IDRC COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

IN_FOCUS PYRAMID AND POLICY WORKSHOPS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to provide some early findings on the strengths and weaknesses of the IDRC In-Focus Pyramid in order to identify any course corrections that might be needed. The In-Focus Pyramid is a key strategy of the Communications Division for ‘closing the loop’ in Canada and in developing countries. The study evaluates the first implementation of the Pyramid Strategy – that for “Local Level Management of Water” (the Water Pyramid). It also looks at the Policy Workshops, which were not organized by the Communications Division.

The Water Pyramid is a severe test of the Pyramid Strategy partly because it was the first time the strategy was implemented and partly because the Water Pyramid was not designed from the outset as an integrated strategy but rather assembled from different opportunities that presented themselves. In our conclusions and recommendations, we have been mindful of this and sought to distinguish between those findings that are more specific to the Water Pyramid and those that we believe are generic to the Pyramid Strategy.

The study examines the response from different groups to three individual elements in the Pyramid Strategy (In-Focus book, IDRC Briefing, Website) and to the Water Policy Workshop at which the book was launched. We also assessed the effectiveness of the In-Focus Pyramid strategy as a whole in reaching different target audiences for IDRC outreach. We did not examine other activities of the Communications Division that contribute to ‘closing the loop’, such as media relations and the Centre’s relations with partners. Nor did we review other major activities of the Communications Division, such as the input provided to the Summit of the Americas and NEPAD.

The sampling strategy to obtain the evidence for the study was to identify different groups who had been exposed to one or more of the elements of the IDRC In-Focus Pyramid and to interview them by one of three means: face to face interviews, telephone interviews or e-mail survey. The seven groups were: Kenyan policy advisors, senior African policy makers, participants to the Water Policy Workshop (and a comparative group of participants to the Health Policy Forum); on-line purchasers of the In-Focus book, visitors to the water page of the IDRC website, and IDRC staff. The total number of respondents across all groups was 105.

The Communications Division is operating in an organizational environment in which ‘closing the loop’ is seen as part of the job of Program staff as well as that of Communications staff and the job descriptions of Program staff have been changed to reflect a larger responsibility for ‘closing the loop’. Therefore the In-Focus Pyramid relies on the active participation of Program staff for its implementation. It is for these reasons that the study has included the views of IDRC staff and management on both the Pyramid Strategy and on ‘closing the loop’. Bridging the research-policy gap is a challenge that IDRC is taking very seriously. It has launched a major study under the leadership of the Evaluation Unit to better understand the policy influence of its projects. The findings of this project, due in 2003, will also have important implications for the Pyramid Strategy.

Our interviews with researchers revealed that they believe that much more research is needed on the research-policy interface. On the other hand, the policymakers interviewed were more
confident that they knew what was needed. This included short policy briefs that clearly show the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action, opportunities to ask experts questions directly, and getting the timing right. Policy windows, when decision-makers will pay attention to researchers, open and close rapidly.

Within IDRC, bridging the research-policy gap has been characterized as “Closing the Loop”. We found that this term covers a range of related concepts, or loops to be closed with different groups. It is important that the Communications Division be not only aware of these multiple loops when developing its Pyramid Strategy, but also be clear about which ones each individual In-Focus Pyramid will seek to close (and they may not always be the same ones). These “loops” are:

- **Providing feedback to project participants**: to those groups and institutions that have provided expertise and resources to the research projects;
- **Meta-studies** in which the results from different case studies or projects are compared and combined to provide broader insights often more useful to policy;
- **Going to scale** through extrapolation from pilot projects to broader geographic or organizational scales
- **Contribution to scientific knowledge**: ensuring that the results are known to other researchers
- **Feedback into IDRC programs**: ensuring that lessons are learned internally
- **Showcasing the achievements of IDRC to Canada and beyond**, especially to the key stakeholder groups of Canadian federal government departments, CIDA and other donors.

IDRC staff point to a number of past and ongoing success stories in bridging the research-policy interface, including Acacia, Crucible, MIMAP, TEHIP, TIPS and EcoHealth. They look to the Communications Division to support them and IDRC researchers with generic communication tools for closing the loop and for advice on messages and marketing. The website is seen as key to IDRC’s ability to close the loop in the future.

The study interviewed 44 people who had read the In-Focus book on Local Level Management of Water. It found that it was well received as a highly readable, general backgrounder on the topic that could meet the needs of general readers, students, NGOs and local level water managers. It is these same features that readers, especially the policy advisors in Kenya, cite as reasons why the book not suitable for policy makers. The reasons given were that it lacked enough specificity and context to provide reality checks for the decision maker who wanted to compare one policy situation with that described in the book. It was not structured to rapidly find information but is designed to be read from beginning to end as a book - but policy makers rarely read books as background to policy decisions. The book was more positively received in Canada than in Kenya.

These findings pose a major question for the Communications Division. Does it want to change the format and approach of the In-Focus book series to better reach policymakers, especially in the countries where the projects took place, or build on the positive response of educators, NGOs etc. in Canada and adapt the books to meet the needs of the audiences it appears to have already? Some of the content problems in the Water book can be (and are being) dealt with in succeeding In-Focus books. Others are generic to the use of books as a communications tool to reach policy makers.
A brochure in the *IDRC Briefing* series is part of the *In-Focus Pyramid*. We have few data from readers of the Water Briefing but there is a question about the design continuity between the book and the briefing (and the website). Respondents didn’t realize they were part of a suite of *In-Focus Pyramid* products so the cumulative impact of the dossiers concept inherent to the Pyramid Strategy is lost.

The website is a key element in the outreach strategy as it enables visitors to access the research materials that form the foundation to the pyramid. The content of the website is focused on the other pyramid elements – the book and the Briefing. The challenge will be to keep the website current and to ensure that new data and links are added to what is, in essence, an orphan program. This will be less of a problem for other *In-Focus Pyramids* that have a home within a PI.

The Water Policy Workshop was held in Ottawa in March 2002. Twenty-two participants responded to our survey. The participants were largely from Canada (74%), especially from federal government departments (54%). CIDA officials made up 30% of attendees. The presentations were mainly by developing country researchers.

The purpose of the IDRC Policy Workshops is to help bridge the research-policy gap, to contribute to knowledge and to showcase the work of the Centre, especially to an Ottawa policy audience. The evidence shows that in the case of the water policy workshop, only the last objective was partially achieved. The organization of the content of the workshop as well as some of the logistics meant that there was a disconnect between the keynote message, the *In-Focus* Water book that was launched at the workshop, the lessons from 30 years of IDRC research (that was the basis of the book), and the actual workshop presentations made by researchers from different PIs. In contrast, the Health Forum was more successful in terms of participants’ assessments.

Beyond some problems in the organization of the water policy workshop, there is a more general danger in billing a meeting as a workshop dedicated to bridging the research-policy interface and then largely designing it as a “show and tell”. Participants tend to evaluate the meeting on the basis of the stated objectives and are less impressed if it does not meet them. It is also difficult to meet multiple objectives within one meeting format. There are a number of recommendations for improving the policy workshops and a proposal to experiment with different formats such as short two-hour ‘question and answer’ style meetings outside of office hours to attract policy makers (Breakfast at IDRC).

The *In-Focus Pyramid* has helped to mobilize and enthrone IDRC program staff to get on board with the various *In-Focus* products and six more *In-Focus Pyramids* are already in development. One difficulty we have found is the lack of a good explanatory framework for the *In-Focus Pyramid* – its conceptual basis, its criteria and its implementation. In the report we pose a number of questions about the pyramid strategy. These include:

- How is a topic selected and ‘framed’ for pyramid treatment?
- Can one pyramid fit all situations and all audiences and all topics?
- Are there missing elements in the pyramid – given that the current elements do not reach policy makers in developing countries?
- Can the pyramid strategy be made more strategic?

The report includes a number of suggestions for strengthening the Pyramid Strategy. They are:

- Publish a new series of IDRC Policy Briefs
- Develop a set of generic communication tools for IDRC researchers
- Start a new communications program for journalists
- Strengthen the capacity of the Regional Offices in communications.

Our main conclusions are that IDRC is at a fork in the road regarding the research-policy interface. Its present pyramid strategy works well for Canada, especially Canadian civil society but not for bridging the gap with developing country policymakers. It must either redesign its present pyramid strategy to reach policy makers in the South or it must redefine the objectives of the pyramid strategy to bring them into line with the audiences in the North that it is successfully reaching. The dossier approach has much appeal but it could be made more flexible and more effective.

These findings are preliminary and based on one, somewhat anomalous case study of the Water Pyramid. We would therefore recommend that IDRC establish an ongoing mechanism for obtaining feedback on the next pyramids in the series. The Centre will soon have the results of a major review of its own projects in terms of their impact on policy. These results and a closer look at the Secretariat modality that has given IDRC many success stories, should also help guide any changes that the Centre decides to make to the In-Focus Pyramid and the Communications Division’s overall strategy to ‘Close the Loop’.
1 Background and approach

1.1 Introduction

‘Closing the Loop’ has entered the IDRC lexicon within the last five years and is now well established in the corporate culture including its program strategy and the job responsibilities of staff. In the 1990’s the term was being increasingly used in various contexts, including green industry (Closed Loop Recycling), education (providing feedback to students), management systems and software, and in evaluation.\(^1\) It was the focus of an international meeting sponsored by ISNAR in 1997 on Closing the Loop: from research on natural resources to policy change and was used within the CGIAR by 1998\(^2\).

The Communications Division of IDRC has developed a Communications and Outreach Strategy and suite of tools to support the Centre’s efforts to Close the Loop (CTL). These include a special book series (In-Focus books), IDRC Briefings, thematic pages on the IDRC Website and support to IDRC Policy Workshops. The first integrated effort of Communications Division to CTL using the new strategy was for IDRC-supported research on local management of water resources. A number of other IDRC research areas are slated for similar support from the Communications Division, involving a major investment of time and resources on the part of the Centre. It was therefore decided to do an early evaluation of experience with the “Water Pyramid” to determine if some strategic adjustments are needed.

1.2 Terms of reference

The purpose of the study is to provide some preliminary evidence on the strengths and weaknesses of the IDRC Communications and Outreach Strategy for Closing the Loop in Canada and in developing countries. The study is asked to examine both the individual components in the strategy (In-Focus book, IDRC Briefing, Website and Policy Workshops) as well as the strategy as a whole.

The study was designed to collect evidence from a range of the target groups (policy makers, technical advisors, researchers and civil society leaders) for the Communications Pyramid for Water (the Water Pyramid) to obtain their views on the different CTL

\(^1\) Closing the Loop includes learning from evaluation, sharing good practice, feeding into planning and strategic developments and linking micro-level interventions to macro-level outputs.

components. In addition, the study interviewed management and staff in IDRC to better understand how the Communications CTL strategy could best support the overall Centre effort; and interviewed policy makers (mainly from Africa) to obtain their views about how best to bridge the research-policy interface.

The full terms of reference for the study are provided in Annex 1.

1.3 Approach and methods

The study was designed as evidence based - using the views of different target audiences that have been reached by IDRC’s outputs – and adding our own experience into the mix to arrive at some conclusions and recommendations. The problem with this approach turned out to be the unexpected level of difficulty in identifying and reaching the target audiences.

This difficulty was manifested in several different ways. First, the In-Focus Water book and *IDRC Water Briefing* had just been published and had received little distribution, so that the population of potential readers to interview was very limited. Second, the Policy Workshop on Water had taken place in March 2002 and the other two IDRC Policy Workshops were held the year before: on Trade (March 2001) and Health (May 2001). A gap of 6-18 months between the events and the evaluation is a test of both the participants’ memories and their willingness to participate in the study. There were also problems with the lists of participants for two of the three workshops.

Third, it was not possible to track the distribution of the *IDRC Water Briefing* for the sub-samples, so instead we gave a copy to some respondents in face-to-face interviews and ask them to comment on it. Finally, the web page questionnaire was posted only in August 2002 so there are few results from it at this time. It will yield more useful information in the future.

