

# Building an Economics Profession in Africa:

## An Evaluation Phase V of the African Economic Research Consortium

by

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1 of 93

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## Table of Contents

	Page
	iii
<b>Table of Contents</b>	
<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	IV
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	v
<i>An Overview of the Evaluation Process</i>	1
1.0 The Phase V Evaluation Process	1
2.0 An Overview of Phase V Activities	2
3.0 A Summary of Recommended Options for the Future	5
<i>The AERC Research Programme</i>	10
4.0 Building Research Capacity	10
5.0 Promoting Policy-Oriented Research	14
6.0 Other Modalities to Build and Retain Research Capacity	17
7.0 Research Capacity Building Outputs and Impacts	19
8.0 Sustaining and Extending the Research Programme	23
<b>AERC's Training Programme</b>	27
9.0 <i>Collaborative Master's Programme [CMAP]</i>	27
10.0 <i>Promoting PhD Studies in Economics</i>	33
11.0 <i>Synergy between Research and Training Programmes</i>	37
<b>Publish and Disseminate Research Output</b>	41
12.0 <i>Communicating Research Results for Policy Impact</i>	41
13.0 <i>Building an Economic Policy Impact Network</i>	43
<b>Managing Capacity Building and Research</b>	48
14.0 <i>Management Structures and Procedures</i>	48
15.0 <i>Assessment of Programme Cost Effectiveness</i>	53
16.0 <i>Resource Mobilization</i>	57
<b>Building for the Future: Phase VI</b>	59
17.0 <i>Building for a Sustainable CMAP</i>	59
18.0 <i>Capacity Building and Current Development Priorities</i>	63
<b>Bibliography</b>	68
<b>Annex</b>	70
<i>Set of Supporting Tables</i>	70
<i>List of Persons Interviewed</i>	79

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**List of Figures and Tables**

		Page
Table 1	Target Output and Indicators of Performance of the Thematic Research and Biannual Workshops during Phase V	10
Table 2	Target Output and Indicators of Performance of Thematic Research Programme Special Sessions and Workshops: Phase V	17
Table 3	Summary Table of Support for PhD Studies: Phase V	33
Figure 1	An Outline of Career Path Opportunities among AERC Programmes	38
Table A.1	The Evaluation Process	70
Table A.2	Funding of Thematic Research Projects and Success Rates for Papers Presented at the Bi-annuals by Category during Phase V	70
Table A.3	Workshops and Sessions Conducted During Phase V	71
Table A.4	Participation of Female and Francophone Economists in AERC Research Activities during Phase V	72
Table A.5	CMAP and JFE Enrolment, Lecturers, Examiners and Electives (2001 - 2003)	72
Table A.6	Course Offerings in the Joint Facility for Electives for the Collaborative Master's Programme: Phase V	73
Table A.7	First Cohort of Students in the Collaborative PhD Programme	74
Table A.8	Entry and Advance from Thematic Research Programme (1991-2003)	75
Table A.9	Participation at Biannual Workshops of Observers, Plenary Speakers and Resource Persons (1991-2003)	76
Table A.10	Cost Structure and Input and Output Indicators of AERC's Phase V Research Activities	77
Table A.11	Defining Characteristics of CMAP	78

## List of Acronyms

AACB	Association of African Central Banks
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACP	African, Caribbean and the Pacific States
AERC	African Economic Research Consortium
AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
CEPA	Center for Economic Policy Analysis, Ghana
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMAP	Collaborative Master's Programme
COFEB	Centre Ouest Africain de Fomation et d'Etudes Bancaires
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CPP	Collaborative PhD Programme
CREA	Consortium pour la Recherche Economique en Afrique
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation
FAO	United Nations/ Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDN	Global Development Network
HIPC	Highly-indebted poor countries
ICEG	International Center for Economic Growth
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFLP	Impact of Financial Liberalization on the Poor
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAR	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
JFE	Joint facility for electives
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis
LEAP	International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEFMI	Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa
NBER	National Bureau of Economic Research
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
PTCI	Programme de Troisième Cycle Interuniversitaire en Economie
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SATRAN	Southern African Trade Research Network
SEATINI	Southern & Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Initiative
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECIA	University of England Consortium for International Activities

# African Economic Research Consortium

## *Evaluation of Phase V*

### *An Overview of the Evaluation Process*

#### *1.0 The Phase V Evaluation Process*

The Evaluation Team, as commissioned by the African Economic Research Consortium [AERC] Board, was asked to assess the Consortium's programmes and activities during the period 2000/01 to 2003/04. The Team was guided by Terms of Reference as established by the Secretariat of AERC (AERC, 2003b). This evaluation was conducted from February through August (see Annex, Table A.1 for a list of evaluation activities).

Primary goals set for this evaluation were:

- assess the extent of fulfilment of the objectives that had been set for Phase V;
- determine the relevance of these objectives and the programme implementation that has occurred during Phase V; and
- based on the conclusions obtained, provide a desirable outlook for programmatic activities during Phase VI.

The focus of the evaluation was AERC's activities in the following areas:

- **Research Programme** - Review the implementation of AERC's Thematic and Collaborative Research programmes and other related research activities.
- **Training Programme** - Review the Training programmes: Collaborative Master's Programme [CMAP], PhD support, and the Collaborative PhD Programme [CPP].
- **Communications** - An AERC weakness identified in previous reviews was a limited capacity to articulate policy-related research to policy makers on a timely basis. In response, major re-organizations of the Division were undertaken and an expansion of the communication strategy was initiated in Phase V.
- **Management** - Assess AERC's management: the impact of restructuring the Secretariat, effectiveness of the revised Human Resource, Finance and Administration policy and procedures, success in realizing synergies among different programmes, the utility of performance indicators in reporting and in internal management, and the ratio of overhead to management and programme expenditures as compared with similar organizations.
- **Resource Mobilization** - Review resource mobilization: to sustain AERC's planned activities to cover the extent of implementation of the existing strategy

for resource mobilization; the level of success in retaining traditional donors, bringing in new donors, and actions to obtain African financial contributors for the Consortium; and the place of the Board of Directors in resource mobilization.

An assessment of these activities was to be located within the changing environment in sub-Saharan Africa and globally. Specifically, the Team was asked to identify the implications of these changes for research programming and analyze the responsiveness of CMAP and CPP to emerging policy issues in sub-Saharan Africa.

For this report, Phase V programme objectives and strategies, as set out in *AERC into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (AERC, 2001a), serve as benchmarks for evaluating AERC's programme activities from 2000/2001 to mid-2004. The intent is to analyze AERC's responsiveness to an evolving policy setting, its ability to retain focus and to strike an appropriate balance between research initiatives and continued capacity building functions, and its contribution to the capacity of African countries to design and implement their respective approaches to development.

## **2.0 An Overview of Phase V Activities**

It is our overall assessment that the objectives and implementation strategies for Phase V were sound. They have served well to guide organizational change, programme delivery and evolution in the nature of activity; they have advanced the distribution of research results and measurement of programme outputs.

Among people interviewed there is general consensus that AERC has been successful in fulfilling its capacity building, training and research missions. A high degree of satisfaction was observed in the Training and Research programmes. A primary conclusion of this evaluation is that AERC should continue its present roles and activities as they are well justified and strongly founded and there is evidence of high value and a need to continue.

Specific indicators of programme outputs and impacts include:

- 1) Thematic Research participants enumerated a number of direct benefits, including their personal advancement in conducting research and the value of interacting with economists from other African countries and beyond. Increased self-confidence and improved presentation skills also were listed.
- 2) For economists who participated in multiple Thematic Research projects a maturing process was observed. This suggests second and third projects for any one participant should be structured to promote movement beyond mastering new methodologies and techniques to developing skills to construct concepts appropriate to analyzing specific African issues and then advancing to identifying feasible policy options for a specific issue.
- 3) Collaborative research addressed demands from stakeholders and donors to strengthen AERC's policy orientation. A target of three projects during this phase is being met with 220 economists involved. In addition, projects initiated

during phase IV were continued to completion with dissemination of research results.

- 4) A series of internships and visiting scholar programmes are in place to advance capacity building and research emphases of the research programme.
- 5) Indicators of programme impact include: a network of economists interacting on contemporary economic policy issues in a number of African countries and a network that now bridges Francophone and Anglophone economists. Also, AERC's methodology is being promoted by other agencies, African and international, as a model for networking.
- 6) Indicators of research impact on policy formation include: use of research output in training programmes; policy makers drawing on AERC outputs as relevant for their work; evidence of research shaping privatization, international trade, and devaluation policies in selected countries; and Central Banks drawing on AERC network members for research and policy input.
- 7) Indicators of development impact of AERC research include: interaction among economists across national boundaries has brought to bear new ideas and best practices from other African countries to the development of individual African economies; Collaborative Research projects have fostered an exchange of ideas, methodologies and policy experience that is shaping the content and approaches to development policies and strategies relevant for Africa; and research on poverty is extending an understanding of economic growth process to incorporate the operation of labor markets, employment and the role of civil society.
- 8) Most of the Phase V targets set for CMAP have been realized: size of enrolment, inclusion of women, number of electives offered, and requisite staff for the programme. Also, the programme is well on track with respect to targets for curricula development and the training-of-trainers.
- 9) More than 1,000 MA's have graduated from CMAP, 453 during the first four years of Phase V. Within the overall supply of MA graduates, CMAP has become established as a quality degree, with employers identifying it as a recognized product in the market. With CMAP in place, some employers no longer see a need to send staff abroad to obtain MA level training in economics.
- 10) A unique strength of CMAP is the Joint Facility for Electives [JFE]. As CMAP graduates cannot readily capture economic rents from a "superior" degree, the JFE needs to be seen as a public good that may not be provided easily or at lower cost by private institutions. AERC, with its international base across African countries, is positioned uniquely to provide quality regional programmes, such as CMAP, on a cost-effective basis.
- 11) AERC support for PhD studies has generated specific outcomes: graduates hold key positions in government ministries and in central banks; a number of

graduates are active in the AERC network and have a commendable publication record; and graduates are involved as lecturers of core and elective courses, student supervisors, external examiners, members of liaison committees and are active in knowledge generation more generally.

- 12) Initiating CPP has proven to be popular, with more than 80 applications received annually, of which AERC is able to support only 25%. CPP will continue AERC's contribution to a capacity to teach economics at the under- and post-graduate levels and a capacity to conduct independent research relevant to Africa's needs. The CPP format will have additional spillover effects in the form of text book writing, curriculum development, and PhD graduates with an education related specifically to challenges and needs within Africa.
- 13) The Communications Division of the AERC is extensively involved in publication and in facilitating publication. It continues to publish an *AERC Newsletter* and *Research News*. All of these outputs are maintained in AERC's library and can be obtained via its information resources centre.
- 14) AERC's vision for communication places a central role on information technology to distribute information both internally and externally. Extending research results to policy makers, increasing information about AERC and its programmes, plus improved communication among AERC's network members should pay off over time and is worthy of significant investment as Phase VI is launched.
- 15) With some 20 years of programming, AERC now has developed a visible network of economists that represents a leading edge for research and teaching of economics in a number of countries. It represents a resource on which AERC can draw to carry out its programming mandates. Through AERC's Secretariat, governments, international institutions, and private-sector agencies also can draw on the demonstrated expertise and experience of this network.
- 16) A priority for Phase V was to enhance networking. There has been good progress with the inclusion of economists from Francophone countries and means are being sought to include economists from disadvantaged countries who have little or no involvement in AERC programmes. Other activities are designed to retain network members and to build their research and post-graduate teaching capabilities.
- 17) AERC has been active in building effective partnerships with national, regional and global institutions. These include institutions within Africa, Universities in Europe and North America, International Financial Institutions, and United Nations Organizations. Also, AERC has provided input and presence in negotiation sessions between African countries and the European Union, the World Trade Organization and the G-77 group of countries.
- 18) An effective forum for outreach to policy makers has been the Senior Policy Seminars. Participating members provided consistent evidence of the

importance of these Seminars. Having become aware of AERC research, they are encouraging their staff to seek out AERC research results. Participation in this forum has created an awareness of the need for an Africa-wide network of policy makers and research economists to organize research projects, to nominate persons to participate in such joint-ventures, and to establish focal points to maintain dialogue at both national and international levels.

- 19) The AERC constitution, with its division of functions between a Board, Programme Committee and Secretariat, has been respected by all involved and provides a satisfactory balance between donors and management.
- 20) Although struggling with a major reorganization during Phase V, the Secretariat has shown a dedication and competence required to manage effectively AERC's mandate as set out by the AERC Board and its activities as defined by the Programme Committee.
- 21) From its roots of research capacity building with a Thematic Research modality, AERC programming has evolved into CMAP, Collaborative Research, and now CPP. The core of CMAP, the JFE, builds on experience gained from Thematic Research. Collaborative Research is a logical extension of Thematic Research, utilizing the research capacity of selected economists to address primary policy issues within African economies. CPP is now possible given an alumnus of well-trained MAs drawn from CMAP and a number of senior economists who have drawn on Thematic Research experience to build a publication record required to serve as instructors for a credible PhD programme. At each stage in this evolution of programming the AERC Board, Programme Committee and Secretariat utilized accumulated experience to design and implement the next stage.
- 22) AERC has demonstrated a willingness to learn from its limitations and mistakes. Evaluations of its programmes, either in full or in part, are conducted regularly. The subsequent evaluations typically report the recommendations received have been considered seriously and, in most cases, have been implemented.
- 23) Continued success of the Thematic Research programme is facilitated greatly by a set of distinguished resource persons who offer intensive services during the biannual workshops at well below market rates. Their reputation and expertise draws in research participants and advances significantly the research capacities of the economists undertaking research projects.
- 24) AERC is now a known, recognized institution serving the profession of economics within Africa. A proven track record in both capacity building and research provides AERC with credibility. Increasingly, this experience and reputation is being drawn upon, both within African countries and in international forums.

### ***3.0 A Summary of Recommended Options for the Future***

The Evaluation Team recommends that AERC stay the course, although evolution in how roles and activities are carried out is to be expected. This will include: issues of size and maintaining focus to assure management capacity is adequate to the task; increase impact on policy and economic management beyond the long-term indirect impacts of research capacity; avoid temptations to achieve direct links to economic policy; and continue to build for cost effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

In staying the course AERC should capitalize on built capacity and network to enhance impacts. Capacity building should be built explicitly into all activities: continue, and possibly intensify promoting some experienced in Thematic Research as resource persons and advancing more to Collaborative Research; emphasize mentoring of junior economists by senior economists within the research programme; intensify building capacity of faculty at various African universities to teach core and elective courses, especially for CPP; and enhance the capability of researchers to articulate research findings in a manner that can be received and understood by policy makers, including those with a limited background in economics.

Some of the specific challenges identified by the Team include:

- 1) Who participates in Thematic Research is defined by who chooses to submit a research proposal. This openness should remain. But, a key target population that needs to be drawn in is recent PhD graduates. It is from this cohort of economists that a faculty capable of sustaining post-graduate programmes will be drawn in the future. Focusing Thematic Research on the needs and interests of recent PhD graduates is a strategic niche to develop the research interests and capabilities of economists of the future.
- 2) Shorten the pre-workshop proposal review phase. While good progress has been made during Phase V, AERC needs to make further efforts to improve performance. A preferred option would be an in-house capacity to perform quick screening using simple elimination criteria to reduce the number of proposals to a more manageable number before sending them out for external review.
- 3) Approximately one-half of the proposals submitted are not funded. Also, a high withdrawal rate after attending a proposal-stage biannual workshop suggests the quality of many proposals is low. An in-country review process of proposals, before they are submitted to AERC, may address this problem. Senior AERC network members and/or Economics Department Heads could conduct or facilitate this first review of research proposals.
- 4) To assure consistent advice throughout a research project AERC should make every effort to assure resource persons assigned to a research project process it from acceptance of the proposal to commenting on the final paper.
- 5) Resource persons should have some discretion to decide whether an interim report is presented at the next biannual workshop or after a 12 month period. The current biannual structure, of advancing to the next stage every six months, has worked well and should remain as the preferred norm. But, in

selected cases (e.g., where there are delays in decision-making or there is a survey involved that may take time to conduct), some discretion should be exercised to define a time frame that will advance best a research project.

- 6) For network members who have completed several research projects, there was an admission that the value of workshop participation declined somewhat. As a result, the three stage process should be retained for first-time research grant holders. For subsequent grants, it is recommended that there be experimentation with replacing the proposal stage with electronic interaction between the applicant(s) and two resource persons.
- 7) Given that the primary purpose of the Thematic Research is capacity building, it is recommended that the number of research grants per economist normally be limited to three. Senior economists who have completed three could return as part of a research team involving one or more members who have not reached the three grant limit. This restriction could serve to build in a positive mentoring role for junior research scholars.
- 8) Some Thematic Research grant holders requested that more African economists be included as resource persons. Similarly, network members who have completed several Thematic Research projects and who have achieved a status of recognized scholar expressed interest in serving as a resource person. As a group of recognized Research Fellows emerges there will be an opportunity to move toward greater reliance on African economists as resource persons.
- 9) As themes are changed or renewed consideration should be given to defining the time span for a theme and the terms for resource persons. A period of three (to receive proposals) to five years (to complete projects) should be adequate to build research capacity in a particular aspect of economics. Where a subject still has considerable potential it could then be renewed, possibly in a modified form.
- 10) There is on-going debate on the merits of requiring publication of a Research Report to complete a research project. The Evaluation Team favours eliminating a mandatory requirement of publishing an AERC Research Report. Publishing a Working Paper series, once a final paper has been signed off as successful by the resource person(s) involved, would reduce significantly the administrative load of the Communications Division, would make the research output accessible much earlier to interested parties, and would address an area of considerable frustration for a number of authors. They would then have the option of submitting a paper for the Research Report series, submitting for publication elsewhere, or both.
- 11) The special methodology and applied research sessions and workshops are a useful complement to capacity building within the research workshops. They should be continued on selected topics on current issues and methods.
- 12) Capacity building that has continued through Phase V is enhancing significantly the ability of African economists and policy makers to take

ownership of Africa's policy development process. As an indicator of this contribution it is recommended that AERC's programming include increased ownership by African economists and policy makers of Africa's economic policy agenda as an impact target set for Phase VI.

- 13) As part of the criteria applied to approving research proposals and guiding research capacity building research scholars need to incorporate gender analysis. Specifically, research should advance understanding of gender roles more generally in African economies, incorporate gender equality as part of the research agenda in economics, and create within the economics profession a new capacity to analyze and advance gender equality.
- 14) A number of respondents encouraged AERC to re-new or expand the range of themes for Thematic Research. Some potential themes identified were: health care delivery options designed to optimize improvements in health for all people; new national policies and managing adjustment processes in response to regional integration now occurring in Africa; sustaining the environment as a strategic input to development; the role of government in development, with a focus on regulatory economics; and employment strategies to reduce poverty and advance equitable approaches to development.
- 15) Continue JFE as an essential part of CMAP. The JFE is a unique contribution in that it adds externalities arising from a reach across national boundaries. As individual countries cannot create a substitute for JFE, it is recommended that AERC continue to finance this important element within CMAP.
- 16) To assure quality control AERC should continue to maintain and fund a set of external examiners to assess course content and instruction of core courses, electives taught within departments and theses completed.
- 17) Decentralizing CMAP will require students, participating universities, or sponsorships by current or potential employers to bear at least part of the cost of instruction of core courses and thesis supervision. To facilitate the latter and to address the serious concern raised by some students of inadequate supervision of thesis research, it is recommended that the Academic Board consider allowing Universities to institute an option of a third elective, offered locally, plus a major research paper as an alternative to the Master's thesis that is currently an integral part of the CMAP degree.
- 18) It is recommended that the basic designation of AERC Research Fellow be linked directly, but not exclusively, to the Thematic Research programme. For example, an economist who has completed successfully two or more research projects and has had the research output of one project published in a journal listed in ECONLIT would be eligible to be named a Research Fellow.
- 19) It is recommended that AERC pursue increased opportunities for sabbaticals, both for African scholars within Africa and abroad and for non-African scholars to locate their sabbaticals within an African institution.

