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# MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

*How can funders encourage more  
effective research communication?*

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**FINAL REPORT (draft)**

Based on a Workshop held at the Institute of  
Development Studies  
16-18 October 2006

December 2006

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## Preface

This Report is the main output of a Workshop that was held in October 2006 to ask the question “**How can funders encourage more effective research communication?**” The Workshop, which was funded by DFID and IDRC, and hosted by IDS, brought together invited participants drawn from the following three groups:

- **Research funders:** international agencies, foundations, and research councils involved in funding development research.
- **Research organisations & networks** from around the world involved in carrying out research, and with an interest in effective research communication.
- **Knowledge intermediaries** involved in communicating research.

To feed into the Workshop a Background Paper was produced to map out the issues, record the status quo in terms of current policies and approaches, and help to frame the discussion. It drew on a combination of desk research and a series of three parallel e-mail surveys carried out over the summer, targeted at these three different groups of participants. This Final Report is based closely on the Background Paper, but includes an additional final section summarising the Workshop discussions. The Executive Summary has also been updated to reflect the overall conclusions from the background study and the Workshop.

This report was put together by **Geoff Barnard**, Head of Information at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), and **Liz Carlile**, Director of Communications at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). The survey was managed and the results compiled by **Deepayan Basu Ray**, from IDS, who has previously worked for both the GNet and id21 initiatives.

The authors would like to thank all those who contributed to the survey and the Workshop. We would also like to express our gratitude to the following colleagues who reviewed the Background Paper in draft form: Andrew Barnett, Joanne Carpenter, Andrew Chetley, Ingie Hovland, Caroline Knowles, Dylan Winder, Jean Woo and John Young. And, finally, we appreciate the support from Alison Norwood and Carol Smithyes in helping with the production of the report and the Workshop website ([www.ids.ac.uk/research-comms](http://www.ids.ac.uk/research-comms)).

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## Executive Summary

1. The premise behind the Workshop was that effective communication is crucial in maximising the impact of development research, but that thinking and practice needs to be strengthened substantially for this to happen in a more systematic way. **The key hypothesis** was that research funders have a critical role to play in encouraging this.
2. Participants agreed with this analysis, although there are differing views on how funders can play this role most effectively, and on what is appropriate in different contexts.
3. There is a growing body of literature analysing the connections between research, policy and practice. This stresses the complexity of these connections and the importance of moving beyond the simple linear model where communication is seen a one-way 'dissemination' process that happens at the end of a research project.
4. Recent thinking highlights the importance of seeing communication as a two-way process, with researchers engaging with stakeholders and being much more imaginative and proactive in how they communicate their findings. Different approaches are needed to reach different groups, so drawing up a communication strategy early on in a project is an essential step. Working with the media and other knowledge intermediaries can be an important part of such a strategy, as both can play a very useful multiplier role.
5. Gearing up their communication efforts is a big challenge for research institutes. It requires an injection of resources and specialist skills. It also involves changes in priorities, attitudes and incentive systems. If taken seriously, it can transform the way researchers conceive and carry out their research.
6. There are many things that research funders can do to encourage more effective communication. Providing additional funding for communication work is part of this, and there are a variety of ways this can be done. Equally importantly, funders can help to change incentive systems by making it clear that they expect researchers to pay more attention to communication issues, and checking to make sure that they do.
7. Funders can go further than this, supporting research communication in other ways and helping to open up their own organisations to engage more actively with researchers, and take research ideas on board.
8. Gearing up research communication is not without its risks and downsides. If stakeholders get heavily involved in setting research agendas, questions can arise over the independence of research. Controversial research findings can also elicit strong responses, making communication a delicate business in some contexts.
9. Demonstrating the impact of research is seen as a high priority by many, though a difficult one to deliver on. Studying how communication between various players really happens will be an important part of making progress in this area, and in assessing the effectiveness of different communication approaches.
10. The Workshop underlined how funders, researchers and knowledge intermediaries have a lot to gain by working together, especially if they are willing to share problems as well as successes. The frank and open nature of the Workshop was particularly appreciated.
11. It was agreed that this agenda needs to be taken forward and championed. Further, more focused, events should be organised, starting with a meeting or research donors in Paris in April 2007. Suggested themes for further meetings included capacity building, open access archiving, and intellectual property rights issues.

# 1: Introduction

## **Background**

A great deal of research is carried out each year on subjects that are directly relevant to policy and practice in international development.<sup>1</sup> But how much of that gets to make a difference? Most would agree that the answer is 'not enough'. Too much research stays within the confines of the academic community that produces it, and is locked away in reports and articles that are only read by a handful of specialists.

So what can research funders do to change this? They are key stakeholders in the research process, and not just because they control the funding levers. Many are also important development players in their own right. At different times they may be the subject of research, target audiences for it, or collaborators in spreading its results. This puts funders in an interesting and potentially influential position.

There seems to be growing momentum around research communication<sup>2</sup>. The idea of holding the Workshop emerged from conversations with a number of funding agencies and research organisations who feel this is an opportune time to bring interested parties together to explore the question **“how can funders encourage more effective research communication?”**

The focus was on the specific role research funders can play, not on the practical or theoretic aspects of 'how to do research communication'. While these aspects are covered in outline in this Paper, the intention is to put the discussion in context rather than trying to provide a definitive analysis of the various theories and approaches. The reading list, and links in the various points throughout the text, highlight more detailed sources for those wishing to delve more deeply.

## **Workshop Objectives**

The objectives of the Workshop were to:

- Share perspectives on the challenges involved in effective research communication.
- Exchange experience among research funders on how they have provided incentives to encourage more effective communications, what they have done themselves to promote better communications, and what impact this has had.
- Hear from research organisations and knowledge intermediaries about how they have gone about gearing up their communications efforts, the challenges and constraints they have faced, and the role of funders and other networks in supporting this work.
- Build momentum for change so expectations are raised on all sides on what can and should be done so research has more of an impact on development, and develop concrete follow-up plans for moving this agenda forward, including considering opportunities for better collaboration between funders in this area.

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<sup>1</sup> The boundaries of what constitutes 'research' and 'international development' are hard to pin down. The expression 'development research', is used here as a convenient umbrella term rather than a precise definition. We take it to cover a broad spectrum, from theoretical work through to practical action research, and spanning the full range of academic disciplines including social and natural sciences, technology and innovation.

<sup>2</sup> We also define 'research communication' broadly to include all kinds of communication and dialogue occurring at different stages of the research process, not just one-way 'dissemination' of final results.

## 2: Setting the Scene

### *The development research sector*

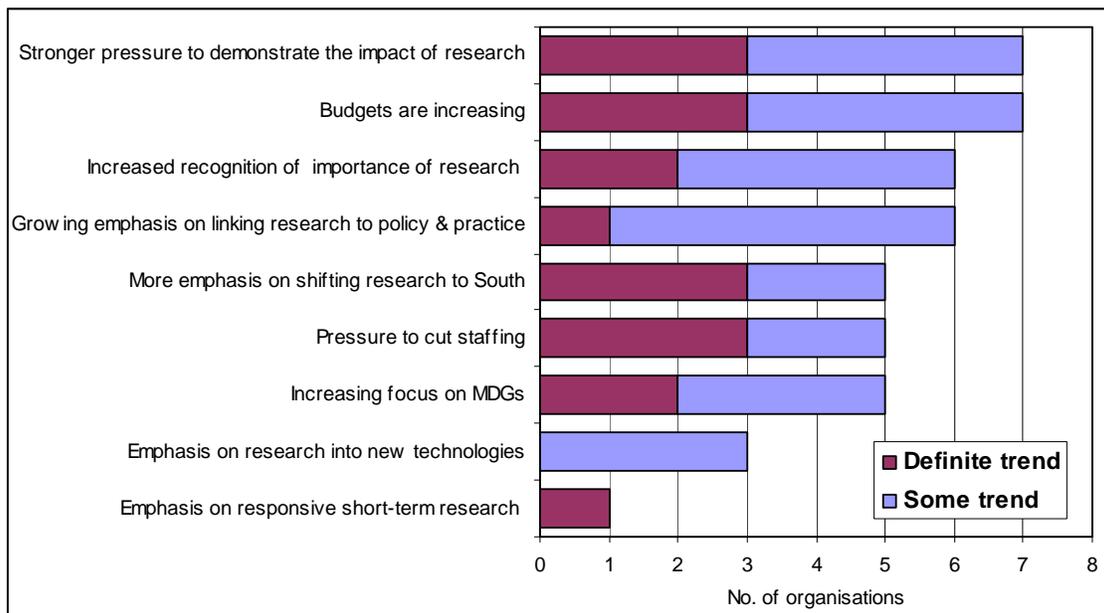
Substantial resources are being devoted each year to development research. Between them, the funders attending the Workshop spend more than 430 Million Euros annually on this. If other large funders such as the European Union and the big US foundations are included, the total would be substantially higher, especially given the recent increase in funding for global health research.

There are a great many organisations involved in development research of one kind or another. It is a large and diverse sector including organisations big and small, some focusing exclusively on development issues and others, such as universities, including it as part of a wider mandate. As an indication of the size of the sector, the GDNet website includes profiles of over 3300 organisations around the world working on aspects of social and economic development. In Europe, the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) has over 160 institutions and networks as members, while a recent mapping study found a similar number of organisations publishing research on international development in the UK alone.<sup>3</sup>

### *Current trends*

Workshop participants were asked to identify current trends within the development research sector. Figure 1 presents the feedback from research funders.

**Figure 1: Current Trends According to Research Funders**



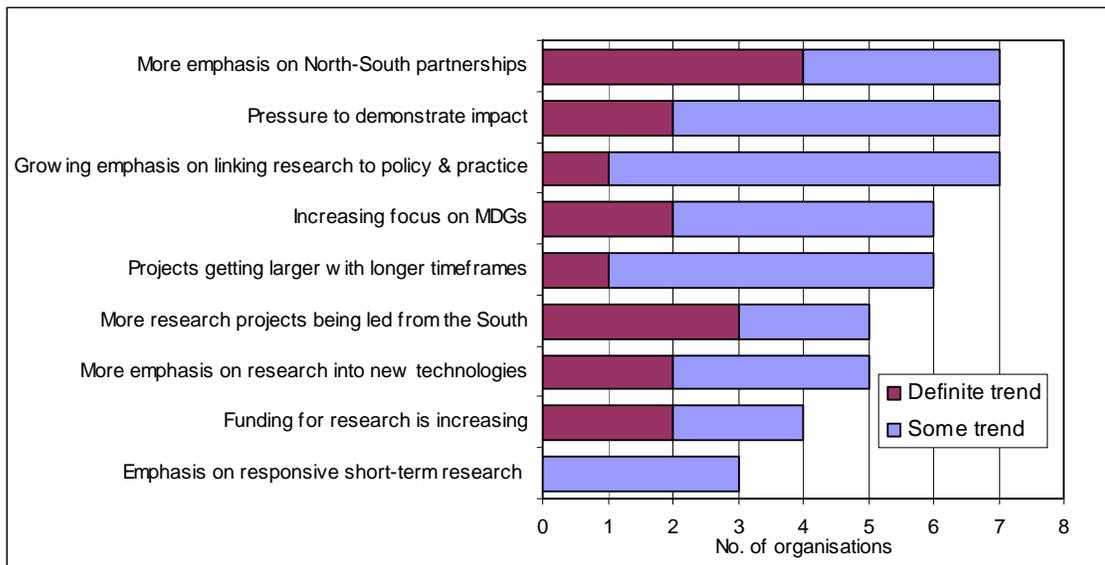
Note: Total number of responses = 9 Details can be found in Annex A

<sup>3</sup> Mapping development research among UK organisations and their partners. Report to ESRC. June 2006. L. Haddad, H. Rowsell, C. Gee, J. Lindstrom, and M. Bloom, Brighton: IDS.

It was notable that seven of the nine respondents stated there is pressure to demonstrate impact of research. Seven also said that budgets for development research are increasing. Six noted an increased recognition of the importance of research as a tool for development, or mentioned a growing emphasis on linking research to policy and practice in their own organisation or in the countries where they work. Five reported more emphasis of shifting research to the South or an increasing focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Significantly, five funders also commented that they are facing pressure to cut the number of staff involved in managing research funds.

Research organisations and networks were asked a related set of questions, and their responses are summarised in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Current Trends According to Research Organisations**



*Note: Total number of responses = 7 Details can be found in Annex A*

The most commonly noted trends were the greater emphasis on North-South partnerships, the pressure to demonstrate impact, and the growing emphasis on linking research to policy and practice. Four organisations, three based in the UK and one African network, commented that funding available for development research is increasing, while two others reported this trend to be in the opposite direct. Funding availability clearly depends on where you are sitting.

## **Research objectives**

The reasons why funders support development research vary and, while overlapping, are not identical. The Background Survey provides a snapshot of how the funders attending the Workshop see their objectives (see Annex A for details):

- All are aiming to have an impact on development policy or practice at some level, though there is different emphasis on the relative importance of affecting policy versus practice.

- Some see the generation of original and high quality academic research (suitable for publication in peer reviewed journals) as key motivators, but for others this is subsidiary to other goals.
- There are also different weightings given to where funders are keenest to see an impact - within their own country, the international development community, or in the South. Several regard feeding into policy-making within their own organisations as priorities.
- Creating new technologies that can be scaled up and applied in the South is a high priority for some funders, but less so for others.
- Many emphasise building research capacity in the South as a very important objective.
- Some also see building research capacity in their own country as very important.
- There may be contradictions between different funding objectives, for example between achieving high academic quality and supporting the longer-term process of research capacity building.

Organisations involved in research also define their objectives differently so have different views on what 'impact' is. A Northern-based policy think tank, for example, will define what it is trying to achieve very differently from a non-governmental group conducting action research at the community level. So it important to recognise this diversity and not over-generalise about what research is, or what it is for.

## ***The Importance of research communication***

Whatever the reasons for carrying out development research, good communications is likely to be essential in maximising its impact. While this is probably self-evident to many, there is growing recognition that more needs to be done to make sure this happens more systematically. The Background Survey reinforced this message. For nearly everyone attending the workshop improving research communication is either already high on their agenda, or is seen as an increasing priority. Three organisations said that while it is on their agenda, they are not sure how to take it forward.

The caricature of the researcher cut off in the academic 'ivory tower', writing in obscure language, and communicating only with a small circle of subject specialists, is probably less prevalent in the development sector than in some others. But most would agree that communication is not being given the emphasis it needs, and in far too many cases is still a hasty end-of-project activity, rather than being integral to the whole research process.<sup>4</sup>

The implication is that a great deal of research funding and a lot of effort on the part of researchers is failing to have the impact that it might. At one level this can be seen as a waste of time and resources; more importantly, it is missed opportunity to make a real contribution to development.

Research funders have a strong interest in maximising the relevance and impact of the research they fund. Most development researchers are also driven by commitment to make a difference. And the organisations they work for know that they need to be

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<sup>4</sup> The weakness of research communications has been repeatedly highlighted in reviews of research effectiveness carried out by DFID and other funders. See for example Surr et al (2002) *Research for Poverty Reduction*, DFID Research Policy Paper, London: DFID.

seen to be both visible and effective if they are to attract funding in the longer term. So all sides have an incentive to do better to improve research communication.

**The key hypothesis** behind this Workshop was that research funders have a critical role to play in making sure this happens, one that has not received the attention it deserves up to now.

**The key question** was how can research funders play this role most effectively, and how can they work with research organisations, knowledge intermediaries, and others to ensure that the potential contribution of research to development is maximised?

## ***How does research have an impact?***

In thinking about research communication it is helpful to have a framework or mental model of how research fits within the wider world, and how it connects to policy and practice. There is a substantial literature on communications from the business sector and elsewhere that analyses how communications works in influencing change. Box 1 highlights one of the fundamental points of marketing communication that just because you have something to say does not mean that your target audience is listening, or will do anything about it even if they have heard your message.

### ***Box 1: Lessons from Marketing***

One of the early marketing models, **Action, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA)**, has been adapted here as it provides a quick snapshot to illustrate what is involved in getting messages (including research messages) through to intended audiences. While too simplistic and linear if viewed as a step-by-step process, it is useful if seen as operating in a continuing loop or cycle of engagement.

- **Attention** – we are working in a very crowded competitive situation. If someone is not actively looking for your information how do you attract enough attention to be heard? Your messages need to cut through the noise of all the other influences and information that your target audience is receiving. What makes you stand out from the crowd? Why is your information trusted above all others?
- **Interest** - your target audience needs to be primed and ready to hear what you have to say. If they are already interested or engaged they will be in the right frame of mind to absorb the information. Stakeholder engagement, dialogue and buy-in is essential. If the stakeholder community or beneficiaries of the research are not engaged the information flow stops here.
- **Desire** – to go further than merely receiving information, the audience has to have a desire to do something with it. Information needs to lead to a perceived tangible benefit – perhaps an easy political win – or it has to be closely aligned with their current agenda.
- **Action** – being sure that the target group has received and heard the messages is not enough. It will not necessarily prompt action. People may not have the power to take action, or they may be inhibited for a range of other reasons. We may need to suggest what action to take or listen to what actions they think are required.