**Sampling strategy**

By combining various strategies to interview people who had experienced one or more of the components in the Communications Pyramid, we obtained four sub-samples whose responses were analysed qualitatively across and within groups. These were:

**Water Workshop Group:** The In-Focus Water book was launched at the Water Policy Workshop held in Ottawa in March 2002 and each participant received a copy, as well as those invited who could not attend. We contacted all participants to the Water Workshop by e-mail and asked them about the workshop, the book and the website.

**Kenyan In-Focus Book Group:** In Kenya, an experimental distribution of the book to policy makers in Nairobi took place in collaboration with the Regional Office, and follow-up face-to-face interviews were held in May-June 2002 in Nairobi with as many
as possible of those who had received the book. These interviews covered the book, the IDRC Water Briefing and the website.

*Book purchasers Group:* Purchasers of the book who agreed to be interviewed were contacted by telephone or by e-mail as they preferred.

*Water page website visitors Group:* A “pop-up” questionnaire was placed on the water page of the IDRC website in August 2002 asking visitors for their assessment of the web page and their search process. Monitoring of the responses is ongoing.

In addition to the four sub-groups groups interviewed on the Water Pyramid, three other groups were interviewed:

- **IDRC management and staff:** Their views on the Water Pyramid are included in section 4, 5 and 8. Their views and experience in Closing the Loop and their views on the role of the Communications Division are included in section 3.

- **Participants in the IDRC Health Policy Workshop** in 2001 were contacted by an e-survey focused on (a) the workshop and (b) the research to policy interface, in order to compare another IDRC Policy Workshop with the Water Policy Workshop (section 7).

- **Policy makers in Africa** attending a meeting in Nairobi. The views of this group on the research-policy interface were combined with those of policy actors attending the policy workshops (section 2).

*Methods*
The methods used are a combination of face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and e-surveys. In each case, the questions covered as many of the following areas as possible so that the responses could be comparatively analysed across subgroups for the Water Pyramid case study:

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3 Policy makers and advisors selected by the IDRC Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa were sent a copy of the In-Focus book on Water and the IDRC Water Briefing together with a letter from the IDRC Director of Communications asking for their help in evaluating them. The Regional Office arranged the interviews with the study team.

4 Health Sector Reform in the Americas: Improving the Research to Policy Interface: A Pre-Summit of the Americas Forum organized by IDRC and PAHO, Montreal, 18-20 April 2001.

5 The first IDRC Policy Workshop (Trade Negotiations and Trade Policies in Developing Countries, March 28 2001) was originally also to be evaluated. It was agreed not to pursue this part of the study because there was no record of who attended and the list of invitees was “high-level”, many of whom are known to have sent alternates in their place. Given that 18 months had passed, it was deemed inadvisable to contact the original invitees as it might not reflect well on IDRC.

- Research-policy interface
- In-Focus book on Water
- IDRC Water Briefing
- Water Policy Workshop
- Water page on the IDRC website

The analysis was based on content analysis of the responses and, given the small numbers, is qualitative except for some simple tabulations.

In addition, IDRC corporate and strategy documents on Closing the Loop, project documents, and job descriptions were reviewed, together with reference material on the research-policy interface.

Table 1: Study groups and respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY GROUPS</th>
<th>POPULATION SIZE</th>
<th>SAMPLE SIZE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Workshop participants</td>
<td>52 (?)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Focus book Kenyan group</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Focus book purchasers/recipient</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water web page visitors</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Workshop participants</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenyan policy makers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDRC staff</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 The sample size was defined as: those who received the e-mail questionnaire (for workshops); those who agreed to be interviewed by phone (for book purchasers) and those who were sent a free copy of the book (Kenyan sample). Water workshop participants also received a free copy of the book and were questioned about it and whether they had visited the website. The number of respondents for each In-Focus product was the sum of respondents across all sub-samples who were interviewed on it. This yielded, for example, a total of 44 respondents for the In-Focus book.
1.4 Structure of this report

Following the introductory section, the report first briefly reviews some of the main ideas about the nature of the research-policy interface, and how policy makers think the links between research and policy are made (section 2). We then examine the suite of communication products developed by the Communications Division in their strategy to help ‘close the loop’. These include the new In-Focus book series (section 4), “IDRC Briefings” (section 5) and the thematic pages on water of the IDRC website (section 6). Together these products form key platforms in the “In-Focus Pyramid”. The first test of this integrated outreach strategy is the pyramid products developed for “water”. In section 7 we review the policy workshops, which are events related to the pyramid. In section 8, the pyramid strategy is assessed as a whole, leading to some general conclusions and recommendations (section 9).

1.5 Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm and support given to us by Jean-Marc Fleury, Director of the Communications Division and the Communications Division team. They were generous in sharing data and ideas with us in this early venture in assessing the In-Focus Pyramid. We also thank Connie Freeman, the Regional Director EASRO, for her ideas and support, and Florence Shiroya of EASRO in arranging the interviews on the In-Focus Water book in Kenya. These studies are only possible with the input of time and ideas from the respondents and we would like to acknowledge our gratitude to all who contributed during face-to-face meetings, telephone interviews and by e-mail. In the end, it is our responsibility to try to do justice to the evidence and to provide conclusions and recommendations that flow logically from it and are helpful for future strategy.
2 Meeting policy needs

2.1 The research-policy interface

The Evaluation Unit of IDRC is currently undertaking a major study of the research policy interface – how IDRC-supported research has influenced public policy; what factors have facilitated or hindered policy uptake; and what constitutes “policy influence” for IDRC. One of the early products of the study is an excellent overview of the various concepts and research studies in the field of research utilization and public policy processes.\(^8\) An interesting finding of the literature review is that about 23% of IDRC projects approved between January 2000 – August 2001 expected that the research would influence policy, although what this means in terms of level of policy maker or what outcomes the “influence” might lead to, is not clear.

To grossly simplify the literature on the research-policy interface, there seem to be three major descriptive models. These are:

- **The “two solitudes” model.** There is a cultural gap between researchers and policy makers. They don’t talk the same language and they have different worldviews, so the research-policy interface is a relatively empty divide.

- **The “policy network” model.** Researchers and policy makers do mix within the same communities that straddle the research-policy interface. The interface is crowded with fluid coalitions of negotiating or competing groups. Sometimes they are networks built up around a particular issue; sometimes the research-policy community is professionally defined – for example, water engineers working in the private sector, for government and in academia, who know and communicate with one another across organizational boundaries.

- **The policy entrepreneur model.** The research-policy interface is inhabited with individuals and institutions (including think-tanks and policy institutes) that specialize in influencing policy. These people move easily across the research-policy interface; they are well connected, persistent and are perceived by both the research and policy communities to have access and credibility with the other. They make a business of linking research to policy.

A fourth view is it doesn’t matter whether the “demography” of the interface is characterized by two separate groups, by moving coalitions, or by policy entrepreneurs – what is more important for matching up policy research needs with research output is

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\(^8\) Neilson, Stephanie, 2001, *IDRC-supported Research and its Influence on Public Policy: Knowledge Utilization and Public Policy Processes – A Literature Review*, Evaluation Unit, IDRC.
timing, opportunity and serendipity – in other words, being in the right (policy) place at the right (policy) time. This we could call the Policy Window Model.

While academics might argue the merit of one model over another, the evidence would suggest that each of these models applies some of the time in most situations. What does this imply for IDRC, particularly the Communications Division? One interpretation is that a strategic “bottom line” would be to develop a polyvalent approach – one that will meet the needs of whatever research-policy interface exists in a particular situation and will also address the imperative to locate the elusive policy windows – those times when decision makers are most likely to seek and to absorb research results.

2.2 Views of policy actors

In the course of obtaining reactions to the Water Pyramid, we obtained views on the research-policy interface from a number of policy makers, academics and civil society leaders, in addition to the policy makers who had been interviewed in Kenya.

There are several common messages coming from these experienced policy actors:

- Targets for research output should be senior policy advisors, not the top policy makers themselves;
- Policy briefings must be short and in the right format;
- In addition to showing the research findings, the message should show the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action;
- Even for well-written policy briefs, policy makers like to ask questions and receive answers;
- Communication of research results is most effective when transmitted through several modalities – research reports, policy briefs and workshops.
- Timing is crucial – the results should be communicated when they can catch the attention of policymakers.

**Policy targets for research output**

Senior technical and policy advisors are seen as the appropriate targets for research output. These people have the background to understand the research and the policy experience to see the implications for policy. They often write policy advice for Government Ministers or Governors of Central Banks and will base their own briefs on research reports and policy briefs provided to them.

“The best way to reach senior decision-makers is indirectly through their professionals. No matter how simply or briefly you make the written output, the senior decision-maker will not read it.”

African Policymaker
**Policy briefings**

Research findings will be most likely to be read by senior policy advisors if they are written as short research reports or policy briefs. Ideally these reports will be 1-4 pages with references to longer research reports. They will summarize the research findings clearly for a knowledgeable reader, including tables and relevant statistics. The briefs will also address the implications that the research findings hold for policy and policy implementation – particularly the costs and benefits to different stakeholder groups of alternative courses of action.

“Policy makers need to know the costs/benefits of implementing policies and the research needs to show this.”

“Policy briefings must be short as a technocrat who is a policy advisor rarely has more than half an hour to spend reading without being interrupted.”

African policy advisors

**Multiple channels**

Effective communication of research results requires several channels. The Minister or Governor of the Central Bank, or even the Permanent Secretary (Deputy Minister) is not likely to read any research report. They may see a Policy Brief, especially if they are advised by their advisors to read it. Even if a Minister has a degree in the subject of the research report, they are unlikely to read it.

The senior advisors need access to a good research report, references to more detailed information, and a research summary/policy brief. The research is most likely to be brought to their attention initially through a short 1-4 page document. Depending on the needs of the situation, they will delve for more information or will write more focused policy advice for the Minister or Permanent Secretary that may summarize the original Policy Brief.

**Workshops and Presentations**

Research has more impact if it is presented at a workshop or seminar where the policy makers and advisors can pose questions and test how far the results are applicable to their own situations. Timing is crucial here and such workshops will only attract the key policymakers if the topic addresses a policy problem that they are currently dealing with. Similarly, individual presentations by researchers provide an opportunity for question and answer sessions for policy makers, but have to focus on a timely issue. The format for the workshop should be kept short (1-2 hours) to attract the key policy makers and allow at least half the time for questions and discussion. Policy makers find too often that the “policy” workshops are in practice academic seminars that don’t address their needs.

“Research papers presented at policy seminars are rarely relevant. They rarely present issues in terms of winners and losers.”

“A policy maker is not going to change current policy unless he is convinced that he has a problem that needs solving. Then he says: “Give me a solution to the problem”. At that point he needs alternative solutions to the problem.”
“Workshops are useful – the written word doesn’t talk.”

African policy makers

_Do we know enough about the research-policy interface?_

While African senior policy advisors and policymakers whom we interviewed were quite sure about what was needed to bridge research and policy, the participants to the Policy Workshops on Health and Water “voted” three to one that we do not know enough about how to link research to policy. This ratio was consistent whether the participants were Canadian or from developing countries and whether they were policy actors, academics, government officials or leading NGOs. _At the same time, only half of the same participants thought that more workshops were needed to consider the problem._

Alternatives proposed to more workshops were experiments on various approaches to linking research to policy, more specific and “hands-on” workshops, in-depth analyses of country experiences, and longer term “issue” networks that include researchers and policy makers.

“I don’t think that we know enough but I am not sure that more fora will do the trick”

“The absence of links between research and policy is one of the most disturbing dilemmas that we face, but it’s probably not true that more workshops and studies on how to make this link will resolve the issue.”

“We have had many workshops on this subject but it seems that new things come out of each one.”

“There is a constant need for such workshops because society is constantly changing, new problems are emerging and science is constantly coming up with new findings.”

Policy Workshop participants
3 Closing the loop in IDRC

Despite the fact that “Closing the Loop” is also part of ideas and language common in business, academic and program management spheres, most IDRC staff talk of it very much as an IDRC phenomenon. They know that the idea was brought into the Centre by the President without seeming to ask themselves where it came from. Some staff members seem to think of it as an IDRC invention.

“I’m still trying to figure out what it means. It’s really opening the loop – communicating our results better to a variety of audiences in a variety of ways.”

“It’s a fairly straightforward concept but Program Branch overanalyzed it.”

“By writing about it, we helped to formalize it as an IDRC corporate value.”

IDRC staff

3.1 Concepts and debates

“Closing the Loop is an approach to programming and projects that seeks to ensure the awareness, understanding, and ownership of research outputs by decision-makers at all levels. Its goals are to increase the relevance and utilization of research outputs, thereby enhancing the influence of the researchers, institutions and work we support.”

This broad definition of CTL as a programming approach was reportedly a compromise outcome of a debate within the Centre about what closing the loop should mean. We found that it is a debate that is still alive and well. While it is recognized that closing the loop is generally understood to mean feedback to decision-makers at different levels who make use of the research results to design and implement policies and programs, there are very different views within IDRC about where the priorities for CTL should lie. These different priorities are related to different conceptions about the nature of the loops themselves. From our interviews with IDRC staff, we have identified six different “loops” that IDRC is concerned with:

- **Direct feedback to project participants:** to those individuals, institutions, authorities, firms and communities that provided input (expertise, local knowledge, time and other resources) to IDRC-funded research projects. This input is correspondingly larger in the participatory research modality that IDRC has been championing for many years. Many Program staff members believe that ensuring that this loop is adequately closed is an ethical obligation on the Centre – even if the researchers actually undertake the activities.

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9 IDRC, 2002, *Closing the loop: communication for change*: Communications Division, IDRC; internal document dated January 2002; Ottawa
“It is an ethical issue of providing feedback on results in local presentations and in local languages to the communities involved in the research so that they also **directly** benefit from the research.”

IDRC staff

- **Meta studies** – comparing the results and lessons learned from several case studies or individual research projects and providing information on trends and key factors that can be generalised to be useful to policy makers at a higher administrative level. This is (or should be) a key means to close the loop with national policy makers in developing countries using the research findings from community based research projects.

“We need to be able to apply lessons from one country or one project or set of projects to another – look at a range of research that can support policy decisions”

IDRC staff member

- **Going to scale**: *vertical scaling up* involves making results from individual projects or pilot areas available (and meaningful) to other stakeholder groups; *horizontal scaling up* refers to geographical extrapolation of the results to comparable situations in wider geographic areas. Scaling up can be based on meta-analysis or can be interpolation from a single pilot project.

- **Contribution to scientific knowledge** – contributing to the building of scientific theory, methods and store of empirical data, which is particularly needed in developing countries. IDRC funds research and technological innovation, which means that there is an important scientific loop to close.

- **Feedback into programming**: ensuring that lessons learned from past programs are fed into future program strategy, so that even when staff leaves there are systems in place to close the program loops.

- **Showcasing the achievements of IDRC to Canada and beyond** – providing evidence to Canadian (government, media and civil society) and international audiences (including other international donors and research institutions) on the contribution the Centre makes to:
  - Canadian policy, particularly foreign policy and development assistance;
  - Economic, social and technological development in developing countries; and
  - The work of its “sister” organization – CIDA.
“The feedback loop between IDRC and CIDA is still not happening – we have an obligation to do that. If we can’t influence the Canadian debate on foreign aid, how can we expect to influence Nigeria?”

IDRC staff

Closing each of these loops involves very different target groups and a range of program modalities. They also demand different roles for Program staff and multiple outputs from the Communications Division. Therein lies the challenge for the Centre – with limited staff time and resources, where should the priorities for closing the loop lie?

3.2 Whose job is it?

“The prime responsibility for closing the loop is that of the project leader. Our job is to help them by knowing how policy impact best takes place and helping them in specific communication skills”

“Who within IDRC should close the loop? All of the above!”

“When does learning among POs take place? At the project design phase (75%), implementation (25%) and end of project (0%). So there’s not much closing the loop goes on with program officers.”

“When whose job is it to close the loop in those areas in which we are no longer active [and should be learning from]? Our own language shows that we don’t close the loop – orphan projects and sunset programs”

IDRC staff

Program staff members recognize that they have key roles to play in closing the six key loops, both directly in their own program work; in supporting project researchers to provide feedback to decision makers in their countries; and in supporting IDRC corporately to provide information to Canadian and international audiences. The new job descriptions for IDRC staff place more emphasis on closing the loop activities than was formally recognised in the past (Table 2)

Table 2 shows that the “closing the loop” tasks are differentiated for program staff at different levels. Program Officers and Senior Program Officers focus their energies on helping researchers to provide local feedback and go to scale and directly contribute to closing the knowledge loop. Senior Program Specialists and especially Team Leaders are also expected to help the Centre to close the “Showcasing IDRC loop” (table 3)

The job descriptions also reveal a major distinction between the emphasis placed on closing the loop for the Secretariats compared to PIs. This distinction may be one of the reasons why many of the success stories identified by IDRC staff are projects that have a more secretariat style modality or are the work of IDRC Secretariats. The emphasis in
job responsibilities for program staff is still on project and program development and management and is weighted towards the front end of the project and program cycle.

Table 2. Closing the loop activities in IDRC job descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>TASKS AND ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>TIME ALLOCATION TO CLOSING THE LOOP</th>
<th>TIME ALLOCATION TO PROJECT/PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Program Area</td>
<td>Actively leads, promotes and supports activities that increase the awareness, understanding and ownership of research outputs by a range of decision maker and society in general, thus enhancing the influence of the work that IDRC supports</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>• assists researchers in writing, editing, and publishing research results;</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• contributes to public and scientific fora—through the preparation of papers for peer reviewed publications, monographs and books;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identifies opportunities and leads initiatives for strategic networking with other donors, lenders, research institutions and policy makers;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• working with the Communications Division, signals the news value of the Centre’s substantive programming and provides intellectual content and interpretation for the Centre’s public relations efforts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Program Specialist/Regional SP Specialist (level 8)</td>
<td>• assists researchers in writing, editing, and publishing research results;</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• participates in scientific fora</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Program Officer/Regional SPO (level 7)</td>
<td>• assists researchers in writing, editing, and publishing research results;</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• participates in scientific fora</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Officer (level 6)</td>
<td>• assists researchers in writing, editing, and publishing research results;</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• participates in scientific fora</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director of Secretariat</td>
<td>Dissemination and Media Outreach (15%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiates and manages publications program, consisting of four series: Research Reports, Special Papers, Policy Briefs, and Newsletters. Oversees maintenance and upgrading of Website. Promotes dissemination of research results in the media through interviews with print &amp; broadcast</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
media; preparation of press releases and press conferences; training seminars for media; and training of researchers in media relations.

Works with editors and designers to produce magazine-format reports for a broad audience on Secretariat’s activities and accomplishments.

Disseminates findings of external evaluations.

Shares experience in network design, governance and management with IDRC, participating donors, and similar networks in other parts of the world through “knowledge fairs”, seminars, papers, correspondence and advisory committee meetings.

Networking and Advocacy (15%)
Establishes contact with and meets representatives of national and international agencies and governments to assist in the identification of problems, the analysis and articulation of needs, and brokering technical assistance and funding support.

Promotes contact and working relationships between the Secretariat’s activities and the projects and priorities of the Secretariat’s sponsors.

Addresses meetings of national and international bodies to increase awareness of problems related to the Secretariats and their solutions; increase political support for intervention programs; and direct resources toward solutions.

Table 3  IDRC staff responsibilities in closing different key loops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LOCAL FEEDBACK</th>
<th>META STUDIES</th>
<th>SCALING UP</th>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
<th>PROGRAM FEEDBACK</th>
<th>IDRC SHOWCASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPO</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED/Secretariat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

KEY TARGET AUDIENCES
Community policy/local contributors  National policy  Community & national policy  Researchers: national international  IDRC Other donors  Canadian govt. International community
What are the downstream implications for programming of this emphasis on closing the loop responsibilities of IDRC program staff? Several views were offered. One is that IDRC should increase the involvement of decision makers and beneficiaries in project development. Another is that IDRC will support fewer projects in the future and ensure that sufficient resources and time are allocated to each one for closing the loop activities. A third implication is that as the program staff responsibilities shift more towards closing the loop, the qualifications needed in program staff will also shift away from scientific expertise and more towards people who can communicate well with non-scientific audiences and synthesise complex information.

Thus, closing the loop has repercussions for resource allocation and staff profiles. It also – but this appears to be little discussed within the Centre – has implications for the Centre’s role as advocate for certain policies and positions. While in theory linking research and policy is a neutral activity, in practice, closing the loop with policy makers, is often achieved by articulating preferred alternatives.

### 3.3 Success stories

The success stories in closing the loop that were most often identified by IDRC staff are:

- Acacia Initiative, especially the work on national telecommunications policy in Mozambique
- Crucible project of SUB (Sustainable Use of Biodiversity)
- MIMAP (Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies)
- TEHIP (Tanzanian Essential Health Intervention Program)\(^\text{10}\)
- TIPS (Trade and Industrial Policy Research in South Africa)
- EcoHealth – its influence on Canada’s preparation for Summit of the Americas and the WSSD

Other success stories that were mentioned are:

- Bellanet
- SME (Small and Medium Enterprise Policy) for its work in Egypt
- Participatory Plant Breeding
- Cities Feeding People – work on urban policy agendas and Quito Declaration
- MINGA (Managing Natural Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean) for its influence on CIDA program in Honduras.

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\(^{10}\) TEHIP influenced government health investments in Tanzania through policy briefs and presentations to key national decision makers, and was featured in the *Economist* (August 17-23 2002) thereby exposing policy makers worldwide to its research findings. This is a testament to successful work not only on the part of the project leaders but also for the Communications Division.
3.4 Role of Communications Division

IDRC staff members were asked what role they saw for the Communications Division in closing the loop. The responses showed that the Division’s role was seen primarily at the corporate level, in helping the Centre to showcase its achievements to Canada (especially the policy community in Ottawa) and internationally. Some staff members could not see what role the Communications Division could play within the project cycle or in developing countries, unless they had more staff in the Regional Offices. Others saw a role for the Division at project and program level in providing expertise on communications to both program staff and to researchers.

The roles seen by IDRC staff for the Communications Division in closing the loop are:

- Show program staff and researchers how to structure messages. Help to identify what is interesting to others outside of the project or PI. Provide strategic messages that work.
- Develop generic communication tools for closing the loop – policy briefs, training materials on communications that can help researchers
- Provide strategic advice on marketing - where and when messages should be targeted and which institutions and media matter.
- Provide technical support to web pages and their design. Help projects get their message out through the web pages
- Help with events that communicate research results to policy makers
- In Canada, help to translate research results into op ed articles and insert them at the right times into policy debates.

From the perspective of programs, the Communications Division is seen as a valuable source of expertise on communications, marketing and media relations. Their direct role in providing communication output is seen as primarily for the Canadian context. In developing countries, their role is seen more as a source of technical support to the researchers who are on the front line in developing the messages and communication outputs necessary for policy. Program staff would like Communications Division to develop tools like the CD-ROM for researchers on different styles of writing for different audiences, including policy makers, or provide specific advice and training to researchers on how to write successful policy briefs.

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11 See http://www.idrc.ca/reports/read_article_english.cfm?article_num=1026
4 The In-Focus Books

4.1 IDRC approach

The In-Focus book series was launched in 2002 by the publication of the book on Water: Local-Level Management by David Brooks (the In-Focus Water book). The series is designed to be:

“Policy-oriented recommendations based on best practices and the experience and knowledge gained by development researchers, mainly through IDRC support but not excluding contributions from funding and research partners.”

The series is planned to have a common design with a clear, crisp language accessible to non-specialists and visuals including photographs and text boxes that would animate the text. Books in the series will have a common structure:

- Description and scope of the issue
- Research approaches
- Research results framed for policy-relevance
- Recommendations for policy and for research
- Proposed future directions.

The books are planned to be short – 60 to 80 pages and in a small page format. An innovative feature is that the book is “linked” to a special web page on the IDRC website. The web page URL is provided at the bottom of the book pages and referred to on the back cover. In turn, the web page posts an electronic version of the entire book. Thus, the book and the web page constitute two important components of the “Water Pyramid”.

The planned focus of the book series is to link IDRC funded research to recommendations for policy. The In-Focus Water book identifies its target audiences as (in the order given) other donors, research institutions, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, and national and municipal government decision makers. It does not specify whether these audiences are primarily in developing countries or in Canada and other developed countries. Indeed, in reading the book it is not possible to discern if the target group is primarily in the North or the South.

4.2 Findings

A total of 44 respondents across all groups gave us their assessment of the In-Focus Water book. The questions included their understanding of the target audiences for the book and whether the needs of those audiences were met, with particular reference to the

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12 Communications Division document describing the Closing the Loop (CTL) Book Collection, 17 September 2001
13 The “readers” included 15 participants at the Water Policy Workshop, 7 on-line book purchasers, 7 policy advisers sent the book in Kenya, and 15 IDRC staff members.
usefulness of the book for policy making. Book purchasers were also asked how they heard about the book and what their own background was in the water field. The Kenyan sub-group were all involved in water policy issues.

**Target audience**

The majority view across all groups interviewed was that the In-Focus Water book is a highly readable, general backgrounder designed for the interested non-specialist. Readers saw the book as successfully meeting the needs of the general reader - who they imagined might be a member of a NGO, a student or a local level decision-maker. Readers thought that the book’s short length, easy writing style and general content all contributed to it successfully meeting the needs of non-specialists.

“The book has a very obvious ‘non-academic slant – it has almost a ‘Coles Notes’ feel to it.’”

Canadian researcher

“I see it as a primer pitched at a general audience, primarily Canadian and then international.”

IDRC staff member

On the other hand, it is these same features that the majority of readers in all groups cite as reasons why the book is not suitable for policy makers. Interestingly, it is the policy group interviewed in Kenya that is the most sure that the book does not meet policy needs.

**Usefulness to policy makers**

Most respondents felt that the book would not help policy makers except as a background reader on local water management. This included the participants at the workshop, IDRC staff and most notably, the Kenyan policy group.

“I can’t imagine policy makers finding it useful. It’s so general it loses the richness of cases. It should be more specific and take a few key lessons. It’s too general for donors – it doesn’t tell them enough about performance of projects. Maybe it could help get Canadian public support for IDRC’’

IDRC staff member

“It is too general and does not give enough good examples on how research was translated into policy decision-making. Maybe this reflects the relative weakness of IDRC in the areas of water resources management.”

Canadian researcher

Several of the Kenyan policy group readers wanted more tables and more structure, so that it would be easier to navigate around the book and find information quickly. “Make the book more friendly for the busy person” was one comment and “You have to read the entire book and some people won’t have time to read the whole book” was another. While the case examples in the boxes were appreciated, the policy group readers thought that there weren’t enough of them.

14 While none of the readers interviewed pointed this out, we noted that there is no index.
The most critical comments from the policy group in Kenya also relate to the general nature of the book – for them its virtues as a general reader are drawbacks for policy relevance. It is seen as too generic, too divorced from real-world contexts – as a well-written reference book or a backgrounder rather than as useful for policy. While non-policy readers are impressed with the clarity and flow of the writing that makes technical results more accessible to non-specialists, the Kenyan policy advisors are looking for local specificity and relevance and failed to find it.

“IDRC should pick out research that is relevant to Kenya, that brings out the Kenyan perspective, otherwise the book is useless to us.”

“Localize the book”

“You have too many recommendations that are uprooted from their context”

“The book would be more useful if it addressed the Kenyan context”

Kenyan policy advisors

The Kenyan policy group also had a number of comments on the key messages of the book and inconsistencies that they saw in them.15

In contrast, some developing country researchers thought that it could be helpful to their national policy makers as well as to other researchers in their countries.

“It will be very helpful for the Chinese government to shift their concepts of water management and it will help them to pay attention to community-based water management.”

Developing country researcher

“The people who work in the Peruvian Government and Congress [in order to] make a new water law in the next three months.”

Developing country researcher

A second common theme among the policy group was that what was needed was not so much information on the what, but the how. The challenge for policy makers and where they needed help from research was in how to implement the policies already on the books.

“Policies we have. They are there. The issue is how do you go from policy to implementation”

Kenyan policy advisor

15 For example, the book says that water demand is the key to management but most of the book and its recommendations deal with managing supply. While the first chapter emphasizes the problem of water scarcity, this theme is not dealt with in the local management scenarios. The book emphasizes integrated water management but does not deal with related issues such as land management. The book is about local level management but does not address issues of household decision-making where the key decisions affecting local level management are taken.
People who had purchased the book on-line were more positive about it. This group consisted of 13 Canadians (7 from Quebec); 5 Europeans; two from the USA and one from a developing country, who had found the book through the Internet or through IDRC publicity. They liked the clarity of the book; many also agreed with its message on the importance of the local management of water, and thought that it would make a good textbook for students and guide for NGOs and local water managers.

Several respondents were unsure of the target audience for the book. Others said that it would meet the needs of many different groups. To judge from the responses overall, readers saw the book as targeted at (in order of frequency of mention) general audiences, NGOs, local water managers, researchers, and students. Several Canadian academics said that they were, or intended to use it as a class introductory text in international development or water management courses. The only groups that were specifically pointed out by readers as not good target audiences for the book were policy makers and other donors.

Overall, all groups except the Kenyan policy group gave more positive assessments than negative ones by a ratio of three to one. The Kenyan policy group were the most negative about the book – primarily because they were judging its value for linking research to policy, whereas the other groups saw it as serving other purposes and closing other loops.

4.3 Analysis and discussion

The responses of the readers in the different sample groups are consistent enough that we can conclude the In-Focus Water book is best designed for the general reader, the interested non-specialist, and a northern – especially Canadian, audience. It is not as well designed to meet the needs of policy makers, or their advisors, particularly in developing countries. It is too long for most policy makers. In fact, any book is probably too long for policy makers, because most do not read books to enlighten themselves on policy issues. Our readers felt that this held true for policy makers in developing countries and in Canada. The strengths that make it a good general reader make it a poor means to influence policy.

These findings lead to a major question for IDRC - does the Centre wish to change the format and approach of the In-Focus book series to better respond to the needs of developing country policymakers or instead retain the series format and instead focus on a target audience that is a more general, academic audience and Canadian one?

16 A notable exception in Canada is the Honourable Herb Gray, now Co-Chairman of the International Joint Commission, who requested a meeting with the President and David Brooks after he had seen the In-Focus book.
Changes are already being made to the format for next few In-Focus books in the series. The book on Participatory Plant Breeding is deliberately being structured around six key questions facing policy makers (and derived from asking them what issues they face). The *In-Focus* book on MIMAP is planned to go beyond the confines of the IDRC-funded research and deal with the scientific basis for policy in that area. These planned changes will move the series towards greater policy relevance – but whether they will be enough to enable the *In-Focus book* series to have more policy influence remains to be seen.

An important question for the Centre is whether the *In-Focus book* series is the best investment of scarce resources. Each one requires considerable investment of senior program staff time to review the research in the Centre project files and archives, plus the costs of an outside writer. Given that the rationale for doing the book series is that of policy influence rather than cost-recovery, the *In-Focus book* series needs to be able to demonstrate that it is effective in closing one or more of the loops for which it was designed.

**Effectiveness in closing the loop**

When we consider the six different loops that IDRC identifies as targets for its CTL activities, the In-Focus books appear to be intended to close four of the six loops:

- To effectively meet the needs of national policy in developing countries (through meta-studies of groups of IDRC supported research)
- To contribute to research knowledge
- To provide lessons learned for IDRC programs and those of its partners
- To showcase IDRC’s work and value to a broader audience particularly in Canada

In addition, it appears that some program staff sees the *In-Focus* series as a much desired mark of recognition for the PIs. Thus, there is a feeling that each PI should be “awarded” its own *In-Focus* book and that PIs without such recognition may be at a competitive disadvantage.

The problem with all these high expectations for the *In-Focus* series is that by aiming to close multiple loops, you may not close any of them well. The Water book was based on an in-depth meta-study of 30 years of IDRC water projects and should have had some powerful case histories for both national and local policy makers. But it does not appear to be as effective in influencing policy as it might be because it is too general in both its documentation and in its recommendations for either policy actors or researchers.

Perhaps the *In-Focus Water book* could be effective in closing the program loop if much of its topic were not already “orphaned” within IDRC, for there are certainly lessons to be learned from it. With respect to the loop to “showcase” IDRC, especially to the Canadian public, the *In-Focus Water book* appears to be very successful.
4.4 Recommendations

1. The target audience for the *In-Focus book series* should be more closely specified and the books designed and structured for the key groups that IDRC wants the books to reach. At present, the generalist approach is resulting in a generalist audience, rather than successfully bridging the research-policy interface.

2. If policy influence is a key objective for the *In-Focus Pyramid*, IDRC might wish to seriously reconsider having the *In-Focus book series* as a major element in the pyramid, especially given the investments required.

3. If the present general and educational audience is deemed appropriate for the series, it could be made more useful as an educational tool if it had more “Suggestions for further reading”, more charts and the content frame were broadened to include more non-IDRC funded research.
5. **IDRC Briefing**

5.1 **IDRC Approach**

‘IDRC Briefings’ are designed to introduce issues and to give an overview to the non-specialist. They are not specifically designed to influence policy. They are not in that sense ‘Policy Briefs’ although policy makers may read them. The Briefings constitute

*An occasional series dedicated to exploring crosscutting international development issues. It focuses on subjects that are particularly deserving of greater North South cooperation in researching and achieving practical solutions to problems of the day and long term challenges to sustainable and equitable development.*

There have been eight publications in the Briefing Series. The latest one is that for the Water Communications Pyramid on “Local Solutions in the Global Water Crisis” published in March 2002 in English, French and Spanish. The Briefing covers 6 pages in a fold out 8x11 inch format on thin card with strong use of photos and colour. The series has a common structure – a montage of photos on the front cover page with titles, an authored overview of the topic and a back cover page with additional resources (including web sites) and information on IDRC.

The IDRC Briefing on Water differs from others in that the content is essentially a summary of the In-Focus Water book with some highlighted ‘lessons learned’. In place of the section on ‘What is IDRC doing?’ four general guidelines are presented for anyone developing or improving local water management systems (under the title of “Building the Foundation for Success”).

Some of the other In-Focus Pyramids planned will include not only IDRC Briefings but also the In-Action brochures. This is a parallel information series with a somewhat similar look and subtitled “From theory to practice”. The Communications Division is collaborating with the EcoHealth PI to produce ten brochures in the “In Action” series in anticipation of the international forum on EcoHealth that will be held in Montreal in May 2003. The two brochures produced to date each take a case study of a project (one in Cote d’Ivoire and one in Kenya) to show how EcoHealth works.

Similarly, the Pyramid for Participatory Plant Breeding may include an “IDRC Briefing” written around the six key decisions facing policy makers, and accompanied by six brochures in the “In Action” series of four pages each – five case studies and one on the comparative results.

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17 Description taken from IDRC Briefings Web page.
5.2 Findings

We obtained few evaluations of the IDRC Water Briefing from respondents. None of the Kenyan group interviewed said that they had personally read the Briefing although it was packaged with the book in the distribution. When shown the Water Briefing, some of the Kenyan policy group were surprised that the two were part of the same communications package, as they do not share the same design or image. None of the on-line book purchasers had seen the Briefing. The design of the questionnaire survey for the workshop participants did not allow for a question on the Briefing. However, IDRC staff members are generally familiar with the series and provided some good insights into its use by staff.

Most staff members see the Briefing Series as intended for general audiences, particularly Canadians or those who come into contact with IDRC staff or projects.

“I give it to multi/bilateral donors and research partners. It’s good for researchers to ‘leave behind’ along with their business card when they have made their pitch to policy makers.”

“It’s useful to give to visitors”

IDRC staff

The series is thus a backgrounder that can be used to reach a variety of audiences, including policy makers in Canada and in developing countries.

5.3 Analysis and discussion

The IDRC Briefing series clearly has a place in the IDRC suite of communication products, but it does not take the place of a ‘policy brief’ that could link research to policy. It doesn’t pretend to do so. The photos seem more designed to attract a Canadian audience than one in the developing world – who see the scenes depicted as part of daily life rather than exotic shots of distant countries. Indeed, that was the reaction of one of the Kenyan policy group.

The IDRC Water Briefing maintains its design continuity with the Briefing series and looks completely different from other products in the In-Focus Pyramid. The result is that the visual effect of a suite of linked outputs (the Pyramid) is lost. It even has a different title from the book (Local Solutions in the Global Water Crisis). This same conundrum will face the Communications Pyramids for Participatory Plant Breeding and Ecohealth, as they are linking elements from both the ‘IDRC Briefing” and “In-Action” series with the In-Focus books.

One of the questions that the Centre might want to address is whether it should produce a Briefing within its suite of products that is specifically targeted at policy makers – a Policy Brief Series. This is discussed further in section 8 on the strategy.
5.4 **Recommendations**

1. If IDRC wants to emphasise the *Pyramid* approach and the linkages between the different elements, it should introduce some design elements that would link the *Briefing* visually to other parts of the *In-Focus Pyramid* while retaining its attractive appearance.

2. If IDRC decides to transform the *IDRC Briefing* series into one more oriented towards policy makers, there are a number of design changes that we would recommend, including a format that can be placed in a file or ring-hole binder and be read easily (that is, not a fold out format) and not get easily mislaid. These are discussed further in section 8.
6. Website

6.1 IDRC approach

The Centre has introduced a “dossier” approach to its new dynamic website. There are presently two thematic dossiers – one on “Conflict over Natural Resources” and the other on “Water”. The first one was reportedly the model for the water page and the dossier approach. There is a prominent link on the IDRC home page to the water page.

The thematic water pages showcase IDRC’s past work on water and are structured around the In-Focus Water book. On the main page is an overview of each chapter of the book. Each overview has two links: one to additional material and the other to the text of the chapter itself. Other features accessible from the main page are a slide show, the IDRC Briefing on Water, the text of an interview with David Brooks, an invitation to participate in the website survey, and water facts and figures. There are links to IDRC programs related to water, to additional resources, a contact point and a link for sending in comments and questions.

The great strength of a good web page is that it can be both interactive and allow the visitor to easily “drill down” through the pyramid to the basic “building blocks” (IDRC Reports, articles, Nayudamma technical sheets). The additional materials that can be directly brought up in each chapter overview consist of descriptions of IDRC supported water projects and most of the additional materials are limited to those from IDRC. There are no links on the main water page to other organizations. Instead, these are found under “Additional Resources” under the text of the final section of the book (Sources and Resources). There are links to the “foundation materials” including the internal review of 30 years of IDRC supported research.

The site is a key tool for the In-Focus Pyramid. It enables visitors to access information in one layer of the pyramid from another of its platforms - the website.

6.2 Findings

Our findings on the website are based on the 17 responses obtained to the “pop-up” online questionnaire established during August 2002; and those people in the other samples who had visited the water pages. These were book purchasers (2), workshop participants (11) providing 30 respondents in all for the website. None of the Kenyan sample had seen the web pages.

The statistics collected for the month of August 2002 provide some insight into the number of times visits were made to the thematic pages on Water compared to some

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other parts of the IDRC website\textsuperscript{19}. For that month, the Water theme page had a comparable number of visits compared with other program related pages, representing the equivalent of about 1,500-2000 visitors per month.

Visitors to the web pages were generally positive about it.\textsuperscript{20} Half felt that the site was about average and half felt that it was better than most other water sites they had visited. The visitors’ comments about improving the site related to making it more accessible from a search engine, adding a search function to the water pages and improving the ease of finding things on the site. Respondents at the workshops were not asked to comment on the quality of the site itself, but two did. One would like to see the site also in Spanish. Another could not find the workshop presentations - which are accessed through hyperlinks from the workshop agenda.

The site has been showcased by at least four other important websites – that of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI); the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; the Global Water Partnership and the Canadian NGO SafeWaterGroup site. The latter site posted the entire book on its website in May 2002. This is an important mark of recognition and also underscores the level of Canadian NGO and municipal level interest in the \textit{In-Focus} water products.

\textbf{6.3 Analysis and discussion}

Our comments relate to two aspects of the website – its content and its ease of use and linkages.

\textit{Content}

One issue with the water web pages is how to keep them up to date since the main feature is the \textit{In-Focus Water book}. In some ways, the whole \textit{Water Pyramid} is built to commemorate an “Orphan Program” and it is not clear who is responsible for keeping it intellectually alive. The site is separate from that for the Water Demand Management Forum, which has its own web pages. The thematic pages on water are quite static and are not updated with new information and links that would be relevant to visitors – such as the upcoming Third World Water Forum (Kyoto, Japan, 16-23 March 2003). A lively

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
& Pages accessed & \% total for IDRC website \\
CBNRM & 19,523 & (1.54) \\
Telecentres & 8464 & (0.67) \\
Tobacco & 6293 & (0.50) \\
Water demand management & 4126 & (0.33) \\
\textbf{Water theme} & \textbf{3961} & \textbf{(0.31)} \\
MIMAP & 3198 & (0.25) \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{19} Statistics are kept by IDRC on the number of pages visited, number of ‘hits’, country of visitors, by day and by hour etc. The data here are simply indicative for the month of August 2002.

\textsuperscript{20} Respondents were almost all first time visitors with a general or educational interest in water management. They either linked to other IDRC water related programs or just visited the main water page. Only one respondent looked at the Briefing, the slide show or the book on line. Most had university degrees.
thematic website requires an investment of program staff time and Communications staff time. How is this going to be assured for the site?

Another content related issue is that the site is presently limited to IDRC materials. In this it is effective as a showcase of IDRC’s past work in water resources management. But if it is limited to IDRC content, how is it a thematic site rather than a PI site? If the site is meant to be a tool for understanding the issues that it addresses, should there not be more links to other water sites or non-IDRC material included? Content-wise the site seems a bit of an anomaly.

On the main page, the main feature is the overview of the In-Focus book’s chapters. The main page does not present the dossier site concept and explain it, which would help visitors to understand the structure. At present a visitor has to go through the chapter overviews to even find out what kind of information is available on the site.

**Structure**

Links to key IDRC documentation for water page visitors should be able to be directly accessed from the site rather than having to go through other parts of the IDRC website. Some examples given on the water page of IDRC supported projects are hyper-linked to a descriptive summary of the project but others lead to the main page of the relevant PI, from which the visitor has to conduct another search to find the water project. For example, the link to *Community Based Technologies for Domestic Wastewater* brings the visitor to the Cities Feeding People site rather than to the relevant project. These obstacles to accessing highlighted information sources could perhaps be better handled.

We agree with the respondent who suggested that the site should have its own search site. Sometimes the links are tortuous – for example in order to find the reports of the discussion groups at the Water Policy Workshop, the visitor has to leave the water website and use the main search function on the IDRC homepage. For ease of downloading and printing pages, providing *pdf* or even *doc* files might be considered rather than only html.

### 6.4 Recommendations

1. The Centre should decide on the long-term objective for the water web site. If it is to be a tool for researchers, NGOs and local water managers, it will rapidly lose its currency and appeal unless someone or some program is charged to maintain and create new content.

2. A few immediate improvements to the structure of the site, along the lines suggested here could make it more easily navigated by visitors and thus strengthen the interactive functioning of the *Water Pyramid*.  

7 Policy Workshops

7.1 IDRC Approach

Objectives
The initial proposal for the policy workshops was outlined in a Memorandum from the President to the IDRC Board in February 2000. The idea was to sharpen the Centre’s thinking on policy research:

“We need to ask when and under what circumstances research does affect policy, and what we can do to make linkages more effective.”

The criteria to be applied in selecting suitable topics included:

- Substantive contribution to knowledge about research in development
- Clear link to IDRC mandate
- Relevance to the South (and participation from South)
- Opportunity for IDRC to demonstrate intellectual leadership and contributions that the Centre has and can make
- Ownership by Programs
- Cost-effective
- Potential for attracting media
- Potential for publication

Thus, the loops that were to be closed by the policy workshops were “contribution to scientific knowledge” and “showcasing IDRC” especially within Canada. The original idea of one workshop devoted to several topics evolved into a series of policy workshops. Each workshop would be dedicated to a single topic, but addressing similar questions with respect to the role of research in policymaking, the needs of policymakers and ways for involving the public in policy debates. An additional loop was added – that of providing feedback into IDRC programs and creating the opportunity for “policy learning” by the Centre and its partners. A call was issued for proposals in May 2000 for workshops to be held in IDRC Ottawa over 1½ days and a competitive “pot” of funds allocated.

The Workshops
IDRC has so far held three of the policy workshops. These are:

1. Trade Policy (Trade Negotiations and Trade Policies in Developing Countries: What Role for Capacity Building and Research?) Ottawa, 28 March 2001

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21 Memorandum dated 1 February 2000 from Maureen O’Neil to Board of Governors on “Policy Workshop October 2000”.
22 Memorandum dated 18 May 2000 from Caroline Pestieau to Program Initiative Team Leaders and Directors of Program Areas.
Objectives: to bring IDRC researchers together with representatives of multilateral economic institutions to reflect on the role of research and capacity building in determining ‘good’ policies and ‘better’ welfare outcomes.

Cost: $66,961 (IDRC contributed $66,961)

2. Health Forum (Health Sector Reform in the Americas: Improving the Research to Policy Interface – A Pre-Summit of the Americas Forum organized by IDRC and PAHO) Montreal, 18-19 April 2001

Objectives: to assess lessons learned on the research-to-policy link by comparing experiences across the Americas and to propose strategies for increasing the use of research and to arrive at specific commitments by stakeholders to increase the quantity and relevance of health systems research.

Cost: $180,773 (IDRC contributed $111,229)


Objectives: to present a review of the state of the art in research on local water management in different regions and under different conditions in order to permit conclusions about the appropriate nature and extent of decentralisation.

Cost: $85,268 (IDRC contributed $85,268)

From their titles and objectives it can be seen that the Trade Workshop and Health Forum were very much concerned with the research-policy interface. However, the Water Workshop was a different exercise. Its purpose was to showcase IDRC’s experience in local management of water in the context of a current concern in Canada over municipal water systems following a crisis in 2001 at Walkerton, Ontario and the anticipated report of an official Inquiry into what went wrong. The program brought together developing country experiences with the Walkerton case study.

7.2 Findings

The initial study design called for a comparison of the three workshops. This was not possible in the case of the Trade Workshop because there was no list of participants available – only a list of those who were initially invited. Many of the invitees were senior government officials who were known to have sent their staff members to
represent them, but we had no way of knowing which ones. The study instead obtained responses from 20 participants in the Health Forum and 22 participants in the Water Policy Workshop for a total of 42 respondents.

Participants

One important objective of the workshops was to expose Canadian government officials and policy makers to IDRC’s work and research results. The workshops, especially those held in Ottawa did achieve this objective.

In the Water Policy Workshop, the largest single group were federal government officials (54%). Participants from CIDA accounted for 30% of attendees. Only two participants were from the policy community in developing countries. Thus the participation was overwhelmingly Canadian rather than developing country policy actors. The overall participation was 41% from the research communities and 61% from policy communities. The North-South breakdown was 74% Northern participation to 26% from the South (who were the main presenters of research findings). Thus the workshop was designed to present southern research to a largely Canadian audience (Table 4).

Table 4  Numbers of participants in Health and Water Policy Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH FORUM</th>
<th>RESEARCH COMMUNITY</th>
<th>POLICY COMMUNITY</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing countries</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (USA, international organisations)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WATER POLICY WORKSHOP</th>
<th>RESEARCH COMMUNITY</th>
<th>POLICY COMMUNITY</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing countries</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Health Forum in Montreal had a broader country representation from all parts of the Americas, which reflected the forum objective to explore different national experiences with health sector reform. Canadians were in the minority (25%) compared to 42% of participants from developing countries and 31% from the USA.

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23 In discussion with the President and Vice President, PPB it was agreed not to send a questionnaire to senior officials about a trade workshop held 18 months before which many had likely not even attended. It would not reflect well on the Centre to raise the question with them and was unlikely to produce good data.

24 These are the best available data as there remain uncertainties about who actually came to the workshops. The policy community is broadly defined to include officials in government and international organizations, and NGO leaders.
and international organizations. The policy: research ratio was 65:35. Again, most researchers were from developing countries (Table 4).

The two workshops attracted a good number of people from the Canadian policy community. Were they the attendees that the Centre originally hoped to attract? In some cases, no. Mid-level officials tended to replace the more senior decision-makers who had been invited. However, some of the key water “gurus” from CIDA attended the water workshop and some senior health officials went to the Health Forum.

Organization of workshops
For the Water Workshop no final list of participants exists. This reduced the effectiveness of the workshop for networking, which is a prime reason for people to attend workshops. IDRC also lost opportunities to do any follow-up or networking themselves with workshop participants without an accurate list of them. As a workshop participant said – “It is Workshop 101”.

Another basic problem with the Water Workshop compared to the other two is the lack of any final report (some participants have looked for it on the website). The papers presented are on the website as are the reports of the discussion sessions, although the latter are very difficult to find. The drafts of the papers together with the Compendium of 30 years of IDRC research on water are also available on a CD-ROM that was given to participants. One rationale for the workshop – to learn from three decades of research on water – was muted when the Compendium was not featured at the workshop. Instead, the papers presented were designed to showcase more recent water related research supported by several different PIs. Thus, despite the good quality of the presentations, the workshop lost some of its coherence and logic.

The other two policy workshops also did better in drawing conclusions. The Trade Workshop had an analytical summary of its proceedings which is on the website and an article dealing with some of the same issues which takes the discussions at the Trade Workshop as a starting point.25 The Health Forum produced a final report with Conclusions and Recommendations that were adopted formally by the participants and forwarded to the Summit of the Americas. The report is on the LACRO website and lists participants, thus enabling further networking to take place.

Participants had a number of suggestions about how to improve the workshops. In the case of the Water Workshop, the presenters didn’t feel that they had adequate time to present their material. The audience felt that there were too many presentations, presenters were too rushed and there was inadequate time for discussion.26 The problem is partly that the Water Workshop was billed as a workshop (where people work together and there is a “product”) but the meeting was

26 A number of participants felt the same about the Health Forum
structured as a seminar with most of the time devoted to presentations. Even the breakout groups did not really work at the Water Workshop according to some participants because there was little time for reporting back to plenary and pooling the wisdom of the groups.

The level of criticism is perhaps higher from the Water Workshop respondents but the messages are similar from both workshops. What participants wanted was more discussion, more topic focus, more case studies both presented and “worked on” collectively, and more analysis of concrete cases. They also wanted more of a focus on policy issues and more involvement from policy makers to “provide reality checks” to researchers. Smaller, more active and participatory meetings are generally preferred according to the participants, to larger “passive” ones; and a regional focus generally preferred to a “global” one. There was implicit criticism of the workshop being used for “show and tell”.

Despite these criticisms, most participants rated both workshops positively as a personal learning experience, especially in learning more about the situations in other countries, and some academics and government officials were enthusiastic. They therefore wanted some means to follow up after the workshop – to position the workshop as part of a longer networking and learning process – and not as a “one shot affair.”

One of the regrets of the organizers of the Health Forum was that they did not have the resources to undertake the networking that could have been built on the energy and enthusiasm generated at the meeting. They did however bring together a research network to plan a meta-study on linking research to policy so that there was both a policy ‘declaration’ and future research that were outcomes of the Health Forum. These are both positive outcomes.

**Workshops as means for linking research to policy**

Almost all participants surveyed in both workshops think that we need to know more about how to link research to policy. They feel that more research and more case studies are needed because the linkage is very context specific. Most also feel that workshops can contribute to this understanding, if they are organized along the lines suggested by respondents – that is, more focus on the context of the research, structured comparison of specific cases, and the active participation of policy makers.

**Location**

Another question raised was the location of the workshops, especially the one on water. If the purpose were to link research to policy, holding the workshop in Ottawa largely defeats it. First, the link would be better made if the workshop had involved developing country policy makers, because the IDRC research is most relevant to them. Second, water is not primarily a federal jurisdiction in Canada so it is not

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27 Building and bridging health services research and health policies in the Americas, IDRC Project 01232, IDRC/PAHO, 2002
likely to be high on the policy agenda in Ottawa – the Walkerton municipal water crisis notwithstanding. No provincial policy makers were invited to the workshop.  

7.3 Analysis and discussion

The assessments of the workshops by the participants show that most found the workshops worthwhile, despite their criticisms about some of the workshop logistics. One of the messages for IDRC is to be really clear about the workshop objectives. Participants assess the workshops on the basis of their stated objectives – which in this case was to link research to policy and learning better how to make the link.

Why does this matter? In the case of the water workshop, signals definitely appear to have been crossed. The Water In-Focus book was officially “launched” at a reception held the evening before the Workshop, but it appeared to play no further role in the event. The keynote speaker for the evening reception and launch was Robert Watson, who is an excellent speaker with very important messages on global climate change for policy makers – but not messages that are directly related to local water management or specifically developing countries. The pulling together of 30 years of IDRC-supported research as captured in the Compendium was not featured as a focal point for discussion. Rather, quite different (but also excellent) presentations from different parts of the world were crowded together in one day to showcase the work of different PIs.

There was therefore a disconnect between the keynote message, the In-Focus book, the lessons from 30 years of IDRC research and the workshop presentations on more recent IDRC research.

The selection of participants mainly from federal government departments, including a large contingent from CIDA; and the choice of Ottawa as the venue fitted logically with the objective of showcasing IDRC’s work. However, the expectations of many participants were more related to the stated workshop objective to analyse the research-policy interface. The danger in having different explicit and implicit objectives is that choices about the workshop content and structure, as well as the selection of speakers and participants become confused – and confound – the attainment of either objective. Likewise, the message that IDRC is giving is not clear or convincing. To invite people to a workshop to discuss how to link research to policy and then expose them to a “show and tell” is risky. It may alienate rather than impress.

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28 There was also a question about languages. The Water Workshop included presentations in both languages without simultaneous translation and clearly this was a problem for some participants. It shouldn’t be, especially when they are invited and paid for by IDRC. In contrast, the Health Forum was held in both English and Spanish.
An enduring challenge for IDRC is to attract the attention of the media. It is also interesting to note that very few IDRC staff are thinking much about mass media as a means of closing the loop, despite increased awareness of the value of “op-ed” pieces for Canadian national papers. None of the workshops had much success in attracting media attention, despite the hard work of the Communications Division. The invited keynote speakers made presentation in other fora when they came to Ottawa and were quoted in the press, but without giving much profile to the Centre’s work.\footnote{CPAC broadcast a presentation by Diana Tussie (Trade Workshop) at the Press Club and she also appeared before the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and one of her texts appeared in Le Devoir. Robert Watson gave a press briefing to which only one of the invited press representatives came. A subsequent article in the National Post quoted Watson on Kyoto but did not mention IDRC.} This is one of the drawbacks of holding workshops in Ottawa – it is hard to get the attention of the media.

Based on the responses of the 42 respondents who attended them, table 5 summarises our qualitative assessment of the two workshops compared to the criteria set by the Centre for its policy workshops. It shows that the workshops succeeded best in closing the loop for demonstrating the value added of IDRC (although with some caveats for the water workshop); and succeeded least in closing the loop for policy or decision-making in developing countries.

Table 5 How well did the Policy Workshops achieve Centre objectives?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES/CRITERIA</th>
<th>HEALTH FORUM</th>
<th>WATER WORKSHOP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantive contribution to knowledge about research-policy interface</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link to IDRC mandate and current programs/lessons learned</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance to and participation by the South</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High for researchers but not for southern decision-makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for IDRC to show intellectual leadership</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride and ownership by IDRC Programs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Less so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximize cost-effectiveness in terms of cost and impact on key audiences</td>
<td>High cost: medium to high impact on key audiences</td>
<td>Medium cost: low-medium impact on key audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for attracting media interest</td>
<td>Yes but did not materialise</td>
<td>Yes but did not materialise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of leading to publication etc.</td>
<td>Workshop book distributed, final report and ‘declaration’ New research project on research-policy interface began</td>
<td>In-Focus book launched No final report No publication envisaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The water workshop had a meta-study as an input (the Compendium of 30 years of IDRC research in water) and the Health Forum has a meta-study as an outcome (the new project examining different experiences of research-health policy linkages).
Neither workshop was itself a significant contribution to scientific knowledge because little new knowledge was actually created at the meeting. In that sense, they were not workshops.

7.4 Recommendations

1. The objectives for workshops should be clear and relatively few in number, so that the substantive and logistical organization of the meeting clearly matches the objectives; participants’ expectations are met, and the meeting has a greater chance of being successful.

2. IDRC should seriously consider holding workshops on the research-policy interface – where the focus is on group analysis of specific cases, there is collective work and brainstorming, and the workshop itself is a contribution to science. These are very different from showcasing IDRC, which has its own legitimacy.

3. Workshops designed to close the research-policy loop should generally not be held in Ottawa, where IDRC’s research has less relevance to the burning issues on the policy agenda than in the countries where the research took place.

4. All workshops organized by the Centre should have final lists of participants with coordinates and e-mail addresses, and ideally provide these to participants before the end of the meeting. These lists are highly valued by many participants as means of networking. This is “Workshop Organization 101” but it is not being implemented.

5. All workshops organized by the Centre should provide some means to obtain feedback from participants about the content, speakers and organization of the meeting. One sheet evaluation forms can be provided with meeting documents and participants reminded to fill them in just before the last coffee break.

6. These workshops represent major investments of program funds as well as the time of key researchers and IDRC staff. IDRC, as a learning organization, should perhaps have better systems in place for learning about how achieve the best outcomes for each and every meeting, such as posting meeting evaluations on the Intranet.

7. IDRC finds it difficult to attract the most senior policy makers and advisors to its workshops, especially in Ottawa. The same is true for the media. A shorter format such as “Breakfast at IDRC” or two hour sessions in the early evening (especially for Parliamentarians) might be more attractive to these groups. A good format both policymakers and science journalists (separately) might be one (research) speaker with one or two non-researcher discussants, and more than half of the time for discussion.
8. Communications strategy for closing the loop

8.1 Pyramid framework

The Communications Division has established seven objectives in its strategy for 2002-2005. These are:

- Assist in securing and increasing support for IDRC
- Help bridge the gap between research and policy development
- Support efforts to increase partnerships and influence key stakeholders
- Increase the reach and accessibility of information about IDRC
- Foster Centre-wide knowledge of IDRC activities
- Facilitate Program communication activities
- Increase the Communications Division operational efficiency

The framework that the Division has developed for working with Programs to achieve the second objective – help bridge the gap between research and policy development – is the In-Focus Pyramid. This pyramid is composed of IDRC information “products”. Its origin lies in the idea of knowledge as a pyramid and a related concept of information targeted at different audiences that relates to the layers of the knowledge pyramid. But nowhere is the In-Focus Pyramid well explained.

We found considerable confusion in the Centre about the pyramid approach, beyond its simple intuitive feel. People seem to be talking about a knowledge pyramid composed of different types of knowledge; a variant of it in which knowledge is categorised by target audiences (Information Pyramid), and IDRC’s pyramid featuring an interactive suite of information products, which it calls the In-Focus Pyramid.

The knowledge pyramid

The idea behind the knowledge pyramid is that decisions are based on knowledge, the basic building blocks of which are research that forms the base of the pyramid, but the relationship is not a direct one. In between research reports (which are largely written for other researchers) and the information that the decision makers actually see or hear are multiple intervening layers. These are the middle layers of the pyramid.

In the lower middle layers of the pyramid, closer to the original research outputs, are various research products that provide broader contexts for interpreting the results. These are the scientific syntheses, comparative studies and meta-studies that rework primary research data. Their purpose is largely scientific. It is to validate the individual research results; to provide a sounder basis for making generalizations; and to reduce scientific uncertainty.

Above these are higher layers in the pyramid that represent the efforts by different actors to interpret what the science means for the outside world. These interpretations can be to support a particular viewpoint (advocacy), to make the information more accessible to laypersons, to provide an evidence-base for decisions, or to reinterpret science within a
moral framework. At the apex of the pyramid are those distillations of scientific knowledge that become universal truths (the earth is round) or highly visible scientific controversies (the climate is warming), or popular concepts (the ozone hole), or moral imperatives (sustainable development).

