The African Economic Research Consortium:

Evaluation of Phase IV

Sue Horton
Department of Economics
University of Toronto
150 St. George Street
Toronto M5S 3G7

email horton@chass.utoronto.ca

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AERC has gone from strength to strength. The degree of long-run sustainability and local ownership achieved stand in stark contrast to many other foreign-aided project in sub-Saharan Africa. After ten years of operation, the AERC is now mature and successful, and can begin to set new objectives for the future. Its task of building capacity from the ground up (the MA program, PhD support, and the thematic research projects) will continue for the medium term. There is now an ever-more-solid base from which the AERC can now actively engage senior researchers, provide them with a forum, and aim to become the African equivalent of the NBER or the CEPR. To achieve this goal will require retaining the momentum of existing activities, laying the groundwork for new ones, and taking a long run perspective.

This evaluator sees key elements of the strategy for the next phase as including:

- continuing support for the thematic research which supports junior researchers
- developing opportunities to continue to engage senior researchers
- continuing support for the CMAP for one additional phase, with support to begin to phase out in Phase VI
- piloting the collaborative PhD provided that additional funding can be obtained
- commencing short courses for policy-makers as a way to disseminate AERC’s research findings, and possibly experimenting with distance education
- continuing support for publications and dissemination and building on the excellent initiatives for publications in French
- raising the emphasis on outreach to the policy community within Africa; this involves continuing to achieve wide circulation of AERC publications, developing short courses, and linking this to fundraising for the network

A long list of specific recommendations follows. This should not be interpreted as implying that there were many things wrong: in fact it is testimony to the vibrancy and strength of the AERC that the evaluator wished to make suggestions to fine-tune an already well-running operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. General
1.1 (General)
AERC should adopt a five-year planning horizon, which also implies five-yearly evaluations. The Board should request donors to co-ordinate reviews of individual programs and not review particular programs more than once in each planning cycle. The Board should strongly encourage donors to move to one single audit covering each financial year, as is the case for CGIAR centres.
2. Research

2.1 (Thematic Research)
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider requesting information on a regular basis on the number of proposals received but not disposed of after 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months.

2.2 (Thematic Research)
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider requesting information at each workshop, as to the number of proposals in the "queue", i.e. accepted but not yet being presented, by group.

2.3 (Thematic Research)
The Research Director should monitor timeliness of review by Resource Persons, and decide to take appropriate action concerning Resource Persons who are not living up to their obligations. There is a trade-off between potential loss of goodwill of the Resource Person, and loss of AERC's reputation for timely review.

2.4 (Thematic research)
In groups with long "queues", members should take this into account when deciding whether or not to bring an existing researcher back for a "revised proposal" or a "revised work in progress". The group might consider whether progress could be made (via correspondence between the researcher and the resource person) without requiring physical attendance at the workshop.

2.5 (Encouraging publication of thematic research)
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider asking the secretariat to provide information with each new proposal, regarding the number of previous research grants received from AERC, and the status of the relevant publications.

2.6 (Encouraging publication of thematic research)
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider whether to make a policy about release of new research project funds, to researchers who have not completed requested revisions.

2.7 (Encouraging publication of thematic research)
As funds permit, the Secretariat could consider offering a small financial incentive to compensate researchers for the effort involved in publishing an international journal article based on a Research Paper.

2.8 (Resource Persons)
The AERC should play close attention to the distribution of Resource Persons, to ensure a broad representation by nationality and country of current residence, and to increase the proportion of women both as Resource Persons and on the Advisory Committee, while maintaining the high quality of these individuals.
2.9 (Resource Persons)
Research Groups should maintain the desired ceiling of six Resource Persons per group. Others who attend as observers should not participate in vetting proposals in the technical sessions. Group Chairs should maintain an appropriate balance in discussions, between network members and Resource Persons/observers.

2.10 (Researchers)
AERC should consider the desired "career path" of its researchers, and lay out its expectations in a small new pamphlet entitled "Opportunities for AERC members" or something similar. (See Appendix 3 for some suggestions as to possible content).

2.11 (Researchers)
The AERC Secretariat should provide information about a researcher's previous "track record" at the time of applying for new funding (i.e. the number of previous AERC grants held, whether or not the results were published as a Research Paper or in a journal).

2.12 (Research Themes)
As funds permit, AERC should consider introducing more micro topics within existing research groups B, AT and C, although these groups may remain on balance more macro in focus. Group A is already more micro in focus, but should continue to sponsor macro work in the area of labour markets and poverty.