- 20) In countries where Research Centres and Foundations now exist, it is recommended that AERC utilize them as front-line means for managing downstream activities flowing from AERC sponsored research. These Centres and Foundations have a capability to translate research findings into a form that informs and shapes policy formulation and implementation within their respective countries. Being aware and having access to AERC research output is essential to their being able to translate research findings into constructive policy advice. In a number of countries, AERC is sufficiently recognized within Central Banks and/or Ministries of Finance that they can be called upon to co-sponsor national workshops. Building this partnership as a basis for periodic National Policy Workshops should be seen as a strategic means to managing research-related downstream activities at the national level.
- 21) The Evaluation Team accepts the importance of Collaborative Research for AERC and its network. It is our assessment that if AERC wants to maintain control of – rather than facilitate – a well-run, effective Collaborative Research agenda it must provide and commit support of requisite resources as a regular function and role, from inception through fundraising to implementation and completion. We expect this will require additional personnel, at the administrator if not manager level. Further, there has to be clear definition of responsibility and authority for each project, which could be located with project Coordinator(s), project steering committee or the Director of Research.
- 22) Periodic use of consultants to cover positions that are temporarily vacant between appointments and to meet periodic peaks in administration work load is a sound principle. Looking to the future, should consultants be employed as a means to keeping management overhead costs within the target of 15%, that would have an adverse effect on staff morale. We would not view such use of consultants as a cost-effective means to sound programme development, delivery and assessment.
- 23) The need for project and development indicators is now recognized within AERC. The Secretariat has made a good start by setting out a path to developing these indicators. It is recommended that resources be allocated on a priority basis to advance this task as soon as the goal and objectives have been finalized for Phase VI. Setting targets for Phase VI that go beyond enumerating expected outputs to include measures of outcomes and impacts will facilitate greatly effective management of programme implementation throughout Phase VI.
- 24) To meet new challenges, AERC should consider the option of replacing themes as the means within which research capacity is developed with a goal of building networks of scholars with interests in a particular subject area within economics. There still would be defined themes but they would be related to contemporary issues that require new knowledge and hence a capacity to generate such knowledge. The network would be build around several senior scholars in the subject area who would play a role similar to that of resource persons. The base here would be African scholars but expatriate specialists might be included to assure access to emerging knowledge internationally.

## The AERC Research Programme

### 4.0 Building Research Capacity

A number of activities were planned on the basis of strategic objectives set out in the *Strategy* for Phase V. The strategy recognized the importance of retaining economics research capacity and promoting self-confidence among trained professionals in the region. In this section we provide a detailed evaluation of the relevance and extent of fulfillment of the primary capacity building research activities and programs of implementation during Phase V.<sup>1</sup>

The Thematic Research programme has a dual role: build research capacity and generate research output. Building capacity to conduct economic research and policy analysis within Africa was the original motivation for establishing AERC. A focus on capacity building continues as a primary goal of its core activities. All previous reviews of AERC have emphasized the importance of maintaining this focus as a critical factor to success, a conclusion we share. This programme, based on a principle of learning-by-doing, continued as the main vehicle for building research capacity during Phase V.

#### 4.1 Phase V Capacity Building Targets and Summary Outputs

The total number of Thematic Research grants increased during the second and third year of Phase V to targets set with an average of 30 grants per annum registered during the first three years (see Table 1). However, realization of Phase V targets received a serious setback when in year 4 the biannual workshop set for May, 2003 had to be cancelled because of heightened security concerns for Nairobi. This is the reason why research workshops organized during the first four and a half years is 80% (versus 90% projected) and research grants funded through 2003 are at 73% (versus 80%) of the target. For the same reason, targets for grants in support of policy and research papers presentations at plenary sessions were underachieved (Table 1). These failures are a product of unanticipated, unavoidable events and do not reflect negatively on AERC's programme delivery.

**Table 1: Target Output and Indicators of Performance of the Thematic Research and Biannual Workshops during Phase V**

Activity	2000	2001	2002	2003	May 2004	Total (00-04)	Phase V Target
Biannual workshops	2	2	2	1	1	8 (80%)	10
Research grants	26	35	32	9	15	117 (73%)	160
Plenary grants	7	7	7	4	4	29 (73%)	40

<sup>1</sup> This section draws both data and conclusions from the evaluation of the Research programme conducted by Marc Wuyts (2004), noting the difference in periods covered.

#### 4.2 The Capacity Building Process

Interviews conducted with workshop presenters during the May 2004 biannual and with research participants during visits to various countries enumerated a number of direct benefits from Thematic Research projects undertaken:

- an opportunity to interact with resource persons at three stages of a project;
- an opportunity to interact with other workshop presenters, which included expanding one's knowledge of African economies;
- personal development in research capability, including research proposal preparation, approaches to research, research methodologies, and writing in publishable form the content of a research project; and
- building of self-confidence and development of presentation skills, including serving as discussants for other workshop presentations.

These interviews also identified several issues related to Thematic Research that require attention: 1) administration of the research process; 2) the time lag from submission of a research proposal until a decision is made; and 3) the time lag in the external peer review process of completed papers before publication as an AERC Research Report.

We observe first that 61% of all proposals submitted made it to biannual workshops, i.e., were invited to present during Phase V (see Annex, Table A.2). This indicates an improvement in admission rates at the pre-workshop review stage during Phase V compared to the lower figure of Wuyts' (2004: 21) evaluation, which shows only 38% of submitted proposals admitted to biannual workshops for the period 1997 - 2003.

In total, 469 papers were presented at the biannual workshops over the first 4.5 years of Phase V, an average of 58 per workshop (Annex, Table A.2). This is approximately the target of 60 papers per workshop for the phase. Categories set for papers presented reflect different stages of the research within the cycle of a research project: new proposals, work-in-progress, and final report. Approximately one-third of the papers presented as new proposals during the first four years are repeating this step at least once, i.e., old proposals resubmitted. Only half of all new proposals (old revised and new) are funded. While funded projects include those that are allowed to proceed with minor revisions, success or approval rates to proceed unconditionally remain low for the new proposal category as only 26% proceed directly to the next stage of work-in-progress. The major groups in the excluded new proposals are those withdrawn or required to resubmit (repeat this stage). This has important implications in terms of costs as well as efficiency in managing the Thematic Research process.

What explains this high failure rate for new proposals? There appears to be a disconnection between pre-workshop external review of proposals, which leads to an invitation to present, and resource persons judging new proposals during biannual workshops. Either the pre-workshop review process is inadequate to exclude proposals that are not ready or the criteria used in the two processes are so different that the persons invited to present new proposals are receiving mixed, in

some cases contradictory, messages. Wuyts comments on the issue of criteria for acceptance in his observation that rates of acceptance vary markedly among the four thematic groups. He calls for greater standardization of assessment criteria across groups.

This issue was pursued in some depth with some of the resource persons. Of those interviewed, almost all are of the opinion that some coordination is needed to facilitate a degree of involvement of resource persons in the pre-workshop review process. In response, AERC reports preliminary reviews of virtually all proposals are now carried out by resource persons. We were not able to resolve this seeming contradiction. We concur, though, with the conclusion of Wuyts (2004: 38): "To achieve efficiency gains, attention can best be focused on improving the quality of proposals entering the workshops, thereby reducing their overall rejection and referral rates within the biannual workshop cycle..."

As Wuyts observes, rejection rates at the work-in-progress and final paper stages are commendably low. We observe, though, that a number of projects – 15% of the work-in-progress and 43% of the final paper – are classified as "proceed conditionally". Combining success ratios at the proposal stage with these data, we observe the average length of a project is the equivalent of four workshop cycles, longer than the intended three workshops (13 month) period. Wuyts (2004, Table III.1 and page 29) observes the same – an average length of four workshop cycles – for the period 1997 to 2002, although the average number of workshops attended was only 3.4.

AERC has already taken concrete action to address the issue of low-quality proposals with a 2003 web-site outline by Jan-Willem Gunning on writing a research proposal. Wuyts (2004: 38) goes on to conclude more is required and he proposes: "the introduction of a decentralized system of mentoring accompanied by good coordination between mentors and resource-persons might constitute a useful way forward." We concur, and we recommend this process of mentoring be encouraged in-country, with a first review of proposals, before they are submitted to AERC. Here AERC could draw on its network of senior economists and/or economics department Heads to work with junior research economists through a process of mentoring and a first review of research proposals submitted from their country.<sup>2</sup> The intent would be to improve the quality of research proposals submitted to AERC plus reduce the drop-out rate when pre-workshop or proposal stage workshop call for revisions to a proposal.

To increase the success rate at each stage of the workshop cycle it is recommended:

- 1) AERC make every effort to assure the same resource person(s) process a research project from acceptance of the proposal to commenting on the final paper to assure consistent advice throughout a research project. This would address a frustration expressed by workshop participants that they received different advice, sometimes contradictory advice, when resource persons were changed from one stage to another in a project cycle.

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<sup>2</sup> Wuyts (2004: 78) cites an option of small research grants to Economics Departments to enable them to undertake "pre-workshop screening of proposals."

- 2) Grant some discretion to resource persons in deciding whether an interim report should be submitted at the next biannual workshop or after a 12 month period. Wuyts (2004: 26) observes that a three-stage, 13 months cycle tends to bias research away from discovering novel stylized facts, exploring new avenues of thought or conducting a survey to collect original data. As some network members gave credit to the tight biannual schedule for teaching them the discipline required to become a successful research scholar, the 13-month, three-stage biannual project cycle should remain as the preferred norm. But, where there are delays in decision-making, novel approaches to research are proposed or there is a survey involved that may take time to conduct, some discretion should be exercised to define a time frame that will best advance such a research project.

On the second issue, the time lag from submission of a proposal until a decision is made on the proposal, it is to AERC's credit that Wuyts was able to report a reduction of the median time lag from 9.5 to 4 months by 2003. Where this progress is commendable, it is recommended that AERC continue efforts to improve performance. A preferred option would be an in-house capacity to perform quick screening using simple elimination criteria to reduce the number of proposals received to a more manageable number before sending out for external review. This should then be followed by notifying the applicant within a month of receiving a proposal that it is being sent to reviewers for assessment and comment or it is rejected in its present form. Reviewers would then be expected to process expeditiously those proposals forwarded for decision and comments.

On the third issue, some Thematic Research participants who had completed a project expressed frustration with the length of time it takes to see their research published. For some research topics it was claimed the results were too old to interest potential readers. Some respondents indicated that they have been able to publish their work elsewhere much faster than in the AERC series. When combined with high repeat and referral rates (about 38% are required to resubmit or revise), and long lags at the pre-Workshop review stage and at the external peer review of final papers (6 - 9 months), this is a cycle of more than three years to see a published product.

A factor that contributes to this problem of delay and the need to repeat is the sheer volume annually of new proposals (more than 100), work-in-progress reports (more than 60), final papers (more than 50), and final research reports for external peer review (more than 20). This volume of papers places significant pressure on resource persons and on the Research department management capacity, given the other tasks they need to handle such as organizing biannual plenary sessions and workshops. A second factor is a long delay by some project participants in their response to constructive criticism flowing from resource persons at the final paper stage and from the peer review process.

The average length of time for a research project raises anew the issue of whether the external peer review of final papers for publication of an AERC Research Report should be continued. Henderson and Loxley examined the merits of this process and recommended that it be continued. The case for their conclusion rests primarily on the need for AERC to obtain research output that can be showcased in a

Research Report series. When viewed strictly from a research capacity building perspective, the case is not as strong. Indeed, AERC workshops on how to prepare final papers for journal publication plus the introduction in 2002 of an incentive grant of \$500 for publication in a recognized journal provide encouragement to seek out the experience of having one's research subjected to an alternative external peer review process.

As part of this on-going debate on the merits of requiring publication of a Research Report to complete a research project, the Evaluation Team favours eliminating the mandatory requirement of publishing an AERC Research Report.<sup>3</sup> Publishing a Working Paper series, once a final paper has been signed off as successful by the resource person(s) involved, would reduce significantly the administrative load of the Communications Division, would make the research output accessible earlier to interested parties, and would address an area of considerable frustration for a number of authors. They would then have the option of submitting a paper for the Research Report series, submitting for publication elsewhere, or both.

#### **4.3 Research Output during Phase V**

A secondary output of the Thematic Research programme is a substantial body of research output. It takes the form of final papers, AERC Research Reports, articles in journals and chapters in books. The visible research output generated during Phase V is the publication of 44 Research Reports out of a total of 139 published as of March 2004, keeping pace with AERC's overall record. In addition, seven papers, out of a total of 40 AERC Special Papers, were published during phase V, again comparing favorably with the previous publication record.

Another form of visible research output is papers presented during the plenary sessions. (For a listing of the range of subjects for the 29 papers generated in these sessions see the Annex, Table A.3)<sup>4</sup> There is an arrangement with Oxford University Press for publication of plenary session papers as supplements to volumes of the *Journal of African Economies*. To date 12 such supplements have been published, including the papers from the first three of eight plenary sessions in Phase V.

It is the assessment of Wuyts (2004: 54) that the quality of this research has been maintained by subjecting the publication of research output to a process of external peer review. Even though the primary role remains research capacity building, the capacity built to date has demonstrated a visible ability to address policy issues and to interact with the policy process in African economies.

### **5.0 Promoting Policy-Oriented Research**

<sup>3</sup> Where Wuyts (2004: 51 and 55) does not arrive at a firm conclusion and recommendation on this issue, his discussion advances the merits of providing choice in publication modalities.

<sup>4</sup> For the cancelled Plenary session in May 2003 there were two additional papers prepared: 1) *Poverty Reduction and Macroeconomic Management in Africa: Research Implications* – based on Senior Policy seminar V – Matthew Martin, Bernadette Kamhnia and Peter Gakunu, (May 2003); and 2) *African Economic Outlook* by Jean-Claude Berthelemy and Barfour Osei, (May 2003).

The primary vehicle for advancing policy-oriented research is AERC's Collaborative Research programme. To manage policy responsiveness, AERC has limited the number of Collaborative Research projects without eroding an enhanced role in the policy relevance front. This has shaped the vision and strategy of Phase V to deepen policy orientation within current programmes and to broaden policy dimensions of its training and research activities.

The administration of this research process was guided by a set of key principles set out in the Phase V *Strategy* document. The relevance of these goals and performance towards achieving them are evaluated in the respective sections below.

#### 5.1 Phase V Targets and Summary Outputs

Projected outputs and targets as set out in the Phase V *Strategy* were to assure the impact of AERC sponsored research under the strategic objective of broadening the research perspective, thematic coverage, partnership and policy value more generally.

The target of three collaborative research projects operational each year set for Phase V has been achieved and the following projects are currently active:

- Phase II of the *Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Market Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa*, approved in December 2000;
- *African Imperatives in the New World Trade Order*, approved in December 2000; and
- *Explaining Africa's Growth Performance*, approved in June 2000.

More than 220 researchers are participating in these projects in their various capacities as project coordinators (5) and authors of framework and background papers (16) and country case studies (212).<sup>5</sup>

The *Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Market Issues* project continued during its second phase to use capacity built in the initial phase to make important contributions to public policy at the national level. In particular, several members participated in the preparation of their countries' poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs). Fourteen proposals from 12 countries have been approved and are expected to complete before the end of Phase V. Also, the Secretariat is developing a framework for an AERC role in the PRSP preparation process, for which terms of references have been formulated for country-specific needs assessment to determine AERC's involvement.

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<sup>5</sup> Collaborative Research that started during Phase IV continued to completion and dissemination in Phase V: 1) Phase I of the *Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Market Issues in sub-Saharan Africa* completed during 2002 and the 12 case studies produced are currently in the publication and dissemination process; 2) *Managing the Transition to Less Aid Dependence in SSA* – concluded with an editorial meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in April 2001 and the proceedings of this meeting were published in September 2001 and publication of framework papers and case studies is in progress; and 3) *Africa and the World Trading System* - concluded with a dissemination workshop in Yaounde, Cameroon in April 1999 and the papers produced are located with an external publisher.

Under the *African Imperatives in the New World Trade Order*, three papers were presented by senior AERC researchers as background for OAU/African economic Community 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in preparation for Doha meetings in November 2001. Two workshops were held in 2002/03. The first in Sandton, South Africa, jointly with Southern African Trade Research Network [SATRN], United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA] and the World Bank, hosted 58 participants including 40 researchers from 25 African countries. The second workshop was held in Kampala, Uganda to discuss interim reports from case studies where 61 individuals participated, including 48 researchers from 16 African countries. Currently 39 country-specific case studies are in progress covering: trade and services in 15 countries; manufacturing in 8 countries; agriculture in 8 countries; and food security in 8 countries. The papers prepared provided input into the World Trade Organization [WTO] Ministerial Conference in Mexico and for trade negotiations with European Union – Cotonou Partnership Agreement and with United States – African Growth and Opportunity Act. Seven country case studies were commissioned for the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) handbook on trade and food security

Several case studies are now in final stage under the third active project on *Explaining Africa's Growth Performance*. Draft reports were presented to a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2002 involving 24 research scholars from 18 African countries. A capacity building meeting, financed primarily by the World Bank, and a dissemination conference were held in 2003.

In addition, five grants were offered under non-thematic research to finance research outside the themes designated by the Advisory Committee.

### 5.2 Building the Collaborative Research Programme

In general, Collaborative Research undertaken is policy relevant:

- it builds policy-oriented research capacity among economists that can be tapped readily by decision-makers when required;
- it informs economists involved in the research on latest thinking on contemporary policy issues in sub-Saharan Africa; and
- it generates a body of quality research output that can be accessed as needed by economists and others directly involved in defining and implementing new policy initiatives.

Other distinctly favorable outcomes of Collaborative Research include:

- it promotes collaboration among economists in different African countries;
- it promotes comparative research among African countries;
- it facilitates direct contact between African economists and economists in other countries, especially Europe and North America, enabling the sharing of ideas, latest theories and techniques, and policy approaches; and
- it facilitates publication of research output in journals and by well-established publishers, which advances tenure and promotion for the scholars involved.

Nonetheless, a number of issues remain as future challenges for AERC's Collaborative Research modality. First, benefits generated from research output for AERC (outcomes) and for decision-makers, especially in the public sector (impacts), are claimed orally but are not documented adequately, either by hard evidence or

AERC corporate memory. Second, even though Collaborative Research has expanded significantly, our assessment is similar to that of Wuyts (2004: 65): "the ... programme has been characterized as an *ad hoc* approach in terms of the selection and *modus operandi* of its projects..." This places undue pressures on AERC staff and complicates achieving the set target of AERC overhead management costs to be limited to 15% of AERC expenditures.

The Collaborative Research work load for Secretariat staff is immense, with considerable variation over time in the peaks and lows in the level of work. In addition to preparing and administering contracts for each participant, there is a need to document use of funds to meet reporting requirements of donors. Second, where the Secretariat has responsibility for the contracts and funds involved, authority to direct research and monitor output rests with the project coordinators. Third, the Secretariat is involved in planning, coordinating and administering other activities related to Collaborative Research such as: research conferences at which reports are presented as work in progress and final papers; technical training sessions; and dissemination and policy workshops. Finally, the volume of research output produced under Collaborative Research is larger than the Thematic Research final output ready for dissemination. Where publication is by book publishers and journals, the Secretariat is still involved extensively in editing and coordinating submissions for publication

We accept that there are good reasons to motivate an AERC ownership argument, the lack of which may prevent effective exploitation of synergies between Thematic and Collaborative Research. Where Collaborative Research projects were selected in line with the type of capacity generated through the Thematic Research process, there is limited progress in the use of Collaborative Research as a test case for adding new themes. Apart from the poverty theme, which made it to the list in an earlier phase, the other Collaborative Research projects do not present strong potential as a new theme.

In summary, key issues related to the role of AERC in managing the Collaborative Research process and plans to provide sufficient resources in support of that responsibility need careful attention from the Programme Committee.

## **6.0 Other Modalities to Build and Retain Research Capacity**

### **6.1 Methodology, Special Training and Other Workshops**

Among the other key modalities for capacity building are methodology sessions, technical training and special research workshops. Targets set for Phase V were one methodology session and one research workshop at each biannual session. These targets have already been exceeded in each case (see Table 2). A list of the sessions and workshops is provided in the Annex, Table A.3.

**Table 2: Target Output and Indicators of Performance of Thematic Research Programme Special Sessions and Workshops: Phase V**

ACTIVITY	2000	2001	2002	2003	MID-2004	TOTAL	TARGET

<b>Methodology sessions</b>	6	4	1	1	2	14 (140%)	10
Technical workshops	1	1	2	1	2	7 (140%)	5

A number of biannual workshop participants avail themselves of an opportunity to participate in methodology workshops. During interviews only a few of the 100+ technical workshop participants were encountered. This limited sample reported these workshops had been distinctly helpful in advancing their data analysis skills.

These special methodology and applied research sessions and workshops are a useful complement to the capacity building within the research workshops. It is recommended that they be continued on selected topics on current issues and methods as they arise.

In addition, three special workshops were conducted during Phase V. These workshops provided opportunities for in-depth analysis and discussion of specialized topics that arose from research conducted in thematic, collaborative and comparative modalities. The proceedings have been or are being prepared for publication to extend the conclusions and policy implications to a much wider audience.

## **6.2. Research Internships**

To assist in a process of conducting Thematic Research projects AERC has been able to establish three ways in which research scholars can draw on external resources.

### *1) The AERC Institutional Attachment Programme*

This facility has not been utilized extensively, with only four grants listed. Two scholars were attached to Economics Departments in Europe, one in the United States. There were no applications during the past year.

### *2) The AERC/IMF Visiting Scholars Programme*

During the life of this programme, 1994 to May 2004, 112 research scholars have drawn on this opportunity. Beneficiaries interviewed during this evaluation highlighted the advantage of being able to access additional research resources and data. This included improved skills in searching internet web sites. The IMF is conducting an internal review of this programme. It is now a line item within the IMF budget and is expected to continue in the future.

### *3) The World Bank Visiting Scholars Programme*

Established in 2002 as complementary to the IMF internship, the first four visiting scholars had six-week attachments at the World Bank after completing their IMF internships. Six potential visiting scholars have been identified for 2004.