*Source: Liz Carlile adapted from the AIDA model developed by Lavidge and Steiner (1961)*

In the development sector, too, there is now a growing body of work exploring the impact of research. There are a number of strands within this. In the agriculture sector there is long standing literature on how innovations such as new crop varieties get taken up, or ignored, by farmers. Similarly, there has been a lot of work on how research-based health interventions do or do not lead to behaviour change. In the area of social and economic research, interest in tracking the connections between

research and policy change has also been growing in recent years, so there is now quite a rich vein of case study evidence and thinking to go on.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the main theoretical frameworks or approaches that have emerged from this literature are summarised in Table 1. Coming from different backgrounds they have their own perspectives and terminologies. What stands out in comparing the more recent thinking is that:

- All stress the complexity of the connections linking research to policy and practice. The simple linear model where research results are disseminated to target audiences who then assimilate this new knowledge, and act upon it, is rejected as far too simplistic. The world is more complicated than that, and research is just one of many competing factors influencing policy decisions and changes in practice.
- All emphasise the importance of identifying the different players or stakeholders involved and trying to understand their different interests and perspectives. This is a fundamental step in appreciating the dynamics and complexity of the change process.
- Most stress the importance of personal contacts and networks and argue that these are crucial in establishing trust and legitimacy and building consensus around new ideas.
- Some have a more political focus and emphasise that researchers are not neutral actors but are themselves embedded in power structures that influence how they and their work are perceived by others. This can have a big effect on who sets the agenda and who frames the whole terms of the debate.
- Communications is fundamental to all of them, either implicitly or explicitly. All stress the importance of engaging with stakeholders as early as possible in the research process and communicating in a language they can understand.

The different frameworks have their own strengths and weaknesses and none would claim to have universal relevance. Nor would they profess to offer any simple formulae for guaranteeing research impact. They do, however, help in putting research communications in context and in setting expectations about what research can realistically achieve, especially in the short term<sup>6</sup>. They also provide a reminder not to expect easy answers to questions like *'how can I assess the impact of research?'*

Most of these frameworks are relatively new and while some have been developed into practical guidelines and toolkits<sup>7</sup> none are yet in very widespread or systematic use. Thinking and practice have undoubtedly come a long way in the past ten years, with many excellent examples of innovative and proactive communication approaches being built into research projects. It is probably fair to say, however, that the majority of the development research being carried out today is still being conducted with fairly simplistic assumptions on how research has an impact, usually based around the standard linear model. If communications is considered at all, it is usually seen in terms of one-way 'dissemination' of results, rather than a more complex multi-

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<sup>5</sup> A recent paper by Healthlink Worldwide neatly summarises many the key issues and current research in this area – see R. Vincent (2006)

<sup>6</sup> In their enthusiasm to justify its importance, there is understandable danger of researchers and research funders 'colluding' in overstating the likely short and medium-term impact of research.

<sup>7</sup> Several of these are listed in the Further Reading section.

directional process of communication, engagement, and dialogue. Clearly, there is much to do in raising the standard, thoughtfulness and effectiveness of research communication.

**Table 1: Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding the Impact of Research on Policy and Practice**

<b>Framework</b>	<b>Key features</b>	<b>Ref.</b>
Classic knowledge driven model	Suggests a liner sequence in which research generates knowledge that impels action	(1)
Incrementalist models of policy change	Gradual and uneven process of small negotiated changes and upward drift as policymakers muddle through	(1)
Problem solving/engineering policy-driven model	A linear sequence starting with identification of a problem from the client who requests researchers to find solutions - used by UK Department of Health in 70s	(1)
Interactive/social interaction model	A set of interactions between researchers and users rather than a linear move from research to decisions	(1)
Percolation model	Research more likely to be used through the gradual “sedimentation” of insight, theories, concepts and perspectives	(1)
Innovation systems approach	<p>Emerged from the agriculture and natural resources sector. Switches attention from research to the process of innovation. Research is just one element of a wider process of transforming “new knowledge” into goods and services.</p> <p>Stresses importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ understanding strengths and weaknesses of systems involved</li> <li>▪ Involving a wider range of key actors and institutions - not just researchers and their institutions – needs a shift of power from a narrower to a wider set of actors</li> <li>▪ Continuous two-way communication between actors so everyone understands each others needs</li> <li>▪ The context of rules, institutions and infrastructure that constrain or facilitate innovation process</li> <li>▪ The nature of the research will change if innovation approach adopted</li> </ul>	(2)
RAPID Framework	<p>Framework for understanding research-policy links – identifies four broad sets of issues that affect how research is shaped, used, ignored or reinterpreted by policymakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Context: politics and institutions</li> <li>▪ Evidence: credibility and communication</li> <li>▪ Links: influence and legitimacy</li> <li>▪ External influences</li> </ul>	(3)
Spreading the Word	<p>Provides practical guidance for disseminating research based on some general principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research programmes should be demand driven</li> <li>▪ Identify those who are directly affected and those who need to information to help beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Involve different actors</li> <li>▪ Internal dissemination is equally important to external</li> <li>▪ Characteristics of dissemination strategy should match project objectives</li> </ul>	(4)

<b>Communication for Social Change Models</b>	<p>Used more for campaigning models for social change. Close alignment to participatory research communication. Stresses that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individuals and communities most affected must own the process and content of communication</li> <li>▪ Communication for social change should be empowering and horizontal (versus top-down)</li> <li>▪ Communities should be agents of their own change</li> <li>▪ Emphasis should shift from persuasion and transmission to dialogue and debate with negotiation</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to encompass social norms, policies and culture etc.</li> </ul>	(5)
<b>Learning Alliances</b>	<p>Emerged from the water and sanitation sector. Involves connected 'stakeholder platforms' created at key institutional levels. Designed to break down barriers to both horizontal and vertical information sharing, and speed up identification, development and uptake of innovation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopts action learning methodology</li> <li>▪ Gives attention to processes of innovation</li> <li>▪ Carries out innovation and learning with alliances of practitioners, researchers, policymakers, activists</li> </ul>	(6)

**References:**

- (1) Stephen Hannay et al (2002), *The Utilisation of Health Research in Policy Making: Concepts, Examples and Methods of Assessment*. A report to the Research Policy and Co-operation Department, HERG Research Report No 28, Geneva: WHO.
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- (6) Patrick Moriarty et al (2005) *Learning Alliances for Scaling up Innovative approaches in the Water and Sanitation sector*, International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC), Delft, The Netherlands. Background paper for CIAT/CGIAR Symposium see [http://www.irc.nl/content/download/16138/208040/file/Background\\_paper\\_symposium\\_.pdf](http://www.irc.nl/content/download/16138/208040/file/Background_paper_symposium_.pdf)

## Research communication approaches

Research communication incorporates a broad range of tools and approaches, one that is steadily expanding as new communication formats and tools become more mainstream. Table 2 sets out some of the main approaches currently in use.

**Table 2: A Summary of Research Communication Approaches**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Approaches</i>
<b>Academic communication channels</b>	The most common ways of sharing research findings within the academic community is via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ conference presentations and seminars</li> <li>▪ journal articles and academic books</li> <li>▪ incorporating research findings into teaching programmes and textbooks</li> <li>▪ research networks</li> </ul>
<b>Involving stakeholders directly</b>	Stakeholders (ranging from government ministers and parliamentarians to local farmers) can be engaged in the research process through, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ inviting them onto advisory panels and review boards</li> <li>▪ involving them directly in the research, as survey respondents, case study subjects, or action researchers</li> <li>▪ stakeholder workshops to present interim or final results</li> <li>▪ citizens' juries to debate issues arising from research</li> <li>▪ participatory research engaging grassroots communities</li> </ul>
<b>Translating research into more accessible formats</b>	Various approaches can be used to convey research issues in more easily understood formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ policy briefings</li> <li>▪ toolkits</li> <li>▪ videos, DVD</li> <li>▪ supporting in-depth journalism</li> <li>▪ theatre, dance and other audiovisual presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Electronic communication channels</b>	Information on research programmes, including interim and final results, can be made available online via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ websites</li> <li>▪ e-mail updates</li> <li>▪ online discussions and bulletin boards</li> <li>▪ weblogs (online diaries)</li> <li>▪ podcasts and other forms of downloadable audio and video files</li> </ul>
<b>Communicating via knowledge multipliers</b>	Research findings can also be spread indirectly via a range of 'knowledge multipliers' such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the media (radio, print and TV) – at international, national or community level</li> <li>▪ specialist websites and other knowledge intermediaries that pool research from different sources (see below)</li> </ul>

This is not a comprehensive list. The point is that there are many channels and approaches that can be used engage stakeholders and spread research messages. The challenge is to come up with a mix of approaches that will do the job best.

## ***The role of knowledge intermediaries***

Individual research organisations are usually the best advocates for their work and are most likely to know where the direct connections into policy and practice can be made within their own sphere of influence. But there are limits to what they can achieve on their own, particularly for smaller organisations that are not widely known. Even for big institutes with strong in-house communication units there are advantages in using other communication channels to reach out to wider audiences.

The print and broadcast media have long played this kind of ‘multiplier’ role in publicising (and sometimes critiquing) research findings, as well as being actors in their own right in widening debate and promoting accountability. Building relationships with journalists takes time and there are important skills to be learned in how to work with the media. Although there are potential pitfalls, this is still one of the most effective ways of getting research issues onto the agenda.

Over the last decade a number of new kinds of initiatives have emerged that have a specific mandate to facilitate better access to development-related knowledge, and which have a particular emphasis on research. They use a range of approaches and are aimed at slightly different audiences. Their role involves a mix of functions – mostly a combination of filtering, signposting, synthesising, repackaging, and providing easy (generally free) access to material that might be otherwise hard to find. We use the term ‘knowledge intermediaries’ here to describe them as a group.

Some of the most prominent of these organisations are attending the Workshop and Table 3 profiles their main features and the services they provide. Knowledge intermediaries of this kind have a number of intrinsic advantages when it comes to communicating research, particularly in terms of critical mass:

- They can bring together the **specialist skills and capacities** needed to handle research information well and develop a really professional service.<sup>8</sup>
- They can bring together a **wide range of material** in one place, providing the breadth, depth and consistency of coverage that individual research institutes cannot match, and helping to put research material in context. This can be a big benefit to users who are looking for information on a topic and are unsure where to start, or lack the time to scan dozens of different sources.
- By establishing a **trusted brand**, they can lend credibility to the research they feature. This is particularly important for small organisations, not least in developing countries, that are working to build up their reputation and profile.
- They can provide a degree of **independence** that users may find valuable, bringing together material from different sources and contrasting the conclusions from different studies to help users come up with a balanced view.<sup>9</sup>
- They can help to provide **continuity** in the longer term, given that research projects come and go, and often have difficulties maintaining communication efforts after the project has finished.

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<sup>8</sup> Depending on the service these include expertise in information management, publishing, editing, design, website management, print production and distribution, marketing, media work, translation, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

<sup>9</sup> There is obviously no such thing as an ‘objective’ source, since any knowledge intermediary will have some built-in biases, whether conscious or not.

**Table 3: A Profile of Some of the Leading Knowledge Intermediaries**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Main Features</b>
<p><b>ELDIS</b> www.eldis.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Managed by IDS in Brighton, UK. Fully operational website went live in 1997.</li> <li>▪ Describes itself as 'the gateway to development information' sharing 'the best in development policy, practice and research'.</li> <li>▪ Provides access to over 19,000 selected documents from 4,500 sources worldwide, each with a short jargon-free summary and a link to the full text. Also highlights news, events and jobs.</li> <li>▪ Covers a wide range of themes with a particular focus on social and economic aspects of development.</li> <li>▪ Website includes resource guides on key themes, country pages, a range of narrative guides introducing topics and comments on current debates, and a series of community pages collecting content direct from partners.</li> <li>▪ Offers subject focused e-mail newsletters and newsfeeds.</li> <li>▪ Aimed at a broad audience including development practitioners, donor agency staff, policymakers, NGOs, researchers, students, development communicators, and others.</li> <li>▪ Most of the material is in English, with some in Spanish.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GNet</b> www.gdnet.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ GNet is the 'electronic voice' of the Global Development Network (GDN). Started by the World Bank, GDN is now an independent organisation with the aim of 'generating, sharing and applying research for development'.</li> <li>▪ The GNet website went live in 2001 and is now managed by the GDN team in Cairo, having originally been developed and hosted by IDS. It still has close links with Eldis including arrangements for sharing content.</li> <li>▪ Focus is on social and economic research. Website offers profiles of researchers, research organisations and research papers, showcasing in particular the work of researchers in developing countries.</li> <li>▪ Has a series of 'regional windows' managed by GDN's regional networks, plus several email newsletters.</li> <li>▪ Offers funding alerts and free access to journals, plus data and library resources, to developing country researchers that register and submit a profile.</li> <li>▪ Also plays a communication capacity building role, offering toolkits and running workshops.</li> <li>▪ The website is mainly in English, with English summaries provided for documents in other languages.</li> </ul>
<p><b>id21</b> www.id21.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Managed by IDS in Brighton, UK. Website went live in 1998.</li> <li>▪ Funded by DFID with a specific mandate to 'communicate development research' to decision-makers and practitioners worldwide.</li> <li>▪ Originally focused on social and economic research; now covers the full spectrum of development topics.</li> <li>▪ Provides 500 word summaries of selected research outputs, written for non-specialists.</li> <li>▪ Has a strong policy focus – the emphasis is on highlighting the policy implications of research.</li> <li>▪ Publishes 10 issues of <i>id21 Insights</i> each year, each focusing on a topical research theme. These are distributed in print to a mailing list of over 20,000, more than half in developing countries.</li> <li>▪ Produces a series of subject-focused e-mail alerts.</li> <li>▪ The main emphasis is on UK-funded research, or work involving UK researchers.</li> <li>▪ Material is mainly in English, with some French and Spanish translations of <i>id21 Insights</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>SciDev.Net</b> www.scidev.net</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Website went live in 2001. SciDev.Net now set up as a non-profit company/charity in the UK.</li> <li>▪ Aims to provide reliable and authoritative information about science and technology for the developing world.</li> <li>▪ Offers e-mail alerts and newsfeeds in addition to the website.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Covers news, views and information on science and technology, including latest research.</li> <li>▪ Aimed at a broad audience including scientist, journalists, decision-makers and development workers</li> <li>▪ Much of the material written by science journalists.</li> <li>▪ Website includes policy-oriented 'dossiers' on key issues, regional 'gateways', editorials, book reviews, opinion pieces, features, jobs, news and other content. .</li> <li>▪ Has a networking role and organises training workshops.</li> <li>▪ Material in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b> <a href="http://www.asksource.info">www.asksource.info</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based in London, a collaboration between Healthlink Worldwide, the Centre for International Child Health and Handicap International.</li> <li>▪ Aims to be a key point of access to up-to-date, relevant information on international health and disability. Supports the dissemination, repackaging and sharing of information on the topic.</li> <li>▪ Comprises a physical collection of print documents with searchable databases of bibliographic records (including online sources), newsletters and journals, and organisational contacts.</li> <li>▪ Provides 'key lists' of recommended sources on different topics.</li> <li>▪ Offers 'what's new' e-mail updates, newfeeds, and material on CDRom.</li> <li>▪ Provides capacity building support to other resource centres, including practical toolkits.</li> </ul>
<b>Relay</b> <a href="http://www.panos.org">www.panos.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Established in 2004 and implemented in partnership between Panos London, Panos Eastern Africa, Panos Southern Africa and Panos South Asia. Evolved out of an earlier joint initiative with id21.</li> <li>▪ Works with Southern radio and print journalists and radio stations to communicate research through features, reports and on-air discussions which target public audiences primarily in the South.</li> <li>▪ Aims to popularise academic research on critical development issues facing the south; and build the capacity of southern journalists to identify research related stories and engage with research in a critical, stimulating and accessible manner.</li> <li>▪ Offers fellowships and training to print and radio journalists and works to establish sustainable networks of researchers and journalists in three regions of the world.</li> <li>▪ Produces briefing documents for journalists on key research topics and guides for researchers on how to engage with the media.</li> </ul>
<b>PERI</b> <a href="http://www.inasp.info/peri">www.inasp.info/peri</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) is run by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), based in Oxford, UK. It started as a pilot in 2000.</li> <li>▪ Supports capacity building in the research sector in developing and transitional countries by strengthening the production, access and dissemination of information and knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Provides online access to international scholarly literature, including 14,500 full-text online journals.</li> <li>▪ Negotiates country-wide licences with publishers, providing free access to educational, research and non-profit organisations. Range of resources available free of charge depend on the country. Others are available at a substantial discount.</li> <li>▪ Information provision aimed primarily at researchers. Strong involvement of libraries in coordinating the programme at the country level.</li> <li>▪ Also supports scholarly publishing in developing countries, collaboration and networking, capacity building in using and managing electronic resources and tools, and research on related challenges.</li> </ul>
<b>HINARI, AGORA, OARE</b> <a href="http://www.who.int/hinari">www.who.int/hinari</a> <a href="http://www.aginter-network.org">www.aginter-network.org</a> <a href="http://www.oare-sciences.org">www.oare-sciences.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HINARI was launched in 2002 as a public-private partnership sponsored by WHO involving many of the leading commercial publishers. Provides free or very low-cost online access to a wide range of biomedical and related journals.</li> <li>▪ AGORA was launched as a sister initiative led by FAO in 2003, covering food and agriculture. A consortium led by UNEP launched OARE to cover environmental journals in 2006.</li> <li>▪ Aimed at non-profit institutions including universities, research and training institutes, government offices, national libraries, etc.</li> <li>▪ Access is free in countries with GNP/capita less than US\$1000. Institutions in countries with GNP/capita between US\$1000-3000 pay need to pay a subscription of US\$1000 per year.</li> </ul>

## ***Building a communication strategy***

A certain amount of communication is bound to happen in the course of carrying out the work and through the normal professional interactions that take place within research circles. Sometimes research gets picked up and can prove influential without any intervention by communication experts and no special effort on the part of the researcher. But experience shows that this process is decidedly random and haphazard. Publishing research through conventional academic channels may be enough to get it into the public domain and to establish the professional reputation of the researchers and institutes involved, and the importance of this is not to be underestimated. But this is not enough to maximise the impact of that research or the influence of the organisations carrying it out. This requires a more thoughtful and strategic approach.