2.13 (Overlaps between thematic research and CP's)
The Secretariat should move as a matter of some urgency to draft a policy on overlaps of interest between participation in CP's and other AERC activities such as membership of the Advisory Committee and serving as Group Chair in a thematic group. It should also deliberate as to the degree of overlap desired between CP's and the group of Resource Persons. Existing participants with overlapping roles should be asked to choose in which activities they continue to participate. The policy should also specify the time interval required to wait, after ending involvement in one modality and switching to another modality of involvement.

2.14 (Overhead policy)
The reviewer strongly recommends that AERC reconsider its overhead policy, and consider adopting a higher rate where projects make significant use of AERC resources, such as the staff of the Secretariat, AERC capabilities for organizing seminars and workshops, etc. Some donors have fixed lower limits on overhead. If these donors also provide core funding, then it may be reasonable (although not desirable) to accept a lower overhead rate. AERC would not normally accept an overhead rate lower than that of a developed country partner in a particular project. The AERC should consider going back to some current donors to CP's, to renegotiate a more appropriate overhead rate.

2.15 (Expectations for network members)
The AERC should include in the suggested pamphlet "Opportunities for AERC members" information as to how researchers can become involved in collaborative projects, and what the expectations are of those selected to participate.
2.16 (Expectations for network members)
It would be desirable to write down existing practice as to how individuals are selected to participate in technical workshops or other such periodic workshops, in the interests of transparency. This could form part of the suggested pamphlet on "Opportunities for AERC Network Members" - see Appendix C.

2.17 (Other services provided by network)
Suggesting names is an expected part of the activity of the Secretariat. However where this involves a non-trivial use of AERC resources, the AERC should charge accordingly. This could involve a "finders fee" or a small proportionate overhead fee.

3. Teaching
3.1. (CMAP)
AERC should continue to support the CMAP through Phase V, but plan to phase out its involvement in Phase VI.

3.2 (Faculty development, Makerere)
It would seem to be a priority - in view of the numbers of students involved - for AERC to approach the World Bank/McGill University/CIDA/ACBF to co-finance enough faculty upgrading at Makerere to shift that University to category B status. This is essential if Makerere can support a quality MA in economics as well as a mid-career policy MEP (Masters in Economic Policy) serving the region.

3.3 (JFE)
The reviewer believes that the JFE is a key component in maintaining the high quality of the CMAP, and excellent "value for money". It should be maintained through Phase V, if this is financially feasible.

3.4 (Exchange agreements/differential fee waivers)
AERC should consider requiring category B universities to incorporate exchange agreements/differential fee waivers into the Memorandum of Agreement with AERC as a condition for receiving AERC funding for Masters students from other African countries.

3.5 (Short-term training courses)
AERC should field-test short term training courses as part of Phase V, aimed at policymakers and also at the private sector. AERC may wish to consider producing "policy briefs" based on research studies as training materials and as part of its dissemination strategy.

4. Publications and dissemination
4.1 (Use of French)
It is a high priority to make the website completely bilingual, and to publish the key AERC information brochures, as well as the Newsletter and the Research News, in French.
4.2 (Internet/email)
The AERC should continue to move very actively to use of internet and email.

4.3 (Outreach)
Outreach (through Senior Policy Seminars, short training courses, as well as publications - both printed and electronic) is key to the long run sustainability of AERC, and its long-run fundraising capability within the region. The management structure of the Secretariat should reflect this.

4.4 (Logo)
The AERC should have its logo redrafted such that it will xerox well.

5. Governance and management
5.1 (Governance)
The AERC should document the guidelines for the term of Resource Persons, members of the Advisory Committee, and the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

5.2 (Management)
The AERC should consider modest expansion of management staff, as recommended by the recent management and financial reviews.

6. Long-run strategy
6.1 (Long-run strategy, research)
Excellent, world-class standards in research have been the hallmark of AERC's success. As the network matures, AERC now has to define opportunities for its "senior research fellows".

6.2 (Long-run strategy, research)
AERC has to begin to take a long-term view of funding for research. This could involve building an endowment; it certainly involves broadening the base of support from official donors both within and outside Africa; and it could involve seeking support from individuals and corporations, which may in turn have implications for strategic direction in teaching and training, and for outreach and dissemination of research results.

6.3 (Long-run strategy, teaching)
The AERC should plan future activities in education and training, including not only the MA and PhD in economics, but also its role in applied economics Masters degrees including MBA's, and begin offering short courses and ultimately distance courses.
1. Introduction

This introduction sets out the background for the review and briefly describes the current situation of the AERC, as it begins to plan for Phase V of operations.

1.1. Background to the review

Each previous phase of the AERC's operations has been reviewed (Svendsen, 1990; Goodwin and Kayode, 1993, Henderson and Loxley, 1997). Given that the phases are only 3 years each, and that the reviews sometimes take up to a year to complete, this implies that reviews are quite close together. In addition to the reviews of AERC as a whole, components have also been evaluated. A relatively large number of such evaluations, plus strategy papers, have been written recently (perhaps related to the changeover in management within the Secretariat). For the present evaluation, it was convenient to draw on a recent review of the Collaborative Masters Program (UNECIA, 1997), of the research program (Thorbecke, 1996), as well as some special technical reports including one on long-term funding (Mule and Wilmshurst, 1998), several on other graduate programs in Africa (Jebuni, 1998, Fine, 1997, Wangwe and Cassim, 1997) and one on another network in Africa (Réseau, 1997). As the marginal returns to additional reviews may be beginning to diminish, the current evaluation was kept to a modest scope, and focuses on strategic issues rather than in-depth first-hand evaluation of all activities. The terms of reference are given in Appendix D.

The process of undertaking the review included an initial meeting with the Chair of the Board and key members of the Secretariat in Ottawa (November 1998), during an Executive Committee meeting of the Board. The reviewer then attended one of the biennial research workshops in Nairobi (December 1998), to observe sessions and interview a wide range of informants (researchers, would-be researchers, former students of the Collaborative Masters Program, lecturers from the Masters Program Joint Facility for Electives, Resource Persons, Advisory Committee members, management staff at the Secretariat and one member of the Academic Board). She visited the Joint Facility in Nairobi to interview students, graduates and lecturers and to observe activities (July 1999). Interviews were also conducted from Toronto and in Washington DC (and in one case by happenstance in Hanoi) with individuals formerly in key positions in the AERC as well as individuals involved in other initiatives in Africa closely related to AERC's work. A wide range of documents were consulted (see list of documents and list of persons consulted in Appendices A and B).

1.2. Current situation of the AERC

The AERC as such began in 1988, following on from an earlier IDRC-sponsored networking project which had begun in 1984. There have been 4 phases of operation, each lasting 3 years (Phase IV, the current phase, goes from 1997/8-1999/2000). The organization is based on two premises: that "improvement in economic policies is necessary for sustained economic growth, and that economic policy-making requires locally-based research conducted largely by highly qualified and motivated resident national economists."
Hence "the principal objective of AERC is to strengthen local capacity to conduct independent research into problems pertinent to the management of economic in sub-Saharan Africa. This is to be achieved through learning by doing research and graduate training in economics." (AERC "Objectives, Structure and Programme" brochure, n.d.)

The organization grew from modest scale (with an annual budget of less than a million dollars in the first phase) to its current scale with an annual budget of around $8 million (US). It receives core funding from 12 member donors (the World Bank, two foundations - Ford and Rockefeller - and eight governments: US, Denmark, Canada, Norway, Sweden, UK, Switzerland and Netherlands: two separate Canadian agencies are involved). The African Development Bank has recently agreed to join as a member donor as of 1998/99. The criterion for membership is provision of at least $100,000 per year in unrestricted funding. Many of the members provide additional restricted funding. Additional restricted funding comes from the European Union, UNDP, the Japanese government, the MacArthur Foundation and the African Capacity Building Foundation.

The AERC has been by all accounts a resounding success, in a continent where all too often projects with foreign assistance have not worked well. Its current success, and ambitions for the future, could scarcely have been foreseen at the time of its inception. Past evaluations have been glowing:

"the ... AERC has emerged as one of the leading promoters of research activities in Africa... By all accounts the AERC has met if not exceeded its objectives.... In an area in which results have been meagre and disappointing, the AERC has achieved wonders in research capacity building through a program of research stimulation and support....The interaction between African scholars and foreign experts is particularly stimulating and productive." (World Bank, 1994, p..)

The World Bank has been sufficiently impressed that it is now providing funds to start similar efforts in other developing regions.

Another evaluation, this time of phase II (Goodwin and Kayode, 1993) found:

"encouraging results on policy impacts....there is clear evidence of direct, positive and immediate impacts of research on public policy...phenomenal success - has met and exceeded the goals set for it, and it has contributed mightily to the production of policy research for reinvigoration of the economics discipline in Africa, and indirectly thereby to improvements in the economies of the nation states."

The Phase IV reviewers (Henderson and Loxley, 1997) were equally enthusiastic:

"As one group of researcher-interviewees expressed it, AERC has encouraged researchers to have confidence in themselves, developed their competence and broken down the previous isolation and helped remedy the crippling absence of facilities."
The review of research (Thorbecke, 1996) stated:

"It has been an extremely successful operation. It combines, within one institution and under one roof, some of the best characteristcs of such eminent US economic research agencies as the Economic Research Division of the NSF and the NBER....it is no exaggeration to claim that the Consortium provides the cement holding African economic researchers together."

The EC-Commissioned (UNECIA, 1997) review of the Collaborative Masters Program was also very supportive:

"The training component of AERC activities has been well designed and managed. The output as measured by the number of good quality graduates and by the enhanced capacity and capability of the individual university departments has been most satisfactory. Overall the program appears to have made very good and productive use of the EU funding."

After all these glowing comments, there seems little left for the present reviewer to add. The AERC has clearly gone from strength to strength. The thematic research program is clearly the core and the most distinctive activity. It is testimony to the success of this core program that it has attracted - year after year - internationally renowned economists both from within Africa and from outside, to spend almost two weeks out of their busy schedules at the workshops, taking the long flight to Nairobi (or Johannesburg, or Abidjan). Other groups in the Middle East and in Russia have tried to emulate the network. In the past donors have poured large amounts of money into bilateral institutional strengthening programs with African universities. It is fair to state that few if any have achieved the degree of long-run sustainability and local ownership enjoyed by the AERC.

The AERC after ten years of operation is now mature and successful, and can begin to set new objectives for the future. Its task of building capacity from the ground up (the MA program, PhD support, and the thematic research projects which nurture young researchers and inculcate in them the tradition of research excellence) will continue for the medium term. However there is now an ever-more-solid base from which the AERC can now actively engage senior researchers, provide them with a forum, and aim to become the African equivalent of the NBER or the CEPR. (Some would even like AERC to become a leading Africa-wide "think-tank"). To achieve this goal will require retaining the momentum of existing activities, laying the groundwork for new ones, and taking a long run perspective at the same time as planning for Phase V.

The main programme items in 1997/98 were as follows: the research programme ($3.7m) which is divided into thematic research ($2.1m) and collaborative research ($1.6m); publication and dissemination ($0.7m), training program (PhD fellowships and dissertation grants: $0.5m); support of the Collaborative Masters Program ($2.2m) and program administration and management ($1.0m).
In the early 1990's, the original program elements were the thematic research projects, and PhD grants. New activities were added throughout the 1990's: these include the Collaborative Masters Programme (CMAP) which began in Phase II; comparative studies synthesizing results across several countries which began in Phase III; collaborative research projects (CP's) which began in Phase III and grew dramatically such that in the current financial year 1998/99 they rival the thematic research in costs; and innovations in publications and dissemination including an annual Senior Policy Seminar of which there have been three, support for national policy workshops, and a brand-new website.

The activities of the AERC are undertaken day-to-day by the Secretariat (4 economics PhD's, 4 senior management staff, about 17 other staff plus another half-dozen "major individual consultants". Oversight is provided by the Advisory Committee (13 researcher and policy-maker members including the Executive Director), by the Board which also has 13 members (member donors plus the Executive Director as well as three "members-at-large"), and by the Academic Board which oversees the masters program (21 members comprising the Heads of Department in the participating universities, the Director of Training, along with three "members-at-large"). Membership of the various committees is kept deliberately separate, with liaison occurring through the Secretariat. The senior management staff and the financial controller attend the Board meetings, the 4 professional economists and some management staff sit in on the Advisory Committee meetings, and the Director of Training is a member of the Academic Board meeting. The Chair of the Advisory Committee is invited to attend the Board meetings, but the converse is not true.

The sections below discuss in turn the research program (section 2), the training program (section 3), publications and dissemination (section 4), governance and management (section 5), and the AERC's role, future and long-term financing (section 6). Recommendations are interspersed in the text, and they are also listed in the Executive Summary. It is perhaps helpful here to review the principal specific objectives of Phase IV (AERC, 1997a). These were (in abbreviated form):

- to maintain a focus on strengthening capacity for policy-oriented research
- to help generate high quality peer-reviewed research that is relevant and useful to policy-making in the region
- to strengthen the capacity of African universities to offer high quality and cost-effective graduate training in economics
- to enhance the professional visibility and profile of the network of researchers and institutions AERC supports
- to foster collaboration and coordination with other initiatives in the region engaged in activities similar to those of AERC
- to promote those features...that will enhance self-sustenance in the longer term
- to sustain efforts to improve managerial efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Consortium's operations

One initial observation is that while the three-year planning cycle under which AERC operates may have been appropriate when it was originally founded, and has some attractions to donors (who tend not to commit for longer than three years), it is now too
short. AERC should move to a five-year planning cycle. The three-year cycle entails too many reviews (the reviewer was frequently dismayed when those interviewed complained that they had been interviewed excessively) and is very costly in terms of time for the Secretariat. It also leads to an undesirable hiatus in activities as the end of the planning cycle approaches (Mule and Wilmshurt, 1998). Another way to minimize the disruption due to multiple reviews, is to request that donors co-ordinate. An example is the Collaborative Masters: it was reviewed twice in the recent past, and one review never made it to the final report stage, implying considerable waste of the network’s time. Finally, the reviewer cannot understand why more than one audit was required by donors, during the same financial interval. The research institutes in the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) only undergo one audit: individual donors do not require separate audits.

Recommendation 1.1: AERC should adopt a five-year planning horizon, which also implies five-yearly evaluations. The Board should request donors to co-ordinate reviews of individual programs and not review particular programs more than once in each planning cycle. The Board should strongly encourage donors to move to one single audit covering each financial year, as is the case for CGIAR centres.

2. The Research Program

Research is the biggest activity in the AERC budget ($3.7m out of $8.2m in 1997/8). Under the research heading there are several activities: the core is the thematic research program, of which the centrepiece is the biannual research workshops attended by around 150 people, which are tied to the provision of thematic research grants (the workshops cost $830,000 and the grants $480,000 in 1997/98). Smaller research programs deal with non-thematic and comparative studies ($110,000), technical workshops ($60,000), and special workshops ($40,000), and the rest is accounted for by program management ($540,000). The thematic research program is about to be overtaken in cost by the new collaborative research programs ($1.6m in 1997/8, but increasing to $2.1m in 1998/9). The next three subsections discuss in turn the thematic research program, the collaborative research program, and other research activities.

2.1. Thematic research

The biannual research workshops have been a key feature of the program. They were based on the visionary premise that young African researchers, through intensive interaction with senior internationally-known African and non-African researchers, could undertake world-class policy-relevant research. Currently four thematic research groups operate, in each of which 15-17 proposals, reports and papers are presented at each of the biannual workshops. The four themes are: Group A - Poverty, Income Distribution and Labor Market Issues; Group AT - Trade, Regional Integration and Sectoral Policies; Group B - Macroeconomic Policies, Stabilization and Growth; and Group C - Finance, Resource Mobilization and Investment. Individual researchers (or research teams) present anywhere from 3 to 5 times during the duration of their project, beginning with an initial proposal (which is sometimes revised and presented again), work in progress (which again may be
revised and presented again), and a final report (it is no longer the practice to present this more than once).

Proposals go through an initial screening process. Some 120 proposals per year are now received, of which a little less than half are selected for presentation at a workshop, and of which about two-thirds are encouraged to be revised and resubmitted, or are funded. (32 new proposals are financed per year). The thematic research groups have at minimum 15 researchers (more if there are joint proposals), and a desired number of resource persons of about 6 (in December 1998 there were additional visiting resource persons such that there were 7-8 in each group). The aim is to have the final reports of the projects publishable by AERC in their Research Paper series, and ultimately to appear if possible in an international journal.

The biannual research workshops also have plenary sessions with high profile speakers on a theme of interest. The December 1998 plenary focussed on financial crisis, and featured Prof. Joseph Stiglitz, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist of the World Bank, as lead speaker. Something over 400 research grants had been awarded by the end of 1997/8, of which 108 were active in that year. By the end of fiscal year 1997/8, 68 Research Papers had been published, with another 19 to be added in 1998/9. 75 were in the pipeline as of December 1998, either being reviewed, with the author undergoing revision, or being edited/typset. A number have gone on to be published in international journals.

The intensive research grant process has paid off handsomely. An in-depth evaluation was recently undertaken by Thorbecke (1996), and an ongoing evaluation of policy impact is being undertaken by John Loxley and Tekalign Gedamu. One researcher interviewed for the present evaluation commented that the process had helped him tremendously after he graduated with his PhD. It helped him survive the competition, gave him contacts and introduced him to donors. He remembered fondly the early days of the AERC when it was possible to sit each evening with eminent resource persons and discuss economic issues of concern in Africa - something a little harder to do now when the organization is much larger and resource persons are heavily burdened with meetings.

Another researcher said that the workshops gave him the chance in a desperate economic environment, to meet face-to-face those people whose articles he cited, and to think about more theoretical research. One member of the secretariat who sees all the incoming proposals (and has done so since 1991) stated that the quality of proposals has definitely gone up over time. Researchers have gotten better over time, and the quality of proposals has also improved because of demonstration effects. Resource persons who had been coming for several years agreed with this, and said that the "bar had gone up". One resource person commented that two of the researchers had recently been invited to the US to good universities on visiting professorships, an affirmation of the quality of their work.

One of the successes of the process is that there is a high degree of continuity of involvement. A good proportion of students who receive PhD funding, go on to become AERC researchers, and an increasing proportion of students who complete the CMAP have
the confidence to apply for research funding even before they go on to PhD studies (for those who remain in universities), or from their employment in Central Banks/Ministries of Finance and/or Planning (for those not remaining in the university system). There are good numbers of repeat proposals from researchers, and RP’s comment that the quality of work improves noticeably as researchers progress on to subsequent AERC projects.

Observation of the thematic research groups by the reviewer suggests that the discussion by peers was very professional. Three of the groups appoint formal "peer discussants", and in the fourth group discussion was sufficiently lively that this was evidently not necessary. The appointment of peer discussants was particularly helpful in the new group A, which is still developing its group ethos. Attendance in the groups is also excellent (and monitored by the group leaders!).

There are always marginal improvements which can be suggested. Various issues were raised in interviews, and are discussed below. These include: (1) delays in the process of initial screening of proposals, and long lags between acceptance and initial presentation in some groups; (2) failure of some final papers to proceed to publication; (3) composition of the resource persons; (4) the "graduation" of researchers after successful completion of two or three projects; and (5) the particular themes accepted/ the phasing in of the new theme on poverty. A much bigger issue, the overlap between the thematic research and the new collaborative projects, is held over until section 2.2.

2.1.1. Delay in reviewing proposals/"queues" of proposals awaiting presentation

The first concern raised in interviews was long time lags after submission of initial proposals, to learning whether the proposal had passed initial screening, and similar lags even once the proposal was accepted for presentation, until the actual presentation. Some of those interviewed said that they had not heard back whether or not a paper had been accepted for presentation in 15 months, and calculations suggested that the longest time lag between acceptance and actual presentation could be as much as 18-24 months. Discussion with the secretariat revealed that in fact there is a well-organized computer database with information on each paper submitted. Thus it would be possible to provide information to each research group, on the number of proposals submitted which had not had their status decided 6 months, 12 months after submission, etc. Similarly information could be provided on the number of proposals in the "queue" i.e. accepted for presentation, but which could not be presented at a given workshop due to space constraints.

The staff person had further insights. One problem delaying initial disposition of proposals, is that resource persons vary in the timeliness with which they review proposals. There are about 120 proposals per year and 26 resource persons, i.e. on average 5 proposals per year to review per resource person. This is in addition to reviewing work for existing work in progress or assisting with comments on final drafts. However, not all resource persons are conscientious about reviewing on time (this is not correlated with seniority). Thus some resource persons are not sent any proposals, increasing the burden on the more conscientious ones.
Explanations of the length of "queues" were as follows. Queues were relatively long for groups B and C. In group B, it was related to the switch from old group A, to the new poverty theme group A. Macroeconomic proposals which would previously have gone to group A, now go to group B, along with the usual type B proposals. Hence this group has a backlog of proposals accepted from the "old" group A, as well as its own queue of proposals accepted. (In the 13 months March 1997 - March 1998, there were 109 proposals in total: 37 for "old" group A, 28 for group AT, 18 for group B and 26 for group C. In the eight-and-a-half months from April 1 1998 - December 14 1998, after the groups were restructured, there were 21 proposals to the "new" group A, 24 to group AT, 15 for group B, and 18 for group C.)

Group C currently has the longest "queue" of proposals accepted and awaiting presentation: at present rates the queue is 18-24 months. Group C has a higher number of presentations at workshops per project than other groups. Proposals in this group are more likely to receive the request to revise and resubmit, and similarly work in progress is more likely to be presented a second time as revised work in progress. The tradeoff is therefore between improving the quality of a given final report, and increasing the cost of that project. The cost per visit to the workshop per researcher is around $5000, including the cost for resource person availability, travel for the researcher, administration, etc. Thus two additional visits can add $10,000 to the cost of the project (as compared to the average research grant which is about $15,000), and also reduce the number of new proposals which can be accommodated.

**Recommendation 2.1:**
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider requesting information on a regular basis on the number of proposals received but not disposed of after 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months.

**Recommendation 2.2:**
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider requesting information at each workshop, as to the number of proposals in the "queue", i.e. accepted but not yet being presented, by group.

**Recommendation 2.3:**
The Research Director should monitor timeliness of review by Resource Persons, and decide to take appropriate action concerning Resource Persons who are not living up to their obligations. There is a trade-off between potential loss of goodwill of the Resource Person, and loss of AERC's reputation for timely review.

**Recommendation 2.4:**
In groups with long "queues", members should take this into account when deciding whether or not to bring an existing researcher back for a "revised proposal" or a "revised work in progress". The group might consider whether progress could be made (via correspondence between the researcher and the resource person) without requiring physical attendance at the workshop.
2.1.2. Non-publication of Research Papers

A few Resource Persons expressed concern that some researchers do not take the final steps to publish their final reports as Research Papers, but prefer instead to begin a new project, especially if the list of revisions required is too extensive. There is a financial incentive to make the final revisions (researchers receive 60% of the research funds after acceptance of the proposal, 40% after the work in progress is accepted, and $1000 after the revised final report is received). Non-publication is bad for AERC (lack of demonstrable output) and definitely hampers the availability of results for policy-makers. Thorbecke examined the issue of non-publication as of mid 1995, and found that out of 58 final reports which had been reviewed, 48 would appear in print. A rough estimate as of December 1998 would suggest that only about half the research projects make it to the Research Paper series. This is based on 300 completed grants up to 1997/98, and about 70 Research Papers published, with about the same number in the pipeline. This proportion is lower than Thorbecke's, however it should be noted that Thorbecke's estimate was more carefully done.

Incentives could be structured so as to encourage authors to complete final revisions. In Canada for example, researchers applying to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council are obliged to include information in their application as to how many such previous grants they have held, to include a list of their publications, and to asterisk which of these were from SSHRC-funded research. The Secretariat has the capability to use its database to provide the Research Groups with information on previous grants received by the same researcher, and publication status of the output. In the case where a researcher was granted a new research project before the final revisions on an earlier project were completed, the funds could be held back pending receipt of final revisions to the earlier project. (Of course, then timely review would become even more important).

Another possibility which has been discussed previously, is providing an additional incentive payment (for example $500) to compensate researchers for the effort involved in publishing a paper in an international journal. This would be a temporary measure, until such time as the peer pressure to "publish or perish" becomes stronger.

Recommendation 2.5:
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider asking the secretariat to provide information with each new proposal, regarding the number of previous research grants received from AERC, and the status of the relevant publications.

Recommendation 2.6:
The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee should consider whether to make a policy about release of new research project funds, to researchers who have not completed requested revisions.
Recommendation 2.7:
As funds permit, the Secretariat could consider offering a small financial incentive to compensate researchers for the effort involved in publishing an international journal article based on a Research Paper.

2.1.3. Composition of group of Resource Persons

The calibre of Resource Persons is very high. The AERC has been fortunate to have several highly-respected economists who have come for a large number of years, and this has been a key feature of the success of the thematic research program. The Resource Persons also receive satisfaction from performing this role. Some not based in an academic environment enjoy doing something different from their usual day-to-day work developing policy in an international institution. One commented that he continues coming - despite heavy pressures on his time - because he enjoys discussing and writing papers with other Resource Persons. The advantages have risen markedly with the opportunity for Resource Persons to participate in collaborative research projects recently. 16 of the 26 at the December 1998 workshop have done so in some capacity, some involved in as many as four of the current five projects. Whereas for the African economists the pool of potential Resource Persons is limited, that is not the case for non-Africans. If anything, there is excess supply of people who would like to attend the workshops, although not all have the desired characteristics to make a good Resource Person.

Out of the 26 Resource Persons at the December 1998 meeting, 10 were resident in the US, 5 in the UK, 8 in Africa, 1 in France, 1 in Canada and 1 in Sweden (original nationalities were more diverse). Of the Africans, 7 were more senior scholars, and one represents a successful "graduate" of the research program, who had moved into the ranks of established scholars. "Bunching" of resource persons by country of residence has unfortunate consequences. It will be noted that there are currently no Resource Persons from Germany, Italy, or Australia for example, countries which do not provide any funding to the AERC (but which do contribute to the CGIAR system and other international organizations).

Donor countries are not completely disinterested in having RP's from their country. Having the RP at the workshops leads to valuable contacts for field research for students from the donor country and for African students to go study in the donor country, especially if discussions underway about a possible collaborative "sandwich" PhD come to fruition.

