Bridging the Research-Policy Gap in the Water & Forest Sectors, India: A Seminar, Delhi, January 2004

John Young & Julius Court, Overseas Development Institute, London
Purpose and Outline

• Seminar Introduction & Self Introductions by Participants

• Introduction to the Water Project

• Share experiences about Research-policy processes in India

• Learn about the Context: Evidence: Links Framework for analysing research-policy processes

• Discussion: strengthening research-policy links in India

• Further Sources of Information & Closing
Definitions

- **Research**: “any systematic effort to increase the stock of knowledge” (NB: focus on science)

- **Policy**: a “purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors”
  - Agendas / policy horizons
  - Official statements documents
  - Patterns of spending
  - Implementation processes
  - Activities on the ground
Existing theory

1. Linear model
2. Percolation model, Weiss
3. Tipping point model, Gladwell
4. ‘Context, evidence, links’ framework, ODI
5. Policy narratives, Roe
6. Systems model (NSI)
7. External forces, Lindquist
8. ‘Room for manoeuvre’, Clay & Schaffer
9. ‘Street level bureaucrats’, Lipsky
10. Policy as social experiments, Rondinelli
11. Policy Streams & Windows, Kingdon
12. Disjointed incrementalism, Lindquist
13. The ‘tipping point’, Gladwell
14. Crisis model, Kuhn
15. ‘Framework of possible thought’, Chomsky
16. Variables for Credibility, Beach
17. The source is as important as content, Gladwell
18. Linear model of communication, Shannon
19. Interactive model,
20. Simple and surprising stories, Communication Theory
21. Provide solutions, Marketing Theory I
22. Find the right packaging, Marketing II
23. Elicit a response, Kottler
24. Translation of technology, Volkow
25. Epistemic communities
26. Policy communities
27. Advocacy coalitions etc, Pross
28. Negotiation through networks, Sebattier
29. Shadow networks, Klickert
30. Chains of accountability, Fine
31. Communication for social change, Rockefeller
32. Wheels and webs, Chapman & Fisher

www.odi.org.uk/rapid/lessons/theory
Existing theory – a short list:

- Policy narratives, Roe
- Systems of Innovation Model, (NSI)
- ‘Room for manoeuvre’, Clay & Schaffer
- ‘Street level bureaucrats’, Lipsky
- Policy as social experiments, Rondene
- Policy streams and policy windows
- Disjointed Incrementalism, Lindquist
- Social Epidemics, Gladwell

ODI working paper 174, 2002, Hovland, de Vibe and Young

Bridging Research and Policy: An Annotated Bibliography.
Reality

• Linear logical → dynamic, complex, two-way.

• “The whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents. It is not at all a matter of the rational implementation of the so-called decisions through selected strategies”¹

• “Most policy research on African agriculture is irrelevant to agricultural and overall economic policy in Africa”²

¹ - Clay & Schaffer (1984), Room for Manoeuvre; An Exploration of Public Policy in Agricultural and Rural Development, Heineman Educational Books, London
The Analytical Framework

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

The political context –
political and economic structures and processes, culture, institutional pressures, incremental vs radical change etc.

The links between policy and research communities – networks, relationships, power, competing discourses, trust, knowledge etc.

The evidence – credibility, the degree it challenges received wisdom, research approaches and methodology, simplicity of the message, how it is packaged etc.
Political Context: Key Areas

• The macro political context (democracy, governance, media freedom; academic freedom)

• The sector / issue process (*Policy uptake = demand – contestation*) [NB Demand: political and societal]

• How policymakers think (narratives & policy streams)

• Policy implementation and practice (bureaucracies, incentives, street level, room for manoeuvre, participatory approaches)

• Decisive moments in the policy process (policy processes, votes, policy windows and crises)

• Context is crucial, but you can maximize your chances
Evidence: Relevance and credibility

- Key factor – did it provide a solution to a problem?
- Relevance:
  - Topical relevance – What to do?
  - Operational usefulness – How to do it?
- Credibility:
  - Research approach
  - Of researcher > of evidence itself
- Strenuous advocacy efforts are often needed
- Communication
Links: Feedback and Networks

• Feedback processes often prominent in successful cases.
• Trust & legitimacy
• Networks:
  – Epistemic communities
  – Policy networks
  – Advocacy coalitions
• The role of individuals: connectors, mavens and salesmen
External Influence

• Big “incentives” can spur evidence-based policy – e.g. EU accession, PRSP processes.
• And some interesting examples of donors trying new things re. supporting research
• But, we really don’t know whether and how donors can best promote use of evidence in policymaking (credibility vs backlash)
Framework: Key Questions for WLI

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

**The political context** –
political and economic structures and processes, culture, institutional pressures, incremental vs radical change etc.

**The links** between policy and research communities – networks, relationships, power, competing discourses, trust, knowledge etc.