There is now a growing base of experience on how to construct an effective research communication strategy, and a number of toolkits and guidelines providing advice on this.<sup>10</sup> These tend to stress a number of common factors:

- **Communications thinking needs to be built in at the start** of the research process, not tacked on at the end.
- **Involving key stakeholders** in the research process, preferably at the stage of formulating research questions, and maintaining these links throughout the life cycle of the project. This helps to ensure the relevance of the research, builds trust, and draws in potential allies who may be able to assist in communicating and applying the results.
- A **stakeholder mapping exercise** can help greatly in identifying key players, and prompting thinking on how best they can be engaged or reached. The more specific this is, the more targeted the communication strategy can be. This might include well-placed journalists or commentators, as well as policymakers and other more directly involved stakeholders.
- It is also helpful to **map out key policy processes and decision points** happening within the environment you are trying to influence to identify possible points of intervention, and construct a calendar of events so you know when is the best time to make that input.
- **Involve research partners in developing the strategy.** With more and more research programmes being based around multi-country consortia, it makes sense to draw on the ideas, networks and skills of all the partners in coming up with an integrated communication strategy. The process of drawing up a joint strategy can also be a useful exercise in building trust within the consortium.
- **A mix of communication approaches** will almost always be needed to maximise impact, since no one approach will reach all the audiences. Research messages will also come across more strongly if reinforced by being heard through different channels.
- **Time and resources need to be set aside** to do communications well. Budgets for outputs and events need to be ring-fenced, but probably more importantly the time required to follow through on communications work needs to be recognised and set aside.
- **Specialist skills** are needed for some communications tasks, and especially in drawing up a communication strategy. Some researchers are natural

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<sup>10</sup> See the list of guidelines and toolkits in the Further Reading section.

communicators and others can pick up these skills if they motivated to do so. But often it is helpful to build a team that includes experienced people with a background in this area. Depending on the situation, a combination of in-house staff, freelance consultants and specialist communication partners may be needed to do the job well.

In developing a communication strategy it is important to recognise that what is appropriate and feasible depends very much on the circumstances. Not all research has direct practical and policy implications. For some theoretical or conceptual work it is entirely appropriate to concentrate on conventional academic publishing channels. In other cases, perfectly good research may prove to be inconclusive, in which case widespread communication may not be merited. Clearly an intelligent balance is needed, with communication efforts being focused where they are most needed and most likely to have an impact.

## ***Challenges and trade-offs***

Coming up with a detailed communication strategy is a substantial task, and quite a daunting one for organisations that have not done this before. But it is just the first step. Implementing the strategy requires an ongoing commitment of time, energy and resources, and can involve difficult trade-offs and challenges, some of which we now explore.

### *Creating strong communication teams*

Developing and implementing an ambitious communication strategy needs good teamwork between researchers, communication specialists and others involved. This is not always easy, for a number of reasons:

- **Control:** researchers may have understandable worries about losing control of how their findings are represented since they feel their professional reputation and career advancement may be at stake. Working with communications staff involves a degree of compromise and negotiation on how material is presented and how messages are simplified, and this can be difficult for researchers who are unhappy about 'letting go'.
- **Legitimacy:** Researchers and communicators work in different ways. Good researchers tend to be analytical and evidence based, whereas good communicators are generally more intuitive and experience based. In a research environment where academic qualifications are valued more than the ability to communicate well, professional communicators can sometimes struggle to be taken seriously by colleagues.
- **Trust:** as with any cross-disciplinary team, to work well together researchers and communicators need to trust each other and respect each others' skill sets. This takes time and organisational space for it to develop. It is an area where senior staff can play an important role in setting the tone.

### *Tensions between good research and good communications*

A good research programme demands a great deal of focus and attention. This is especially the case with large multi-partner consortia, where the management challenges of knitting together a dispersed team of researchers can be very demanding. Even with the best will in the world, communication has a tendency to drop off the agenda given all the other issues to consider.

Embedding communication staff within research programmes is perhaps the best way of guarding against this. It helps to ensure there is always a communications voice at the table, and can take the pressure off the project manager having to be responsible for the communications work themselves. It only works, however, if the communication staff involved have the experience, seniority and support to be proactive in their role. There are many research programmes where the communications job is given to a secretary or junior administrator, and while this can help in dealing with routine communication work it puts the pressure back on the research manager to drive and coordinate the process.

## *Incentives*

One of the widely acknowledged barriers to engaging researchers in communication work is that incentives systems are often stacked against it. In most research organisations, professional advancement and peer recognition is still tied primarily to academic performance, particularly success in getting material published in peer reviewed books and journals. Research institutes as a whole face the same pressures if their funding is assessed based largely on the same narrow academic criteria. Few would argue that academic quality is not absolutely essential in maintaining the standard and credibility of research. But there is no doubt that an exclusive emphasis on this one aspect of performance does get in the way of taking a broader view of what research is for and how its value should be measured. Busy researchers are always having to make decisions on how to juggle their time. If finishing a journal article is always seen as a higher priority than, say, taking part in a stakeholder workshop, the status quo will be perpetuated and communication with non-academic audiences will never get the attention it needs.

These are deeply embedded tendencies which are part of the whole research culture and ethos (see Box 2, which refers to the reluctance of US climate change researchers to communicate more widely). Change is possible, however, and indeed is happening in those research organisations that have grasped this as a priority. Senior management, board members, and others in leadership positions can help to shift this culture over a period of time by demonstrating their commitment to a broader view of what constitutes 'effective research', and by building this into their recruitment and performance review procedures. Research funders can also play a key role in shifting incentives, as we will discuss below.

### ***Box 2: The problem of incentives***

*"What are the incentives of academic scientists to propagate their findings through society? Scientists are rewarded largely for success in specialized research and for communicating what they learn to their peers. Their most striking findings trickle out to a wider audience, but the scientific community, by and large, is a rarefied, walled-off world. Peers are the source of professional esteem, of reviewers for one's journal articles, and of the kind of dialogue and collaborative insights that can be critical to research breakthroughs. Given their proximity to this incentive-rich network of colleagues, most scientists resist diverting time to communicating with the media or the public, or injecting their expertise into the policy fray on issues like climate change. Most are also sensitive to reputational risks from being seen as too eager to gain public attention, or from extending beyond the secure core of their knowledge base amidst policy crossfire. Before presuming that these tendencies should change, it is important to recognize that many regard them as crucial to the success and credibility of objective science".*

From Daniel Abbasi (2006), *Americans and Climate Change: Closing the Gap Between Science and Action*, New Haven: Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

## *Budget pressures*

Communication work costs money. Given the constraints on research funding there are always trade-offs to consider in allocating project or institute resources to communications work. Finding the most cost-effective way of making an impact is therefore a key part of devising a realistic communication strategy. But if research organisations and research funders are to take communications seriously they will need to get used to devoting a larger proportion of the budget to communications work.

There is no easy formula for what the right percentage is.<sup>11</sup> DFID has taken a lead on this and its new research guidelines specify that a minimum of 10 per cent of research grants should be spent on communications. Some research programmes have gone well beyond this. The Citizenship DRC,<sup>12</sup> for example, managed by IDS, has put a big emphasis on engaging with a range of stakeholder communities and devotes as much as a third of its budget to communications work, broadly defined. DFID has gone a stage further with its new 'Research Into Use' programme, which is entirely devoted to getting the results of previously funded natural resources research into wider use, so it has a more direct impact on poverty reduction.<sup>13</sup>

The bigger the research programme, the easier it is to establish 'critical mass' in terms of communication efforts. It is hard to be consistently good at communications if research is mainly funded through small stand-alone grants, especially when they are only short term projects. This has important implications for research funders, who need to have a realistic view on what it takes to do effective communications and the amount and nature of funding required.

## *Potential risks*

Effective communication can also create risks. Putting research findings into the public domain involves 'putting your head above the parapet'. Findings may be challenged and critiqued in a way that researchers are not comfortable with, or they may be 'co-opted' and misused by others to pursue their agendas. Some findings may be highly controversial. By stating their conclusions clearly, research teams can put themselves and their partners in jeopardy, especially if they are seen as taking on an perceived activist role. This could mean losing out on future funding, being banned from working in a country, arrested, or sometimes worse.

Steering clear of these potential dangers requires additional care in mapping out a communication strategy. Involving key stakeholders as advisors can help to identify and reduce the risks. Working as part of an international consortium may also be useful in providing in-country researchers with added credibility and back-up if they get into trouble.

## *Demonstrating impact*

Demonstrating the impact of research is a high priority for funders and research organisations, but is a notoriously difficult task. This is especially the case given the complexity of the various impact pathways and the fact that research can take time to

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<sup>11</sup> An empirical study of the relationship between communication spending and research impact would be an interesting addition to the debate.

<sup>12</sup> The full name of this DFID-funded programme is the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability. See <http://www.drc-citizenship.org>

<sup>13</sup> The five-year Research Into Use programme is managed by NR International. See [www.researchintouse.com](http://www.researchintouse.com)

filter through and may not have its greatest impact until long after the programme has finished.<sup>14</sup>

Assessing the effectiveness of communication efforts is one part of this larger task and creates its own methodological difficulties. Did a particular piece of research get picked up because of the excellent press release, for example, or was it because it was particularly timely or insightful research? Often it will be a mixture of factors, making it hard to isolate the specific role of communications.

That said, greater efforts are needed to track and understand these factors. Funders need to justify why they are spending development funds on research rather than on other more direct forms of development assistance. And all sides need to be able to assess which combinations of communication work are most effective. There is therefore a strong mutual interest in understanding the research communication process better, and finding more robust ways of demonstrating impact. This will be an interesting field to watch over the coming years.<sup>15</sup>

## ***Perspectives from the South***

The same questions surrounding research communication are equally pertinent to research organisations and knowledge intermediaries based in the South. This is particularly the case given the increasing emphasis on the part of funders and others to build indigenous research capacity in the South, and to strengthen the role of research in development decision making and government accountability.<sup>16</sup>

Increasing the capacity of research organisations to communicate effectively is an important part of this picture. The starting point is very different in different countries, however, and there are big variations between organisations. So, again, it is important not to over-generalise.<sup>17</sup>

At one end of the spectrum there are a growing number of highly competent and professional research outfits that are well on top of this issue, and already have highly effective communication operations in place.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, some of these leaders in the field are probably ahead of a lot of their Northern counterparts. At the other end of the spectrum there are many research institutes that struggle to have an impact, and have difficulties in paying staff let alone mounting effective communication programmes. In some countries, decades of under-funding of the university sector have left research

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<sup>14</sup> IIED has managed to maintain partnerships and collaboration with a number of partners in Asia and Africa over a period of thirty years and now has a body of evidence to show where change is occurring. For short-term projects and donor accountability cycles this kind of timeframe is out of the question.

<sup>15</sup> A workshop on monitoring and evaluation of research communication was held in London in September 2006. Called *Proving our Worth: developing capacity for the monitoring and evaluation of communicating research in development*, it was jointly organised by IIED, IDS, Panos and Healthlink Worldwide for the Research Communications Monitoring and Evaluation Group. A summary of the workshop findings is available.

<sup>16</sup> Promoting indigenous research is one of the agendas being championed by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) – see [www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org).

<sup>17</sup> The Background Survey covered just a few southern-based organisations and networks, so was in no way comprehensive. These impressions are based mainly on IDS and IIED experience in working with Southern partners, and with initiatives such as GDNet.

<sup>18</sup> The Energy Research Institute (TERI) in India is a good example. They have a strong communications and publications programme, and are well connected into national and international networks including policymakers and the business sector. See [www.teriin.org](http://www.teriin.org). Other research organisations known for their effective national and regional communication efforts include the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), the Advanced Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Kenya, ENDA Tiers-Monde in Senegal and Vitae Civilis in Brazil.

organisations weak and demoralised, and virtually invisible when it comes to their international profiles.

Many of the communication challenges involved in gearing up communication work are similar wherever you are based. Incentives are still important, communication skills are needed, and resources have to be found. But there are some intrinsic advantages and disadvantages of being located in the South:

- **On the plus side**, researchers are much closer to the action in terms of engaging and feeding in to national debates. They can become key players in the process, sometimes moving back and forth between roles in government and academia. Compared to outsiders, they can more easily develop links to the local media and are much more likely to understand the subtleties and political nuances of the local context.
  
- **On the minus side**, a disadvantage they often face is in tapping into global research knowledge and in feeding back their findings into regional and international debates. There has been significant progress on both fronts in the last few years through initiatives such as PERI, HINARI and GDNNet. These have made an important difference in providing free or low-cost access to online journals and other resources, and in raising the profile of Southern research. They do depend, however, on having reasonably good internet access, something that remains a problem in many countries.

A range of capacity building work has been carried out aiming at improving the communication skills of Southern researchers, communications staff and librarians. PERI, GDNNet and Healthlink Worldwide are among those who have been active in this area. There have also been initiatives by Panos, SciDev.net and others to encourage closer dialogue and understanding between researchers, journalists, and other stakeholders. So while there is certainly more to be done, there is a growing base of experience to build on. Indeed, this is probably an area where a South-North transfer of experience would be useful, not just North-South.

A final point to note is on the interesting potential that comes from multi-country research partnerships. These are becoming increasingly common and are being actively encouraged by some funders who see them as an important part of research capacity building. They also create important opportunities for joining forces in maximising the impact of research. With different partners having different skill sets and spheres of influence, there is a lot to be gained by combining their communication efforts. Southern-based partners will have a natural advantage when it comes to reaching in-country audiences, but can benefit from the added credibility that comes from being part of a larger consortium. Northern-based partners, in contrast, may be better connected with international audiences, but may be more influential if they are seen as representing a network of partners on the ground. These kind of partnerships can create scope for sharing learning and skills around between members.

The nature of the partnership is obviously crucial, however. The more equal it is the more open and productive these exchanges can be. In too many cases research partnerships remain very unequal, with Southern researchers being contracted on a freelance basis rather than through their institutions, and having little say in project decision-making or budget allocation. Under these circumstances, establishing a creative and productive alliance around communication work is much harder, so a shift in the power relations of research will be needed before the potential for this kind of collaboration can be unlocked.

### 3. Current Thinking and Practices

#### *Background surveys*

A set of three Background Surveys was conducted between July and August 2006 to scope out current thinking and practices amongst participants attending the Workshop. Three slightly different surveys were sent to research funders, research organisations and networks,<sup>19</sup> and knowledge intermediaries. Many of the questions were in common, but some were phrased slightly differently, or included additional options, in order to capture the distinctive perspectives of these three groups. The knowledge intermediary survey was shorter than the others, since the organisations involved are a more heterogeneous group.

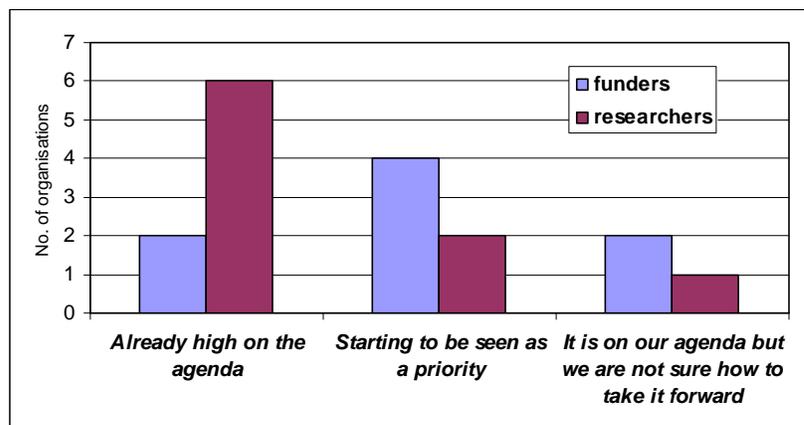
We received a good response despite the surveys being sent out over the summer period. A total of 24 organisations completed the survey, including 9 funders, 9 research organisations or networks<sup>20</sup>, and 6 knowledge intermediaries. While this is in no way a statistically valid sample, it does provide an up-to-date snapshot of where Workshop participants are in their communications thinking and practices. The results are reproduced in full in Annex A. Here, we highlight the main patterns emerging, drawing on all three of the surveys.

#### *Survey results*

##### *Is research communication on the radar?*

Perhaps not surprisingly, among most of the funders and researchers attending the Workshop, communications is clearly already on their agenda, or is being seen as an increasing priority, as Figure 3 shows.

**Figure 3: Is effective research communication seen as a priority?**



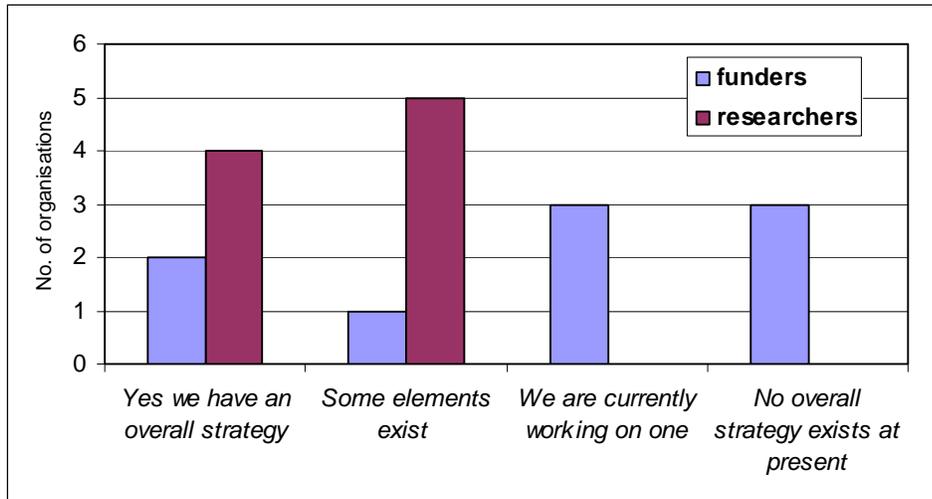
Note: Total number of responses = 17 Details can be found in Annex A

<sup>19</sup> In the interest of brevity, we group research organisations and networks together in this section, and refer to them as 'researchers'.

<sup>20</sup> The survey questionnaire was also distributed to members of the Danish Network for Agricultural Research for Development (NETARD), and the Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KPF), in Switzerland. This generated an additional 13 responses. A parallel survey of European research institutes was also conducted as an input to the EADI Information Management Working Group Workshop, held at IDS in September 2006. This was completed by 17 organisations. Details of all these surveys, together with aggregated results, can be found on the Workshop website: [www.ids.ac.uk/research-comms](http://www.ids.ac.uk/research-comms).

Whether organisations have developed a strategy for research communication is one measure of how far they have got in taking this issue forward. Figure 4 shows that only a third of respondents already have an overall strategy, but most others have some elements in place or are working on a strategy.

**Figure 4: Do you have an overall research communication strategy?**



Note: Total number of responses = 18 Details can be found in Annex A

### *How are funders encouraging research communication?*

The Survey showed funders are taking action in a number of ways:

- **Requiring communication plans at the grant application stage** - this is a key point in the process. Eight out of nine funders said that they expect researchers “to provide some indication of their communication plans, but not in much detail”. This pattern was reinforced by the feedback from researchers. This begs the question of whether funders could be doing more in requiring more detailed plans.
- **Providing communication guidelines** – only two funders currently provide guidelines to researchers to help with research communication (DFID and ESRC).
- **Providing budget guidelines** – only DFID requires researchers to devote a specific proportion of their grant on communications work: a minimum of 10 per cent. Other funders said they are prepared to fund communication work, but do not specify a set percentage. The Wellcome Trust, the Advisory Board for Irish Aid, and IDRC are prepared to allocate up to 10% of a project budget for communications work, while for ESRC and DANIDA the equivalent figure is 5%.
- **Monitoring communication efforts** – most funders admit this does not happen consistently, and the feedback from research organisations confirms this. Only three said they try to do this systematically. DFID’s new research framework requires research consortia to produce a communication strategy during the six-month inception stage. This is then reviewed as part of the routine reporting and monitoring and evaluation requirements, which use a logical framework as a key tool. IDRC expects communications to be included in interim and final reports, with IDRC Programme Officers responsible for working with research organisations on their dissemination plans. DANIDA monitors communications efforts through project annual reports.

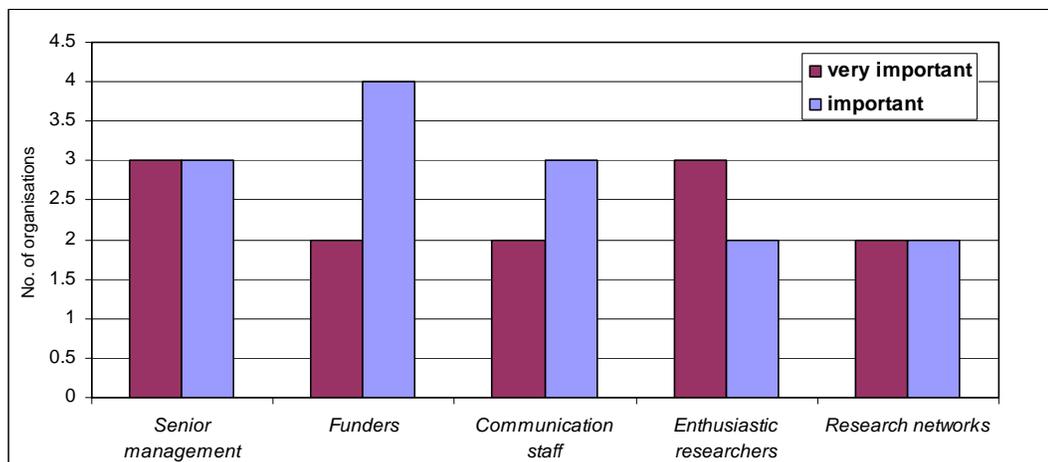
- **Funding non-project communications work** – four funders provide funding for communication work as part of core funding to research organisations. The same number provide grants for communication work that is not tied to specific projects.
- **Having expertise available** – there is mixed picture on whether or not funders have staff with specific responsibility for coordinating communications work. The Wellcome Trust and DFID are the only ones with in-house communication staff within their research departments at present. Others rely on consultants, research networks, or communication staff elsewhere in the organisation. But for three of the funders this is incorporated into general staff responsibilities.
- **Having a central budget for communication work** – the Wellcome Trust and DFID are the only funders who have a specific budget for centrally coordinated communications activities (for DFID it represents 6 per cent of the total department budget)
- **Supporting centrally organised communication work** – most funders get involved in or support some kind of centrally organised communication work, in addition to supporting specific research projects. This varies from making basic information on research grants available, to more active engagement such as organising internal workshops, hosting stakeholder meetings or media briefings, publicising highlights of successful projects. Several also provide funding to knowledge intermediaries as part of their research communication mandate. A full picture of which funders are most active in supporting these kinds of activities, and what they see as their primary audience for this work, can be found in Annex A.

### *Current thinking and practices among research organisations*

The survey enquired about how researcher organisations and networks are currently set up to deal with communications, and some of the challenges they face. Although it is hard to draw out clear picture because of the relatively small sample group, some interesting patterns did emerge:

- **Who is championing research communication?** The situation clearly varies. Senior management and funders were cited most often as the key motivators. However communication staff, enthusiastic researchers, and, to a lesser extent, research networks, were also mentioned. Figure 5 shows the results.

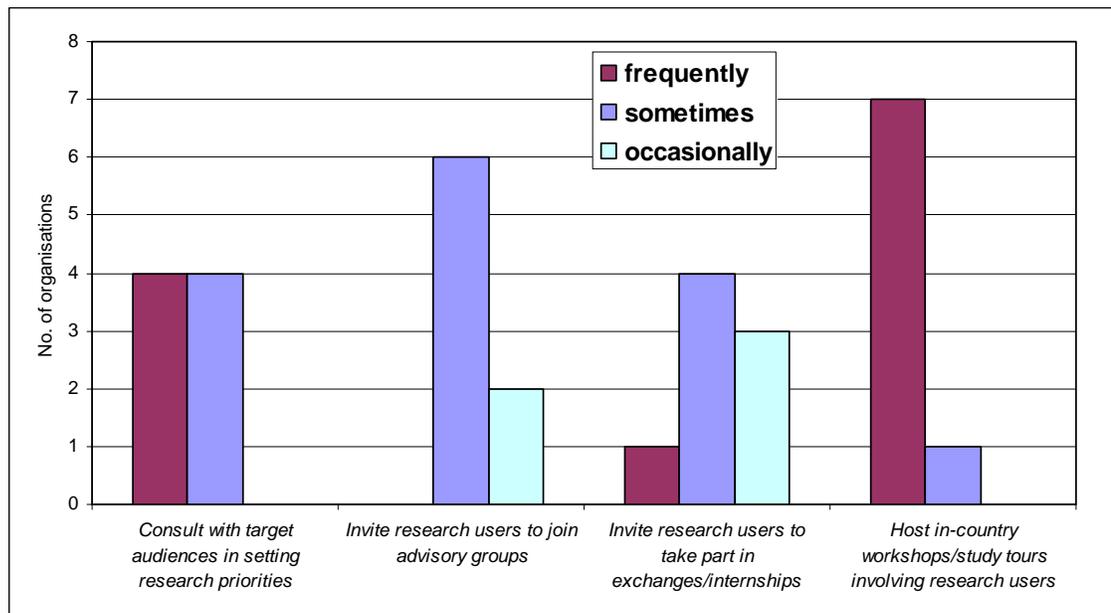
**Figure 5: Who is championing research communication**



Note: Total number of responses = 7 Details can be found in Annex A

- **Communications staffing:** Most of the research organisations attending the Workshop have designated staff with responsibility for coordinating communications work. Several of them have strengthened their communication staffing considerably in recent years and now have teams of six or more staff in place, either working in a central communications unit or ‘embedded’ in research projects. It is important to note that this picture is probably not typical of the sector as a whole. There are a significant number of research teams, especially smaller groups working within university departments, where having dedicated communication staffing is quite a new idea. For a good many, communications work is still delegated to administrative staff and there is no specialist capacity in this area.
- **Engaging research users:** Engaging stakeholders during the course of research is widely seen as a priority. Hosting in-country workshops involving researchers and research users seems to be the most common approach, as Figure 6 shows. Just over half the organisations that responded also said they consult ‘*frequently*’ with target audiences to assess research priorities; others report this is done ‘*sometimes*’ or ‘*occasionally*’.

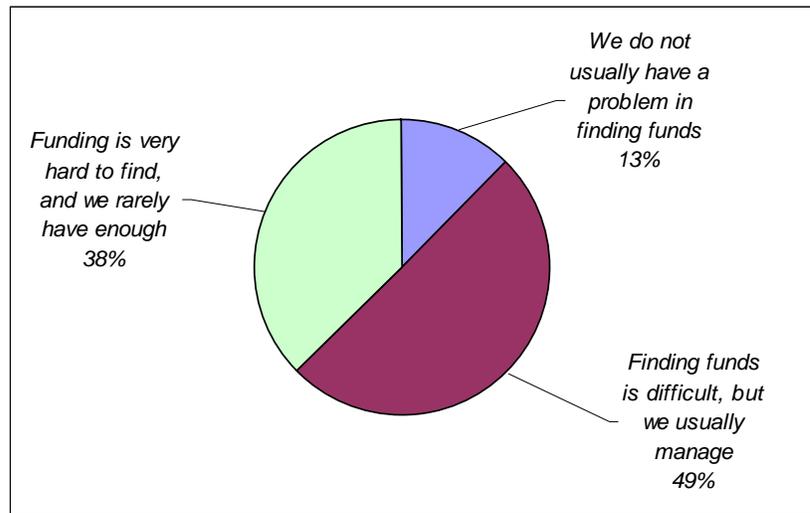
**Figure 6: How do you engage research users during the course of your research**



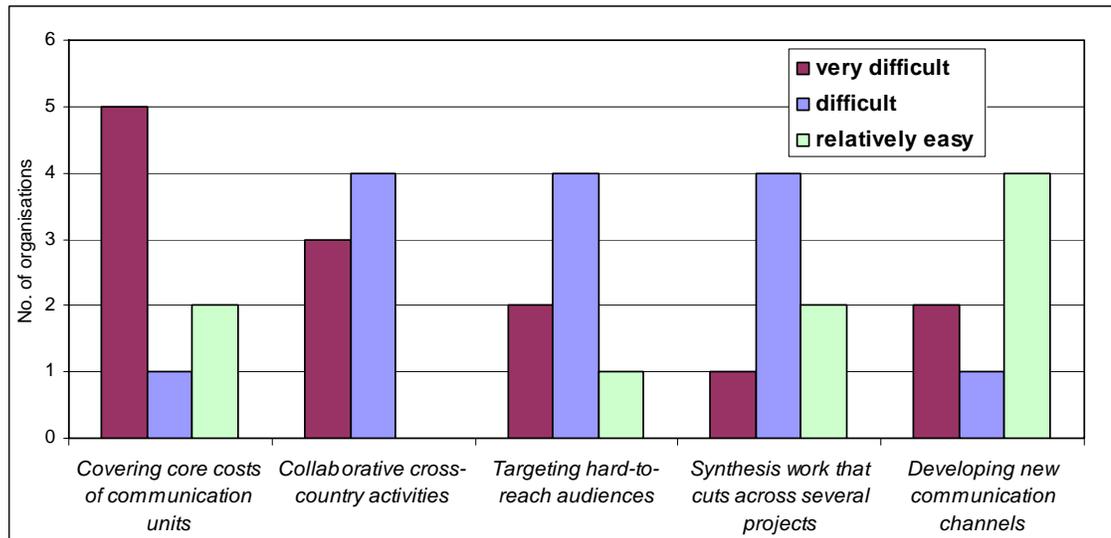
Note: Total number of responses = 8 Details can be found in Annex A

- **Funding challenges:** The answer to this question “How easy is it to fund communication work?” was mixed. Some organisations clearly find this a lot harder than others, as Figure 7 shows. Asked about which type of communications work was hardest to fund, covering the core cost of communications units was most frequently mentioned as being ‘*very difficult*’ (see Figure 8).

**Figure 7: How easy is it to fund communications work?**



**Figure 8: What kind of communications work is hardest to fund?**



Note: Total number of responses for both questions = 8. Details can be found in Annex A

### Barriers to impact

All three groups of Workshop participants were asked a similar set of questions about what they perceive as the main barriers preventing research having a greater impact. The results are summarised in Figure 9. There were some overall trends, but also significant differences in how the different groups perceive things:

- **Incentives:** for all three groups, the lack of incentive among researchers to put the effort needed to communicate with non-academic audiences was seen as a significant barrier, and had the highest weighted score across the three groups.
- **Strengthening communication units:** research organisations and knowledge intermediaries both put this as a high priority (funders were not asked this question).

- **Inadequate funding for communications work:** interestingly, this was rated as more of a problem by research organisations and knowledge intermediaries than by funders.
- **Engaging user groups:** failure to involve user groups at the early stages of research was particularly noted amongst funders.
- **Lack of skills:** a substantial number from all three groups said that researchers lacking the skills to communicate with non-specialists was a barrier.
- **Information overload and lack of interest amongst target groups:** these are both seen as barriers by all three groups.
- **Relevance of research:** this is seen as more of a problem by funders and knowledge intermediaries than research organisations.
- **Quality of research:** this is not regarded as a significant barriers by most respondents, although knowledge intermediaries were rather more critical on this point than the other groups.

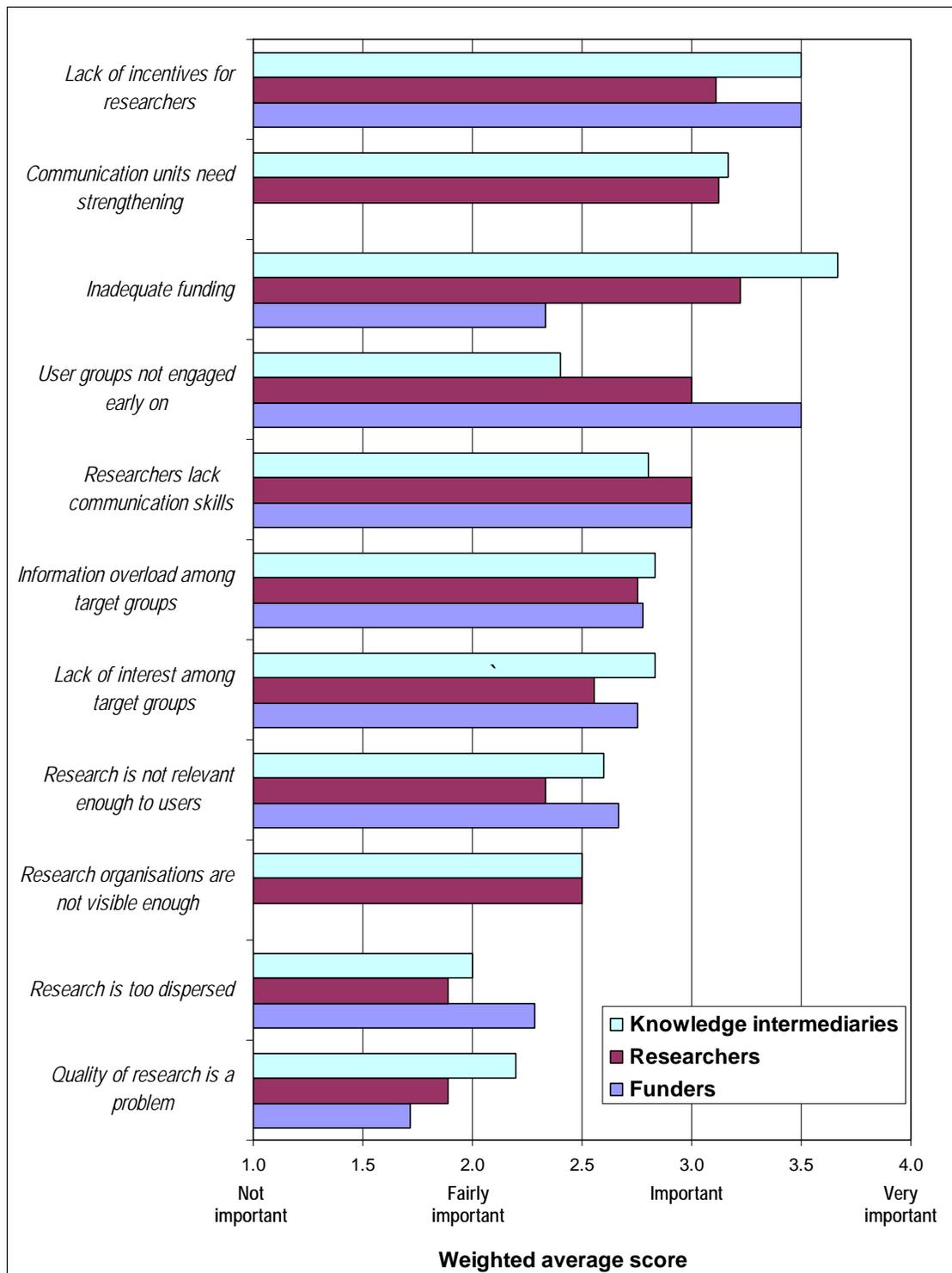
***Additional comments on barriers:***

*“Research is carried out to further the researcher's scientific career, for scientific excellence, and not targeted to development actions. Although research capacity building of course is a development aim in itself.” (SDC)*

*“I think one of the main issues is that good research communication requires more investment in time and requires planning from an early stage in the research process. Skills and expertise are important, but can be bought in.” (DFID)*

*“Research produced in African countries is largely funded by Northern institutions through individual researchers (on a freelanced basis), rather than through institutions. This means that the Southern research organisation has no ownership of the research, no remit to communicate it, and no funds coming in to support the institution's communication strategy... even if there was research to communicate.” (Panos)*

**Figure 9: What are the barriers preventing research from having a greater impact?**



Note: These are weighted average scores for the different groups. The groups were asked similar questions, but the surveys were not identical. Where a bar is missing it is because that question was not posed to that group.

## 4. What Can Funders Do?

### *Opportunities for taking action*

There is a whole range of ways research funders can encourage more effective research communication, and some are already taking steps in this direction. Providing more funding for communication work is clearly the starting point, since having adequate resources to do the job is fundamental to turning good intentions into reality.

Making a funding case for putting more resources into communications work should not be difficult, in principle. Indeed, boosting spending on communications can be presented as the key to creating greater impact with research as a whole, and in helping to demonstrate it. Questions do arise, however, as to what kind of funding is most appropriate. Some of the options include:

- Encouraging (or requiring) researchers to build a more generous allowance for communication work into project budgets.
- Providing top-up funding when ideas of additional communication emerge during the course of projects. This helps account for the unpredictability of research – it is not always possible to know in advance how important the results of a piece of research will be, and what opportunities will crop up to make a difference.
- Funding communication activities that are outside of specific research projects and the normal project cycle – for example stakeholder workshops on topical themes, or cross-cutting communications work pulling together research from different sources.
- Supporting core costs of communication units.
- Funding knowledge intermediaries to play a broader research communication role, helping to bring together research from different sources, put it in context, and communicate it to a much wider audience than individual institutes can reach.

Providing more funding is not the whole story, however. There are other important ways that funders can promote more effective communications, or engage in it themselves:

- **Changing incentives:** funders can use both ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ to help change incentive structures. By stressing the importance of communications work, and specifying that they require well thought out (and properly budgeted) communications plans as part of funding proposals, they can send a clear signal that they expect communications to be taken seriously. To be fully effective, this kind of policy needs to be backed up at by monitoring efforts at the mid-term and end-of-project review stage to check what actually happened, so researchers know they need to deliver on their communication plans.
- **Playing a supportive role:** funders can play a valuable supportive role in providing guidelines to researchers, organising training events, and encouraging skill sharing and networking in various ways.
- **Engaging as stakeholders:** funders who are development players in their own right can usefully engage in the research process by taking part in advisory panels, putting researchers in touch with key agency staff, and being open to suggestions on how they can get involved in the research.

- **Helping communicate results:** funders could play a much stronger role in helping publicise the research they fund, taking advantage of the ‘seat at the table’ they occupy within national and international fora, and the credibility and contacts they have<sup>21</sup>. This can be done by organising workshops, passing material on through their networks, or brokering engagement between researchers and their contacts and partners. Funders can go a stage further and take on a role in championing the research they fund, issuing press releases in their own right, for example, and taking the lead in communicating the results themselves.<sup>22</sup>
- **Stimulating the demand side:** funders can also intervene on the demand side. Supporting stakeholder networks or consultative fora is one option. Another is to encourage work with the media to raise awareness of research issues and create opportunities for dialogue between journalists, researchers and other key stakeholders.
- **Building research into knowledge management and organisational learning strategies:** most development agencies have knowledge management (KM) or organisational learning (OL) strategies of some kind, though terminology and approaches vary. Finding ways of incorporating research knowledge into these strategies would seem logical, alongside other forms of more practical and experiential learning. But it is striking how few development agencies have succeeded in doing this. It is not uncommon for agency staff to comment on how they have no idea what research their own organisation is funding. And viewed from the outside, funding agencies can seem very hard to penetrate with new ideas, even when they might have funded the research. Although this not an easy issue to address, this is clearly an area where more can be done to connect development agencies’ ambitions with their actual policies and practices.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Some have commented on the ‘disconnect’ between development agencies desire to influence national and global agendas, and their apparent reluctance to put their weight behind the research they fund. See WEDC/ITAD (2002), *Evaluation of DFID’s Research Dissemination*.

<sup>22</sup> This approach has been used successfully in the UK by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which has been a pioneer in promoting more effective research communication. It funds research on social and economic policy issues within the UK, and is very proactive in championing the results of the projects that it supports. (see [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)) The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation provides another interesting example. They are simultaneously a research organisation, a research funder, a knowledge broker, a policy advocate, and a participant in health service reform. (see [http://www.chsrf.ca/home\\_e.php](http://www.chsrf.ca/home_e.php))

<sup>23</sup> Part of the difficulty is that research funding units are often separated from those involved in policy or operational work. Nor do they always have good links with other units responsible for knowledge related work, such as monitoring and evaluation or staff development departments. The gulf between headquarters and country office adds to this fragmentation. These kind of structural factors make achieving effective knowledge-sharing within organisations very challenging, though clearly still a high priority.

## ***Challenges involved***

Grasping these opportunities is not without its difficulties, both for research organisations and their funders. Gearing up communication work involves taking on a whole range of challenges. Beyond a certain stage it involves a change in mind-sets, not just in day-to-day practices. But it opens up possibilities for redefining how research is conceived and the ambitions it has.

### *For research funders*

Funders need to understand what effective research communication means if they are to play a proactive role in encouraging it. This involves developing capacity themselves so they can be effective champions of good communications and discerning judges of what constitutes an appropriate communication strategy.

Communication consultants can be very useful to research departments in boosting capacity. But having a core team of communication specialists within the department is probably the best way of doing this. Viewed from the perspective of the grant recipient, it makes a big difference if your research funder is able to engage in conversation themselves on issues around communications. It demonstrates their commitment and can be very useful in driving home the message to research managers that communications is being seen as a priority. This is certainly an important factor in DFID's success in gearing up its communication efforts, as outlined in the case study presented in Box 3.

Recruiting in-house communication specialists can be problematic for funders with only modest research budgets, as it may be difficult to justify a dedicated post. It can also be a problem for agencies that are facing pressures to downsize their headquarters staff and shift resources into 'front-line' development work. When it comes to research, however, one can argue that communications work is the 'front-line' – so it should be one of the most important areas in which to have in-house skills.

A second set of challenge arises if research funders are to engage more substantively in the research process itself, as outlined above. This may involve breaking down barriers between different parts of the organisation so research departments are not so detached from other areas, and so operational and policy staff are more open to inputs from researchers. And it will require funders to become more active (and demanding) consumers of research, rather than playing only a more passive funding role.

Finally, there are a range of challenges in how research funders work together in maximising the impact of development research as a whole. At the moment there is some informal coordination between development research funders, for example through the IFORD group.<sup>24</sup> Funders have also come together in co-funding some knowledge intermediary initiatives such as Eldis, SciDev.Net and PERI. But it is probably fair to say that these connections are fairly light and that more could be done to create more joined-up thinking and action in this area.

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<sup>24</sup> IFORD is the International Forum for Research Donors. It is an informal grouping of about 18 research donors, including bilateral agencies, foundations and the World Bank.

### **Box 3: Gearing up research communication: the DFID Story**

Over the past few years, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has substantially geared up its emphasis on research communication, providing an interesting case study of how change can occur.

**Origins:** Recognition of the need to do more on research communications dates back to the early 1990s when a number of reports pointed this out as a weakness. At that time research was being managed by a series of separate thematic departments in DFID. Several of these began to take steps to improve research communication. In 1996, for example, the unit responsible for economic and social research put out a tender to set up a facility to disseminate all UK research on these themes. This was the origin of the id21 initiative. Some research programmes within the natural resources area also started taking a more proactive approach, including commissioning research on how communication can improve research uptake. These efforts received additional impetus in 1997 when the Labour Government's first White Paper put renewed focus on poverty reduction, requiring research programmes to justify their poverty impact more explicitly. New thinking on sustainable livelihoods approaches and moves to improve knowledge management created further awareness in DFID of the need to connect research to policy and practice, though these efforts were still quite fragmented.

**New structures:** It was not until the reorganisation of DFID's Policy Division in 2003 that a more joined up approach emerged. All research funding was brought together under a new Central Research Department (CRD), and a process was launched to develop a new research funding framework. The management team responsible were already convinced of the importance of research communication and drew on advice from some of the leading specialists in the UK both in developing their thinking and providing evidence for investing more in this area, making the case that good communications is essential for maximising the impact of research. This was reflected in the resulting funding framework. A communication team was set up within CRD with its own budget, and with experienced in-house staff to champion this work and put this new framework into action.

**A communication-friendly framework:** The most important elements from a communications perspective are:

- At the proposal stage, grant applicants need to demonstrate a demand for the research and indicate how they expect their findings to have an impact. They also need to allow at least 10% of the project budget for communications work.
- During the six-month inception phase, successful consortia need to develop a detailed communication strategy, which has to be submitted for comment and approved by CRD before work commences.
- Communications work is then reviewed as part of the subsequent reporting and monitoring and evaluation cycle, using a log frame to guide the process.
- The CRD communications team also plays a supportive role in helping research consortia develop their communications capacity, providing advice and guidelines and organising knowledge sharing events.
- In addition, CRD has stepped up its support for a range of knowledge intermediary initiatives, and has commissioned the new R4D research portal, a central website providing details of all DFID-funded research (see [www.research4development.info](http://www.research4development.info)).

**Resulting changes:** It is still early days, but the signs are that this new, more proactive, approach from DFID is starting to change behaviour and practices among the research community. After initial scepticism from some quarters, most research organisations are starting to respond. They are recruiting communications staff, sometimes for the first time, and joining up with communications partners to develop and implement more ambitious communications strategies. Researchers are realising that to be successful in bidding for the DFID research funds they need to take communications seriously. The combination of 'carrot' and 'stick' is changing incentive structures and seems to be producing the desired results.

**Challenges:** Some of the challenges that the CRD communication team see ahead include: measuring the impact of communication work so they can demonstrate that it makes a difference; maintaining their hands-on approach given pressures to reduce central staffing; and making decisions on long-term funding of knowledge intermediaries where there is no obvious endpoint for the work, as there is with most research projects.

*Source: based on interviews with Dylan Winder and Abigail Mulhall, from the DFID/CRD Communication Team*

## *For research organisations*

Some of the practical challenges and trade-offs facing research organisations have already been discussed. Assuming funding can be found, there is plenty of scope for making incremental improvements in how communications is done, and many research organisations have made significant strides in this direction in recent years.

At a certain point, however, incremental changes give way to a more fundamental rethinking of how research is carried out and what it is trying to achieve. If stakeholders (including funders) are to become routinely involved in research projects, especially in setting the research agenda, it implies a big shift in the balance of work being done. It also implies a willingness to accept a greater degree of sharing of control over the research process. Research is no longer an aloof activity, conducted by researchers standing at arms length from processes of political and social change. As they become more engaged with other stakeholders, researchers stop being the sole owners of the process, and communication becomes integral to it, not an add-on.

This is an exciting prospect for some researchers. But others will worry about losing their independence or having their academic freedom constrained. How far should one go in engaging with stakeholders – including funders – and what are the compromises that will be involved if one does?

Clearly there is no one answer to this question. Most would agree that a lot of research would benefit from being more closely connected with policy and practice. But for other types of research, the ability to stand at a distance is essential to the integrity and independence of the work. As research organisations gear up their communication work they will need to address these dilemmas and decide what is the best path for them.

## *Potential downsides*

The Background Survey asked participants if an increased focus on research communication has any potential negative aspects. Though most felt that this was not a serious concern, some important issues were raised, emphasising the point that gearing up communications needs to be done thoughtfully. Some of these comments on potential downsides are reproduced here:

- *“[it is a problem] only if it leads to misunderstanding if the issues are not well explained.”* (STEPRI)
- *“Need to maintain space for conceptual research, as well as policy/practice focus” ..... “might overly politicise research.”* (IDS)
- *“[it is a problem] only if perceived to be at the expense of research quality.”* (ESRC)
- *“The main negative aspect is raising false expectations.”* (Wellcome Trust)
- *“If the weight is too much on short-term use of results of relevance for aid agencies, and not on strengthening of institutional capacity ..... the overall effect may be detrimental” ..... “The use of short term consultancies/researchers may ‘hollow out’ the knowledge base in public education and research institution.”* (NORAD)
- *“The core business of researchers is to perform good research. Research communication should not take up more time ‘than needed’. Rather research communication should be fostered through ‘research brokers’”..... “Research communication should not be the privilege of the North – it is equally important for southern partners.”* (SDC)

- “[it is a problem if there is a] focus on PR and publicity rather than awareness and practice/policy change”..[or of] “over-simplifying the research outputs/message.s” (DFID)
- “An uncoordinated flurry of activity in this area could be confusing, both to donors, participants and funders.” (HINARI)
- “...research communication through the media could expose a particular community to abuse if the research is about groups who lack power in society” ... “communication of a piece of research which criticises the government could either provoke an inappropriate knee jerk reaction from politicians to the issues raised, or even endanger local research partners.” (Panos)
- “We need to ensure that it is demand-led. There is no point in communicating research for the sake of it and adding to information overload.” (INASP)

### *Learning together*

With the increasing awareness and emphasis on research communication we can look forward to an interesting period of experimentation and change ahead. Building a constructive relationship between researchers, funders and knowledge intermediaries will be an important part of this. It will be learning process for all concerned. Not every communication attempt will be successful, and some may actually backfire and create problems for the organisations or individuals involved. So all sides will need to be prepared to take risks in pushing ahead in this direction, and accept that mistakes and disappointments will be part of the learning process.