In addition to advancing the research capabilities of the participants in these attachments, they serve to facilitate the mission of the AERC in building a network of economists who are competent, committed research scholars. These

opportunities to visit international institutions and to interact with economists elsewhere assists in retaining an economics research capacity within Africa.

There do not appear to be reporting or monitoring mechanisms in place, limiting the possibility of outcome or impact analysis of these internships. As they are designed to support completion of Thematic Research projects and publication of the research output obtained, it will be possible to assess impacts comparing success among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of these programs. We were not able to make such a comparison but AERC may want to consider instituting specific impact indicators, e.g., differences in time required to complete a project and the success in publication of a journal article or an AERC Research Paper.

## **7.0 Research Capacity Building Outputs and Impacts**

The central place of Thematic Research within AERC programming has been accredited by previous AERC reviews as a core activity in its efforts to build capacity. Interviews conducted during this evaluation confirm this conclusion. Professors in Universities and Research Institutes, Directors of Research in Central Banks, and other senior economists give credit to their earlier Thematic Research involvement for setting them on a research career path that has allowed them to advance within the economics profession to their current positions.

There is evidence that this commendable progress is continuing in Phase V. AERC is making good progress in creating local capacity to conduct research and publish the research findings. This capacity forms the essential building blocks for an ability to teach economics at all levels and to undertake high quality, policy relevant economic analysis. Based on interviews, some examples are:

- research experience gained has enabled successful research grant applications from other funding sources;
- research output has contributed to gaining promotions; and
- evidence of significant interaction among economists from a number of African countries, and some of their respective resource persons, on contemporary economic policy issues.

### **7.1 Evidence of Payoff from Research Capacity Building**

#### *1) Indicators of Programme Output*

During this Phase 101 research grants were issued and 92 papers were presented at the final stage. As final papers reflect funding in the previous year, these 92 papers are the product of 124 projects funded from 1999 to 2002, a 74% success rate. As of now AERC does not have a record of completed research papers that are published in a journal or book. A beneficial side effect of the cash prize for publication of a final paper in a recognized journal will enable AERC to track better the publications generated from Thematic Research.

#### *2) Indicators of Programme Outcomes*

- personal development in research capability and knowledge of the economy for economists so funded;

- biannual workshop format has imposed a healthy discipline required for a productive research career;
- engendered self confidence among programme participants;
- 90% of research reports reviewed externally received a positive response from the referees and 75% have been published; and
- the quality of research output is observed to be improving over time.<sup>6</sup>

### 3) *Indicators of Programme Impact*

- a network of economists in which significant interaction among economists from a number of African countries on contemporary economic policy issues is evident;
- these network arrangements have broken down isolation of individual economists, a bridging that now includes Francophone and Anglophone economists;
- observed advance of a sub-set of economists so funded into Collaborative Research;
- Thematic Research participants who form part of AERC's network are being invited to their respective Central Bank meetings to participate in research and policy discussions; and
- staff at the World Bank, members of the administration at the University of Dar es Salaam, and staff at several donor agencies are commending AERC's methodology as a model for networking in other disciplines and in other countries.

## 7.2 Assessing Impact of Research on Policy and Development

### 1. *The Place of Research in Policy Formulation*

There is a shared expectation by African policy makers and foreign assistance donors that AERC should be actively involved in influencing policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. The possibility that African governments and regional institutions will eventually take ownership, by providing some or all the funding for AERC's programming, is likely to be shaped by their assessment of policy content and policy relevance of AERC outputs. The challenge is to outline a strategy of involvement for AERC that enables economists in Africa – as individuals and as members of economic research institutions – to address creatively this call to influence policy.

For government policy, what is politically feasible is a major factor, indeed may take precedence over good economic theory. Economists tendering advice to policy makers have to be masters in the art of the "second best". A primary contribution of economics for all policy making is to identify the opportunity costs of specific policy proposals. Decision-makers constantly need to be reminded: "there is no free lunch."

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<sup>6</sup> This assessment of quality was provided by Charles Owino and Margaret Crouch from AERC's Communications Division. They attribute the improved quality partly to AERC's input on writing skills and streamlining of the review process.

Timeliness forms an essence of policy advice. Frequently it has to be delivered within days; typically within a few months. A research initiative that must seek funding first is unlikely to provide direct input to a specific policy decision. At best, it can anticipate the questions policy makers will be asking a year or two in the future. Therefore, the **essence of policy-oriented research** should be to **build capacity within the economics profession** to deliver immediate, politically-sensitive policy advice when it is requested plus generate a body of knowledge that is relevant and accessible to an economist who is asked to tender policy advice within a day or in three months time.

Given its international composition and its network of economists throughout Africa, AERC has a comparative advantage to deliver capacity building and policy-oriented research in a defined subject area that cuts across national boundaries. Promoting and organizing Collaborative Research continues to be a primary tool for AERC in carrying out this aspect of its mandate.

### *2. Indicators of Research Impact on Policy Formation*

Interviews with persons close to policy making processes show awareness of AERC sponsored research. This is especially so for the persons who have been involved with AERC activity: participation in Senior Policy Seminars, attendance at plenary sessions, or participated in National Policy Workshops that showcase AERC research. Also, some are active members of the AERC research network or are advised directly by economists who are members. In general they speak positively of the relevance of AERC sponsored research to issues of development policy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Impact indicators of such research on policy formulation include:

- published AERC research material is being used by students in the JFE and by CMAP alumni in various countries (especially those based in Kenya);
- there are some policy makers who claim AERC outputs are the first place they search when they want to access economic research relevant for their work;
- the Economic Policy Research Centre in Kampala has published some of the research conducted in Uganda and the Centre reports these publications are having an impact on policy formulation in Uganda;
- the privatization policies of the Government of Tanzania were influenced by AERC research results;
- Tanzania's devaluation policies were affected by AERC research results;
- the Economic Policy Analysis Unit in Benin made good use of the poverty project in guiding their monitoring and evaluation of the impact of actions and investments made under its PRSP;
- a number of economists in the Center for Economic Policy Analysis [CEPA] in Ghana and many lecturers at the Universities of Yaounde and D'Amomey-Calavi in Benin found AERC Research Reports useful in shaping the development of their own policy interests; and
- Ministry of Finance in Benin indicated the project on explaining growth has improved significantly its understanding of and views on the determinants of economic growth.

### *3. Indicators of Development Impact*

An evident indicator of AERC's impact on development in Africa is the existence of an extensive research network of economist throughout a majority of countries in Africa. This network is linked electronically and through a variety of AERC activities. Its members are engaged in both training and research, which are shaping the development of African economies. The interaction across national boundaries has brought to bear new ideas and best practices from other African countries to the development of individual African economies

Second, the Collaborative Research projects have fostered direct interaction between a number of economists based in Africa with selected economists in other countries, especially in Europe and North America. The exchange of ideas, methodologies and policy experience inherent to this interaction has and is shaping the content and approaches to development policies and strategies relevant for Africa.

An example of these two indicators is the impact of the *African Imperatives in the New World Trade Order* on negotiations related to the Doha Development Agenda within the World Trade Organization, the African, Caribbean and the Pacific States – European Union Partnership Agreements, and the United States – Sub-Saharan Africa partnership agreement embedded in the African Growth and Opportunity Act.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, as African countries move beyond non-reciprocal preferential trade relationships, this Collaborative Research project has served as an important input to identifying the costs and benefits of alternative reciprocal trade agreements and hence to shape trade negotiation strategies. As the negotiations mature to specific agreements, the output of this project will provide input into a process of aligning African regulatory systems within existing multilateral trade rules.

The *Collaborative Project on Poverty, Income Distribution and Labor Markets* has the potential to re-shape significantly African approaches to development. Specifically, it is focusing renewed attention to the importance of:

- the agriculture sector within the overall development strategy;
- investment in education, health, nutrition and improved sanitation as a direct means to poverty alleviation;
- intra-household allocation of consumption as an important determinant of the well-being for vulnerable groups in society;
- access to markets and public infrastructure as a means to increased participation by all in the economy; and
- re-discovering the central role of labour markets and employment creation in poverty alleviation.

Similarly, the *Managing Transition from Aid Dependence in Africa* shows potential for re-shaping the approaches of donors and individual African countries to such important issues as the central role of host-country ownership of the development process, capacity building to manage change, reducing transaction costs in aid delivery, improving budget management systems, and mobilizing resources through debt relief, reversing capital flows and attracting foreign direct investment.

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<sup>7</sup> A strong stand taken by African representatives at the Doha meeting was in part the result of AERC's ongoing capacity building efforts through its collaboration with the OAU, UNECA and Geneva African group of trade negotiators (AERC, 2002: 8).

In their assessment of policy relevance and impact of AERC research John Loxley and Tekalign Gedamu identified a need to move beyond the macro-economic requirements of Ministries of Finance and Central Banks to address economic issues confronted by trade unions, parastatals, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. This did not occur during Phase V. This is not an indication of failure. Rather, it is an indication that AERC does not have the resources to cover all economic issues and these did not rank as priorities in setting Thematic Research themes and Collaborative Research agenda.

## **8.0 Sustaining and Extending the Research Programme**

### **8.1 Advancing Gender Equity**

The participation of women remains low, although the number involved in biannual workshops is somewhat higher than the number engaged in Thematic Research projects (see Annex, Table A.4). This level of participation is primarily a function of there being so few female African economists. A secondary factor identified by Wuyts is that women are less likely to pursue second or third Thematic Research projects.

Efforts to foster a gender equality objective have been directed to drawing more women into programmes. This is a commendable output. But, extending assessment of performance to include outcomes and impacts involves moving beyond a count of the number of women participating to documenting changes (or lack thereof) in the place and role of women in African societies and to analyze both the determinants and effects of such changes. Criteria applied to guiding research capacity building should require research scholars to incorporate gender analysis. Specifically, research should advance an understanding of gender roles, incorporate gender equality as part of the research agenda in economics, and create within the economics profession a new capacity to analyze and advance gender equality.

To address the issue of a limited supply of females choosing to major in economics at the under-graduate level intervention would need to occur prior to AERC's post-graduate involvement. Increasing the number of women involved in teaching of economics and as research economists will provide positive role models, which will provide some pay-off in the longer term. More immediately, an option of scholarship incentives for women studying at the under-graduate level might be considered. For example, at each University there could be a sizable final year prize for the top female student majoring in economics. Also, scholarships might be offered to the best female students majoring in economics in second and third year.

### **8.2 Drawing in Under-represented Areas**

An extension of the programme to include Francophone countries is commendable. It brings together two sets of scholars who previously worked quite separately. It also enriches the knowledge basis and extends the possibility of new knowledge and new policy options that will advance the development of Africa more generally.

Good progress has been made to initiate this extension during Phase V (see Annex, Table A.4). Of the 667 Thematic Research proposals received between 1997 and 2003, 157 were in French. Using December 2003 as an indicator of progress

toward the objective of extending reach to Francophone scholars we observe: 1) of the 59 research projects active, 28% are from Francophone countries; and 2) there were 94 research scholars involved, 39% are from seven Francophone countries. This difference between number of projects and number of participants reflects a greater tendency of Francophone economists to work as research teams. The extent of participation of Francophone economists still is not evident at more senior levels. As shown in Table 5, only 7% of the plenary grant holders were Francophone.

Eight countries dominate the Thematic Research process, accounting for two-thirds of the proposals received: Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Côte d' Ivoire, Uganda, Ghana, Senegal and Tanzania. Therefore, the primary challenge is not Francophone versus Anglophone. Rather, it is drawing in countries now marginalized by extended civil wars and political instability – both Anglophone and Francophone.

Programme extension entails specific costs. Administering it requires staff with bilingual capacity. Second, simultaneous translation has to be instituted at plenary and research sessions. Third, AERC staff need to expand their travel, in some cases to countries where logistics remain a problem. Finally, the travel, cost of living per diem, and facility costs have to be expanded. In summary this commendable extension of AERC activities will require additional financial and human resources.

The Francophone economists involved in the Research programme are appreciative of AERC's initiative to draw in Francophone scholars. Linguistic barriers remain though. First, only a limited number of the Research Reports and other documents appear in both English and French. Second, the quality of translation of papers presented, as well as the simultaneous interpretation, struggle with technical terms involved. The effect places Francophone scholars at a disadvantage as their ideas are presented less clearly and the constructive criticism received tends not to be as precise and clear as that provided for Anglophone presenters.

Some biannual workshop participants indicated they would prefer to arrange for the translation of their proposals and reports to assure the translator has the requisite technical competence. According to AERC, this has been tried in some cases, with mixed results. Ultimately, the solution will depend on the availability and the willingness to pay for quality interpreters.

Given this experience with attracting female economists and drawing in Francophone research scholars, we agree with Harris Mule and Jon Wilmshurst (1998: 9) that there is a case for affirmative action to facilitate entry to the research process for countries not involved at present. We also concur with them that affirmative action needs to be explicit, transparent and for a specified duration.

### **8.3 Sustaining the Supply of Thematic Research Participants**

The supply of participants likely will be affected by two significant changes in the economic environment within which AERC operates: the elimination of foreign exchange constraints and increased consulting opportunities for economists. Together, these reduce the value of an AERC hard currency research grant and increase the opportunity cost of time spent on research projects.

Phase V started with a good supply as the programme had been opened to include Francophone countries. But, Wuyts observes the number of applicants is declining from a peak in 1999. He speculates that the supply of Nigerian economists (30% of the total) may decline in the future as salaries at Nigerian Universities increase. Also, the substitution of CPP for a number of African students seeking PhD's abroad will have a negative supply effect.

The reality of growing consulting options was identified by both Heads of economics departments and Directors of research institutes as reducing the time and interest of their members spent on research. When requested to conduct research, members were demanding compensation for the consulting fees forgone. This attitude suggests there are significant opportunity costs of attending three (even four) one-week biannual workshops and spending up to three years on a relatively small research grant. Further, in both South Africa and Botswana we were informed that economists had ready access to research funding and they had no need to look to AERC for research grants.

Another supply factor of concern is the domination of Thematic Research by economists from eight countries who account for two-thirds of the research proposals submitted. The eight member countries in southern Africa, in contrast, account for only six percent of the research proposals. An explanation for the latter, advanced by a few of our interviewees, is that economists from certain cultural backgrounds find biannual workshop sessions a hostile environment. Aggressive criticism is made to score points rather than to build capacity through constructive interaction. The setting created is academic one-upmanship rather than a place where mentoring can occur.

Whether this perception of a hostile environment is valid is not the point; if some feel this way they will not pursue grants or attend biannual workshops. The implications for initiatives designed to draw in economists from disadvantaged countries are severe.

To date, Thematic Research has been driven by a supply of economists who apply for research grants. Changes in the economic environment and perceptions of workshop sessions listed above pose a question whether AERC will need to "attract" future applicants for the programme. The need to attract applicants is not new. As noted above, AERC has made efforts to attract women, has drawn in Francophone research scholars, and is now reaching out to countries not represented well in the AERC network.

With the introduction of CPP there is a new challenge to attract a specific cohort of economists, recent PhD graduates. To sustain a strong, credible CPP a supply of Senior Lecturers and Professors, with a recognized publication record, needs to be built. A key target population that needs to be drawn in for this purpose is PhD graduates in their first five, possibly ten years, after graduation. Exceptions could be made for more senior economists who need to re-tool to teach specific courses at the post-graduate level.

To mature into recognized scholars, PhD graduates need to develop an ability and discipline to launch an effective research career path. This will enable them to: 1) generate the theoretical foundations and policy options required for an independent research and policy formulation capability within Africa, and 2) meet the programme needs of AERC as resource persons, External Examiners, Programme Committee members, Academic Board members, and JFE instructors. Focusing Thematic Research on the needs and interests of recent PhD graduates to develop their research interests and capabilities is a strategic niche for AERC.

Along with a focus on recent PhD graduates, the current openness to all who apply successfully needs to be retained. Holders of MA degrees and PhD candidates (other than in CPP), are not to be excluded. Specifically, post-graduate students pursuing a PhD in economics as a research degree within selected Universities in Africa should be encouraged to apply. The Thematic Research approach could be a strategic input to the successful completion of their PhD dissertation. Finally, the involvement of CMAP alumni as active research members, individually or as members of a research team, would enable them to advance their abilities in economic analysis.

To assure focus on capacity building AERC should not use the Thematic Research structure to fund research for all economists. Specifically, it is recommended that the number of research grants per economist be limited to three. Senior economists who have completed three projects could return, but only as part of a research team involving one or more members who have not reached the three grant limit. Returning in this way could build in a positive mentoring role for junior research scholars.

The recommendation of three projects makes provision to build on an observation by Wuyts that a maturing process can occur from participating in multiple projects. He identifies a need to move beyond increased mastery of methodologies and techniques to develop an ability to identify and address political economy issues specific to African economies. This suggests structuring the research programme so that it builds in a process of maturing as a research scholar. For example, a first project could be open to various approaches and methodologies and it would be acceptable to use the project to build skills in preparation of proposals, develop methodological approaches to a problem, learn econometric techniques, and advance skills in reporting research results obtained. A second project would build in an additional dimension with a focus on developing a skill to construct concepts appropriate to analyzing a specific issue in one or more African economies. A third project might then require that the final report contain an outline of policy alternatives, including the relative merits of each, which are appropriate to the research topic of this project.

On the issue of programme renewal to draw in applicants several additional recommendations are presented.

- 1) There is debate on whether three biannual workshops are required for each project to obtain the capacity building objectives. Participants agree that it is a useful learning experience to defend one's research and ideas among one's peers. Similarly, it is a useful learning experience to see one's peers subjected to constructive criticism in a workshop forum. But, for network members who

have completed several research projects, there was an admission that the value of workshop participation declined somewhat. As a result, we recommend the three stage process be retained for first-time research grant holders. For subsequent grants, there should be experimentation with replacing the proposal stage with electronic interaction between the applicant(s) and two resource persons.

- 2) Some biannual workshop participants would prefer a wider range of subjects than the four research themes open at present. They accept that the Programme Committee carries responsibility for defining themes. What they seek is greater clarity on why these four themes were defined, whether other themes were excluded, how the time span for a theme is determined, and what the process is for introducing new themes. To address these concerns for greater clarity, it is suggested the process of defining themes be made more transparent. Further, as themes are changed or renewed, consideration should be given to defining the length of the theme and the terms for the resource persons. A period of three (to receive proposals) to five years (to complete projects) should be adequate to build research capacity in a particular aspect of economics. Where a subject still has considerable potential it could then be renewed, possibly in a modified form.
- 3) We concur with Wuyts (2004: 48) that the workshop structure must avoid a graduate school atmosphere where resource persons "supervise" junior economists. Rather, what is needed is a setting where economists interact as peers in a "network linking academic researchers with policy makers through joint research and debate on African economies and derived policy-relevant issues."

Regardless of approach, the core content of capacity building must be recognition of the importance of a research career and an ability to conduct research that leads to a publication record, affords promotions and is recognized by peers within Africa and internationally. As the demand for economists with recognized qualifications and demonstrated capabilities includes both policy input and guiding PhD education, a distinction between policy-oriented versus theoretical research appears rather artificial if the primary intent is research capacity building.

## ***AERC's Training Programme***

The activities of AERC's Phase V Training programme are set out in the *Strategy* for Phase V. In addition, there were specific target outputs and planned activities to achieve each of the objectives listed. The following sections evaluate the soundness and feasibility of the objectives and targets set for the Training programme and assess fulfillment during Phase V of these targets.

### ***9.0 Collaborative Master's Programme [CMAP]***

#### **9.1 An Overview of CMAP Activities**

Many of the targets set for CMAP have been fully realized during the first four years of Phase V. Enrolment in CMAP's JFE has been maintained at above 100 students

and was increased to 115 in 2003 (see Annex, Table A.5).<sup>8</sup> The percentage of female students in the JFE has increased to an average of 21% from 16% in Phase IV. The number of electives offered increased from 8 to 9 during Phase V. Out of the 12 electives listed, one course, Labour Economics, was not taught thus far during Phase V (see the Annex, Table A.6). The number of lecturers teaching at the JFE has reached the target of 18 with two lecturers for the 9 elective courses offered. External examiners engaged as of 2003 were six for the JFE and seven for the core courses, both exceeding the target set for Phase V.

AERC is also well on track with respect to the curricula development and the training-of-trainers' targets. Two special training workshops were conducted successfully: 1) basic poverty measurement in 2003; and 2) advanced poverty analyses in 2004. Also, the planned 10 day skill-intensive training on Exploratory Data Analysis using STATA was run in 2003. A special study on the impact of CMAP was completed in 2004 and its results were presented to a stakeholders' workshop in March 2004.

For several of the targets implementation progress is more mixed. The target of expanding to 10 Category B Universities has not been met, so enrolment in the JFE remains below the target of 140.<sup>9</sup> The number of CMAP universities has increased from 20 to 21 with the addition of Liberia, but remains below the target of 23. For the target of adding more policy relevant courses, no new courses were added during Phase V. However, in response to an evaluation conducted by the European Union (UNECIA, 1997), Category B Universities were urged to add a policy elective to their respective offerings. Five of the seven Universities now list Public Policy as a course at the post-graduate level. It was not possible to make an independent assessment of whether the content and relevance in teaching policy themes has been enhanced in the JFE electives. The policy-oriented course, Policy Analysis and Economic Management, was offered only once, in 2000. AERC has developed a syllabus for a core course in this subject area and made it available to Universities on a CD-ROM.