**The evidence** – credibility, the degree it challenges received wisdom, research approaches and methodology, simplicity of the message, how it is packaged etc.
Political Context: Key Questions for WLI

- What are the main policy issues in water and livelihoods policy in India?
- Who are the key players?
- What is the policy process – is it transparent and predictable?
- Are new policy directions implemented?
- What are the barriers to policy change?
- Which other political issues affect research-policy links?
Evidence: Key Questions for WLI

- What is the evidence to support better approaches?
- Is it credible?
- Is the evidence contested? Does the research community agree on the policy conclusions?
- Is it operationally useful?
- How do researchers communicate their results?
- What could be improved?
- What kind of evidence convinces policymakers in this area?
Links: Key Questions for WLI

- What types of intermediaries are involved in this sector (media, NGOs)?
- What is their impact?
- Do researchers use them?
- Are there different intermediaries in different areas?
- What networks are useful?
- How to build trust and legitimacy?
External Influences: WLI Key Questions

• What external influences affect research-policy links in the water sector in India?

• What is the impact of donor funding policies within the sector?

• Which donors have impact?

• How is donor-funded evidence viewed – by policymakers and by different groups within the local population (with suspicion or as credible)?
The Analytical Framework

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**The links** between policy and research communities – networks, relationships, power, competing discourses, trust, knowledge etc.

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

1. Ideal model

2. Daisy-chain model

3. Islands model

4. Technocratic model

5. Ivory tower model
The Analytical Framework

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Socio-economic and cultural influences, donor policies etc

The political context – political and economic structures and processes, culture, institutional pressures, incremental vs radical change etc.

The links between policy and research communities – networks, relationships, power, competing discourses, trust, knowledge etc.

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A Practical Framework

External Influences

- Campaigning, Lobbying
- Scientific information, exchange & validation

Politics and Policymaking

- Media, Advertising, Networking
- Research, learning & thinking
- Policy analysis, & research

Political context

links
evidence
Using the framework

• **The external environment:** Who are the key actors? What is their agenda? How do they influence the political context?

• **The political context:** Is there political interest in change? Is there room for manoeuvre? How do they perceive the problem?

• **The evidence:** Is it there? Is it relevant? Is it practically useful? Are the concepts familiar or new? Does it need re-packaging?

• **Links:** Who are the key individuals? Are there existing networks to use? How best to transfer the information? The media? Campaigns?
## Putting it into practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What researchers need to know</th>
<th>What researchers need to do</th>
<th>How to do it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Context:</strong></td>
<td>• Get to know the policymakers.</td>
<td>• Work with them – seek commissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who are the policymakers?</td>
<td>• Identify friends and foes.</td>
<td>• Strategic opportunism – prepare for known events + resources for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there demand for ideas?</td>
<td>• Prepare for policy opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is the policy process?</td>
<td>• Look out for policy windows.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence</strong></td>
<td>• Establish credibility</td>
<td>• Build a reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the current theory?</td>
<td>• Provide practical solutions</td>
<td>• Action-research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the narratives?</td>
<td>• Establish legitimacy.</td>
<td>• Pilot projects to generate legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How divergent is it?</td>
<td>• Present clear options</td>
<td>• Good communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Links</strong></td>
<td>• Get to know the others</td>
<td>• Build partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who are the stakeholders?</td>
<td>• Work through existing networks.</td>
<td>• Identify key networkers, mavens and salesmen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What networks exist?</td>
<td>• Build coalitions.</td>
<td>• Use informal contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who are the connectors, mavnens and salesmen?</td>
<td>• Build new policy networks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Paravets in Kenya

1970s
- Professionalisation of Public Services.
- Structural Adjustment → collapse.
- Paravet projects emerge.

1980s
- ITDG projects.
- Privatisation.
- ITDG Paravet network.

1990s
- Rapid spread in North.

2000s
- Multistakeholder WSs → new policies.
- Still not approved / passed!
Paravets in Kenya - political context

- **1970s**
  - Professionalisation of Public Services.
  - Structural Adjustment → collapse of services.
  - Paravet projects emerge.

- **1980s**
  - ITDG projects.
  - Privatisation and change of DVS.
  - ITDG Paravet network and change of DVS.

- **1990s**
  - Rapid spread in North.

- **2000s**
  - Multistakeholder WSs → new policies.
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Paravets in Kenya - Research

**1970s**
- Professionalisation of Public Services.
- Structural Adjustment → collapse of services.
- Paravet projects emerge.

**1980s**
- ITDG projects – collaborative action research.
- Privatisation and change of DVS.
- ITDG Paravet network and change of DVS.

**1990s**
- Rapid spread in North.

**2000s**
- Multistakeholder WSs → new policies.
- Still not approved / passed!

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International Research

The Hubl Study
DELIVERI Project - Indonesia

• 5-year DFID-funded programme to make livestock service more responsive to the needs of the poor

• Action-research. 5 components:
  – Pilot projects
  – Institutional Development
  – HRD
  – Total Quality Management
  – Information & influence

• Astonishingly successful – why?
Success factors

• Designed for policy influence – at the right time.
• Approach – participatory action-research, with all stakeholders.
• Marketing / Communication strategy.
• Luck – economic crisis caused a political crisis.
• Ready to seize the policy window.
• Flexible, opportunistic.
Other sources of information:

http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid