence that these problems are being considered, and that optimal use is made of extension agencies. Early liaison with extension should enhance the overall quality and appropriateness of adaptive research, as well as assisting dissemination.

In a few projects, extension agencies can be considered as end-users of research outputs, as for example with decision support systems and complex rationing systems. In most other cases, extension will transmit research outputs, appropriately packaged, to farmers. LPP would prefer not to see *major* research resources committed to the production of frontline extension materials, as this is the job of extension agencies who will be better able to judge what they can use. LPP will actively support the dissemination of results in forms that can be used by *extension managers and subject-matter specialists*. This has the advantage that materials can be circulated to more than one extension agency, in more than one country.

Dissemination direct to farmers

LPP projects, even adaptive projects, will not normally have responsibility for large-scale dissemination of research outputs to farmers, but it is recognised that limited dissemination, especially in areas adjoining research centres, is useful and cost-effective, and will enhance the quality and appropriateness of research through feedback. This is the case even with projects not formally labelled as 'participatory'. Such dissemination methods can include demonstration plots, field days and farmer workshops, as well as the limited production of written extension materials (but see above). Projects should be clear about, and make clear to farmers, the distinction between demonstrations and on-farm trials.

Reporting

Projects should be responsible for including in their reports (especially their Final Technical Reports) wherever possible basic information on the size and nature of audiences reached by dissemination outputs. This is especially important for dissemination outputs that have required specific LPP funding.

Some networks and non-technical periodicals currently used by, or of interest to, LPP projects include (the list is not intended to be exhaustive):

- CTVM's Draught Animal News
- ATNESA, WAATN and RELATA (regional animal traction networks)
- National animal traction networks in several countries
- ICRAF's ATNESA and AHI networks
- IDRC's Small Ruminant Production Systems Network for Asia
- The Tanzanian Dual Purpose Goat Network
- World Animal Review
- Heifer Project International's *Exchange*.

LPP has successfully funded one network in the past, and will consider well-argued cases for funding the start-up of networks in the future, if there is a clear role for a network in a particular subject area.

Electronic dissemination

LPP recognizes the increasing use of the Internet, email and electronic media generally, even in developing countries, and will support innovative dissemination strategies using such media.

Workshops

LPP will support workshops as a form of dissemination to various sorts of research-users. These need not necessarily be researchers or policy-makers: workshops involving traders in livestock products have been effective in the past. Workshop objectives and the criteria for inviting participants should be clear. Workshops should be planned with adequate time for programmed activities and unprogrammed contact between participants, which is often as valuable. The format and style of workshops should be adapted to the needs and expectations of participants. Proper back-up documentation should be produced, and participants made aware where they can access further information.

Training

LPP will support the training of individuals, in-country or if necessary in the UK or third countries. As this form of dissemination is expensive, a clear case should be made. Training of individuals has a particular role in projects whose outputs are mainly methodological.

objectively verifiable indicators of the outputs, and thus listed in the second column of the output row. *Dissemination outputs* should specify the dissemination medium involved, but can include 'media' such as training, workshops and personal contacts.

LPP does not wish to prescribe dissemination strategies for projects, but the following paragraphs set out some of the advantages and disadvantages of different dissemination methods.

Journals and scientific dissemination

LPP recognises the value of peer-reviewed academic journals, and related dissemination media (conference papers and posters etc.) in disseminating research outputs to other researchers. LPP also recognizes that publication in peer-reviewed journals is a form of quality control, and that researchers have a legitimate personal interest in having their work published in such media. However, there are serious disadvantages to reliance on these media; the circulation of academic journals in developing countries, even among professional researchers, is very poor, largely because of high costs, and they are unlikely to reach other sorts of research users at all. Publication lags can be long. There is also a concern that publication in scientific journals may be difficult for projects involving on-farm or participatory research.

LPP will shortly be circulating a list of journals that have a high circulation in developing countries and/or are receptive to the results of on-farm or participatory research. It is in any case recommended that projects other than the most purely strategic consider other methods of dissemination alongside journal articles.

Networks

A number of networks exist which publish and circulate research findings, and there are also a number of non-technical periodicals, and series published by development agencies. Publication through such media has several advantages:

- Publication is considerably speedier than in scientific journals
- publications are frequently free to members or considerably less costly than journal subscriptions
- they therefore have greater membership/readership in developing countries
- they attract members/readers across the research/policy/implementation spectrum