Available evidence on the policy orientation in specific courses or as a part of all courses, especially the electives, does not identify a significant weakness within CMAP. Employers in Research Institutes, Ministries of Finance and Central Banks emphasized the need for a strong technical background. Provided the graduates were well prepared technically, they argue a policy capability can be added with on-

<sup>8</sup> Total CMAP enrolment is given as 1,050, which exceeds the CMAP-JFE enrolment of 971. The difference includes students in several universities that exceeded the 22 maximum admitted annually from any one university plus several students who were employed and could not obtain the time off required to attend a JFE. In 2003 total CMAP enrolment was 138, approaching the target of 140.

<sup>9</sup> Within the Phase V Strategy there is an expressed expectation that the number of Category B universities will increase to ten. As this occurs, the number of students supported annually for the JFE is expected to increase from 100 to 140 annually. These expectations, though, do not form part of the output targets set for Phase V.

the-job training. Also, students who entered CMAP from employment in a policy position were able to return as effective policy researchers. This suggests the policy orientation and capability of a graduate is shaped, at least in part, by the nature of a student rather than the content of the courses offered in CMAP.

### 9.2 Indicators of Programme Performance<sup>10</sup>

In the early 1990s, when CMAP was initiated, graduate training in economics was assessed to be in a state of collapse (Kimuyu, 2004: 10). In response, CMAP has trained more than 1,000 MA's in economics, 453 during Phase V.<sup>11</sup> There are 21 participating universities in 16 countries: 7 in Category B – Dar es Salaam, Ghana, Nairobi, Botswana, Malawi, Addis Ababa and Zimbabwe – and 14 in Category A – Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah, Zambia, Makerere, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Swaziland, Kenyatta, Egerton, Moi, Mauritius, Liberia and Eduardo Mondlane. Nonetheless, CMAP still provides for only a small share of the total demand for this type of training. Our rough estimate of total annual intake is 600 students. If this estimate is accurate, CMAP accounts for less than 20 per cent of the annual economics MA graduates in 15 countries.

There appears to be a growing demand for applied training in economics at the MA level.<sup>12</sup> Overall demand can be segmented into two distinct markets. One sub-set includes employees who are required to pursue post-graduate training or there is a job advantage to having such training. Their interest is not further study per se. Rather, they want a programme that is offered at times that fit with being employed, has content and workload that can be handled while employed, and generates a degree acceptable to the employer. The interest is in content that applies to work and the students are not concerned with academic preparation that might, some day, open opportunities for PhD studies. The second sub-set is genuinely interested in academic advancement. CMAP meets this latter demand. The majority of alumni interviewed expressed an interest in pursuing a PhD should an opportunity present itself.

It is our assessment that the training offered to meet the demands of the first sub-set is not a direct substitute for well-trained graduates as set out in AERC's mandate for CMAP. The demand for the latter, for strong technical and academically oriented training at the Masters' level, is far from satisfied. Among economists and government officials interviewed for this evaluation there was general consensus

<sup>10</sup> This assessment draws significantly on Kimuyu's (2004) study of the Training programme, which incorporates the findings of two independent evaluations of the CMAP programme by the African Capacity Building Foundation and The European Union. AERC has also commissioned several studies over the past few years on the impact of its CMAP programme.

<sup>11</sup> In addition, a sister program to CMAP in Francophone Africa, PCTI, and a Nigeria programme have graduated a number of MA's in economics.

<sup>12</sup> A number of MA programmes are running currently, funded by government agencies and donors: 1) the economic policy management (EPM) programme funded by ACBF in four countries (Makerere in Uganda, Accra in Ghana, Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire and Yaounde in Cameroon), each admitting between 25 to 45 students annually; 2) the MA program in development planning at Makerere, which funds 50 students per year; 3) the economic development and policy MA at Nairobi in which 60 students are enrolled annually; 4) a similar MA program at Cape Town admitting 30 students every year. Generally, they provide a different kind of training where employed students enroll on a part-time basis, usually in evening classes, to upgrade their skills.

that the demand for well-trained Masters' in economics will continue to exceed supply by a considerable margin for some time to come. Several institutions, especially economic policy research institutions in all countries interviewed during this evaluation, have recruited CMAP graduates on annual basis and most expect this demand to continue in the future. This demand likely will grow as the newly introduced PhD training programme (CPP) continues and hence the need for entrants with a CMAP background grows. Nonetheless, it is important to note the total number of students involved as an indicator of continued strong demand for MA-level training in economics.

Within the overall supply of MA graduates CMAP has become established as a quality degree. A majority of employers of CMAP graduates interviewed spoke highly of them. The employers report it is easy to distinguish a CMAP product from graduates of other MA training programmes offered by a number of universities. Several employers indicated they knew what they were getting when they employed a CMAP graduate. In general, they were pleased with the on-the-job performance of CMAP graduates. This response suggests a CMAP degree is now a recognized product in the market. This conclusion is consistent with Kimuyu's observation that, with CMAP in place, some employers no longer see the need to send staff abroad to obtain graduate training in economics at the Master's level. They commented that CMAP graduates were more likely than other graduates to take their own initiative, rather than require constant supervision, and to pursue other economic interests beyond the immediate agenda involved in their employment.

One-half to two-thirds of the CMAP alumni in four countries reported they were attracted to the programme by its quality. This perception of quality is verified by the performance of CMAP graduates who have entered CPP and by the perception of a majority of the Heads of economics departments that the proportion of MA graduates able to compete for PhD admission and scholarships has increased as a result of CMAP. Interviews with students and some of their lecturers in various post-graduate degree-training programs in Africa, Europe and North America indicate CMAP graduates were prepared well for rigorous PhD training in economics. Additional evidence is provided by C. Perrings and J. Vincent in their External Review of the Center for Environmental Economics and Policy in Africa (CEEPA), a post-graduate programme at the University of Pretoria where CMAP graduates were enrolled.

It is primarily the JFE and secondarily AERC's investment in quality control – independent contracting of external examiners and stipends for thesis supervision – that provide high value and strength of CMAP. Our independent review confirms Kimuyu's assessment of the many benefits of the JFE and the significant value added it provides to Master's education. The JFE is considered by students and employers alike to be a distinguishing feature of CMAP providing the following benefits:

- a wider range of electives than what would be available at one university;
- access to a wider range of lecturers, with diverse experiences and competence from other African countries, than within a single University;
- high quality of instruction;<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Only a few complaints about lecturers were received. One complaint was that some lecturers had not updated their reading lists and course content. Students demand knowledge that is current.

- greater access to computer technology and library resources than in any one University, which contributes to higher teaching quality;<sup>14</sup>
- interaction with students from other countries, including a healthy competition among students from the seven category B Universities to demonstrate who has been prepared best in the study of core courses;
- fertile ground for identifying research topics for MA theses; and
- reduced teaching loads within departments.

Almost all alumni agree the time frame for JFE is too short to accomplish the education goals for the study of electives. There is not enough time to absorb and understand the theories and the methodologies presented. It was suggested that introducing seminar sessions, interspersed with lectures, would be helpful. A few admitted their JFE experience had taught them how to manage time and work schedules better.

While some departments are already teaching a few elective courses, our assessment indicates current capacity in economics departments cannot support the instruction of a full range of options available at the JFE. Also, given the current state of resources in most departments, unless funded externally, teaching of a wider range of electives would compromise quality. The question then becomes: will it be more cost effective to decentralize funding of teaching the electives at individual departments or are there significant economies of scale at the JFE? The JFE also provides valuable external benefits of intercontinental interaction and exchange of experiences between students and lecturers – both social and professional. Many continue interacting via the internet with alumni and faculty with whom they share common research interests.

Given that CMAP graduates cannot readily capture economic rents from a “superior” degree, the JFE needs to be seen as a public good that may not be provided easily at lower cost by private institutions. No national program within a country will invest in or subsidize the provision of such benefits. This externality has a positive value one would not wish to lose (UNECIA, 1997). The question remains, is a high price being paid for this benefit? Again, it is our assessment that AERC, with its international base across African countries, is positioned uniquely to provide quality regional initiatives or arrangements on a cost-effective basis. The challenge therefore is to find ways to lower the price or cost of providing this valuable external benefit rather than losing it.

We conclude the JFE is a unique contribution to CMAP in that it adds externalities arising from a reach across national boundaries. As individual countries cannot create a substitute for JFE, it is recommended that AERC continue to finance this important element within CMAP. As noted in the European Union evaluation,

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A second complaint related to lecturers who had just completed a PhD. They were current, which was positive, but they lacked experience needed to assess whether particular theories had application in African settings and had a limited ability to identify conditions under which such theories might apply.

<sup>14</sup> Several alumni who had attended a JFE recently complained that library and computer facilities were inadequate. It would appear that increased enrolment is placing undue pressure on library and computer resources available.

phasing out of the JFE "will not be compatible with a growing program as new departments reach category B status."

### 9.3 Remaining Challenges Requiring Attention

In general, our assessment, based on the interviews with students, faculty and department Heads as well as physical inspection during our visits, supports Kimuyu's findings on the positive institutional impact of CMAP. However, a few challenges remain. For example, the condition of facilities critical to the success of this programme is deteriorating in a number of departments. This is particularly so for access to teaching and research facilities such as computers, software and essential textbooks and journals. This problem arises because participating departments received a one time initiation capital grant ten years ago and they have not included in their annual University budget requests a provision for maintenance, upgrading and expanding facilities.<sup>15</sup> The University of Botswana would be a notable exception here.

In addition, there is concern that AERC, under pressure to cut CMAP costs, is reducing further its current grant allocations to departments. For example, in Ghana the department is subsidizing foreign students as actual costs are higher than AERC scholarship provisions. Tuition for AERC scholarship students from other countries is \$5000/year and AERC provides only \$6000 towards total costs, down from \$9000. A similar situation applies to local students (down to \$3000 from \$5000), but this is less serious as tuition is free. A related complaint relates to supervision allowances. The University of Ghana requires two supervisors and AERC provides only \$500, which is deemed to be a low incentive.

Thesis supervision is also a concern for students. Where students must seek out their own supervisors, a number complained the faculty members with expertise in their respective areas of research interests declined being involved. As a result, thesis research frequently was guided by faculty with limited expertise and interest in that aspect of economics and hence students did not receive constructive criticism nor did they experience a process of mentoring. For these students, the thesis was an ordeal to be overcome rather than a valuable part of their post-graduate education.

If and when a decentralizing of CMAP occurs, students, participating universities, or sponsorships by current or potential employers will be required to bear at least part of the cost of instruction of core courses and thesis supervision. To facilitate the latter and to address the serious concern raised by some students of inadequate supervision of thesis research, it is recommended that the Academic Board explore the possibility of allowing Universities to institute an option of a third elective, offered locally, plus a major research paper as an alternative to the Master's thesis that is currently an integral part of the CMAP degree. This option is common in many post-graduate programs, including some economics departments in Africa. If some students select this option, it would reduce the added degree cost of conducting research for a thesis and supervision of a thesis.

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<sup>15</sup> At several universities external funding obtained for policy-oriented alternative MA programmes is being used to upgrade computers and other facilities within economics departments.

Despite a few, important challenges that lie ahead, we conclude the implementation of CMAP continues to be well justified and successful during Phase V. There is clear evidence of programme impact: the quality of training received and the performance of graduates are distinguishable in the market. CMAP graduates have an edge in gaining employment and they are more likely to advance within their place of employment.

### **10.0 Promoting PhD Studies in Economics**

The Training programme objectives for PhD studies are: strengthen support for PhD training, enhance responsiveness to policy needs, and enhance gender balance. Entering Phase V these were addressed through support for PhD students studying abroad. During Phase V CPP has been initiated and the former is being phased out.

#### **10.1 PhD Fellowships and Dissertation Awards**

To be eligible for PhD support students must be African, attached to an African institution and actively enrolled in a post-graduate degree programme in Africa or internationally. As shown in Table 3, support for PhD dissertations has exceeded the target for Phase V by the end of the fourth year and PhD Fellowships are just below the target set for Phase V.

**Table 3: Summary Table of Support for PhD Studies: Phase V**

	PhD Fellowships			Dissertation Research Awards		
	Number	Target	% female	Number	Target	% female
<b>2000</b>	8	5	13	11	9	36
<b>2001</b>	4	5	0	11	9	18
<b>2002</b>	2	5	0	12	9	8
<b>2003</b>	4	5	NA	12	9	NA
<b>2004</b>	5	5	60	13	9	8
<b>2000/04</b>	23	25	17	59	45	25

A goal of enhanced gender balance was realized partially for dissertation awards: 25% female in Phase V versus 13% for the total period. The increase for PhD Fellowships was smaller, where the proportion granted to women increased to 17% in Phase V versus 14% for the total period. Kimuyu concluded the solution to ongoing gender disparity had to be addressed at lower educational levels as there were only a limited number of women pursuing post-graduate studies in economics. In part it is also an issue of gender disparity in the recruitment of women in staff development programmes, as a majority of the PhD students supported had teaching appointments.

The economists interviewed who had received PhD support were almost unanimous in giving credit to AERC for timely support that enabled continuation and completion

of PhD studies. The degree studies completed were deemed relevant for current employment – 100% for students from Nigeria and 91% of other PhD fellows.

As formal tracing of the alumni of AERC's PhD studies support programme has not been established there are no direct indicators of programme impact. But accumulated evidence allows for summary statements on outcomes flowing from this investment in training of economists:

- Of those who have completed their studies, AERC identifies approximately 50 who are active in the AERC network.
- PhD graduates hold key positions in government – e.g., Deputy Governor, Operations – Bank of Zambia; General Manager, Bank of Mozambique; Director of Research, Bank of Namibia; Senior Official responsible for fiscal policy at Treasury, Republic of South Africa; Economist in The President's Economic Policy Advisory Unit, Government of Tanzania.
- 40% of the PhD graduates are members of key government committees.
- The PhD graduates active in AERC's research network are productive, listing an average of five papers each.
- PhD graduates are involved as lecturers of core and elective courses, student supervisors, external examiners, members of liaison committees and active in knowledge generation more generally. One, Margaret Chitiga, is a member at large of CMAP Academic Board.
- The average recipient of AERC's PhD support is confident about his/her ability to build capacity for policy analysis; 78% assess their economic capacity building as high. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude this programme is contributing significantly to a capacity to evolve development policy in Africa.

### **10.2 Collaborative PhD Programme [CPP]**

Enhancing the ability of African academic institutions to provide local training in economics at the PhD level is another major stride in AERC's continued efforts to build capacity for competent economic research on the continent. The programme was launched in December of 2002. It was recognized that a CPP was not possible until a strong MA programme was in place and there was a sizable cohort of graduates willing and able to enter a PhD programme. By 2002 CMAP had met that condition.

Effective demand for CPP has been demonstrated with applications for scholarships exceeding the number available – 80 applications received annually, of which AERC was able to support only 25%. During the course of this evaluation many of the AERC network members and others with a MA degree working at various training and research institutions in the region interviewed expressed strong interest in this programme. They expressed a concern that present scholarships are insufficient, making it hard to enter.

CPP provides five scholarships for each of the four regions (east, southern, west Anglophone and west Francophone). In each of the four regions, there is a host degree awarding university where the teaching and examination of core courses are undertaken. Each region also has a non-host degree awarding university, which sends its students to and collaborates with the host university on teaching core courses. Of the five CPP scholarships to each region, three go to host and two to

non-host universities with the exception of the University of Cocody, which has three as well, hence 21 scholarships per annum in total.<sup>16</sup>

Two cohorts have been supported so far. The first group of pioneer students included 19 on full AERC sponsorship and one self-sponsored.<sup>17</sup> (See Annex, Table A.7 for summary data on this cohort of students.) Intake in the second year included 25 students (21 on AERC scholarships and 4 privately sponsored - one at Cape Town and 3 in Dar es Salaam). The first cohort has drawn in students from nine countries, no doubt reflecting the strength of a regional approach to allocating scholarships. This first set of students was drawn primarily from university employment, 16 of 19. Gender inequality persists with only 21% female students. This has improved slightly in the second cohort where 24% are female. However, given the low participation of females in CMAP, this is a good start for CPP in its first two years that needs to be sustained.

To assure that the best students in each region are drawn into CPP, participating universities are required to advertise widely the selection of candidates for these scholarships. To facilitate this, AERC is linking university advertising for CPP to its website.

Our independent assessment confirms: 1) a strong demand for CPP; and 2) an AERC capacity to run it. The design and planning of CPP were credible and implementation is progressing satisfactorily. An initial focus on eight universities, two in each of three regions plus two Francophone Universities, appears sound. A rationale for dividing the two universities in each region into host degree awarding and non-host degree awarding is not as convincing. Also, some student feedback was received indicating dissatisfaction with being limited to attending universities within a region. Where allocating scholarships by region was sound, some students wanted greater freedom in selecting their preferred university for a course of study. Opening up the system in this way would have a quality control advantage in that universities would have to compete for students.

The administrative structure for CPP appears appropriate. A four-year time frame and the course content are standard for a PhD degree. Upon completion of core course modules students proceed to the CPP-JFE to qualify in their fields of specialization, after which they return to their degree awarding university to complete their dissertation research project. AERC has plans for an effective process to support the completion of dissertation research that are designed to follow a system of phased workshops similar to the Thematic Research process.

The initial intent appears to have been to assure international acceptance of the degree. This is a good strategy as credibility of the product within the market is important for the extensive investment of time and resources required to complete a PhD degree. Hopefully, over time, the range of courses and the content of courses can reflect more adequately the unique aspects of African economies and the paths

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<sup>16</sup> More details on the CPP design and structure are found in the CPP Operational Plan (AERC, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> One student passed away while part of the programme, reducing this first cohort to 18 students.

of development pursued within Africa. The use of the Thematic Research structure to guide dissertation development is an excellent innovation, even though it may require some ingenious organization to locate it within that framework.

CPP is in its infancy and, understandably, must undergo natural teething problems. These realities are recognized by the Secretariat as outlined in the Executive Director's Report for 2003/2004. Also, comments provided in August by the Secretariat to earlier concerns raised by the Evaluation Team indicate the Academic Board has refined the details of the programme – in areas such as definition of electives, the meaning and administration of candidacy examinations, and the supervision of PhD dissertations – such that the CPP *Operational Plan* is no longer a complete benchmark. Given this evolution in programme definition, we did not attempt to formally evaluate CPP. Rather, we limit ourselves here to a few summary comments.

- 1) The current design of CPP follows the CMAP structure and curricula. Drawing on the experience gained from running CMAP is advancing well the implementation of CPP. Students, though, raised two concerns: 1) there is significant overlap between MA and CPP courses, currently beyond desirable levels; and 2) there is a tendency to teach the same material with a similar level of instruction when the same lecturers teach core MA and CPP courses. The first issue can be addressed by assuring that presentation, reading lists and sources are adequately differentiated using frontier material for CPP. Where possible, different instructors should be used when similar courses are offered in CMAP and CPP and in the instruction of a core courses in the host university and the CPP-JFE.
- 2) There are issues related to the coordination of teaching by visiting lecturers. Where this is done for a short visit, it crowds the time students have to absorb new material and to integrate it with the whole course. Similarly, students are concerned with a lack of coordination between multiple lecturers in a course. In some cases there have been large variations in quality and styles of instruction and a failure to integrate what is taught within a course.
- 3) As is the case with CMAP, participating universities have signed Memoranda of Understanding with AERC where selected, individual Universities grant the PhD degree but AERC controls the programme. This is no doubt justified on efficiency grounds given the need to bring together a number of diverse universities. But, it limits a sense of ownership within the participating universities, which may affect an eventual transfer of "ownership" of CPP to its member Universities. If so, that will affect longer-term sustainability of CPP.
- 4) Some member Universities already offer research-based PhD degrees, which are likely to continue. Simultaneous administration of two PhD streams poses some problems: 1) a department grants the same degree with different requirements, where some take courses and qualifying exams and others only successfully defend their dissertations; and 2) departments will face a problem of streamlining requirements for completion of a PhD degree. A need to coordinate and/or merge these two PhD streams is already

recognized by AERC and is under discussion with member Universities. Universities taking more direct “ownership” of CPP may well become a significant factor in whether – and how – this issue is resolved.

### ***11.0 Synergy between Research and Training Programmes***

The terms of reference for this evaluation called for an assessment of synergies between AERC’s training and research programmes. In addition, we were to comment on the balance between capacity building in research and outreach to potential users of research with special emphasis on policy makers.

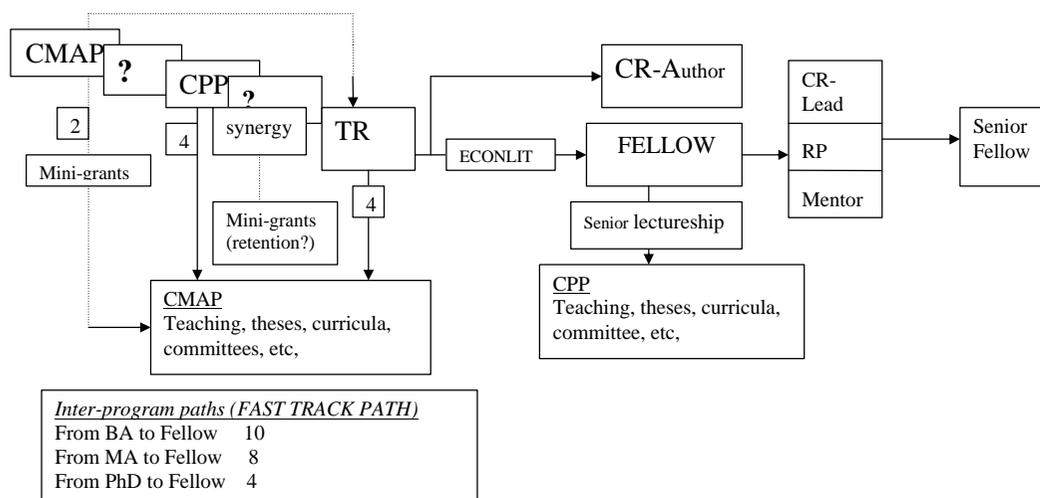
#### **11.1 Career Path Options**

The structure of AERC programmes and portfolio of activities are by design complementary and provide a basis for supporting integrated inter-program professional paths for AERC network members (see Figure 1). These should be the main focus and primary options for capacity retention and career development within this network of professionals.

The bulk of AERC Thematic Research participants are young economists, with a PhD or in a PhD programme, who are mainly faculty members of academic research and training institutions. Some are employed in research departments of government agencies such as central banks and ministries. Thematic Research does not appear to provide the best option for graduates of CMAP as less than one percent join Thematic Research, comprising only 2% of the projects (see Annex, Table A.8). This is not surprising, as the majority of CMAP graduates are absorbed by or return to government jobs that do not require or allow them to spend the time needed to complete a project.

Another related issue is the involvement of graduates from AERC’s PhD fellowship programs into Thematic Research. While relatively better than CMAP graduates, it is still low at less than 9% of all recipients of PhD support and less than 7% of all Thematic Research participants (Annex, Table A.8). In our assessment these relatively low percentages are a matter of concern related to retention of local capacity that needs to be investigated and addressed. Given a current lack of information on graduates of the AERC PhD Fellowship programme, as to where they are and what their activity, it will be of value for AERC to carry out a tracer survey of this group to gain better understanding of this question and other broader capacity retention issues.

Figure 1: An Outline of Career Path Opportunities among AERC Programmes





Some 36% of all Thematic Research participants were absorbed in various activities within AERC's programmes. The highest rate of absorption is in Collaborative Research (19%), followed by participating as observers at biannual meetings (15%).<sup>18</sup> There are, however, interesting variations between different Collaborative Research projects: higher rates in CFA zone, *Foreign Direct Investment* and *Poverty* compared to *Explaining Growth* and *Trade* projects. This may be a result of the time when the projects were initiated, which will mean absorption is improving if the former are more recent projects. It also may reflect existing capacity and expertise differentials.

Advance from Thematic Research to more senior capacities within the AERC programmes, such as plenary speakers and resource persons at biannual workshops, remains low, 2% and 1% respectively. A number of still active and motivated members of the AERC network expressed frustration about limited room to grow into these roles after Thematic Research. In contrast, many CMAP and PhD fellowships alumni and Thematic Research network members are absorbed in various training activities of AERC as lecturers of core and elective courses, external examiners and supervisors of these research in the CMAP and CPP programmes.

The average number of observers at the biannual workshops increased from 38 to 48 during Phase V (see Annex, Table A.9). AERC has made significant progress in reaching out to more stakeholders and professional groups from the region through these workshops with an increase from 78% to 94%. The ratio of new attendee observers from the region declined by about 10%, in part because the average number of times attended per person increased from 1.7 to 2. Attending biannual meetings more than once may be justified over longer time horizons, as new themes are deliberated, but it may be high to invite the same person twice within a four-year period (2000-2003). It is also important to improve the current low ratio (51%) of new observers from the region.

The average number of plenary speakers per workshop dropped from 6 to 5 during Phase V. However, the regional share improved significantly, growing from one third to almost half, a trend to be maintained. The percent of new plenary speakers was maintained at 90%, suggesting only one time appearance per person.

This regional share, however, does not hold for resource persons. While the total number at biannual workshops increased significantly from 16 to 26 per workshop (by more than 60%), the regional share in this growth was almost nil (remaining at a 36%), and the ratio of newcomers declined during Phase V (see Annex, Table A.9). This is also reflected in the increased number of appearances per resource person, with little turnover observed during Phase V. This could be one of the reasons limiting opportunities for professional growth along the AERC ladder among members of its network, affecting the goal of retention of created capacity.

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<sup>18</sup> Observers are invited to the biannual meetings for various purposes. The majority are usually local policy makers and other stakeholders. Some are invited to familiarize themselves with the process in preparation for joining as plenary speakers, resource persons and often to interest them in the Thematic Research process itself. This means that for some of the 32 graduating as observers it could be the other way around, i.e., graduating from observers to Thematic Research.

### 11.2 Effective Utilization of Network Members

Of all the graduates from CMAP only a selected sub-set go on to PhD studies. Many others serve effectively in various forms of employment. Similarly, it is to be expected that only a sub-set of the Thematic Research participants will go on to produce the research publication record required to serve as effective instructors at the post-graduate level, guide the development of CPP including course development, instruction at the CPP-JFE and dissertation supervision, mature into senior policy makers, serve as the recognized scholars in the Collaborative Research programme, and become the future external examiners for post-graduate programmes and resource persons for the Thematic Research programme.

For the remainder, they also will make important contributions as instructors in under-graduate programmes, research staff in various Ministries and Research Institutes, as well as in the private sector, and as decision-makers in public, private and non-profit organizations. Their place as network members could be recognized formally by designating as research fellows Thematic Research participants who have completed two or more projects. To facilitate their advance to other research and employment opportunities, AERC should maintain a directory of all Thematic Research participants. At a minimum, updating such a directory would include promotions within the University system, advances to senior positions in the public and private sectors, as well as AERC's designation of Research Fellow.

### 11.3 Co-ordination of PhD Dissertation and Thematic Research Workshops

Two cohorts of students have started the CPP so far. Toward the end of Phase V a third cohort of students will be joining. At the same time the first intake of 18 students will be starting their PhD dissertation planning (proposal) phase. Within two years, sometime during 2006, the first three CPP intakes (60) will be at their three respective stages of the PhD dissertation research: projects' planning (proposal stage), implementation phase (work-in-progress stage) and final reporting. From there on, a similar number of PhD candidates will be engaged every year in the various stages of dissertation projects supervision. This number is equivalent to the target total number of Thematic Research papers presentations at biannual workshops for Phase V.

Although detailed plans for implementing PhD dissertation workshops are not worked out as yet, the current thinking of following the Thematic Research modality imply that half way during Phase VI, AERC will have to manage double the current number of Thematic Research projects. There is still a debate on whether this represents an extension of Thematic Research or whether it is a parallel but separate venture. The case for the latter is the need for direct supervision for PhD students versus interaction and mentoring by peers within Thematic Research. If separate from Thematic Research, it is argued PhD candidates would benefit from observing both Thematic and Collaborative Research in action. Regardless of the approach taken, we see the potential for extreme management pressures on AERC Secretariat and competition between the two parallel capacity building processes for other supporting services, e.g., dissertation supervisors/resource persons,<sup>19</sup> a matter that will need proper and careful strategic planning.

<sup>19</sup> Note that with the current thinking of appointing three supervisors per PhD dissertation means that a total of more than 180 supervisors will be involved as resource persons at the PhD dissertation workshops. With the limit of not more than three PhD students per supervisor, this means a

In addition, as CPP develops one source of input for Thematic Research will largely disappear as PhD candidates in CPP will receive the same capacity building programme as part of CPP. Thematic Research might seek to compensate for this loss with specific action to draw in those PhD candidates currently seeking a research-based PhD from African universities (outside of CPP). Finally, when CPP graduates enter the market, their demands from Thematic Research may be different in that they are effectively ready to enter a second cycle of Thematic Research.

Accordingly, this evaluation would like to bring to the attention of the Research and Training Departments of AERC the nature and magnitude of such potential challenges in managing the capacity building process. At the same time, we see great opportunities presented by this situation for the Research and Training programmes to take advantage of a more integrative and cost-effective management of capacity building within AERC modalities.

## ***Publish and Disseminate Research Output***

A major challenge for AERC is to link research output generated with policy decision-makers. These links need to occur on a timely basis and be in a form that will command attention and can be absorbed by non-economists as well as economists. A second challenge is to raise the profile of the AERC as an active, significant force in economics capacity building and research. To address these challenges the Phase V Strategy set out goals and means for what has become the Communications Division.

### ***12.0 Communicating Research Results for Policy Impact***

To enhance its effectiveness in communicating research results for policy impact the AERC commissioned a review of its communications and dissemination functions. Its implementation response to this review is *Getting the Message Across*, (AERC, 2003a), an enhanced communications strategy with a goal "to facilitate the impact of AERC training and research products on economic policy formulation in Africa." The primary objectives set are:

- convey the products of AERC research and training to key target audiences;
- raise the profile of AERC and enhance the visibility of Consortium activities;
- link members of the AERC network on the continent with each other, with the Secretariat and with the array of information available around the world; and
- ensure an enhanced internal communications systems.

For the purpose of these objectives the target audience was defined as: 1) the policy community; 2) economists in Africa and beyond; 3) Francophone network members; and 4) civil society.

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minimum of 60 supervisors. More likely, though, the total number of supervisors attending biannual meetings will remain as high as 100 if current plans are implemented.

As the communications strategy is still in draft stage, it cannot be evaluated. There is evidence though of new initiatives as well as continuation of previous activities.

### **12.1 Publication and Library Services**

The Communications Division of the AERC is extensively involved in publication and in facilitating publication. A list of Research Reports, Collaborative Research papers, Plenary Session papers and special workshop papers has been provided above in chapters 4 and 5. In addition, the Division continues to publish Annual reports, an *AERC Newsletter* and *Research News*, and various brochures on issues as they arise. All of these outputs are maintained in AERC's library and can be obtained via its information resources centre.

An on-going problem is the coordination of external peer reviews of Thematic Research final papers, including requested revisions by the authors. Some authors fail to follow through to meet peer review requirements. Where a Research Report is completed successfully, the paper is not necessarily in a form suitable for publication in a journal or book. Therefore, the existing process is only partially successful in generating a preferred outcome, an expanded publication record for network members in recognized journals.

In 2002 AERC initiated a US\$500 incentive for publication of Thematic Research output in a journal listed in the ECONLIT database. To be eligible for this incentive award an author has to acknowledge the role of the AERC in preparation of the article. We applaud this initiative. We also advanced in chapter 4 a proposal that workshop participants who have completed a final paper successfully be given an option of publishing either in a refereed journal or in AERC's Research Report series.

In keeping with the objective of targeting publications for specific audiences, AERC prepares executive summaries for Research Reports and disseminates these to senior policy makers. Similarly, some research outputs are being translated into French to address demands from Francophone network members. Another initiative is the placement of full page advertising supplements in selected newspaper to raise strategically the profile of the AERC. In addition to paid advertising, the Communications Division is preparing press releases designed to highlight specific AERC activities and research outputs.

### **12.2 The AERC Website**

At the May 2004 biannual workshop a special session introduced the updated, revised website. Preliminary responses are distinctly positive, both in the content as well as the more user friendly nature of this site. There are now in excess of 200 reports available on the website, plus the *AERC Newsletter and Research News*, and information about and application forms for AERC research and training activities.

The number of hits to this site averages in excess of 70,000 per month. Hits from African sources come in third, after North America and Europe. This ranking likely indicates the relatively limited access to the internet in a number of African countries. With these recent improvements to the website it should become an

effective means for disseminating information and research results. As this occurs, the profile of AERC will be enhanced as well.

### **12.3 Assessment of Cost Effectiveness**

Cost estimates for implementing *Getting the Message Across* strategy had not been prepared at the time of this evaluation. Also, it was not possible to obtain a measure of the full range of outputs that would be generated or indicators of outcomes and impacts. Hence the cost effectiveness of this new strategy could not be assessed.

We concur with the implementation paper's claim that it is a "strategy statement of AERC's vision for communication beyond Phase V – a vision that pulls information technology to centre stage for both internal and external information sharing." (AERC, 2003a: 1) Extending research results to policy makers, increasing information about AERC and its programmes, plus improved communication among AERC's network members should payoff over time and is worthy of significant investment as Phase VI is launched. To assure effective implementation, AERC should set specific outcome and impact indicators to measure timely publication of research in a form that reaches decision makers as well as the extent of utilization of such output. Only with such indicators in place will AERC be able to assess whether adequate and appropriate resources have been committed to achieve its intent to impact economic policy formulation in Africa.

## **13.0 Building an Economic Policy Impact Network**

A visible outcome of AERC programmes is a network of economists across a majority of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa. A priority for Phase V was to enhance networking. This included extending the network, especially to Francophone countries and to disadvantaged countries that have little or no involvement in AERC programmes. It also included retention of network members and building their research and post-graduate teaching capabilities. And it included building effective partnerships with national, regional and global institutions.

The capacity building aspects of the network building agenda have been covered in the discussions on AERC research and training programmes. We focus here on explicit actions to build and maintain the network, including enhancing AERC's profile within Africa and beyond. We then outline and assess three initiatives to build partnerships: National Policy Workshops, Senior Policy Seminars and linkages with other institutions, both within Africa and in the larger international forum.

### **13.1 Building a Network of Economists**

The AERC network complements existing research and training networks. This was the conclusion of Harris Mule and Jon Wilmshurst (1998) in their comparison of AERC with existing research and training institutions in Africa. Building on this complementarity allows AERC to focus where it has comparative advantage and to participate jointly with other institutions, without necessarily taking the lead role where it does not have such an advantage. An example of the latter cited by AERC is contributing to research initiatives by Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa [CODESRIA] or other specialized institutes on political

economy issues such as the study of corruption, governance and post-conflict economies.

To draw members of the AERC network into research opportunities there is now a manual, *Research Opportunities with the African Economic Research Consortium: A Guide for Perspective Researchers*, that has been prepared by the Research Department. It is posted on the AERC website and it has been highlighted in *Research News*. The intent was to facilitate participation by all economists, especially from Francophone and under-represented areas. Use of information technology in this manner is a significant advance toward achieving an AERC goal of becoming a premier African economic "think-net."

### **13.2 Naming Research Fellows as a Form of Network Building**

Two reviews of AERC programmes, David Bevan and Kerfalla Yansane (2003) and Marc Wuyts (2004), have identified a need to facilitate and encourage continued involvement of "middle-level" economists who have moved beyond Thematic Research projects but do not have a place within either AERC's Collaborative Research or its Training programmes.

In 2003, AERC's Programme Committee recommended the naming of AERC Research Fellows. The intent was to identify economists who were resident in Africa and who had a proven research record. Being designated a Research Fellow would constitute a form of brand recognition for Institutes, Governments, civil society organizations, and international organizations searching for research and teaching skills in economics. They would be so designated in AERC's website listing of AERC training alumni and research network members. In turn, Research Fellows will be expected to include this designation on their business cards and to credit AERC accordingly in consulting, research and publishing activities. The exact modalities are still being worked out. To make administration relatively simple, it is proposed to use publication in a journal listed in ECONLIT as the primary criterion for evidence of research capability that is recognized internationally.

The Evaluation Team recommends that the basic designation of AERC Research Fellow be linked directly, but not exclusively, to the Thematic Research programme. For example, an economist who has completed successfully two or more research projects and has had the research output of one project published in a journal listed in ECONLIT would be eligible to be named a Research Fellow.

There likely is merit in having a two-tier designation where economists with an exemplary research record are named a Senior Research Fellow. A proposed criterion is two or more publications in a journal listed in ECONLIT. As an indication of currently active in internationally recognized research it is proposed that such publications (at least one) be listed during a defined time period, e.g., the previous five years.

Discussions of this naming of Research Fellows have identified an issue still to be resolved: a perceived bias toward Anglophone economists with the use of ECONLIT as the relevant benchmark. This concern might be addressed by stating the criterion as publication(s) in journals listed in ECONLIT or its equivalent. AERC could then identify a small sub-committee within its Research sub-Committee to evaluate

applications to be named a Research Fellow that invoked the “equivalent” criterion. Equivalence could recognize publication in recognized journals in languages other than English, publication of a book rather than a journal article, or publication of one or more papers that has demonstrated policy influence.

### **13.3 Facilitating International Sabbatical Exchanges**

In addition to brand recognition within the market there is a need for opportunities to interact with economists in other African countries and beyond. The Collaborative Research modality provides for such opportunities. In addition, the JFE and Thematic Research programmes provide opportunity for such interaction within Africa. The internship and visiting scholar programmes provide external opportunities for economists who are involved in Thematic Research. There is a case to be made for increased opportunities for interaction for “middle level” economists that do not fit into any of these existing programmes.

A standard approach for such interaction within academic communities is the sabbatical. It is recommended that AERC pursue actively increased opportunities for sabbaticals, both for African scholars within Africa and abroad and for non-African scholars to locate their sabbaticals within an African institution. For the latter, the investment would be more in the form of listing opportunities, facilitating visas and research clearance, and encouraging African universities and research institutes to make provision for hosting scholars on sabbatical.

For African scholars, at least initially, there would need to be a financial contribution to cover travel, added living costs, and research expenses. It is proposed a fund be established for this purpose and applications be received annually for economists who are eligible for a sabbatical 6 to 12 months hence. Allocation of funds would be on the merits of the proposal plus evidence from a hosting institution that is willing and able to facilitate the proposed interaction, capacity building and research. Initially, special merit might be attached to sabbaticals that seek to advance a capability for creative definition of CPP courses and the instruction of such courses.

### **13.4 The Role of National Policy Workshops**

It was the conclusion of Mule and Wilmshurst (1998) that governments in Africa lacked an in-house capacity to translate AERC’s research findings into policies and operational activities. Following up on this assessment, Bevan and Yansane (2003) recommended that urgent attention be given to manage downstream activities flowing from AERC’s research initiatives. Our discussion in chapter 11 of the research programme has identified already the importance of Plenary Sessions and Special Workshops in facilitating direct interaction between members of AERC’s network and policy makers. The other important means to managing downstream activities within countries is National Policy Workshops.

Members of Research Centres and Foundations and senior government officials were in agreement that National Policy Workshops have proven to be an effective means of communicating the output and significance of AERC sponsored research. This modality brings research findings specific to a country to the attention of senior decision-makers at a convenient time in a neutral setting.

In countries where Research Centres and Foundations now exist, the Evaluation Team recommends that AERC utilize them as a front-line means for managing downstream activities flowing from AERC sponsored research. These Centres and Foundations have a capability to translate research findings into a form that can inform and shape policy formulation and implementation within their respective countries. Being aware and having access to AERC research output is essential to their being able to translate research findings into such constructive policy advice. In a number of countries, AERC is also sufficiently recognized within Central Banks and/or Ministries of Finance that they can be called upon to co-sponsor such Workshops. Building these partnerships as a basis for periodic National Policy Workshops should be seen as strategic means to managing research-related downstream activities at the national level.

### **13.5 The Role of Senior Policy Seminars**

Where National Policy Workshops are effective means of communicating AERC's research outputs within countries, the Senior Policy Seminars serve a similar role at the international level within Africa. The aim of these Seminars is:

- to present latest research on a key issues for African economic policy making;
- to exchange information about best practices in this policy area among African policy makers and researchers; and
- to define an agenda for future joint policy-oriented research and analysis.

To date there have been six Senior Policy Seminars, one conducted every other year. By drawing in selected senior policy advisers and policy decision-maker from a number of African countries AERC has a forum that serves two important functions: communicate research results to senior decision-makers and members of AERC's research network receiving information on the specific policy issues policy makers are confronting in their respective countries. The impact and effectiveness of this activity has been well recognized in the external valuation report of the Global Development Network (Muth and Gerlach, 2004).

Responses received to individual Seminars plus interviews with Seminar participants provide consistent evidence of the importance of these Seminars. Policy makers reported they had benefited directly plus they were distributing the papers presented at the Seminar to their staff as input for their research. Having become aware of AERC research, they were also encouraging their staff to seek out AERC research results in the future. Finally, participation in this type of forum has impressed on policy makers a need for an Africa-wide network of policy makers and research economists to organize research projects, to nominate persons to participate in such joint-ventures, and to establish focal points to maintain dialogue a both national and international levels.

One constructive critique received from these interviews was an observation that the format of Seminar VI was primarily research economists presenting their ideas and findings. As presenters, policy makers served mainly as discussants. Some policy makers observed this format made it too easy for economists to hide behind presenting policy options and to avoid engaging directly with decision-makers in the policy-related decisions that had to be made. The policy makers who made these

observations argued a case study format might lend itself better to focusing the research output directly on one or more specific policy issues requiring action.

A second constructive suggestion was to draw in inter-African agencies such as NEPAD, UNECA, African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union (AU) as co-sponsors of Senior Policy Seminars. Building partnerships in this way would draw these international agencies directly into AERC programming and would broaden the base for the dialogue with senior representatives from African governments and from primary economic institutions within African countries. In turn, dialogue within such a broader inter-African forum would provide opportunity for AERC network members to assist in shaping the agenda and policies of these important inter-African institutions.

### **13.6 Extending the Network to Other Research and Policy Institutions**

An important means to extending the influence of AERC's network is through participation with other institutions in addressing research needs and policy issues within African economies. AERC has been active, as members of the Secretariat and via network members, in a number of such collaborations during Phase V. To illustrate, the following is a list of some of the recent forms of collaboration:

- 1) Central Bank of Tanzania co-hosted with AERC a Senior Policy Seminar;
- 2) Cornell University conducted two technical workshops for AERC;
- 3) AERC participated in a conference to inaugurate the organization International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty (LEAP).
- 4) World Bank joined with AERC to conduct a short course for policy makers in poverty-related issues;
- 5) AERC joined with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA] and the Organization of African Unity to prepare trade-related presentations for the Conference of Ministers of Trade and the WTO fourth Ministerial Conference;
- 6) AERC Secretariat participated in Southern & Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Initiative [SEATINI] expert meeting on financing for development in Geneva;
- 7) AERC Secretariat participated in the North-South Institute's global financial governance initiative on long-term financing for development held in Ottawa;
- 8) AERC participated in a forum in Capetown on the need to re-think the content and nature of development economics; and
- 9) AERC participated in G-7 high-level advisory group in Geneva.

There are other opportunities that could have been pursued. For example, discussion within the Bank of Ghana identified annual meetings of the Association of African Central Banks [AACB] as a place where AERC research was relevant and the participants could benefit from interaction with the AERC research network. The meeting in Cameroon in July of 2004 had the theme of money laundering. It was argued that AERC's presence there would have been enhanced significantly by more direct participation than merely Central Bank staff who had participated in AERC training or research programmes.

The Bank of Ghana is involved in an International Labour Organization funded project on the *Impact of Financial Liberalization on the Poor* [IFLP]. As this funding

is drawing to a close, the Bank is interested in pursuing this further by drawing directly on the work of the Collaborative Research project on poverty.

It is in international forums such as these listed above where AERC has a comparative advantage. Direct participation of the AERC Secretariat and/or network members (e.g., Senior Research Fellows) brings AERC's expertise and research findings to bear on these pressing policy debates and implementation strategies for African economies. At the same time, such participation raises AERC's profile and enhances its reputation as an active player in capacity building and research in Africa.

## ***Managing Capacity Building and Research***

Realization of objectives set in the *Strategy* for Phase V has been affected by a major re-organization of the Secretariat during this phase. This change was driven by several factors – management challenges within the Secretariat, significant increase in work load inherent in the introduction of CPP, etc. There were other external factors, e.g., a facility in French for some staff members as the activities of AERC were extended to Francophone Africa. Drawing on the recommendations of two external reviews the reorganization sought to strengthen the operational efficiency of the Secretariat and to put in place systems to enable it to cope with new demands. The revised structure is now in place with the appointment of a Director of Research.

The Evaluation Team chose to accept as given the validity of the conclusions and recommendations of the two external reviews of the Secretariat. It is too early to assess formally the new structures, procedures and personnel that have been the product of this re-organization. Summary reflections provided in this section are based on interviews with staff and observations made during attendance at AERC functions.

### **14.0 Management Structures and Procedures**

#### **14.1 Organizational Structure**

The current organizational structure retains a basic division between training and research. The Training Department is now expanded to manage CPP. In addition, existing responsibilities for external liaison, communications, publication and dissemination were drawn together into a Communications Division. A new position of Chief of Resources has been created to bridge the responsibility roles of the Finance and the Human Resources Units.

Appropriate job descriptions and reporting lines, consistent with the new structure, are in place. The changes were designed to eliminate inefficiencies caused by duplication of tasks and inadequate use of new technologies. They also provide more centralized control over both financial and human resources.

It is Secretariat staff assessment that it is too early to conclude that the right structure has been achieved. It is our observation that the two primary activities of AERC are capacity building and research. The capacity building, within the current structure, is partly within the Research Department and partly in the Training

Department. Is this division of capacity building warranted? We expect the potential for duplication and the need for coordination between the two Departments will increase as CPP matures to the stage where large numbers of PhD candidates are at their dissertation stage. In fairness, though, the process of re-organization appears to be on-going, with openness to evolution and renewal. To assist this process, a consultant was reviewing the internal structure of the Secretariat.

#### **14.2 Management Procedures**

True renewal of structure requires changes in management procedures as well as changes in structure. These procedures have been defined in appropriate manuals and implementation is proceeding as key positions are filled.

Maintaining Finance and Human Resource as separate units that are coordinated by a Chief of Resources appears to be working well. The staff identified one position, Chief of Resources, where there appeared to be an imbalance between responsibility and authority. The Evaluation Team was not in a position to make an independent assessment of this issue or to assess a proposed solution of changing it to a Deputy Director or Director level.

An important change in management procedures recommended by the two management reviews was appropriate financial control to assure "value for money" for all AERC expenditures. This was not an issue of potential fraud or embezzlement as AERC has a good system for financial control with clear segregation of functions: initiation, authorization, execution, payment and reporting. Rather, it involved going beyond selecting via competitive bid the suppliers offering best prices to assuring that suppliers selected were indeed providing best value for money on each purchase. The issue has been addressed in two ways: 1) preparation of a manual for procurement; and 2) setting up an Administrative Committee that approves expenditures in excess of \$1,000. Again, internal staff assessment appears to be that this is working well.

There are two issues related to management procedures raised as concerns by Secretariat staff. The first is a general one, outcome and impact indicators are not articulated well making it difficult to evaluate effectiveness of procedures used in managing AERC's resources. Given the Secretariat's plan of action for Phase VI, referred to in sub-section 14.6 below, this issue may be resolved over time.

The second issue, AERC's management of the Collaborative Research programme, is major and likely will continue over time. AERC has identified Collaborative Research as a primary means of assuring policy relevance and application of all research sponsored by AERC. To assure exercise of control of this process AERC sees a need to "manage" Collaborative Research.

The practical problems encountered include:

- Extensive work in preparing relevant contracts with each person engaged within the Collaborative Research and responsibility for funds allocated but limited authority to enforce compliance as the research process is in the hands of the Coordinators – part of the AERC network but not AERC staff – of a Collaborative Research project. AERC needs to address this imbalance between staff responsibility and authority by establishing clear procedural mechanisms,

including definition of roles and relations between a project coordinator, AERC's Research Department, and project steering committees.

- There is a *priori* uncertainty related to quantity of funds and number of persons involved as these depend on the number of projects active at a point in time, the nature of each project, and the stage at which a project is operating. The workload involved in administering contracts and addressing the reporting requirements of donors varies from year-to-year. As Secretariat staff complements and budget allocations are not linked directly to such changes in the Collaborative Research programme, staff lack continuity at times and are over-burdened at other times.
- Expenditures within Collaborative Research are monitored closely to match them with income expected. To address AERC's commitment to limiting its administration costs to 15% of the overall budget, significant progress has been made in overhead cost recovery from external funds obtained for each Collaborative project.<sup>20</sup> This addresses AERC's overall budgeting process but does not address variations in workloads and responsibilities for Secretariat staff entrusted with managing this part of AERC's research programme.

We accept the importance of Collaborative Research for AERC and its network. It is our assessment that if AERC wants to maintain control of – rather than facilitate – a well-run, effective Collaborative Research agenda it must provide and commit support of requisite resources as a regular function and role (from inception through fundraising to implementation and completion). We expect this will require additional personnel, at the administrator if not manager level. Further, there has to be clear definition of responsibility and authority for each project, which could be located with project Coordinator(s), project steering committee or the Director of Research.

### 14.3 Personnel Management

Information received during this evaluation indicates Secretariat staff is adapting well to new structure and procedures. Staff reported a general level of satisfaction. To assist in the transition, time and resources were committed for training and to build a culture of teamwork that strives for quality and efficiency in the development, delivery and assessment of programmes. Definition of employment responsibilities and reporting lines are appreciated at all levels within the structure. Use of performance evaluations is not new. A clearer definition of responsibilities is facilitating reviews, where objectives can be set and employees evaluated on the basis of the objectives.

What is new is term contracts. The rationale provided by Robert Auger and Anne Whyte (2002:8): "...limited term appointments would increase staff turnover ... and reduce the dispiriting effect on the morale of employees of the low prospects for promotion inherent in a small organization." This rationale assumes the relevant alternative is employment in non-governmental organizations where term contracts are common practice. The validity of this assumption has not been tested formally.

There appears to be acceptance by staff of this rationale but they are less assured on implementation in practice. The stated policy of effective performance review will

<sup>20</sup> Overhead cost recovery was US\$501,281 in 2003 and US\$470,396 in 2004.

be conducted regularly and renewal of term appointments will be based solely on staffing needs and performance should work if implemented consistently and well. But, what is to prevent staffing needs at a point in time to be defined by AERC's commitment to adhere to the 15% limit for overhead management costs? The staff observes that vacant positions are readily filled by consultants and they are conscious that some consultancy costs can be billed to programme budgets. Hence a concern about how the stated personnel policy will be implemented. Maintaining staff commitment and morale will depend on an appropriate resolution of this issue.

#### **14.4 Committee Structure**

The committee structure, clearly separating the roles of the AERC Board and the Programme Committee, is seen as an advantage. Previous reviews related to Phase V identified areas of potential conflict of interest and a need to define explicitly the roles of Committee chairpersons. These recommendations appear to have been addressed appropriately. The Evaluation Team did not receive any concerns related to the operation of the Programme Committee or its sub-committees.

There are concerns about high levels of turnover on the CMAP Academic Board and a lack of clear definition of roles and responsibilities of steering committees for Collaborative Research projects. These have been addressed elsewhere in the report.

Harris Mule and Jon Wilmshurst (1998: 3) pose the question of whether AERC should be seen as a permanent or transitional institution. This issue needs to be posed as AERC ownership of all programmes, continuously funded by donors, likely is not viable in the longer-term. To start a process toward longer-term sustainability of primary programmes the Evaluation Team outlines some means for initiating a transfer of "ownership" of selected AERC programmes. For example, the Evaluation Team is recommending that the CMAP Board be re-structured (see chapter 17) and that the option of transferring "ownership" of CMAP to the degree-granting universities be considered and possibly initiated during Phase VI (see chapter 17 below).

#### **14.5 A 15% Ceiling for Personnel Costs**

Capping costs of administration of a programme to 15% of the overall budget is a common target imposed by donors.<sup>21</sup> Past reviews have found this target as appropriate for AERC and the mid-term evaluation of Phase V recommended that it be maintained. In general, AERC has been able to meet this target over the life of a phase even though there were year-to-year fluctuations. For example, in 2003 the overhead rate achieved was 13.7%, while in 2004 it was 18.5%.

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<sup>21</sup> AERC defines as overhead costs all expenses not related directly to programmes. These are divided into general management and programme management components. The former includes personnel costs of senior management (Executive Director, Finance Manager and Human Resource Manager), personnel costs for other support staff who do not work directly under programmes, rental costs, audit and consultancy costs, costs related to Board meetings, and staff travel. The programme management component includes expenses incurred by the Programme Committee, evaluation costs and specific consulting services.

The Evaluation Team was not in a position to arrive at an independent assessment of the 15% overhead management target. We bring to the discussion two primary concerns. First, from our academic experience we know PhD programmes are faculty intensive and expensive to manage and operate. Second, a variable that remains inadequately defined is AERC's "management" of Collaborative Research.

It is our recommendation that the Programme Committee define more precisely what AERC is to administer and manage. Then the AERC Board needs to commit the resources to enable the Secretariat to manage well this programme of action. There are likely to be times when a 15% limit is an arbitrary and unreasonable binding constraint to effective programme delivery.

Periodic use of consultants to cover positions that are temporarily vacant between appointments and to meet periodic peaks in administration work load is a sound principle. Looking to the future, should consultants be used to circumvent the 15% rule that would be detrimental. We would not view such use of consultants as a cost-effective means to sound programme development, delivery and assessment.

#### **14.6 The Planning Process**

Two major changes occurred during Phase V that were not directly part of the planning strategy: the re-organization of the Secretariat and the introduction of CPP. An evaluation of AERC's Secretariat by James Trowbridge in 1998 did not signal a need for re-organization. Primary difficulties identified focused on staff being over-extended: especially senior staff, programme staff seasonally. Time devoted by senior staff to fund-raising received special attention.

Several donors reported it was their understanding that the decision to re-organize was driven in part by the expanded responsibilities involved in implementing and administering CPP. Where a planning process for CPP is mentioned in the Phase V *Strategy*, CPP is not included in the "Summary of Phase V Performance Indicators" that guides AERC activities during Phase V. During interviews, these donors expressed concern that the addition of CPP as a major initiative to the Phase V *Strategy*, when combined with reorganization of the Secretariat, may have distracted from successful implementation of the *Strategy*.

AERC must confront as a basic issue of management whether major programme changes should be undertaken if not planned for explicitly in the strategy. Part of the issue for Phase V was the longer time frame, extending strategies from three to five years. Where a five-year time frame is a sound approach to planning, it creates additional pressure to assure all anticipated activities for the next five years are outlined appropriately. With the benefit of hindsight, this did not occur in the transition from three to five years. In setting out the strategy for Phase VI, the Secretariat, Programme Committee and AERC Board need to have a five-year planning horizon. It will be appropriate discipline for all involved if the AERC Board limits any major new initiatives during Phase VI to what has been identified and outlined in the Phase VI strategy document.

A second planning issue is the development of programme outcome and impact indicators related directly to the goal and objectives of the Phase VI planning document. To meet its internal management needs as well as address reporting

requirements of donors, AERC must develop such performance indicators. A significant step in this direction has been made with the consultancy for AERC staff conducted by Douglas Saltmarsh (2003). The output from this exercise has highlighted the importance of goals and purpose/objectives for AERC as a whole and for the primary activities within AERC. Further, it has demonstrated a need to go beyond enumerating activity outputs to identify specific outcomes that enable assessment of meeting purpose/objectives, and to identify impacts that flow from the outcomes and enable assessment of goal realization. This framework and these linkages is an important first step to obtaining information required for strategic management decisions.

The work so far on defining verifiable indicators of outcomes and impacts is still at a preliminary stage. The measurement of capacity building and research outcomes and impacts is an especially daunting task. In part, this is the case because there is not a one-to-one mapping between a training initiative and capacity built or between research output and policy formulation and input. Other agencies, for example International Development Research Centre, are devoting significant resources to identifying verifiable indicators for research activities. AERC networking with such external initiatives should prove useful in developing a much-needed capacity to measure outcomes and impacts.

It is our assessment that the need for such project and development indicators is now recognized within AERC. The Secretariat has made a good start by setting out a path to developing these indicators. It is recommended that resources be allocated on a priority basis to advance this task as soon as the goal and objectives have been finalized for Phase VI. Setting targets for Phase VI that go beyond enumerating expected outputs to include measures of outcomes and impacts will facilitate greatly effective management of programme implementation throughout Phase VI. For example, the capacity building that has continued through Phase V now makes it possible for African economists and policy makers to begin to take ownership of the policy development process. Assuring that this occurs throughout AERC's programming structures should be set as an impact target for Phase VI.

## **15.0 Assessment of Programme Cost effectiveness**

### **15.1 The Research Programme**

Different funding arrangements are used to support the two key research activities of AERC. While Thematic Research is funded from core AERC funds, Collaborative Research receives financial support through complementary funding arrangements. To allow proper evaluation of cost effectiveness available cost data were used to construct general and specific cost indicators. We have chosen an approach to categorizing cost components that is consistent with evaluating the cost effectiveness of various aspects of rethinking Research programme activities as argued in different parts of our assessment of the current situation and future direction. Our analyses of cost effectiveness produced the following general results (see Annex, Table 10).

- 1) *Total spending* - Total spending on research has declined over Phase V, averaging US\$2.7 million per year during the first four years. This is about 68% of the budgeted spending on research (US\$4 million/annum) projected

in the strategic plan. Approximately 30% was spent on Collaborative Research leaving the largest share (70% on average), for supporting Thematic Research.

- 2) *Programme input indicators* - Average annual cost per person participating in Thematic Research projects is US\$13,500 during the first four years. This is an estimate of average annual total cost of US\$23,000 per Thematic Research project, which is lower than Thorbecke's (1996) estimate of average annual costs of \$28,000 per project for 1989 -1995. Cost indicators for Collaborative Research were lower, averaging about \$8,500 per commissioned study. When combined (total spending on both Collaborative and Thematic Research) a lower average unit total cost per project of \$16,000 is obtained. This is more than one third lower than Thorbecke's (1996) estimate of \$25,000 per project during 1989 - 1995. Average total annual cost per Thematic Research grant awarded was at a high of \$65,500 over the first four years of Phase V. We do note, however, that the number of researchers trained or projects funded do not capture fully all external benefits of capacity building.
- 3) *Cost structure* - Total spending on Thematic Research has been broken down in to its fixed and variable components (see Annex, Table A.10). Variable costs vary with the number of researchers participating in the Thematic Research and biannual workshop processes. These include workshop participation costs and value of research grants awarded. On the other hand, fixed costs reflect costs associated with organization of the biannual workshops including cost of resource persons at the technical and plenary sessions as well as peer review and other shared costs. The available data indicate that fixed costs contributed to about two-thirds (65%) of total spending on Thematic Research over the first four years of Phase V.

The numbers above provide a basis for evaluating cost effectiveness of various options available for improving the efficiency of the Thematic Research process.

- 1) Currently, each project requires, on average, 3.4 instead of the planned three workshops. Reducing rates of repeat and re-submission in the workshop process will reduce costs of researchers' participation in biannual workshops. However, this will only affect the smaller, variable cost component of 35% and hence is not expected to be a major cost saver. At the same time, this improvement would reduce the total number of participants per workshop, thinning the base for spreading the major component of costs (65% fixed costs). The net effect may be higher average costs per research participant (given a loss of scale economies).
- 2) Reducing the number of workshops to only two for second time entrants, i.e., participants on their second Thematic Research project. Again, this measure will effectively reduce the total number of participants leading to higher average cost per researcher.
- 3) For fixed costs, the main items are costs of resource persons and plenary speakers. We believe that the current number of plenary sessions and resource persons is desirable. However, changing the composition of these participants towards more from the region may bring significant cost savings given that travel costs of people from outside the region is a major cost item.

- 4) Reducing the number of grants may be another option for cutting costs. Again, this measure will reduce the total number of participants and hence a smaller base for sharing fixed costs.

The option of a smaller number of grants will be feasible and desirable if synergies between the CPP dissertation supervision process and Thematic Research are exploited effectively. Combining the two programmes could improve the ratio of resource persons from the region and, hopefully, lower repeat and resubmission rates (PhD students can devote full time to their research), leading to further cost savings. If a smaller number of Thematic researchers is combined with a similar or larger number of PhD candidates, economies of scale and sharing of fixed costs will be realized.

In his assessment of cost effectiveness, Wuyts (2004: 35) describes biannual workshops as “costly, but highly effective instrument for capacity building.” We agree with Wuyts: a major reduction in cost per workshop participant would require altering significantly this successful workshop structure. Our analysis points to the same conclusion obtained by Wuyts (2004:38): “To achieve efficiency gains, attention can best be focused on improving the quality of proposals entering the workshops, thereby reducing their overall rejection and referral rates within the biannual workshop cycles...” The potential savings, though, will not be large and may, in some cases, increase per unit costs.

### 15.2 CMAP and the JFE

During the first three years of Phase V the CMAP budget averaged US\$1.88 million annually. This represents an average cost of US\$15,654 per student. As many of AERC costs are fixed, an increase in enrollment reduces average cost per student.

AERC funding of CMAP includes:

- operating and service grants for category B Universities on the basis of their level of participation;
- enhanced institutional grants to selected departments in both Category B and Category A Universities to finance recurrent expenditures including tuition for supported students, supplies, teaching materials, equipment maintenance and teaching assistants;
- scholarships of US\$5,000 plus tuition costs (average is US\$3,698) are offered to Category A students to attend universities in other countries (the number has stabilized at about 20% of JFE enrolment);
- assistance to students for preparation of their MA theses and stipends for thesis supervisors (a Category B benefit); and
- funding to cover the costs of operating JFE, including travel cost to Nairobi for students and faculty.

These AERC expenditures understate the actual cost of a CMAP degree as the Category B universities absorb the costs of teaching the core courses and supervising thesis research. These costs are only partially offset by operating grants and scholarships for students from Category A Universities. The latter may cover tuition fees but these fees cover only a fraction of a Universities cost of providing a post-graduate degree programme. Again, the increase in enrolment at Category B Universities served to reduce the average cost per student.

In summary, where the total cost is higher than that of a Master's degree in economics offered by some African universities, it compares favorably with the full cost of sending a student to North America or Europe for a two-year Master's programme. In addition, the purpose of AERC goes beyond graduating MA's in economics to building an institutional capacity to train Africans in Africa by Africans. Therefore, an assessment of the expenditures on CMAP needs to factor in this contribution to Africa's development, including a growing research and teaching capacity that is more oriented and of relevance to challenges faced by the peoples of Africa. It is our conclusion that the implementation of CMAP continues to be well justified in Phase V and should be continued in Phase VI.

### 15.3 Cost Effectiveness of Support for PhD Studies

The PhD fellowships programme was relatively expensive. For 42 fellowships offered between 1993 and 2002, the cost was in excess of US\$2 million. There was quite a range in expenditure, determined by university registration costs, length of study and dissertation research costs. The maximum spent was US\$165,000, with an average cost in excess of US\$50,000. There is no indication of the proportion of PhD training costs that were covered with these Fellowships.

In contrast, the average value of PhD dissertation research grants was US\$15,000 per annum. Kimuyu estimated these grants covered 23% of training costs. If so, the average cost of the PhD's obtained via this route was approximately US\$65,000. Using AERC's current expenditures per PhD fellowships as a benchmark, the cost is US\$32,000 annually per student. Relating these cost estimates to projected costs for CPP, we observe a decline from US\$58,200 per student in year 1 to US\$22,000 in year 5, and US\$19,700 in years 11 and 12. Provided these cost estimates are realized, the cost of CPP, when fully operational, will be 62% of the current cost of AERC Fellowships.<sup>22</sup>

The initial costs for CPP are high because the number of students is small – there are significant economies of scale involved in the operation of this programme – plus start-up grants are being offered to the eight universities and to selected faculty to build their respective capacities to offer a quality PhD programme. AERC contributions to operating CPP include: 1) start-up grants of US\$30,000 to host and degree granting universities; 2) annual operating grants of US\$5,000/student to eight universities; and 3) institutional support grants of US\$30,000 awarded on the basis of demonstrated need, which includes research to support faculty in teaching of core and elective courses. In addition, AERC covers the cost of the CPP-JFE.

In summary, given a high PhD completion rate and a relatively high rate of return to employment in Africa, the investment in fellowships and dissertation awards has contributed significantly to a capacity to teach economics at the under- and post-graduate levels and to a capacity to conduct independent research relevant to Africa's needs. The introduction of CPP will continue this tradition, expanding the number of PhD's, entering the field annually. Offering PhD degrees within Africa in a CPP format will have additional spillover effects in the form of text book writing,

<sup>22</sup> Both estimates are pecuniary costs incurred by students and do not cover the full cost per student incurred by the universities that award the PhD degrees. There are no independent estimates of what proportion of total PhD programme costs are actually borne by the students enrolled.

curriculum development, and a PhD graduates with an education related specifically to challenges and needs within Africa.

## **16.0 Resource Mobilization**

A brief survey, involving E-mail exchanges and some interviews, was conducted with representatives of eleven donor agencies. On the basis of this survey it is fair to conclude there is no indication of impending cuts or a change in donor priorities. Also, the research and training initiatives of AERC “fit” with current donor priorities. The commitment of funding for the first stage of CPP is an encouraging indicator of donor interest and commitment.

Some specific comments received on donor involvement and resource mobilization include:

- There was concern about continuity among Board members and the need for Board members to serve as the directors of AERC, versus merely representing their respective agencies on an AERC Board.
- It was recognized that there was a need to strike an appropriate balance between greater participation of senior African members on the Board and maintaining the strength of a Board funded and defended by international donor agencies.
- A number of donors want AERC to move beyond reporting inputs and outputs to providing indicators of programme outcomes and impacts.
- Several donors expressed their commitment to using country-level Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers [PRSPs] to guide their foreign assistance decisions. It is not clear whether this emphasis will result in a relative shift from funding international programmes like AERC to country-based initiatives. It should be noted that a number of country-based research institutes and other forms of post-graduate training are now evident in Africa and represent potential competition to AERC for available funds from donors.

Within this larger framework, the Evaluation Team noted there are several challenges and costs associated with accessing adequate funding for AERC core activities. First, it is time consuming for the senior managers who carry responsibility for fund raising. Second, a need to continuously re-new current funding introduces an element of uncertainty that makes a five-year planning horizon difficult. Third, there are significant costs involved in meeting the different reporting requirements of a number of donors.

The first two issues are addressed by the Mule and Wilmshurst recommendation for longer-term funding where donors are asked to commit funds for three years and extend annually for a year to maintain a three-year time horizon. We see this as a practical recommendation that would provide AERC with a three-year period to adapt to a reduction or withdrawal of funding by any one donor.

The third issue may be facilitated with the introduction of programme outcome and impact indicators that are accepted by all donors. If there is agreement on how programme activities will be assessed it may be possible for donors to harmonize their reporting requirements so that one set of accounts and performance

assessments meets the periodic reporting requirements of all AERC supporters (other than funds ear-marked for specific activities). Such harmonization would reduce significantly staff time devoted to donor reporting requirements.

The additional funding required for Collaborative Research projects is a separate issue and is best handled on a case-by-case basis. As country-level case studies feature in some Collaborative Research projects, and given that increased donor reliance on PRSPs to allocate aid will likely channel aid nationally – rather than internationally – there may be areas where the content of PRSPs can serve to mobilize donor funds for specific countries to fund country-studies that feed into the Collaborative process.

It has been a recommendation of past reviews that AERC explore actively the option of obtaining some funds from African sources. In their 1998 assessment Mule and Wilmshurst were pessimistic on this issue. The pressure from donors on governments to focus on primary, secondary and under-graduate schooling remains. Also, limited funds available for research will continue to be channeled to Institutes within a country. To possibly open doors for the future, Mule and Wilmshurst recommend appointing some African representatives to the AERC Board.

It needs to be recognized that there are already significant contributions in-kind from African governments and institutions that contribute to the success of AERC's programmes. First, the Category B universities are covering much of the cost of CMAP core-course teaching and thesis supervision beyond what is covered by tuition fees. The in-kind contribution from the eight participating universities to the operation of CPP will be even larger. Second, some of the country-based research institutes and foundations are taking on a task of translating AERC sponsored research conclusions and recommendations into a form that is of interest to and can be taken on board by government ministries, central banks and other organizations within that country. Third, the members of AERC's network are employed somewhere. AERC can build and utilize a network of economists only because these economists have a place of employment within their respective countries.

Therefore, the challenge is to build on these contributions. For example, the recommendation to explore possibilities for initiating a transfer of ownership of CMAP from AERC to the degree-granting universities (chapter 17 below) will encourage and facilitate universities and/or sponsors of students at the MA level to begin to cover most if not all in-country costs of a CMAP degree. This would reduce AERC's funding commitment for CMAP to operating the JFE plus some mechanisms to assure coordination of university activities and the maintenance of a quality control system. Again, country-level PRSPs may open possibilities for using donor assistance within countries to contribute to the in-country costs of post-graduate training.

Other comments received during these interviews with donors that shaped this evaluation include:

- Strong affirmation of CMAP, including the quality of the graduates and the impact of graduates in their respective places of employment. The JFE was affirmed as "the heart and soul" of the programme.
- CPP is a positive initiative, responding to a pressing contemporary need in African countries. Use of CMAP as a model was a good implementation

- strategy.
- Several donors are presenting AERC as a model for organizing research and post-graduate training in programmes they support in other regions. Obtaining synergy between research and training was also an attractive aspect of AERC's experience.
  - Mixed messages were received on AERC's visibility. One respondent commented AERC was not particularly visible while another was impressed with how often AERC was referred to other forums. There was some agreement that AERC should try to build visibility further. As outcomes and impacts are embodied to a considerable extent in the persons participating in Thematic Research and in graduates of the training programmes, AERC should track better their employment and their involvement in extending knowledge, guiding policy decisions, and their actions as policy makers.
  - Several donors expressed strong concerns about the continued "low" participation of women in AERC programmes. One called on AERC to consider some form of "sanctions" on member Universities who failed to actively attract women as economics majors at the undergraduate level.
  - The reorganization of the Secretariat created some unease among donors while it was occurring. The final assessment, though, is that AERC is a better organization as a result of this reorganization. AERC's ability to adhere to a 15% of expenditure for overhead management costs was commended.

## ***Building for the Future: Phase VI***

### ***17.0 Building for a Sustainable CMAP***

#### **17.1 Promoting Advance from Category A to Category B Universities**

CMAP has been operational during four of AERC's five phases. Looking to the future, it is to be expected that an increasing portion of the funding for CMAP will need to shift to African sources. Anticipating such a shift, it is appropriate to examine whether the assumptions that shaped CMAP initially (see Annex Table A.11) are still valid for Phase VI.

The programme that emerged from the underlying assumptions has defined two sets of universities: category B with a deemed capacity to offer the in-country components of CMAP, and category A universities that do not have such capacity. Category B universities are responsible for admissions, teaching examination, degree conferment, accreditation and all other university functions.

The governing body of CMAP is an Academic Board. It is composed of one representative of each participating university: either the Head of the economics department or, in his or her absence, a designate who can fully represent the department of economics. This Board functions basically as a University Senate (see Annex, Table A.11 for a list of responsibilities). Decisions made by the Academic Board are to be binding to all participating universities.

AERC, in turn, has defined functions similar to that of a Board of Governors of a university. The *Operational Plan* and *Memoranda of Understanding* between AERC and participating universities defines for AERC a role of facilitator, with insurance or

brokerage functions, to take responsibility for the management of resources for 21 universities on behalf of the consortium of donors. This was perceived to be more efficient than each donor having to interact directly with the individual universities.

To be designated a Category B university the economics department must meet a set of requirements (see Annex, Table A.11). The logic of donor-based funding for Category B universities for five years and longer-term funding for collaborative aspects of the programme implies at least one University in each participating country will mature to Category B status. No progress in this area was observed during the current phase. For Category A universities this is a pressing issue as the benefits and positive impacts fall unevenly on the two categories, with Category B departments reaping the lion's share. This division among universities as an issue was established in the CMAP impact study and confirmed by our independent review. A number of problems and issues of significance to the future of CMAP relate to this on-going division and need to be examined carefully and resolved.

Of special importance is a strong belief that the current division forms a major hurdle to progress by Category A Universities in strengthening their institutional capacity. Several factors contribute to this: relatively lower grant support, and a loss of resources inherent in local students and associated academic and financial benefits (teaching opportunities, tuition and supervision funds, etc.) to Category B departments where category A students are required to enroll under this programme. Only one University (Malawi), has moved up to category B over the past ten years, an indication that current mechanisms to support development of departmental capacity to graduate to Category B are not working.

Within the *Operational Plan* and *Memoranda of Understanding* no agency or committee is given explicit responsibility to assess whether maturation toward Category A is occurring or is being promoted in selected Category A universities. The term accreditation appears in the *Plan* but refers to the responsibility of one committee and AERC appointed external examiners to assure maintenance of academic standards in category B universities.

Assessing maturation progress toward offering a quality masters programme involves formal accreditation of academic programmes. Normally this is carried out by a body external to the universities being accredited. Therefore, neither the Academic Board (senate) nor AERC (Board of Governors) is an appropriate institution to accredit potential masters' programmes in Category A universities.

To overcome current inertia toward the maturation that was intended in the *Operational Plan*, consideration should be given to phasing out a formal distinction between Category A and B universities. Responsibility for developing a quality masters' programme would then be placed on individual universities and they would be assured of becoming a recognized teaching institution within CMAP if they met conditions currently set for universities with a recognized capacity to offer a CMAP degree. The government and university (or lead university) in a member country that does not have a Category B university will need to decide whether they want to dedicate the resources required to meet these conditions. Implied in this decision is giving up current institutional support for Category A universities plus AERC scholarships for students from that country, and investing in-country resources

required to mount and maintain a quality masters' programme. In exchange, if successful, the department of economics would receive a startup grant and a minimum of five years of AERC institutional support to Category B universities.

Where a university submits written evidence of having met the established conditions, AERC and the Academic Board would then need to make a programme "accreditation" assessment and decision. As there does not appear to be an independent body to undertake this, a possible compromise with some integrity might be to designate two of the AERC-appointed external examiners to make an accreditation assessment and to submit a report to the Academic Board for a decision. Once a positive decision has been made, the current quality control process would assure conditions are met and standards are maintained over time.

As CMAP matures to donor funding directed primarily to collaborative aspects of the programme assuring quality control is maintained in each member university will remain as one of these collaborative functions. At a minimum, this would include:

- AERC continue to maintain and fund a set of external examiners to assess course content and instruction of core courses, electives taught within departments and theses completed; and
- universities with a recognized MA-level teaching programme or seeking to enter as a recognized teaching university within CMAP would need to submit core course content and faculty qualifications to AERC's appointed external examiners for approval and to subject the output of students involved to such external examination. Where such examinations generate a pass, students completing core courses would be eligible to compete for JFE positions and would be eligible for a CMAP degree on completion of a thesis.

To actively promote this maturation to a system where donor funding is limited primarily to cover collaborative aspects of CMAP may require some capacity building in selected category A universities. Also, during the phase-out of a distinction between category A and B universities there will be a continued need for some scholarships for students from member countries that are unable to mount a masters' programme that meets CMAP standards. Potential adverse effects of such scholarships on capacity building within these Universities need to be monitored carefully and evaluated regularly. As one University in each member country develops a basic capacity to participate in CMAP this will open up the possibility of countries – governments directly, employers of CMAP graduates or students personally – to cover an increasing portion of the core course instruction and thesis supervision costs for their students.

#### **17.2 Strengthening the Management of CMAP**

It is our assessment that the Universities involved with AERC are now the weak link in the overall management and delivery of programmes. This weakness is evident especially in CMAP. In addition to the issues identified above, there remains a persistent problem of high turnover of CMAP Academic Board members. Sub-committees need to be continually re-constituted as new Heads of departments join the Board. This turnover and lack of continuity affects the effectiveness of the CMAP committees, as well as the management and administration of grants disbursed to participating departments.

CMAF was created at a time when Universities were under severe financial constraints. Creating mechanisms to assure that AERC resources granted to universities were channeled to departments of economics would have been cumbersome and hard to administer from one central office. Also, at the time the participating departments typically were represented by the department's Professor and Head. The programme design located responsibility for advising AERC's Secretariat on programme implementation at the economics department level, and administration of departmental funds in the hands of these senior faculty members.

These initial conditions no longer exist and the structure needs to be re-examined. Also, as more Universities joined, plus the addition of members-at-large, the Academic Board has become too large to serve effectively. To address these various problems considerations should be given to streamlining decision-making to strengthen the management of CMAF by the member universities. For example:

- The Heads of economics departments (or alternate designates) of all CMAF member Universities meet annually as a set of stakeholders. Their responsibility would be to receive annual progress reports from the Academic Board, provide input to guide the Board in setting policy and implementing CMAF, and elect the members of an Academic Board.
- Establish a CMAF Academic Board of nine members, three elected annually for a three-year term, with election by the set of stakeholders from members within this set of stakeholders. Conditions could be set for members who would be eligible to be elected: only one of the nine from any one country; one of the three elected annually from each of the three regions, East Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa; a minimum of one of the three elected must be a woman, etc.
- Eliminate the category of Member at Large.

To implement this change a nine member Board would need to be elected with three for one year, three for two years and three for a full term. To provide for some continuity, the three elected for one year could be eligible for election to a full three year term in the second year. Indeed, it may be desirable to allow persons to be elected more generally for two consecutive terms, provided they are part of the set of stakeholders at the time of re-election. As some of the first nine elected will likely be current Board members, this also would provide continuity during the transition. A nominating committee could be established to identify suitable candidates for election to the Academic Board who have requisite ability and experience plus meet the conditions the stakeholders might choose to institute.

A change in the Academic Board, such as proposed here, would require changes in the *Operational Plans* and possibly the *Memoranda of Understanding* with member universities. This would present an opportunity to shifting responsibility for CMAF beyond departments of economics, essentially run by department Heads, to a base within the university structure.

To facilitate this form of evolution consideration should be given to:

- AERC jointly with the Vice Chancellor of each member university review respective *Memoranda of Understanding* and update them to assure CMAF becomes located within the overall university structure consistent with its responsibility as the grantor of CMAF degrees.

- Consider the option of having the Vice Chancellor, or her/his designate, appoint the university representative, for a defined term, to sit as one of the set of stakeholders as outlined above. This appointee may be the Head of the economics department, but could also be a senior faculty member who plays an integral role in the economics department's post-graduate programme. The term of office would not be limited to the term of the Head of the department.
- A University representative would be responsible to the University and would, at least once a year, report on CMAP activities and account for expenditure of AERC funds at the university. This report would be given to the Vice Chancellor, Chief Academic Officer, Dean of the Faculty in which the economics department is located, and the members of the economics department.

Such changes in the university base of CMAP would assure university administrations are aware of CMAP and, hopefully, cause them to recognize their stake in the continuation of CMAP. With Vice Chancellors aware, CMAP should register on the agenda of the Association of African Universities. Recognition at that level will be required to build the inter-Africa base required to continue the essential features of a truly collaborative MA programme.

This transfer of ownership of CMAP does not mean AERC's withdrawal. Rather, it allows AERC to concentrate on where it has a comparative advantage, the JFE and maintaining quality control. This form of evolution has potential for reducing AERC's budget for CMAP to the annual operation of the JFE plus the cost of assuring overall quality control.

## ***18.0 Capacity Building and Current Development Priorities***

### **18.1 The Place of AERC within Current Development Priorities**

Phase VI will be initiated in an environment governed by new institutions and specific development priorities. Impact assessment of donor activities throughout the phase will be governed by measures designed to show progress (or lack thereof) toward achieving 2015 targets set for the Millennium Development Goals. As part of this process donors will rely on country-level PRSPs to shape their initiatives in Africa.

Across African economies there are new institutions such as the African Union and NEPAD. The latter has some feedback on the G-8 group of countries as chairpersons of the annual summit now make financial obligations within NEPAD part of the G-8 summit agenda. This tends to involve selected African leaders. It provides opportunities for dialogue – and hopefully shaping the foreign assistance agenda – on such poverty alleviation issues as the ongoing debt burden, the adverse effects of agricultural subsidies in G-8 economies, communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria tuberculosis and polio, peacekeeping initiatives, and private sector-led economic growth.

Drawing on experience gained from past development assistance in Africa the World Bank (2004: 21 – 27) has highlighted the following issues for strategy planning:

- fighting poverty is the goal that guides development initiatives;
- economic growth is necessary but not sufficient condition for development;
- the development process is multifaceted;
- given many facets, there will be diversity which demands flexibility;
- host country ownership of development programmes and projects is the key to sustainability of development assistance;
- development within Africa occurs within a global environment, which matters;
- a capacity to absorb development assistance and to undertake development is a critical constraint;
- HIV/AIDS is more than a health issue;
- gender and sustainability are development issues;
- African states need to work together toward a common goal of alleviating poverty;
- shocks to the economies are the norm; and
- Africa's concentration of development challenges is unique.

AERC is strategically placed to build capacity, to encourage and facilitate African states working together, and to shape the approaches and means to achieving the development envisioned by the African Union, NEPAD and the Millennium Development Goals.

### **18.2 Potential Research Themes**

Subject areas or fields identified and listed during our various discussions include:

- 1) Health care delivery options designed to optimize improvements in health for all people. Such an initiative would include HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases as part of the agenda, but the focus would be programme design and delivery as a means to good health for all rather than alleviating or eradicating selected diseases.
- 2) Regional integration is becoming a reality among various sets of countries in Africa. The process of integrating economies represents new policy challenges as well as a need to manage adjustment processes within economies. National policy institutes and government research departments are not well suited to analyzing multi-country issues and deriving appropriate policies. AERC, in contrast, has a comparative advantage here and should pursue this as an important issue during Phase VI.
- 3) Sustaining the environment is now recognized as a strategic input to development. The implications of such recognition for development strategies and policies are not understood well at present. As the environment is larger than any one economy, AERC is strategically placed to take this on as a research agenda.
- 4) Structural adjustment, with an emphasis on privatization, focused on what governments should not do. Now the time has arrived to identify the essential, strategic roles of government to facilitate and encourage private sector-led growth and development strategies. Specifically, this calls for the application of economics to the role of government in development, especially regulatory economics.

- 5) Given that employment ranks with wealth redistribution (traditionally land reform) as the primary development strategies to alleviate poverty, an understanding of well-functioning labor markets and employment strategies are important inputs to current emphases on economic growth as essential for development. This agenda will include, but not be limited to, employment and labor market effects of regional integration, employment implications of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, and diversifying rural incomes via non-farm employment opportunities, including agro-business.

### **18.3 An Evolution of Thematic Research to Building Networks**

The Thematic Research structure was created to bring together a small number of economists who were working in relative isolation. Now there exists a much larger core of economists. And, many of them are linked or have the potential to be linked electronically. Also, to shape the in-Africa body of economics knowledge to guide the development of courses for a quality PhD programme there is a need for selected economists to network in specific subject areas within the discipline of Economics.