The Information Pyramid

One can imagine an information pyramid that is the inverse of the knowledge pyramid so that it appears to be standing on its apex. The broad base of the knowledge pyramid is written in language that is largely restricted to the relatively small world of scientists. Scientific reports are mainly destined to reach other scientists, from the prestigious international peer-reviewed journals, to the grey materials of workshop presentations and in-house reports, to posting early results on the web. Their readership is relatively narrow. So the broad base of the knowledge pyramid matches the apex of the information pyramid.

In theory, anyone can read on the web the latest high-energy physics paper on the amazing behaviour of matter’s smallest particles. In practice only physicists do. As you go up the information pyramid, the reinterpreted, translated and massaged knowledge becomes more accessible to broader populations and the pyramid widens. The interested generalist reads about the smallest particles in the New Scientist, perhaps looks at Science online or listens to something about it on Quirks and Quarks. These are located in the broadband part of the pyramid (the upper area in an inverted pyramid).

Thus the layers in the information pyramid are differentiated on the basis of the audiences that they reach. At the same time, any target group, including national policy makers can receive information via different critical paths through the multiple layers of the pyramid.30

The In-Focus Pyramid

Communications Division has taken the idea of the knowledge pyramid and its mirror image, the information pyramid and created the In-Focus Pyramid (figure 1). This pyramid is constructed from IDRC supported products: from the PI websites, project reports and PCRs at its base, to corporate publications, technology files and books in the middle layers, to distillations of those products near the apex (‘facts and figures’ on the website, op-ed articles, and press releases).

Sitting at the centre of the pyramid is the In-Focus book. The book is seen as a gateway to the whole pyramid. It draws lessons and practical recommendations for both policy makers and researchers. The In-Focus book is thus positioned to allow policy makers to drill down to the original research and for researchers to better access the preoccupations of the policy world. The In-Focus Pyramid is designed as a communications strategy for reaching decision-makers with linked pyramid “products” from IDRC.

30 This assumes that knowledge pyramids are discrete and enduring structures, which, of course, they are not. Science is said to proceed by building pyramids and then rearranging the blocks to create new ones. Sometimes the pyramids are torn down a la Kuhns and reconstructed into entirely new forms.
Figure 1    IDRC In-Focus Pyramid

Press Release

Slide Show

Facts and Figures

IDRC Briefing
Op-Ed Pieces

IN_Focus Book

Stories, interviews, technology files, corporate publications, Reports, Nayudamma,
Annual Report, Country profiles

Books, Journals, copubs, Trade, Focus, “Must Read”, etc
Peer reviewed literature

PI Web sites, Library Archives, project reports, PCRs, Workshop papers, project descriptions, etc
Grey literature, no peer review
The first pyramid is the Water Pyramid that is the focus of this study. In 2003 five more In-Focus Pyramids are planned or are under discussion:

- ICTs and poverty (*February 2003, Johannesburg*)
- Ecosystem approach to human health (*May 2003, Montreal*)
- Measuring, monitoring and modelling poverty at community level (*May 2003, Asia*)
- Urban Agriculture (*June 2003, Latin America*)
- Participatory Plant Breeding (*September 2003, Washington*)

### 8.2 Analysis and discussion

**In-Focus Pyramid**

The pyramid framework has put Communications on the mental map of IDRC Programs. It is an intuitive, easy to visualise concept that people find attractive. It embodies the idea of different elements combining to create a structure and the notion of research as IDRC’s foundation.

> “It’s a useful visual tool to visualize different audiences and products”
> “It is intuitively appealing”.

IDRC staff

On closer examination there are some problems with the concept of the In-Focus Pyramid, which is why we have sought to describe the knowledge pyramid and the information pyramid that are closely related concepts. One difficulty that IDRC staff has is the relationship between the layers of the In-Focus Pyramid. Is there an inevitable order to the communication products at the different levels in the pyramid? What is the nature of the change from one level to another? Increasing synthesis? Enlarging audience? More targeted audiences? It is not clear from the Communications Division strategy as presently elaborated. Some of the questions that the Division needs to address are encapsulated in the following quotation from one of our interviews:

> “There has to be increasing synthesis and increased targeting for different audiences as you go up the pyramid. Hmm – I wonder – is it more general or more targeted as you go up the pyramid? The higher levels in the pyramid correspond to more senior decision makers – that said, that’s not really true. The more I look at this pyramid, the less I like it. But the importance of the pyramid is to get us to think about a mix of vehicles for getting information out.”

IDRC staff

The last point is very important – the In-Focus Pyramid has made an enormous impression on IDRC Programs on the need to devise a suite of products as well as multiple channels and opportunities to reach their target decision makers. If Program staff did not realise it before (and some certainly did), they do now.
Our analysis of some of the different elements of the pyramid leads us to pose four main questions to Communications Division and to IDRC about the pyramid strategy. These are:

- How are ‘pyramid’ topics most effectively framed for policy uptake?
- Can one pyramid fit all?
- Is there a missing element to the pyramid?
- Can the pyramid strategy be made more strategic?

**Framing research results for policy uptake**

One of the issues running through our meetings with policy makers, researchers and IDRC staff relates to the question of how to define the topic for the *In-Focus Pyramid* – or how to ‘frame’ the issue. There are at least three different frames to consider:

- The *research frame* that defines the subject of scientific investigation
- The *policy frame* or issue as seen from the perspective of the decision-maker
- The *organisational frame* of IDRC and the PIs.

The pyramid strategy requires IDRC to take output from the research frame and try to mould it into suitable input for the policy frame. It has to do this by going through the organisational frame of IDRC and its PIs. This is not a theoretical dilemma.

There are different views about whether *In-Focus* books should cover the entire subject area of a PI, or select a more limited topic that is closer to actual policy issues. At the heart of this debate is the struggle between two objectives (or loops to be closed) - linking research to policy or showcasing the work of the PIs. The Communications Division is clear that the books should focus on policy issues or subjects and not on program areas. However, another lively in-house discussion is whether the *In-Focus* book should present only IDRC supported research or should deal with the topic, using relevant research inputs wherever they may be found. It again comes back to which loop you are trying to close – the research-policy link or demonstrating the value-added of IDRC.

**Can one pyramid fit all?**

The strategy is less clear than it might be about who are the target audiences for the *In-Focus Pyramid*. The reasons for this lie beyond the borders of the Communications Division and relate to the many different loops that the Centre is trying to close. Can one *In-Focus Pyramid* meet the needs of local communities, national policy makers in developing countries, other researchers worldwide, other donors, DFAIT and CIDA? In theory, maybe, but in practice, it is very difficult.

What is the role of the Communications Division in developing elements of the *In-Focus Pyramid* for developing countries? The pyramid strategy needs to elaborate the different responsibilities within IDRC and those of researchers within IDRC-supported projects for developing and delivering the different pyramid products to policy makers outside Canada. It might be more effective to develop a *Water Pyramid* for Canada and another
one for developing countries, or to have pyramids that are expressly designed for closing particular loops.

Are there missing elements in the pyramid?

One of the lurking questions in our analysis of the pyramid is to ask which of the present elements is effectively bridging the research-policy gap. From our case study of the Water Pyramid, we are not convinced that the In-Focus Water book does. We are not convinced that the IDRC Briefing does, nor the Policy Workshops unless some changes are made to them. Other In-Focus books and IDRC Briefings in the preparatory stages have already incorporated changes similar to those proposed here. Future workshops can also experiment with new formats designed to actively involve the policy community. But is there a need for one or more elements (layers) to be added to the In-Focus Pyramid that would be more effective at reaching policy makers, principally in developing countries, but also with benefits in Canada?

We have four suggestions:

- Publish a new series of IDRC Policy Briefs
- Develop a set of generic communication tools for IDRC researchers and others
- Start a new communications program for science journalists
- Strengthen the capacity of the Regional Offices in Communications

Producing Policy Briefs would require the cooperation of Communications Division, the Regional Offices, Program staff and researchers. The raw material for the briefs would come from the researchers. Program staff can help to provide a broader context (the meta-studies) and Communications Division can provide where needed the writers and communication tools to ensure a high standard. IDRC Policy Briefs could become as highly respected and looked for as those from other leading institutions producing policy briefs, such as ODI, IDS, USAID-EAGER and ISNAR.

However, the investment required to produce a series of high quality policy briefs is significant and it is definitely not a step for the Centre to take without first considering at senior management level the pros and cons and then providing adequate resources and commitment to do the job well.

A second option lies more comfortably within the present remit of the Communications Division. It is to develop a suite of communication tools and guidelines to help researchers and others to close the policy loop. The CD-ROM on Writing for Change is an excellent example of what can, and needs to be done in different languages. They should be widely distributed in different formats, including being available on the IDRC and Regional Office websites.

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31IDRC and Fahamu, 2001, Writing for Change: An Interactive guide to effective writing for science and for advocacy. Daniel Buckles supported the production of this CD-ROM and user’s guide within a SUB project, together with three workshops on effective writing for scientists, policy advocates and community based development professionals held in Chile, Kenya and South Asia.
A third option is to target some of IDRC’s outreach efforts directly at journalists working in print, radio and television media in developing countries. Our policy group in Kenya as well as policy advisors in Canada shared the view that the policy process is largely an oral one.

Policy makers like to pick up the phone and talk to an expert, or have the expert available to ask questions and test ideas with. Policy makers rarely read books as background to policy decisions. They are more likely to be influenced by reading the paper on the way to the Minister’s office. If this is true, the In-Focus Pyramid may be missing its key target audience. An initiative to reach journalists, especially science journalists could perhaps be made in partnership with other donors and with NGOs like SciDevNet.

A fourth option is to strengthen the capacity of the IDRC Regional Offices to undertake more of this In-Focus Pyramid work in the regions and to scan the regional horizon for opportunities and policy windows where IDRC could be active and effective. While this might involve having Communications staff located in some of the Regional Offices, an alternative might be to identify focal points for Communications within the Regional Offices and provide some technical support and training to those people.

Can the pyramid strategy be made more strategic?
The Communications Division has taken an important step to make its strategy more effective by undertaking an evaluation of the pyramid strategy at an early stage. There are a number of findings from this study that can be readily incorporated into the new In-Focus Pyramids that are underway.

However, some of the difficulties that we have encountered in analysing the pyramid relate to the way in which the Communications Division’s strategy is described. Its objectives seem closer to goals than objectives against which the performance of the Centre and the Division can be measured.

If the In-Focus Pyramids are to influence policy, then before IDRC makes further investments in them, it should have reasonable assurance that they are both effective and cost-effective. This admittedly early and small evaluation study raises some doubts about the effectiveness of the In-Focus Pyramid, especially its most expensive component – the In-Focus Book. There may be other, more cost-effective, ways to achieve policy impact.

We felt unable to judge if the number of media reports on water, or the number of hits to the water website, or the number of purchasers of the water book were above or below expectations, or what might be considered successful, because there are no performance measures in the Pyramid Strategy. We believe that it would be helpful if there were, not only for external evaluations but also to provide internal feedback loops.

The Communications Division could produce a better description of the In-Focus Pyramid. It is not yet clear to us what conceptual assumptions underlie the pyramid and
nowhere could we obtain a good explanation of the Pyramid Strategy. For example, how is the arrangement of the different layers (communication products) in the pyramid determined? Other than the intuitive understanding that research reports form the foundation, the proximity of one communications product to another in the pyramid is not self-evident.

Is the effect of the pyramid assumed to be cumulative? This would require some evidence that each target audience is reached by more than one product (layer). Our evidence, albeit fragmentary, would indicate that one cannot assume that readers of the book will read the briefing or visit the website. The *In-Focus book* may not be a portal to the rest of the pyramid.

These and other questions about the *In-Focus Pyramid* remain unanswered, thus underscoring the need for a more analytical framework for the Pyramid Strategy from the Communications Division.

### 8.3 Recommendations

1. We recommend that serious consideration be given to answering some of the questions about the Pyramid Strategy that are raised in this section, in order to arrive at a fuller explanatory framework for the *In-Focus Pyramid*. This framework should include a clear rationale for how topics are selected for the pyramids, and the expected relationships between the topic, the target audiences, and the *In-Focus* products.

2. In general, there is a need to establish more specific set of objectives (or sub-objectives) for the pyramid strategy and some criteria by which the Centre can know if it has performed well.

3. IDRC should consider at senior management level whether it wants to get into the business of supporting the preparation and dissemination of policy briefs or other new information products that are more specifically targeted at policy audiences than the current *In-Focus* products appear to be.
9 Conclusions

This study has focussed on the suite of communication products that are part of the Water Pyramid. It is a test case for the Communications Division because it is the first experience of the Pyramid Strategy. It is also a severe test because in many ways, the Water Pyramid is an anomaly. All the products – the IDRC Briefing, the website, and the Workshop were designed around the In-Focus Water Book. This is itself based on a Compendium of Thirty Years of past IDRC research that has no present program home – that is, they are all designed around an “orphan program”.

Some of the results that we report on are related to the particular circumstances of the Water Pyramid. Others, we believe, are generic to the whole pyramid strategy, and therefore will require more careful attention from the Centre. These are the ones that we turn to in this last section.

First, the In-Focus Pyramid has many attractive features. It has appeal as a unifying and mobilising concept and it is built around a “dossier” approach to communications that lends itself well to interactive tools and the needs of very different audiences. Its weaknesses lie in its conceptual ambiguity, its relative complexity and potentially high cost, which may limit its flexibility and responsiveness in changing situations. A suite of linked publication products takes time to produce.

Our major question about the pyramid strategy as presently formulated is that it does not seem well designed to bridge the research-policy gap, which is its principal objective. Indeed, there is a gap between what the pyramid can best provide and what we are told are the needs of policy makers. On the basis of this initial study of the water pyramid, we conclude that the centrepiece of the Pyramid Strategy – the In-Focus book – is best suited as a backgrounder for Canadian (and Northern) audiences, drawn mainly from the ranks of educators, students, NGOs and general readers. This is an eminently worthwhile audience to reach, but it is not the stated objective of the Pyramid Strategy.

It is early days yet in the distribution of the In-Focus Water Book and it may prove to be more useful in the South than at first appears. But the messages of the book do not seem to make the connection between community level and higher decision-making levels that largely determine whether the national policy environment will be a facilitating or inhibiting one for those communities. It is too “decontextualised” to help anchor policy decisions.

If our results and conclusions hold, the Centre faces a strategic fork in the road. It must either redesign the Pyramid Strategy and its key components to better bridge the research-policy gap in the South, or it can reorient its Pyramid Strategy northwards and fine-tune it to meet the needs of the receptive audiences that it clearly has already in Canada.
Redesign of the strategy for the South will involve rethinking the design of the dossiers, and perhaps introducing new ones requiring significant commitments such as the ‘policy brief’. There are implications here for the role of the Communications Division, and how it can best support researchers to prepare effective materials for policy makers in their countries. We have proposed ideas such as an IDRC Communications tool-kit, and outreach to key intermediary groups for policy influence, such as journalists. These initiatives would build on the expertise of the Communications Division without necessarily changing the location of its staff or its mandate.

The Centre also needs to reflect on how seriously it wants to close the loop with developing country policy makers and whether it is willing to make some of the system changes that might be needed. Currently IDRC is not very nimble as an organization. It can be responsive and fast on occasion but would probably find it difficult to make a habit of it. The Centre may not wish to make the tradeoffs necessary to create an organization that is able to seize opportunities for policy impact as policy windows open and close. It may not see itself as a policy responsive organization. The next question then becomes – what steps does the Centre wish to take to increase the policy influence it and its researchers can have without radical change? Our recommendations to the various sections suggest what some of these changes could be.

We would suggest that the Centre look closely at its own Secretariats to see if their greater focus on closing the loop has achieved successes in policy impact that provide useful models for the PIs. We were impressed with the job descriptions for the Executive Directors of the Secretariats, which encompass many elements that can drive the policy impact of research. We also noted that many of the success stories in policy impact quoted within the Centre relate to a Secretariat program model.

Finally, we want to congratulate the Communications Division for its initiative and courage in evaluating the pyramid strategy so early in the game. Some of our recommendations – if accepted - can be implemented in the short term. Some of our findings have been anticipated by the Division and are already being incorporated into the Pyramid Strategy. To build on this learning process, we recommend that the Communications Division obtain feedback on the next *In-Focus Pyramids* in the series, especially on any innovations that are introduced.

Beyond that, we would urge the Centre to look at the more far-reaching implications of this report in the light of the major study on the research-policy interface being undertaken by the IDRC Evaluation Unit. It is the results of the larger study that should help frame future decisions made by the Communications Division on the Pyramid Strategy for closing the research-policy loop.
ANNEX 1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

FOR STUDY OF IDRC COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR “CLOSING THE LOOP” FOR POLICY OUTREACH

Mestor Associates Ltd. will assist the Communications Division of IDRC to further develop a Communications and Outreach strategy for “Closing the Loop” which seeks to make decision-makers aware of the research outputs of projects supported by the Centre in order to have input to improved policy making.

Specifically, Mestor Associates will:

1. Collect the views and experience of policy stakeholders through surveys and interviews on the effectiveness of the different elements in the “Communications Pyramid” as means for making them aware of research findings and using these findings in making decisions.

2. Undertake a case study of the Communications Outreach Strategy for making policy-makers aware of the IDRC research findings on “Water”. This will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of four key elements in the strategy for reaching policy-makers at local and national level in Canada and in the regions (In-Focus book, policy workshop, IDRC Briefing and thematic web-site). The consultants will conduct e-mail surveys of:
   1. Recipients of the In-Focus book in Canada and in the regions through the distribution from the IDRC headquarters and the Regional Offices;
   2. Participants in the Policy Workshop on Water held in Ottawa in March 2002 as well as a smaller sample of participants in the Health Workshop held in Montréal 17-18 April 2001 and the Trade Workshop held in Ottawa 28 March 2001;
   3. Visitors to the thematic page on water on the IDRC website (through a “pop-up” survey on the web-page).

3. Undertake a minimum of 20 interviews in person or by phone of selected policy-makers in Canada and in the regions to obtain more in-depth information about the effectiveness of different elements of the communications pyramid, particularly for the outreach strategy on Water.

4. In consultation with the Director of Communications and the IDRC Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa, contact selected recipients in Kenya of the In-Focus book on Water and obtain their views and experience in relation to the Communications Outreach Strategy for Water.

5. In consultation with the Director of Communications, interview selected people within IDRC, especially in Programs and Partnerships Branch, Evaluation Unit and the Policy and Planning Unit, to obtain their views on the Communications Outreach and Dissemination strategy and to identify how it can be most effective and supportive to IDRC program and corporate objectives in “Closing the Loop”.

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Annex 2       List of Respondents

1 Interviewees in Kenya

Officials of the Kenyan Government and UNEP

Mr. Donald Kaniaru
Director
Division of Environmental Policy Implementation
United Nations Environment Program, Nairobi

Ms. Elizabeth Khaka
Program Officer
Division of Environmental Policy Implementation
United Nations Environment Program, Nairobi

Mr. Charles M’bara
Deputy Director, Farm Management
Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya

Mr. J. M’bote
Deputy Director, Land Development
Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya

Ms. Rose Mwangi
Agricultural Officer
Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya

Mr. Florian Mulli
Deputy Director, Urban Development
Ministry of Local Government, Kenya

Eng. David Stower
Senior Deputy Director, Water Development
Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya

Senior Policy Group met in Nairobi

Dr. Joseph Kinyua
Chief Economist
Central Bank, Kenya

Prof. Allechi M’bet
Conseiller économique principal
Présidence de la République, Côte d’Ivoire
Harris Mule  
Former Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Finance, Kenya  

Tchetché N’guessan  
Directeur de Cabinet  
Primature, Côte d’Ivoire  

Mr. Terrance Ryan  
Former Director of Planning  
Ministry of Finance, Kenya  
Currently Professor  
Department of Economics  
University of Nairobi  

Osita Ogbu  
Executive Secretary  
African Technology Policy Secretariat  

2 Water Policy Workshop Respondents  

Juan Carlos Alurrade  
Director, Legislation Project  
Bolivian Commission for Integrated Water Management  
La Paz, Bolivia  

Sabrina Barker  
Policy Analyst  
Environment Canada  

Ruth Beukman  
Manager, Water Demand Management Project  
Pretoria, South Africa  

Safdar Bokhari (general feedback over phone)  
Senior Project Officer  
CIDA  

John Cadham  
Cadham Hayes Associates  
Ottawa, Canada  

Guy Carrier  
Spécialiste en eau et assainissement  
Ressources naturelless et infrastructure  
ACDI
Lise Clement  
Agriculture Canada

Prof. Jan Dai  
Xinjiang Academy of Agricultural Sciences  
Urumqi, China

Malik Gaye  
Directeur, Projet développement urbain  
ENDA-TM  
Dakar, Sénégal

Peter Groenvelt  
University of Guelph

Adele Hurley  
Munk Centre for International Studies  
University of Toronto

Paul Kay  
University of Waterloo

Liz Lefrancois  
Chief, Water Awareness and Efficiency  
Environment Canada

Seydou Niang  
Institut Fondamental de l’Afrique Noire

Guillermo Rebosio Arana  
Centre for Research, Education and Development (CIED)  
Lima, Peru

Elias Rosales Escalente  
FUNDATED  
Cartago, Costa Rica

Hans Schryer  
Institute for Resources and the Environment  
University of British Colombia

Rodger Schwass  
IDRC Governor

Susan Seguin  
Central and East Europe  
CIDA
3 Health Forum Respondents

Celia Almeida
Research, National Public Health Institute
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Enis Baris
Senior Public Health Specialist (EASHD)
World Bank

Mario Bronfman Pertzovsky
Executive Director
National Public Health Institute
Cuernavaca, Mexico

Rafeal Cortez
Universidad del Pacifico
Lima, Peru

Jorge Diaz Polanco
Universidad Central de Venezuela
Caracas, Venezuela

Gilles Dussault
Senior Health Specialist
World Bank Institute

Tania Dmytrizcenko
Special Initiatives
Partnership for Health Reform
Bethesda, MD, USA

Miguel Gonzalez-Block
Manager, Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research
WHO

Oscar Feo
Presidential Commission for the Health Sector
and Social Security Reform
Maracay, Venezuela

Slim Haddad
Administration de la santé
Université de Montréal
David Helms
President,
Academy for Health Services Research and Policy
Washington DC, USA

Maya Kagis
Canadian Institute for International Health

Elsie Le Franc
University of the West Indies
Bridgetown, Barbados

Patricia Pittman
Academy for Health Services and Health Policy
Washington DC, USA

Nick Previsich
International Affairs Directorate
Health Canada

James St. Catherine
Program Manager in Health
CARICOM

Lynn Dee Silver
Researcher
University of Brazilia

Debora Tajer
Southern Cone Coordinator
Latin American Association of Social Medicine
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Beatriz Tess
Ministry of Health
Brazilia, Brazil

Francisco Yepes
Executive Director
Columbian Health Association
Bogota, Columbia
4 In-Focus Water Book Online Purchasers/Recipients

Jean-François Bibeault
Environnement Canada
Montréal, QC

John Butterworth
National Research Institute
Chatham Maritime
Kent, UK

Jim Chauvin
Canadian Public Health Association

Catherine Courchesne
Québec QC

Paul Jacobs
Université Libre de Bruxelles
Research Unit on Biotherapy and Oncology

Ronald Hart
Safe Water Group
Picton, ON

Rene van Lieshout
Royal Haskoning Company
Netherlands

Sonia Tait
Kingston, ON

5 IDRC Respondents

President’s Office
Fred Carden
John Hardie
Maureen O’Neil

Programs and Partnership Branch
Daniel Buckles
Peter Cooper
Brent Herbert Copley
Richard Fuchs
Jean Lebel
Rohinton Medhora
Ronnie Vernoy
Christine Zarowsky
Regional Offices
Ellysar Baroudy
Roberto Bazzani
Constance Freeman
Luis Navarro
Eglal Rached
Andres Ruis
Randy Spence

Communications Division
Bill Carman
Robert Charbonneau
Jean-Marc Fleury
Diane Hardy
Chantal Schryer

Former Staff
David Brooks
Caroline Pestieau