## 5. WORKSHOP REPORT

### *Format and participation*

The Workshop was held at the Institute of Development Studies, in Brighton, from 16-18 October 2006. A total of 45 participants took part, with a strong representation from all three of the groups invited: research funders, research organisations and networks, and knowledge intermediaries.<sup>25</sup> The format of the Workshop was designed to encourage open discussion both among and between the three groups.<sup>26</sup>

This section summarises the main points emerging from the Workshop, and highlights the conclusions and next steps that were agreed.

### *Sharing perspectives*

This was a core objective of the Workshop and was widely welcomed since this was one of the first times that researchers, intermediaries, and funders had met on equal terms to discuss communication issues. Some of the views expressed are captured here:

#### *The researcher's perspective*

- **The risk of generalisation:** several stressed the importance of recognising that research is not 'one thing', so there is no simple formula for how to approach research communication. Basic scientific research is very different from policy research, which is different again from more applied action research. All of these need very different approaches when it comes to research communication. In using the term 'research communication' there is a danger conflating these, and implying (even unintentionally) that 'one size fits all.'
- **From push to pull:** we need to be moving from a mindset of 'information push' to one of 'demand pull', it was pointed out, recognising that in any real world situation lack of technical information is only 10 percent of the problem that a policy maker or practitioner is facing.
- **New ways of conceptualising research:** one view was that research programmes should be seen as 'mutual learning platforms', providing opportunities for a range of stakeholders to explore an issue together, and with researchers not necessarily driving the process.
- **One-way communication:** while much of the new thinking on how research links to policy and practice stresses the multi-directional nature of the communication process, it was stressed that there is still an important role for one-way communication, as part of the mix. The point is that a range of approaches will be needed, with the right blend depending on the type of research and the context.

#### *The knowledge intermediary's perspective*

- **Defining terms:** the term 'knowledge intermediary' is a relatively new one and is intended to cover quite a broad spectrum of roles and functions. There is no

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<sup>25</sup> A list of participants is provided in Annex B. Because of last minute travel and visa problems, participation from Southern research organisations was less than originally hoped.

<sup>26</sup> The Workshop Programme is reproduced in Annex C.

consensus yet on how to define this role or distinguish between different types of intermediaries. For some, 'information intermediary' may be preferred as a description, though the group avoid the temptation of entering into a lengthy discussion of the difference between the two.<sup>27</sup>

- **An emerging sector:** the knowledge intermediary sector is growing, with new initiatives and organisations emerging to play different roles, occupying different 'niches' within the 'knowledge ecosystem'. Some are helping research producers to communicate better, others are more focused on servicing the knowledge needs of particular user groups, or are aiming to span the two roles. This was generally seen as a healthy trend, though it was pointed out that while there are now a number of well-established global initiatives based in the North, there are still many gaps at the country level in the South where intermediaries could play a valuable role.
- **Expanding roles:** as well as facilitating information exchange and knowledge sharing, intermediaries are also in an interesting position to take on other roles, some felt. Depending on the context these may include lobbying and advocacy, capacity building, facilitating learning processes, and being a channel for helping to articulate what the demand is from users for new research.
- **Neutrality:** it was suggested that intermediaries may sometimes be in a better position than researchers to communicate with donors and policymakers because they are perceived as being more neutral. For similar reasons, they may be able to scrutinise research and facilitate debate, although to play this role they need to be well briefed on the issues they are covering and alert to the perspectives both of researchers and research users.

### *The funder's perspective*

- **Research is a means to an end:** development agencies are not interested in research for its own sake, it was pointed out. It is the use of research knowledge to achieve development aims that is the ultimate aim.
- **Diversity of approach:** there is quite a wide range of objectives and approach among research funders, we were reminded, with some funding research projects directly and others playing a longer-term and more hands-off capacity building role, for example in supporting Southern universities. The starting point for addressing research communication issues can therefore be very different, requiring different approaches.
- **Absorbing research:** even if communication channels are working well, lack of time to absorb and interpret research findings is often a big blockage, it was noted. This will not change unless we take steps to make more space for reflection and learning for those involved in implementing development programmes, not least among those working for donor agencies.
- **Disconnect:** while donor agencies may aspire to be 'learning organisations', and be responsive to research knowledge, it was recognised that the different cultures, priorities, and timeframes of donor organisations can lead to a sense of disconnect with the research community, and that this makes dialogue more difficult. This can be a particular problem at country level if country office staff are not tuned in to the value and importance of research.

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<sup>27</sup> IDS is beginning some research to map out the role of knowledge intermediaries, as part of the work of the Information Department's Strategic Learning Initiative.

#### **Box 4: Quotes from the Workshop**

This selection of quotes, paraphrased in some case for clarity, gives a further flavour of the Workshop discussions:

- *"Don't let the researchers rule the show. Find an innovation agenda into which researchers can feed."*
- *"The issue is not so much how to strengthen communication teams as how to involve communications in research."*
- *"Researchers and communications people shouldn't be driving the agenda - it should be the end users."*
- *"If what funders want is innovation – research plays a only small part in this."*
- *"Research is often pulled in two directions – between the needs of end-users, and those of researchers to generate high quality, peer-reviewed publications."*
- *"We are very poor at connecting back with the policy-makers we're hoping to influence and asking them what would be useful"*
- *"From a Southern perspective there are 3 issues: mapping incentives for researchers, supporting better research communication, and identifying the context in which researchers communicate."*
- *"It would be good to get communications in at the very beginning".*
- *"There are huge budgetary implications in trying to change our approach and include communications from the beginning."*
- *"There are few incentives to do communications work other than what is needed to get funding."*
- *"What is communications? It includes advocacy and influencing ... it's not just about building a website."*
- *"When we develop our next strategy we need to work out how we can demonstrate that this increased focus on communicating research had an effect."*
- *"We have taken a gamble by raising research up the development agenda but follow-up work is needed to keep the momentum up."*
- *"We need to find out where we've made mistakes, do more of what's good and adapt what's not helpful."*
- *"There is a huge gap between the world of development research and policymakers, we need to bridge this."*
- *"When it comes to research information, more is not necessarily better."*
- *"There is pressure from researchers to do research for research's sake but now there is more need to demonstrate the impact of research. How can we make more use of the research we are funding?"*
- *"We want our research to have an impact but I don't think we provide enough incentives for that to happen"*
- *"It's not very easy to map predictable pathways of getting research into policy and practice. Often it's external and political events that drive the agenda. A linear model is not useful. I think of it more in terms of a 'soup'.*
- *"It's a collective failure what we don't understand enough about what impact our research has."*
- *"Making selections about what information to put forward involves political choices – development is a political process, and it is necessary for intermediaries to confront this fact and be clear and transparent that are making political decisions."*

## ***Digging deeper***

In the second session, participants were asked to nominate issues for more detailed discussion. These were clustered under five broad headings and covered in parallel working groups. The topics chosen and the main thoughts that emerged were as follows:

- **Demand for research:** How can we make research more demand driven? The power rests on the supply side and not the demand side. We need to define demand better. A systems diagnosis or mapping exercise could be used to find out how poor people, ministers, industry, academia and others see demand. The answer to the demand questions is not necessarily new research; it can be better exploitation of research that has already been done.
- **Incentives:** What kind of incentives are we looking at, what do we want to incentivise? One side of this about providing incentives to communicate research. It is important that research institutions value communication and encourage researchers to take risks. The way funding is structured makes a difference to this. The prospect of increased funding and profile can both work as incentives. Adding an element of conditionality – so communications is expected and required – can also work, but needs to be used flexibly. For Southern researchers there also can be issues around ownership of research that need to be addressed. The other side is about incentives to take up research. Policymakers need to feel that by making more use of research they can change things for the better, and make a difference to peoples' lives. The flip side of this is that they need to be held more accountable for their actions, including by watchdogs, such as the media.
- **Learning:** Two areas were identified – organisational learning (an internal process), and facilitation of learning processes (an advocacy position). What is needed for effective organisational learning – stronger incentives, or a different mindset? We need to identify what peoples' knowledge needs/ambitions are – what are the gaps that could be filled? This process could be systematised and facilitated. This is the idea behind the learning alliances approach – bringing together actors from different stakeholder groups around particular issues to focus on how research can help. This allows researchers to learn from each other and from other sectors (including the private sector).
- **Evaluating the impact of research:** This is about how to plan, monitor and evaluate research. There should be more sharing of mechanisms that exist for charting impact, such as by collecting and generating stories and documenting these processes. We should clarify expectations and be more realistic about what impact research can or should have. Researchers can offer each other more support in evaluating impact, for example through peer review processes. We need more research (maybe a research programme) on how to evaluate research – including practical research, tool kits, case studies. More resources need to be invested in this in a more systematic manner.
- **Effective ways working (within the policy soup):** It is important for the different groups represented at the Workshop to work together more closely, and not just on research communication issues. We need to identify opportunities for collaboration as this leads to more coherence, a better division of labour, and a better interface with end-users. A mapping exercise would be useful to find out more about what capacity people have. We need to create spaces to collaborate so that there is more sustained dialogue about research communications, including at regional and thematic levels.

## ***A vision for the future***

In the next session, participants were asked to set aside immediate constraints and look ahead five to ten years to imagine what kind of future we should be aiming for. Working in groups, they were asked to sketch out their vision of world where research is having a much greater impact on development.

One group highlighted the transformations that are likely to occur in the use of information and communication technologies, and the opportunities this will open up. Others chose a visual metaphor to symbolise their vision: a tree of knowledge with research providing the roots; a house providing an overall framework for knowledge sharing, while allowing chaotic interactions within it; an innovation system with multiple players interacting and distinctions between producers and users of knowledge becoming more blurred; and a rainbow of good research communication practice leading to the pot of gold - ending world poverty.

Comparing the different visions there was an encouraging level of optimism that research can have a much greater impact. Increased funding for communication work was clearly part of this. Better connections between the different players involved, and a breaking down of the barriers that separate them, was another common theme. Improvements in connectivity and access to knowledge featured in several, although some expressed doubts about how quickly this would be achieved.

## ***Overall Conclusions and Next Steps***

In the final session, researchers, intermediaries and funders divided into separate groups to discuss the question 'how can funders encourage more effective research communication?' They then reconvened in plenary to share their thoughts, reflect on the usefulness of the Workshop, and consider next steps. The main conclusions emerging are summarised here.

### ***The Workshop***

- The objectives of the Workshop – to share perspectives, exchange experience, and build momentum for change – were all successfully achieved. The openness of discussions was especially appreciated.
- The three-way engagement between researchers, intermediaries and funders was particularly welcomed. While others could have usefully attended – research users were missing, as were some important research funders, and the number of Southern participants was less than originally hoped – the size of the meeting worked well from the point of view of encouraging dialogue.
- The broad focus of the Workshop was felt by most to be a useful starting point for discussions. But future meetings should focus in on more specific aspects of research communication, because the challenges involved vary so much depending on the context.

### ***What can funders do?***

- The central hypothesis that research funders have a critical role to play in encouraging more effective research communication was broadly accepted.
- There clearly needs to be a balance between spending on research and spending on communication, but in a context of increasing funding to the sector these need not be in competition.

- Funders should help to 'globalise' research that is carried out for the global public good by supporting research communication, and insisting that the research they fund is made public in ways that can be accessed by all. This means putting their weight behind moves to break down intellectual property rights restrictions.
- Capacity issues are central to improving research communication, and funders need to invest in building capacity at a number of different levels. This includes expanding their own capacity to make use of research findings and to encourage research communication.
- The catalytic role of knowledge intermediaries in helping facilitate research communication came through strongly in the Workshop. There is a lot more to be done in this area, not least in the South, so it is important that funders take this role seriously. Better networking and coordination between knowledge intermediaries is needed to maximise the contribution of this emerging sector, and encourage learning and continuing innovation.
- Research funders should be working together to coordinate their efforts and learning around research communication. This should be done both at headquarters level, and at country level – possibly by establishing a joint country lead on research and research communication.
- This should include taking steps to share relevant material such as communication guidelines, monitoring and evaluation reports, and lessons on how to strengthen incentives.
- The OECD/DAC<sup>28</sup> could be a useful forum for coordinating these efforts, possibly via a special task force, though it was recognised that this cannot be the only forum as it does not include all the relevant funders, and is by its nature donor driven.
- It makes sense to take advantage of existing meetings and fora to get research communications onto the agenda (the Global Development Network's annual conference was one suggestion), particularly if steps are taken to ensure a mix of participants.
- While stopping short of establishing a formal network or coalition amongst Workshop participants, or agreeing a 'Brighton declaration' on research communication, there was consensus that the group had achieved a strong degree of shared understanding of the subject and some useful personal links. This '*Brighton connection*' was definitely seen as something of value that can be built on in future.

### *Next steps*

- It was agreed that participants will need to share the leadership task of taking forward the research communication agenda, and building on the momentum that the Workshop has generated.
- DFID agreed to take the lead in convening a further meeting of research donors but would also like to see the wider group get together again in future.
- The next meeting of the International Forum for Research Donors (IFORD) is in Paris, in April 2007, and this will provide the a concrete opportunity to put the issue of research communication on the table amongst a wider donor group.
- Further mapping work is needed to identify the players in involved in research communication – funders, research organisations and knowledge intermediaries –

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<sup>28</sup> The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development.

and to scope out their current practices, policies and capacity in this area. IDRC and DFID agreed to fund this work, which could form the focus for a future meeting.

- Other suggested themes for future meetings included capacity building approaches around research communication, and open access archiving and intellectual property right issues.

## Recommended Reading

This is a preliminary selection of the available literature on the subject of development research communication<sup>29</sup>. Each has a selection of excellent references and weblinks.

Andrew Barnett (2006), *Journeying from Research to Innovation: Lessons from the Department for International Development's Crop Post-Harvest Research Programme "Partnerships for Innovation"*, The Policy Practice Limited, Brighton UK [www.cphp.uk.com/aboutcphp/default.asp?step=4&pid=1](http://www.cphp.uk.com/aboutcphp/default.asp?step=4&pid=1).

Fred Carden (2005), *Making the Most of Research: The Influence of IDRC-Supported Research on Policy Processes*, Paper presented at an international conference on African Economic Research Institutions and Policy Development: Opportunities and Challenges, Dakar, January 2005. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre. [www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11085518871Making\\_the\\_Most\\_of\\_Research.pdf](http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11085518871Making_the_Most_of_Research.pdf)

Julius Court (2006), *Policy Engagement for Poverty Reduction – How Civil Society Can be More Effective*, ODI Briefing Paper No 3, London: Overseas Development Institute [http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/CSPP\\_BP.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/CSPP_BP.pdf)

DFID (2005), *Research Funding Framework 2005-2007*, London: Department for International Development. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/researchframework/research-framework-2005.pdf>

Global Development Network 'Bridging Research and Policy project' literature review – [www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=537](http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=537)

Stephen Hannay, Miguel A Gonzalez-Block, Martin J Buxton, and Maurice Kogan (2002), *The Utilisation of Health Research in Policy Making: Concepts, Examples and Methods of Assessment*. A report to the Research Policy and Co-operation Department, HERG Research Report No 28, Geneva: WHO.

Nazneen Kanji and Laura Greenwood (2001) *Participatory approaches to research and development in IIED: learning from experience*, London: International Institute for Environment and Development. [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)

Megan Lloyd Laney (2005) *Scanning the Policy, Communications and Research Environments*, Communication Information Management Resource Centre - Draft, Commsconsult, August 2005.

Megan Lloyd Laney (2003) *Advocacy Impact Assessment Guidelines*, Communication Information Management Resource Centre , Commsconsult.

Patrick Moriarty et al (2005) *Learning Alliances for Scaling up Innovative approaches in the Water and Sanitation sector*, International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC), Delft, The Netherlands. Background paper for CIAT/CGIAR Symposium. [http://www.irc.nl/content/download/16138/208040/file/Background\\_paper\\_symposium\\_.pdf](http://www.irc.nl/content/download/16138/208040/file/Background_paper_symposium_.pdf)

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<sup>29</sup> We would welcome suggestions for additional material that Workshop participants have found useful.

Bridget McBean (2005) *What matters in a communication strategy*. InBrief No. 11B, Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management  
[www.ecdpm.org](http://www.ecdpm.org)

Will Parks with Denise Gray-Felder, Jim Hunt and Ailish Byrne (2005), *Who Measures Change? An Introduction to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change*. Communication for Social Change Consortium  
[www.communicationforsocialchange.org](http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org)

Martin Surr et al (2002), *Research for Poverty Reduction: DFID Research Policy Paper*, London: Department for International Development.

Robin Vincent (2006) *Communicating health research: how should evidence affect policy and practice?* Healthlink Exchange Findings No. 5, London: Healthlink Worldwide. [www.healthlink.org.uk](http://www.healthlink.org.uk)

John Young and Julius Court (2004), *Bridging Research and Policy in International Development, An Analytical and Practical Framework*. RAPID Briefing Paper Number 1. London: Overseas Development Institute  
[http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/rapid\\_bp1\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/rapid_bp1_web.pdf)

### **Research Communication Toolkits/Guidelines**

DFID (2005), *Communication of Research: Guidance Notes for Research Programme Consortia*, Communications Team, Central Research Department, London: Department for International Development.

Julie Fisher, Frank Odhiambo and Andrew Cotton (2003), *Spreading the Word Further – Guidelines for Disseminating Development Research*, Water, Engineering and Development Centre, Loughborough University  
[www.lboro.ac.uk/wedc/](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/wedc/)

*GDN Toolkit: Disseminating Research Online*. Available via the GDN website:  
[www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=373](http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=373)

Ingie Hovlund (2005), *Successful Communication*, RAPID Toolkit, London: Overseas Development Institute.

Bridget McBean (2005), *What matters in a communication strategy*. (ECDPM In Brief 11AB). Maastricht : ECDPM

Panos London (2006), *Working with the media: A guide for researchers*. Panos Relay Programme. London: Panos London

### **Related Websites**

The Overseas Development Institute's website provides access to the wide range of publications and other material produced by the RAPID Programme.  
See [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications)

The Communications Initiative website provides access to many successful communications case studies as well as a route into communication theories, strategies and tools that research communicators can draw on.  
See [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com)

# ANNEX A: DETAILED RESULTS FROM BACKGROUND SURVEY

## *PART 1: Survey of Research Funders*

Responses were received from the following organisations (the acronyms in the left hand column are used in the subsequent tables).

ABIA	Advisory Board for Irish Aid - Department of Foreign Affairs (Ireland)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council (UK)
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
WELL	The Wellcome Trust (UK)

**Q2. Size of Research Budget:**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>International Development Research Budget</b>	<b>Total Research Budget</b>
ESRC	11.6	203.0
WELL	65.0	65.0
ABIA	1.0	1.0
NORAD	75.0	75.0
SDC	34.5	34.5
DFID	160.9	166.8
IDRC	60.2	60.2
DANIDA	26.8	26.8

Note: All figures in Millions of Euros

**Q3. What are the primary objectives for the research you fund?**

<b>Very important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Fairly important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Questions</b>
WELL ABIA DFID	ESRC NORAD DANIDA SDC IDRC	SIDA		Generating original & high quality academic research that meets standards for publication in peer reviewed journals
WELL ABIA NORAD	SDC DANIDA	ESRC DFID SIDA	IDRC	Building research capacity in our own country
WELL ABIA	NORAD SDC IDRC	DFID SIDA	ESRC	Feeding into policy-making within our own organisation
DFID IDRC	ABIA SDC DANIDA	ESRC WELL NORAD SIDA		Having an impact on development policy within the international development community
DFID IDRC	WELL SDC SIDA	ESRC ABIA NORAD		Having an impact on development policy in the South
WELL SDC DFID IDRC	NORAD SIDA	ESRC ABIA		Having an impact on development practice in the South
WELL NORAD SDC IDRC DFID SIDA	ABIA DANIDA		ESRC	Building research capacity in the South
ABIA DFID IDRC	ESRC WELL NORAD SDC	SIDA		Ensuring research is accessible to users
WELL SDC	DFID DANIDA	NORAD SIDA IDRC	ESRC ABIA	Creation of new technologies that can be scaled up and applied in the South
NORAD				Other objectives

**Q4. What are the trends in relation to your organisation's research funding?**

<i>Definite trend</i>	<i>Some trend</i>	<i>No trend</i>	<i>Trend is in opposite direction</i>	<i>Questions</i>
ABIA DFID	ESRC NORAD WELL SIDA	SDC		There is increased recognition of the importance of research as a tool for development
ESRC DFID IDRC	WELL NORAD ABIA SIDA	SDC		Budgets for development research are increasing
WELL DFID SIDA	ESRC DANIDA	ABIA SDC NORAD IDRC		Pressure to cut staffing involved in managing research funds
DFID SIDA	ABIA SDC IDRC	ESRC WELL NORAD		Increasing focus on linking research to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
WELL DFID SIDA	NORAD SDC	ESRC ABIA		More emphasis on shifting research to the South
WELL SDC DFID	ESRC SIDA NORAD IDRC	ABIA		Stronger pressure to demonstrate the impact of research
WELL	ABIA DFID NORAD SIDA SDC	ESRC		Growing emphasis on linking research to policy & practice in our own organisation & in partner countries where we work
ABIA		WELL SIDA NORAD IDRC SDC	ESRC DFID	More emphasis on funding responsive short-term research
	WELL SDC SIDA	ESRC NORAD ABIA DFID		More emphasis on research into new technologies for use in the South

**Q5. Is encouraging effective research communications seen as a priority in your organisation?**

ABIA DFID	Yes – it is already high on the agenda
WELL SDC NORAD IDRC	It is starting to be seen as a priority
SIDA DANIDA	It is on our agenda but we are not sure how to take it forward
	There is some attention being given to this but it is not seen as a priority at present
	No – it is not on our agenda

**Q6. Does your organisation have an overall strategy for research communications?**

ESRC DFID	Yes – we have an overall strategy (please include a copy with your reply)
IDRC	Some elements exist, but not an overall strategy (please include a copy)
WELL ABIA SIDA	We are currently working on a strategy
NORAD SDC DANIDA	No overall strategy exists at present

**Q7. Does your organisation provide guidelines to researchers to help with research communications?**

ESRC DFID	Yes – we have a set of guidelines
	Some elements exist, but not a full set of guidelines
	We are currently working on a set of guidelines
WELL ABIA NORAD DANIDA	SDC SIDA IDRC
	No guidelines exist at present

**Q8. How much attention is given to research communication during the grant application and selection process?**

	Researchers are required to spell out a detailed communication plan, providing a clear picture of how they will engage with target audiences
ESRC WELL NORAD SDC	DFID SIDA IDRC DANIDA
	Researchers have to provide some indication of their communication plans, but not in much detail
ABIA	Communication is not an issue we put much emphasis on during the selection process

**Q9. Are research communication efforts monitored during the course of a project?**

DFID IDRC DANIDA	Yes
ESRC ABIA	NORAD SIDA
	We keep an eye on this, but do not follow up consistently to check that communication efforts are effective
WELL SDC	No – we do not monitor communication efforts

**Q10. How much of a research project budget do you expect to be spent on communication work?**

DFID (10%)	We expect budgets to include a minimum allocation for communication work
ESRC (5%) WELL (10%) ABIA (10%) DANIDA (5%)	SDC SIDA IDRC (10%)
	We do not specify a proportion, but we are prepared to fund communication work
	We do not fund communication work

**Q11. Do you fund communication work by research organisations that is not related to specific research projects?**

ESRC NORAD	SIDA IDRC	We provide funding for communication activities as part of core funding to organisations
ESRC WELL	NORAD DFID	We provide specific grants to research organisations for communication work not tied to research projects
ABIA DANIDA		No – we only support communication work related to the research projects we fund

**Q12. Does your research department have staff with specific responsibility and skills for coordinating communication work?**

WELL DFID		Yes – we have specialist staff working on research communications work in the department
DFID SIDA		Yes – we use consultant(s) to coordinate communication work
ESRC IDRC		No – but we enlist the help of specialist staff working elsewhere in the organisation
ABIA NORAD SDC		No – communication work is incorporated into general staff responsibilities
DANIDA (done via research networks)		Other arrangements

**Q13. Does your research department have a specific central budget for managing and promoting research communications?**

WELL DFID		Yes – it represents a part of the department's budget (ie. funding for centrally coordinated communications activities in addition to funding built into research project budgets)
ESRC ABIA NORAD DANIDA	SDC SIDA IDRC	No

**Q14. What centrally organised communication activities does your research department get involved in?**

<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Questions</i>	
ESRC WELL SDC	SIDA IDRC DFID	ABIA DANIDA	NORAD	Making basic information on research grants available	
WELL SDC DFID	SIDA IDRC	ESRC ABIA	NORAD	Publicising highlights of successful research projects	
WELL ABIA IDRC	SDC DANIDA	NORAD SIDA DFID	ESRC	Encouraging research teams to engage with staff within our agency during the course of their research	
ABIA IDRC	NORAD SDC SIDA DANIDA	ESRC WELL DFID		Organising internal workshops to present research findings to agency staff	
ABIA IDRC DFID	SDC SIDA DANIDA	WELL	NORAD	Hosting in-country stakeholder workshops/seminars	
WELL	ABIA SIDA IDRC	SDC DFID	NORAD	Organising media briefings/issuing press releases to publicise research findings	
SIDA DFID	IDRC	SDC	WELL ABIA NORAD	Providing funding for research communication initiatives managed by knowledge intermediaries, eg. SciDev.net or Eldis	
DFID		IDRC	WELL ABIA NORAD	SDC SIDA	Arrange communications training workshops for researchers
				We do not get involved in organising these kind of activities	

**Q15. Which target audiences do you see as the main priority for your centrally organised research communication work?**

<i>very important</i>	<i>important</i>	<i>fairly important</i>	<i>not important</i>	<i>Questions</i>
ABIA NORAD SDC	DFID IDRC	WELL DANIDA	ESRC SIDA	Staff within our own agency
ABIA DFID IDRC	ESRC WELL NORAD	SIDA		Policy makers within our own government/parliament
DFID	WELL IDRC	ESRC ABIA	NORAD SIDA	The media and the general public in our own country
WELL ABIA SDC	DFID SIDA IDRC	DANIDA	ESRC NORAD	The development research community
WELL DFID IDRC		ABIA SIDA	ESRC NORAD	The wider international development community in the North
DFID SIDA IDRC	WELL DANIDA	ABIA	ESRC NORAD	Policy makers in the South
DFID SIDA IDRC	WELL DANIDA	ABIA	ESRC NORAD	Practitioners in the South
DFID SIDA IDRC		WELL	ESRC ABIA NORAD	The media and the general public in the South

**Q16. What do you see as the major barriers preventing research from having a greater impact?**

Score: 4 (very important) 3 (important) 2 (fairly important) 1 (not important)

<b>Weighted Average Score</b>	<b>very important</b>	<b>important</b>	<b>fairly important</b>	<b>not important</b>	<b>Questions</b>
2.7	SIDA	WELL ABIA DANIDA SDC DFID	NORAD IDRC	ESRC	Research is not sufficiently relevant to target users
1.7		WELL	ABIA DFID IDRC	ESRC SDC SIDA	The quality of research outputs is sometimes a problem
2.8	SDC SIDA	WELL NORAD DFID	ESRC ABIA	IDRC	Lack of interest in research among target groups
2.8	ABIA NORAD SDC	SIDA DANIDA	ESRC WELL DFID	IDRC	Information overload among target groups
3.5	WELL ABIA SDC DFID IDRC	SIDA DANIDA	ESRC		Not enough care is taken to engage user groups at the early stages of research projects
3.5	ESRC WELL ABIA DFID	SDC SIDA IDRC DANIDA			Researchers do not have a strong enough incentive to put in the effort needed to communicate with non-academic audiences
2.3		SDC DFID IDRC DANIDA	WELL ABIA NORAD SIDA	ESRC	Inadequate funding for research communication work
3.0	ABIA SIDA	ESRC WELL IDRC DANIDA	SDC DFID		Researchers lack the skills to communicate with non-specialists
2.8	SIDA	ABIA SDC DFID DANIDA	ESRC WELL IDRC		Research organisations do not put enough effort into communicating their research
2.3	SDC	ABIA IDRC	ESRC WELL	DFID SIDA	Research is too dispersed – it needs to be brought together so it adds up
n/a	ESRC SDC	SDC			Other barriers

## ***PART 2: Survey of Research Organisations and Networks***

Responses were received from the following organisations (the acronyms in the left hand column are used in the subsequent tables).

KFPE	Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (Switzerland)
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Senegal)
NETARD	Danish Network for Agricultural Research for Development
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management (Netherlands)
IDS	Institute of Development Studies (UK)
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development (UK)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute (UK)
STEPRI	Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (Ghana)
UNU	United Nations University - Maastricht Economic and social Research and training centre on Innovation and Technology – UNU-MERIT (Netherlands)

Note that additional responses from members of the EADI, NETARD and KFPE research networks can be found on the Workshop website: [www.ids.ac.uk/research-comms](http://www.ids.ac.uk/research-comms)

**Q3. What trends do you see in relation to the research funding environment?**

<i>Definite trend</i>	<i>Some trend</i>	<i>No trend</i>	<i>Trend is in opposite direction</i>	<i>Questions</i>
IDS CODESRIA	IIED ODI	KFPE	STEPRI NETARD	Funding available for development research is increasing
IDS	KFPE NETARD IIED ODI CODESRIA	STEPRI		Research projects are getting larger, with bigger budgets and longer time frames
IIED CODESRIA	STEPRI KFPE NETARD IDS	ODI		Increasing focus on linking research to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
NETARD IIED ODI IDS	STEPRI KFPE CODESRIA			More emphasis on North-South research partnerships
NETARD IIED IDS	STEPRI KFPE	ODI CODESRIA		More research projects are being led by Southern research organisations
STEPRI IIED	KFPE NETARD ODI IDS CODESRIA			Stronger pressure to demonstrate the impact of research
IIED	STEPRI KFPE NETARD ODI IDS CODESRIA			Growing emphasis on linking research to policy and practice
	STEPRI NETARD CODESRIA	KFPE IIED ODI IDS		More emphasis from funders on responsive short-term research
STEPRI NETARD	KFPE ODI CODESRIA	IIED IDS		More emphasis on research into new technologies for use in the South

**Q4. Is improving research communication seen as a priority in your organisation / network?**

STEPRI IIED ODI	IDS CODESRIA ECDPM	Yes – it is already high on the agenda
KFPE UNU		It is starting to be seen as a priority
NETARD		It is on our agenda but we are not sure how to take it forward
		There is some attention being given to this but it is not seen as a priority at present
		No – it is not on our agenda

**Q5. Does your organisation/network have an overall communication strategy?**

KFPE IIED	ODI IDS	Yes – we have an overall strategy
STEPRI NETARD UNU	CODESRIA ECDPM	Some elements exist, but not an overall strategy
		We are currently working on a strategy
		No overall strategy exists at present

**Q6. Who is championing the need for better research communications?**

<b>Very important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Fairly important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Questions</b>
NETARD ECDPM	KFPE ODI IIED UNU	IDS		Funders
ODI UNU IDS	KFPE NETARD IIED	ECDPM		Senior management
KFPE IIED IDS	NETARD ODI	UNU ECDPM		Individual researchers who are communication enthusiasts
UNU IDS	NETARD IIED ODI	ECDPM		Communication staff
UNU ECDPM	NETARD IDS		IIED ODI	Research networks
NETARD			ODI ECDPM	Other stakeholders

**Q7. Does your organisation/network have staff with specific responsibility for coordinating research communication work?**

STEPRI NETARD IIED ODI	UNU IDS CODESRIA ECDPM	We have designated staff working on communications compared to total research staff ( <i>see figures below</i> )
IIED ECDPM		We employ outside consultants to manage this work
NETARD ODI		We enlist the help of other staff working in the organisation
KFPE ODI ECDPM		Communication work is incorporated into general staff responsibilities
IIED		Other arrangements

The ratio of communication staff compared to researchers is shown in the table below.