To meet these new challenges AERC should consider an option of replacing themes as the means within which research capacity is developed with a goal of building networks of scholars with interests in a particular subject area within economics. There still would be defined themes but they would be related to contemporary issues that require new knowledge and hence a capacity to generate such knowledge. The network would be built around several senior scholars in the subject area who would play a role similar to that of resource persons. The base here would be African scholars but expatriate specialist(s) might be included to assure access to emerging knowledge internationally.

The intent would be to fund research projects that build a capacity to generate both theoretical and applied research in this subject area. The end product would be a network of scholars with participants continuing to work jointly to advance their respective research interests. Some thought needs to be given to the gestation period for a network of research scholars to fly on their own. Initially, an experiment might set an exit strategy of five years as a maximum time frame for funding research projects in any one subject area.

To build research capacity there will still be a need to meet periodically to receive direct feedback and to observe the interaction with peers as constructive criticism and new ideas are exchanged. But, the need to meet during any one research project would likely be less than three times in 13 months. Also, resource persons would be networking on a more continuous basis rather than responding periodically to submitted papers, reports and papers. As a network emerges, ideally the participants will begin to provide constructive criticism and mentor each other. The output generated would serve as primary input for post-graduate courses in that subject area. Some of the emerging research scholars in a subject area will then become the instructors in the post-graduate courses so defined, serve as external examiners, guide research more generally in Africa, and build options relevant for African countries based on economic theory that has strong African roots.

This recommendation poses the question whether themes as a basis for research capacity building need to be dropped. Given information technology, building networks of scholars is becoming an important dimension in building research capacity. Building networks of research scholars might also create options for more flexibility in organizing biannual research workshops. It may not be necessary for all networks to meet at the same time in the same place on a regular basis.

#### **18.4 Building Synergy between PhD Dissertation and Thematic Research**

As noted in chapter 11, by the second year of Phase VI AERC will be managing a PhD dissertation capacity building programme that is similar to and equal in size to the Thematic Research programme of Phase V. Further, unless addressed with specific, creative planning, responsibility for these two similar, parallel programmes will be split between the Training and Research Departments of AERC.

To facilitate strategic planning in this area we pose the following questions for AERC thought and action:

- How to design an efficient process to best exploit the synergy between the two parallels, which are clearly serving largely overlapping if not the same objectives?
- Whether AERC will need to continue pursuing the same target output levels for Thematic Research projects? And, what would be the desirable level of investment in Thematic Research given that the PhD dissertation workshops will at least partially provide for its objectives?
- How to re-design the Thematic Research process to achieve such new targets? This may need major restructuring that imply significant reductions in target outputs for Thematic Research achieving major cost savings.
- How to share responsibility for coordination and management of the two processes between the Research and Training departments within AERC for best delivery?

#### **18.5 Building Capacity in Economic History**

In various AERC documents there is discussion related to methodology. The basic complaint registered expresses a concern that the methodology is rather exclusively neo-classical in content. Others are concerned that too much emphasis is placed on macro-economic aspects of economic growth. The primary concern seems to be that the development model(s) involved are shaped too strongly by the World Bank and the IMF. There appears to be agreement, though, that AERC should not seek to become an alternative, in theory or methodology, to the World Bank/IMF.

The central issue is not the superiority of one methodology versus another. Rather, there should be openness in both the training and research programmes to alternative methodological approaches. A larger weakness at this stage of development of the discipline of economics in Africa is a limited knowledge and appreciation of the variety of institutions that govern economic activity, including where these institutions came from and why they evolved in a particular way. In summary, the teaching of economic history is conspicuous in its absence from the economics curricula.

A better understanding of the history of development in Africa will increase awareness of and appreciation for the role of social institutions in the development

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process. An increased understanding of social institutions will open the possibility for including the depletion and building of social capital as important determinants of development.

The introduction of economic history as a course at both the under- and post-graduate levels will require capacity building from the bottom up. Building on the work initiated by Tiyambe Zeleza (1993), there is a need to write economic histories for African countries and to draw these together into some forms of consistent story of Africa's past as a means to understanding its present. It will require the education of faculty capable of teaching economic history. Then it will require an educational process where faculty and students alike begin to appreciate why an understanding of Africa's economic history can add significantly to the overall educational endeavor in the discipline of economics.

AERC is strategically located to promote and fund this capacity building. The development impact will not be immediate but it can become large over time.

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## Annex : Set of Supporting Tables

**Table A.1: The Evaluation Process**

Date	Activity	Location
February	Meetings with AERC Secretariat, Committee members and CPP and CMAP participants	Kenya
February	Meetings with AERC network members and training participants – Hassan	South Africa
March	Attend Senior Policy Seminar VI; meetings with AERC network members and training participants	Uganda
March	Meetings with AERC network members – Rempel	Tanzania
April	Meetings with AERC network members and training participants – Hassan Meetings with donor representatives – Rempel	Ghana Canada
May	Meetings with AERC network members and training participants – Hassan	Cameroon
May/June	Attend Thematic biannual workshop	Kenya
June	Meetings with AERC network members and training participants – Hassan Meetings with AERC network members and training participants – Rempel Report writing – submission of draft report	Benin Botswana South Africa
July/August	Contacts with Donor Representatives	
September	Submission of Final Report	

**Table A.2: Funding of Thematic Research Projects and Success Rates for Papers Presented at the Workshops by Category during Phase V**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	05/2004	Total
<b>Total Proposals</b>	52	65	54	38	54	263
% invited to Biannual (BA)	58	78	67	55	43	61
<b>Presented at Biannual</b>						
<b>New Proposals</b>	50	63	53	37	32	235
% old re-submitted	40	19	32	43	28	31
<b>% funded</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>49</b>
% proceed unconditionally	26	33	26	19	19	26
<b>Work in progress</b>	33	29	36	19	8	125
% proceed unconditionally	61	66	44	79	50	59
<b>Final paper</b>	26	23	25	18	17	109
% proceed unconditionally	35	61	44	50	47	47
<b>Total presented</b>	109	115	114	74	54	469
<b>Number/workshop</b>	55	58	57	74	54	58

Table A.3: Workshops and Sessions Conducted During Phase V

Date	Workshops/Special Sessions
<b>1. Plenary Sessions</b>	
May 2000	Globalization – 4 papers
December 2000	Financial Sector Reforms and Restructuring - 4 papers
May 2001	Regulation and Deregulation - 3 papers Policy Roundtable on <i>Regulation and Deregulation: Policy Implication and Practice</i>
December 2001	Growth and Poverty – 4 papers
May 2002	Public Sector Delivery – 3 papers Policy Roundtable on <i>Public Sector Delivery: Policy Implication and Practice</i>
December 2002	Africa and the World Economy – 4 papers
December 2003	Governance and Economic Development – 3 papers Policy Roundtable on <i>Governance and Economic Development: The Role of the New Partnership for Africa's Development [NEPAD]</i>
May 2004	Synthesis of Recent AERC Collaborative Research Projects 4 papers Special session: Global Development Network report on <i>The Impact of Rich Country Policies on Poverty</i> Global Development Network report on <i>The Impact of Rich Country Policies on Poverty</i> by Gary McMahon.
<b>2. Methodology Sessions</b>	
May 2000	Three sessions: <i>Preparing Your AERC Research Paper, Presenting Your Credentials, and DAD: Software for Distributive Analysis</i>
December 2000	Three sessions: <i>Emerging Africa, Trade Blocs, and AERC Website Demonstration</i>
May 2001	Two concept and methodology sessions on <i>Measuring Changes in Welfare in Africa: Methods and Results from the Demographic and Health Surveys and Contract Theory</i> (31 participants)
December 2001	Two concept and methodology sessions on <i>Publishing in an International Journal: What You Should Know and Contract Theory</i>
December 2002	<i>Writing an AERC Proposal: What You Should Know</i> , - a paper was posted on the AERC website
December 2003	<i>Accounting for AERC Grants: What You Should Know</i>
May 2004	Two sessions: <i>Corporate Governance; Writing and Presentation Skills for AERC Researchers</i>
<b>3. Technical Workshops</b>	
November 2000	An econometrics and modeling workshop on <i>Time Series Econometrics</i> (14 participants)
November 2001	A workshop on <i>Basic Poverty Mapping</i>
May 2002	A workshop on <i>Working with Integrated Household Data Sets</i> (34 participants, 12 francophone and 8 female)
October 2002	A workshop on <i>Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) Modeling</i> (18 participants, from 7 countries, 6 were women)
October 2003	A workshop on <i>Exploratory Data Analysis and Uses of STATA Statistical Package</i> – Training Programme (18 participants from 7 countries, 6 of whom were women)
March 2004	Training of trainers workshop on <i>Basic Poverty Measurement and Diagnostics</i> and a workshop on <i>Advanced Poverty Analysis</i> – Training Programme jointly with World Bank

**Table A.4: Participation of Female and Francophone Economists in AERC Research Activities during Phase V**

	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	00-04
Biannual workshop participants	137	160	148	109	554
% females	15	14	13	15	14
% Francophone	28	42	32	32	34
Thematic Research participants	38	43	51	11	143
% females	13	2	10	18	9
% Francophone	24	23	18	18	21
Number of Plenary grantees	7	8	9	5	29
% females	14	0	22	0	10
% Francophone	14	13	0	0	7
Methodology session presenters	6	4	4	2	16
% females	17	0	0	100	19
% Francophone	0	0	0	0	0
Technical workshop participants	14	60	52	18	144
% females	21	20	27	33	24
% Francophone	29	40	40	22	37
Special workshop participants	29	0	14	0	43
% females	7	0	21	0	12
% Francophone	79	0	21	0	60

**Table A.5: CMAP and JFE Enrolment, Lecturers, Examiners and Electives (2001 - 2003)**

	Average Phase IV	2000	2001	2002	2003	Average
<b>CMAP students</b>	98	103	109	103	138	113
Percent female	16	22	21	25	12	20
<b>JFE enrolment</b>	92	98	99	99	115	103
Percent of CMAP	94	95	91	96	93	91
Percent female	16	23	23	26	14	21
<b>No. of electives offered</b>	8	9	9	9	9	9
<b>Lecturers-JFE</b>	16	18	18	18	18	18
<b>External examiners-JFE</b>	NA	6	6	6	6	6
<b>External examiners-Core</b>	NA	7	7	7	7	7
<b>Policy relevant courses</b>	NA	8	8	8	8	8
<b>No. of universities</b>	20	20	20	20	21	21
<b>Category B universities</b>	6	6	7	7	7	7

NA indicates that information is not available.

**Table A.6: Course Offerings in the Joint Facility for Electives for the Collaborative Master's Programme: Phase V**

	Course Title	Years Offered	Instructors
1.	Econometrics Theory and Practice	2000 2001 2002 2003	Marios Obwona & Njuguna Ndung'u Bruno Ocaya & Eliab Luvanda Bruno Ocaya & Eliab Luvanda
2.	Health Economics	2000 2001 2002 2003	Benjamin Nganda & Pius W. Owino Kenneth Ojo & Eyitayo Lambo Steve Koch & Kenneth Ojo
3.	International Economics	2000 2001 2002 2003	Festus Egwaikhide & Longinus Rutasitara Festus Egwaikhide & Longinus Rutasitara Festus Egwaikhide & Oluyele A. Akinkugbe
4.	Labour Economics		
5.	Corporate Finance and Investment Theory	1999 2000 2001 2002 2003	Böö Sjöö & Kofi A. Osei Böö Sjöö & Kofi A. Osei Böö Sjöö & Samuel Oludoyi
6.	Managerial Economics*	2001 2002	Vincent Babikanyisa & S.E. Incoom A. Baah-Nuakoh & Stephen Kapunda Kwame Osei-Safo & Stephen Kapunda
7.	Public Finance	2001 2002 2003	Mkhululi Ncube & Nehemiah Osoro Mkhululi Ncube & Stephen Njuguna Karingi
8.	Monetary Theory and Practice	2001 2002 2003	Augustine F. Gockel & Gebrehiwot Ageba Ohineas Kadenge & Michael O.A. Ndanshau
9.	Agricultural Economics	2000 2001 2002 2003	Joseph T. Karugia & Hezron O. Nyangito Joseph T. Karugia & Dejene Aredo Joseph T. Karugia & Innocent Matshe
10.	Environmental Economics	2000 2001 2002 2003	Sesi Akoena & Alemu Mekonnen Christopher Mupimolia & Alemu Mekonnen Christopher Mupimolia & Adolf Mkenda
11.	Policy Analysis and Economic Management	2000	Stephen Kapunda & Davidson Omole
12.	Industrial Economics	2003	

\* At an Academic Board meeting in November 2003, in response to recommendations by external examiners, a decision was made to withdraw the Managerial Economics course with a thorough review of course content and level at which it is offered (Lyakurwa, 2004: 20).

Table A.7: First Cohort of CPP Students

<b>Course enrolment by gender</b>			
Course	Total	Male	Female
Development Economics	4	2	2
Econometrics	7	6	1
Financial Economics	6	6	0
Health Economics	9	6	3
International Economics	3	2	1
Public Sector Economics	9	8	1
<b>Students by country of origin</b>			
Country	Total	Male	Female
Cameroon	2	2	0
Eritrea	1	1	0
Ghana	1	1	0
Côte d'Ivoire	3	2	1
Kenya	1	0	1
Malawi	1	1	0
Nigeria	5	3	2
Tanzania	3	3	0
Uganda	2	2	0
Total	19	15	4
<b>Placement origin of the students</b>			
Previous placement	Total	Male	Female
Financial institutions	2	1	1
Universities	16	14	2
Government ministries	1	0	1
Private/unemployed	1	1	0

**Table A.8: Entry and Advance from Thematic Research Programme (1991-2003)**

<b>Entry into Thematic Research</b>	Number	% of total in source	% of total in TR
<i>Total Entering</i>	17	NA	8
From CMAP <sup>a</sup>	3	0.4	1.4
From PhD fellowships <sup>b</sup>	14	8.4	6.6
<b>Advance to Other Activity: <i>Thematic Research</i></b>	Number joining	% of total receiving	% of total in TR
<i>Total absorbed:</i>	77	NA	36
<i>To observers</i>	32	7	15
<i>To Plenary Speakers</i>	4	12	2
<i>To Resource persons</i>	2	3	1
<i>To Collaborative Research</i>	<u>39<sup>c</sup></u>	<u>18.7</u>	<u>18.5</u>
Performance of CFA Zone			
Foreign Direct Investment	7	33	3
Poverty Phase I	4	25	2
Poverty Phase II	6	33	3
Explaining Growth	6	29	3
Post-Conflict Economies	5	15	2
Africa & World Trade System	2	20	1
African Imperative & World	3	16	1
Trade	6	14	3

a. Considering CMAP graduates up to 2000, e.g., allowing a two year lag.

b. Considering recipients of PhD fellowships up to 1999, e.g., allowing for three year lag.

c. Number of studies commissioned. Total number of Collaborative Research studies commissioned, excluding regional integration and trade liberalization in sub-Saharan Africa, was 209.

**Table A.9: Participation at Biannual Workshops of Observers, Plenary Speakers and Resource Persons (1991-2003)**

<b>Observers at Biannual</b>		
	1991-1999	2000-2003
<b>Average number of people per workshop</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>48</b>
<i>From Africa (percent of total)</i>	78%	94%
<i>Percent new (1<sup>st</sup> time attendance)</i>	60%	51%
<i>Number of appearances (times/person)</i>	1.7	2
<i>From outside Africa (percent of total)</i>	22%	6%
<i>Percent new (1<sup>st</sup> time attendance)</i>	69%	68%
<i>Number of appearances (times/person)</i>	1.5	1.5
<b>Plenary Speakers at Biannual</b>		
	1994-1999	2000-2003
<b>Average number of people per workshop</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>From Africa (percent of total)</i>	33%	46%
<i>Percent new (1<sup>st</sup> time attendance)</i>	91%	89%
<i>No. of appearances (no. of times/person)</i>	1.1	1.1
<i>From outside Africa (percent of total)</i>	67%	54%
<i>Percent new (1<sup>st</sup> time attendance)</i>	90%	88%
<i>Number of appearances (times/person)</i>	1.1	1.1
<b>Resource Persons at Biannual</b>		
	1991-1999	2000-2003
<b>Average number of people per workshop</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>
<i>From Africa (percent of total)</i>	35%	36%
<i>Percent new (1<sup>st</sup> time attendance)</i>	16%	13%
<i>Number of appearances (times/person)</i>	6	8
<i>From outside Africa (percent of total)</i>	65%	64%
<i>Percent new (1<sup>st</sup> time attendance)</i>	21%	15%
<i>Number of appearances (times/person)</i>	5	7

**Table A.10: Cost Structure and Input and Output Indicators of AERC's Phase V Research Activities (US\$ million)**

	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	Average
<b>Total spending on research</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.68</b>
Percent on collaborative research	8	23	44	37	28
<b>A. Total on thematic research</b>	<b>2.36</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>1.86</b>
<b>A1. Costs of biannual workshops</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>0.67</b>
Cost of participating researchers <sup>a</sup>	0.34	0.40	0.37	0.27	0.35
Other costs (fixed)	0.32	0.31	0.43	0.22	0.32
<b>A2. Total value of TR grants</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.30</b>
<b>A3. Other fixed costs of TR</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.90</b>
<b>Total fixed costs of TR <sup>b</sup></b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>1.21</b>
Percent of total TR costs	73	56	63	68	65
<b>Total number of researchers</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>139</b>
TR costs/researcher (\$ 000)	17	11	14	12	13.5
TR costs/active project (\$ 000) <sup>c</sup>	29	19	24	20	23
<b>Number of TR grants</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>26</b>
TR costs/TR grant (\$ 000)	91	50	65	141	87
<b>Number successful final reports <sup>d</sup></b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>
TR costs/final report (\$ 000)	262	124	188	141	179
<b>Number of published articles</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
TR costs/publication (\$ 000)	337	116	173	106	183
<b>Total on collaborative research</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>1.65</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.77</b>
Cost/ commissioned study (\$ 000)	8.88	7.25	10.69	7.25	8.52

a. Based on estimates of travel and accommodation costs of US\$2,495 per participant

b. Biannual fixed costs plus other TR fixed costs

c. Based on Wuyts estimate of 1.7 researcher per active project for the 1997-2003 period

d. Final reports proceeding unconditionally

**Table A.11: Defining Characteristics of CMAP**

<p>1) Underlying assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Difficulties in attracting and retaining senior academic staff plus heavy teaching loads are undermining post-graduate programmes.</li> <li>➤ The focus will be training at the masters' level to supply governments with high-caliber, technically proficient economic managers and policy analysis and to provide an essential foundation for doctoral training in economics.</li> <li>➤ University-based programmes, rather than regional centers outside of the university system, are the appropriate place to deliver economics masters' programmes.</li> <li>➤ Quality programmes that meet international professional standards are needed to assure longer-term sustainability.</li> <li>➤ Masters' programmes within African universities can be strengthened through a judicious blend of regional, inter-university collaboration and external assistance.</li> <li>➤ CMAP is to be inclusive with member Universities that do not have a masters' programme represented on the governing structures eligible for scholarships to enable their students to join departments with a recognized masters' programme.</li> <li>➤ Participating universities are to draw in key government ministries and the private sector by establishing national liaison committees.</li> <li>➤ Participating universities will require external assistance for five years while the regional collaborative aspects of the programme will require longer-term external assistance.</li> <li>➤ The content of the masters' programme would strengthen teaching and research capacity of university departments of economics, reducing the need for African countries to purchase comparable quality post-graduate training abroad.</li> </ul>
<p>2) Functions of the Academic Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ approval of the common curricular requirements for the core courses;</li> <li>➤ arrangements for external examiners for core courses and approval of their terms of reference;</li> <li>➤ approval of the menu of elective courses, including their course descriptions, from which each year's set of JFE courses is chosen;</li> <li>➤ appointment of examiners for the JFE;</li> <li>➤ approval of the JFE examination results;</li> <li>➤ approval of recommendations for the development of textbooks and other instructional materials;</li> <li>➤ the periodic review of the quality of the programme and the performance of participating departments; and</li> <li>➤ oversight of the masters scholarship scheme.</li> </ul>
<p>3) Terms and Responsibilities for Category B Universities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ teach the three core courses adequately, covering the curricular requirements approved by the Academic Board;</li> <li>➤ accredit external examiners for the core courses and adhere to the evaluation procedures set for the core courses;</li> <li>➤ send all masters students to the JFE for two electives;</li> <li>➤ secure official university recognition of the electives and exams in the JFE;</li> <li>➤ reserve a minimum number of places in the masters programme for category A students with AERC scholarships (one place out of a total of less than ten places or two places out of a total of ten or more places);</li> <li>➤ set up a liaison committee with members from the university, government and the private sector; and</li> <li>➤ where necessary, secure the commitment of the appropriate university or government authorities to insulate the masters programme from disruptive pressures, such as a too heavy teaching load at the undergraduate level.</li> </ul>
<p>Source: AERC, (1992/1997), <i>Regional Collaborative Masters Programme in Economics for Anglophone Africa(except Nigeria): Operational Plan</i>. Nairobi: AERC.</p>

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