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Number of researchers</b>	<b>Number of communications staff</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
UNU	40	1	40.0
STEPRI	10	1	10.0
ODI	75	9	8.3
IDS	91	11	8.3
IIED	40	6.5	6.2
NETARD	2	1	2.0

*Note: staff figures are in full time equivalents*

**Q8. Which target audiences do you see as priorities for your research communication work?**

<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Fairly important</i>	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Questions</i>
STEPRI NETARD ODI UNU IDS	KFPE IIED CODESRIA	ECDPM		Policy makers within your own government/parliament
STEPRI IDS	KFPE UNU CODESRIA	NETARD IIED ODI ECDPM		The media and the general public in your own country
STEPRI NETARD IDS CODESRIA	KFPE IIED UNU	ODI ECDPM		The research community
IIED UNU IDS ECDPM	STEPRI KFPE CODESRIA	NETARD ODI		The international development community in the North
IIED ODI UNU IDS CODESRIA	STEPRI NETARD ECDPM	KFPE		Policy makers in the South
NETARD IIED UNU IDS CODESRIA	STEPRI ECDPM	KFPE ODI		Practitioners in the South
UNU IDS CODESRIA	STEPRI	NETARD IIED ODI ECDPM	KFPE	The media and the general public in the South
	STEPRI			Other

**Q9. How do you engage research users during the course of your research**

<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Questions</i>
STEPRI ODI UNU CODESRIA	IIED IDS NETARD ECDPM			We consult with potential target audiences to assess research priorities
	STEPRI IIED ODI UNU IDS ECDPM	CODESRIA NETARD		We invite research users to join advisory groups
UNU	STEPRI CODESRIA ECDPM NETARD	IIED ODI IDS		We invite research users to take part in exchanges/internships
STEPRI IIED ODI UNU IDS CODESRIA NETARD	ECDPM			We host in-country workshops/study tours involving researchers and research users

**Q10. How easy is it to fund research communication work?**

NETARD	We do not usually have a problem finding funds for communication work
IIED ODI UNU IDS	Finding funding is difficult, but we usually manage to find most of what we need
STEPRI CODESRIA ECDPM	Funding is very hard to find, and we rarely have enough
	We do not put a lot of effort into finding funds for communications work

**Q11. What kind of research communication work is hardest to fund?**

<i>Very difficult</i>	<i>Challenging</i>	<i>Relatively easy</i>	<i>Very easy</i>	<i>Questions</i>
KFPE UNU IDS	CODESRIA ECDPM	IIED	STEPRI ODI	Covering core costs of communication units
ECDPM	STEPRI ODI	UNU CODESRIA	IIED IDS	Repackaging and synthesis work that cuts across several projects
ODI ECDPM	STEPRI IIED	UNU IDS	CODESRIA	Identifying and targeting hard-to-reach audiences
UNU ECDPM	IDS	STEPRI IIED	ODI CODESRIA	Developing new communication channels
ODI UNU ECDPM	STEPRI IIED	IDS CODESRIA		Collaborative cross-country communications activities

**Q12. How much attention is given to communication issues by funders when researchers apply for research grants?**

ODI UNU IDS	Some funders expect researchers to spell out a detailed communication plan when they submit proposals, providing a clear picture of how to engage target audiences.
STEPRI KFPE NETARD IIED	ODI UNU IDS CODESRIA
IIED IDS ECDPM	Some funders will not support communications work
	Researchers generally have to provide some indication of their communication plans, but not in much detail

**Q13. Are research communication efforts monitored during the course of a project?**

IDS	Some funders look into this during project reviews, and will raise it as an issue if they feel that not enough effort is being put into communications work.
STEPRI KFPE ODI	UNU IDS CODESRIA
NETARD IIED IDS	Funders do not usually monitor our communication efforts
	Some funders keep an eye on this, but do not follow up consistently to check that communication efforts are effective

**Q14. How much of a research project budget is normally allocated to communication work?**

STEPRI (2-5%) IIED (5-15%) ODI (5-8%)	UNU (2-5%) IDS (5-15%) CODESRIA	Most large research projects budgets include an allocation of between ___% and ___% for communication work
ECDPM		Budgets do not normally include an allocation for communication work

**Q15. Do your research funders provide additional support in helping you to communicate research?**

<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Questions</i>
	STEPRI KFPE UNU IIED	ODI IDS		They publicise highlights of successful research projects (describe how this is done)
	STEPRI KFPE IIED UNU CODESRIA	ODI		They promote dialogue between agency staff and research teams during the course of the research
	KFPE UNU CODESRIA	STEPRI IIED ODI IDS		They organise internal workshops to present research findings to agency staff
STEPRI	KFPE UNU CODESRIA	IIED IDS	ODI	They host in-country stakeholder workshops/seminars involving researchers
	STEPRI CODESRIA	KFPE UNU	KFPE IIED ODI IDS	They organise media briefings/issuing press releases to publicise research findings
	UNU CODESRIA	STEPRI IIED	ODI IDS	They provide financial support for our communication unit (in addition to research grants)
		STEPRI IIED UNU IDS CODESRIA	ODI	They provide top-up grants for specific communication activities
ODI		STEPRI IDS CODESRIA	KFPE IIED UNU	They provide guidelines on effective communications
	UNU CODESRIA	STEPRI ODI IDS	KFPE IIED	They provide training workshops to researchers on communication techniques

**Q16. What do you see as the major barriers preventing your research from having a greater impact?**

Score: 4 (very important) 3 (important) 2 (fairly important) 1 (not important)

Weighted average score	Very important	Important	Fairly important	Not important	Questions
2.3	NETARD ECDPM	KFPE IDS	STEPRI IIED	ODI UNU CODESRIA	The research is often not relevant enough to target users
1.9	ECDPM		KFPE NETARD IIED IDS CODESRIA	STEPRI ODI UNU	The quality of research outputs is sometimes a problem
2.6	STEPRI ECDPM	KFPE IDS	NETARD IIED ODI CODESRIA	UNU	Lack of interest in research among target groups
2.8	IIED ECDPM	STEPRI ODI IDS	UNU CODESRIA	NETARD	Information overload among target groups
3.0	KFPE NETARD IIED ECDPM	UNU IDS	ODI CODESRIA	STEPRI	Not enough care is taken to engage user groups at the early stages of research
3.1	KFPE NETARD IIED UNU ECDPM	IDS	ODI CODESRIA	STEPRI	Researchers do not have strong enough incentive to communicate with non-academic audiences
3.0	NETARD IIED UNU	STEPRI IDS CODESRIA ECDPM	KFPE	ODI	Researchers lack the skills to communicate with non-specialists
3.1	IIED UNU ECDPM	STEPRI NETARD CODESRIA	ODI IDS		Our communications units needs strengthening
3.2	STEPRI KFPE CODESRIA ECDPM	IIED UNU IDS	NETARD ODI		Inadequate funding for research communication work
2.6	NETARD	IIED IDS ECDPM	STEPRI UNU CODESRIA	ODI	Our organisation is not visible enough
1.9		KFPE ECDPM	NETARD ODI IDS CODESRIA	STEPRI IIED UNU	Our research is too dispersed – it needs to be brought together so it adds up

### ***PART 3: Survey of Knowledge Intermediaries***

Responses were received from the following organisations (the acronyms in the left hand column are used in the subsequent tables).

GDN	Global Development Network (India & Egypt)
HINARI	Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative (Switzerland)
IDS	IDS Knowledge Services, Institute of Development Studies (UK)
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (UK)
PANOS	Panos (UK)
SCIDEV	Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net)

#### **Q2. Who is championing the need for better research communications?**

<b><i>Very important</i></b>	<b><i>Important</i></b>	<b><i>Fairly important</i></b>	<b><i>Not important</i></b>	<b><i>Questions</i></b>
HINARI PANOS GDN	IDS SCIDEV	INASP		Funders
PANOS	HINARI INASP IDS SCIDEV GDN			Senior management within research organisations
PANOS SCIDEV GDN	HINARI INASP	IDS		Individual researchers who are communication enthusiasts
IDS SCIDEV	PANOS GDN	HINARI INASP		Communication staff within research organisations
GDN	HINARI	PANOS INASP IDS		Research networks
	HINARI SCIDEV		PANOS	Other stakeholders
			HINARI PANOS	Nobody is championing this issue at present

**Q3. Which target audiences do you see as priorities for your research communication work?**

<b>Very important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Fairly important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Questions</b>
IDS	HINARI PANOS SCIDEV	GDN		Policy makers within government/parliament in the North
		IDS GDN SCIDEV	HINARI PANOS	The media and the general public in the North
INASP GDN	HINARI PANOS SCIDEV	IDS		The research community
HINARI IDS	GDN SCIDEV	PANOS		The international development community in the North
HINARI PANOS SCIDEV	IDS GDN	INASP		Policy makers in the South
PANOS IDS	GDN SCIDEV	HINARI INASP		Practitioners in the South
PANOS SCIDEV		IDS GDN	HINARI	The media and the general public in the South
	PANOS			Other

**Q4. What do you see as the major barriers preventing research from having a greater impact?**

Score: 4 (very important) 3 (important) 2 (fairly important) 1 (not important)

<b>Weighted average score</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Fairly important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Questions</b>
2.6	PANOS	INASP	HINARI IDS GDN		The research is often not relevant enough to target users
2.2		HINARI INASP	IDS GDN	PANOS	The quality of research outputs is sometimes a problem
2.8	IDS	HINARI GDN SCIDEV		PANOS	Lack of interest in research among target groups
2.8	PANOS IDS	INASP	HINARI GDN SCIDEV		Information overload among target groups
2.4		PANOS IDS GDN	HINARI	SCIDEV	Not enough care is taken to engage user groups at the early stages of research
3.5	PANOS IDS GDN	HINARI INASP SCIDEV			Researchers do not have strong enough incentive to put in the effort needed to communicate with non-academic audiences
2.8	GDN	HINARI PANOS	IDS SCIDEV		Researchers lack the skills to communicate with non-specialists
3.2	IDS GDN	HINARI INASP SCIDEV	PANOS		Communications units within research organisations needs strengthening
3.7	PANOS INASP	IDS GDN	HINARI SCIDEV		Inadequate funding for research communication work
2.5	GDN	HINARI	IDS	PANOS	Research organisations are not visible enough
2.0	GDN	IDS		HINARI PANOS SCIDEV	Research is too dispersed – it needs to be brought together so it adds up
n/a	PANOS GDN				Other barriers

## Annex B: Workshop Participants

Name	Position	Organisation	Country
Joanne Alston	Head of Central Research Department	Department for International Development (DFID)	UK
Geoff Barnard	Head of Information	Institute for Development Studies (IDS)	UK
Andrew Barnett	Director	The Policy Practice	UK
Deepayan Basu Ray	id21	Institute for Development Studies (IDS)	UK
Jarle Bjerkholt	Senior Advisor	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)	Norway
Liz Carlile	Head of Communications	International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)	UK
Joanne Carpenter	RELAY Programme Officer	Panos London	UK
Andrew Chetley	Director of Programmes	Healthlink Worldwide	UK
Kirsty Cockburn	Head of Communications	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)	UK
David Dickson	Director	SciDev.net	UK
Paul Engel	Director	European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)	Netherlands
Jean-Marc Fleury	Executive Director	World Federation of Science Journalists	Canada
Solveig Freundthal	Senior Research Advisor - Dept for Research Cooperation (SAREC)	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	Sweden
Sherine Ghoneim	Director - GDNet Cairo	GDNet	Egypt
Joseph Gogo	Former Director	Science and Technology Economic Research Council (STEPRI)	Ghana
Sara Gwyn	PERI Coordinator	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications	UK
Lawrence Haddad	Director	Institute for Development Studies (IDS)	UK
Teresa Hanley	Programmes Director	Panos London	UK
Ingvild Hestad	Head of Information	Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI)	Norway
Ingie Hovland	Research Officer, RAPID Programme	Overseas Development Institute	UK
Bente Illsøe		Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA)	Denmark
Caroline Knowles	Head of Communications	Institute for Development Studies (IDS)	UK
Thomas Lawo	Executive Secretary	European Association for Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI)	Germany
Marc Levy	Chef du Bureau de la veille stratégique et de la prospective	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	France

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Country</b>
Maurice Long	Publisher Coordinator	HINARI	Switzerland
Jon-Andri Lys	Secretary General	Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE)	Switzerland
Nicole McHugh	Development Specialist	Advisory Board for Irish Aid	Ireland
Henk Molenaar	Senior Expert, Research & Communication Division	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS)	Netherlands
Steve Morgan	Associate Director	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)	UK
Patrick Moriarty	Head - Knowledge Development and Advocacy	International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC)	Netherlands
Nick Ismael Perkins	Head of Communications, Networking and Learning	Healthlink Worldwide	UK
Carole Priestley	Head, Special Projects	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications	UK
Amitav Rath	Director	Policy Research International	Canada
Wyn Richards	Director, Communications and Knowledge Management - Research into Use Programme	NR International	UK
Véronique Sauvat	Responsable Division Appui à la Gestion des Connaissances	Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	France
Jacqueline Schmid	Thematic Service Knowledge and Research	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)	Switzerland
Christopher Smart	Resource Person		Canada
Val Snewin	International Activities Manager	Wellcome Trust	UK
Anne Sørensen	Head	Danish Network for Agricultural Research for Development (NETARD)	Denmark
Zissimos Vergos	Programme Officer, DG Research	European Commission (EC)	Brussels
Isabel Vogel	Manager, Strategic Learning Initiative	Institute for Development Studies (IDS)	UK
Dylan Winder	Team Leader, Communications - Central Research Department	Department for International Development (DFID)	UK
Jean Woo	Programme Officer	International Development Research Center (IDRC)	Canada

# Annex C: Workshop Programme

**MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH:  
How can funders encourage more effective research communication?**

***Workshop Programme – Day 1 (16<sup>th</sup> October)***

VENUE: Institute of Development Studies	
14.00	<p><b>Introduction to IDS research communication work</b></p> <p>A series of short presentations, with time for questions and discussion.</p> <p>14.00 – How IDS approaches research Communication (Caroline Knowles)</p> <p>14.30 – Introduction to IDS Knowledge Services (Geoff Barnard)</p> <p>14.45 – Eldis (Alan Stanley)</p> <p>15.15 – id21 (Alistair Scott)</p> <p>15.45 – BRIDGE (Hazel Reeves)</p>
16.00	<b>Tea</b>
16:30-18.15	<p><b>Introductory Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welcome from workshop organisers</li> <li>▪ A round of introductions from participants</li> <li>▪ Clarifying objectives for the workshop</li> <li>▪ Presentation of Background Paper (Geoff Barnard &amp; Liz Carlile)</li> <li>▪ Initial feedback and discussion</li> </ul>
18.30	<b>Welcome reception and dinner</b>

## **Workshop Programme – Day 2 (17<sup>th</sup> October)**

<b>VENUE: University Conference Centre – Bramber House, Gallery Room 1</b>	
9.15	<b>Introduction to Morning Session: Sharing Perspectives</b>
9.30	<p><b>The Research Organisation’s Perspective (North and South)</b></p> <p>Round table discussion of how research organisations see research communication. What are the lessons they have learned? How different is the picture for research organisations in the South? What are the key issues/questions that need to be on the table?</p>
10.15	<p><b>The Knowledge Intermediary’s Perspective</b></p> <p>How do knowledge intermediaries see their role in research communication? How different is the picture for knowledge intermediaries in the South? What are the key issues/questions that need to be on the table?</p>
11.00	<b>Coffee</b>
11.30	<p><b>The Funder’s Perspective</b></p> <p>What has worked best in stimulating effective communication? What are the key issues/questions that need to be on the table?</p>
12.15	<p><b>Key issues emerging</b></p> <p>Highlighting key issues for more detailed discussion in the afternoon working groups</p>
12.45	<b>Lunch</b>
14.00	<p><b>Working Groups</b></p> <p>Discussion in smaller groups – digging more deeply into six priority issues emerging from the morning</p>
15.00	<b>Report back to plenary</b>
15.30	<b>Tea</b>
16.00	<p><b>Looking ahead: Creating a vision</b></p> <p>Group exercise to create a vision for how we would like research communication to be perceived and conducted 5-10 years from now</p>
17.15	<b>Wrap up - Session ends</b>

## **Workshop Programme – Day 3 (18<sup>th</sup> October)**

<b>VENUE: University Conference Centre – Bramber House, Gallery Room 1</b>	
9.15	<p><b>Introduction to Day 3</b></p> <p>Recap on progress to date</p> <p>Agree tasks for Working Groups</p>
9.30	<p><b>Working Groups</b></p> <p>Research organisations, knowledge intermediaries and funders to divide into separate group(s) to debate the question <b><i>“How can funders encourage more effective research communication?”</i></b></p>
10.45	<b>Coffee</b>
11.15	<b>Report Back from Working Groups</b>
12.00	<p><b>Conclusions/Next Steps</b></p> <p>Agreement on what should happen next, and concrete follow-up plans</p>
13.00	<b>Workshop ends/Lunch</b>