Another issue on composition of RP's, is that out of 26, only one is female. (For comparison, one member of the AC out of 13 is female, and on the Academic Board - where membership is predetermined by the requirement that members have to be Heads of Department in the participating universities - there are actually 3 women out of 24 members. Thus the AERC has a worse track record as regards gender balance on its own committees, than it does as regards the researchers and students in the CMAP, about 14% of whom are women. Thus, in addition to commissioning studies on gender balance (AERC, 1994), the AERC could set a positive example with its own committees. There would then be less chance that the audience would be addressed as "Gentlemen", or that
people would refer to the "Chairmen" of the research groups (both of these things happened at the December 1998 workshops).

Some of those interviewed also commented that the group of Resource Persons is excessively concentrated on mainstream economists, with a predilection for econometrics, with strong representation from the World Bank and IMF.

It is also desirable to maintain some ceiling on the number of Resource Persons per group, and for Group Chairs also to ensure that observers remain just that and do not participate in the vetting of technical proposals, so as not to make the technical sessions unduly formidable. At the November 1998 meetings, there were 26 Resource Persons, plus over 60 observers (although only a few attended the research groups), as well as presenters from the plenary sessions observing the research groups.

Recommendation 2.8:
The AERC should play close attention to the distribution of Resource Persons, to ensure a broad representation by nationality and country of current residence, and to increase the proportion of women both as Resource Persons and on the Advisory Committee, while maintaining the high quality of these individuals.

Recommendation 2.9:
Research Groups should maintain the desired ceiling of six Resource Persons per group. Others who attend as observers should not participate in vetting proposals in the technical sessions. Group Chairs should ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained in discussion, between network members and Resource Persons/observers.

2.1.4. "Graduation" of researchers
In previous years, there was a problem of researchers approaching a "ceiling", i.e. after researchers had held two or three research grants, their need for the intensive one-on-one mentoring began to diminish. There emerged the issue of how to retain the interest of these now more experienced researchers and to continue to engage them in AERC activities, while at the same time (given the small numbers of grants available) to open up spaces in the thematic groups to new researchers and maintain a healthy rate of turnover. In recent years this problem has been partly addressed by the advent of the comparative research modality (discussed in the next section), although the "ceiling" remains an issue. A few researchers can expect to graduate to becoming RP's. Some will of their own accord drift out of active AERC membership, if they become increasingly involved in teaching and consulting. More thought has to be give as to how to continue to engage the others in a way consistent with scarce resources.

AERC still has however some researchers who reach a "plateau" and may not go on to become RP's or be invited to join CP's. It may not be the best use of resources to continue to invite these researchers to the biannual workshops, in which case some other modality is necessary, or some informal rule of thumb as to how many times researchers can expect to continue to get research grants. One possibility is that a researcher's "track record" be available at the time of application for a new research grant, listing the number
of previous grants held, the numbers of AERC Research Papers published, and the number of articles in international journals published on the basis of the AERC-funded research. This procedure is standard practice at the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council in Canada for example. (The Secretariat indicated that this information could be compiled fairly easily from their database). If the AERC thought it appropriate, it could give preference to researchers who had received only one or two previous research grants, or to new scholars, or to researchers who had been active in publishing previous work. (Of course, it would be important to indicate that there was no automatic entitlement to three grants, or whatever number was deemed to be a reasonable "ceiling").

Other possibilities include providing a "seed funding" modality for more senior researchers to encourage them to apply for outside research funds; continuing to invite them to technical workshops but not the intensive biannual research ones; or for the AERC to intensify its existing efforts to strengthen networking opportunities for more senior researchers (for example through the regional economics associations) for this group. AERC is already exploring the "senior research fellow" modality employed by the CEPR in Europe, for example.

Recommendation 2.10:
AERC should consider the desired "career path" of its researchers, and lay out its expectations in a small new pamphlet entitled "Opportunities for AERC members" or something similar. (See Appendix C for some suggestions as to possible content).

Recommendation 2.11:
The AERC Secretariat could provide information about a researcher's previous "track record" at the time of applying for new funding (i.e. the number of previous AERC grants held, whether or not the results were published as a Research Paper or in a journal).

2.1.5. New research themes

When the AERC began, the themes for research were overwhelmingly macro-economic, consistent with the perceived most urgent needs for policy-relevant research in the environment of stabilization programs and SAP's. Originally, the four groups were External Balance and Macroeconomic Management (Group A), Trade, Trade Policy and Regional Integration (Group AT), External and Internal Debt Management (Group B) and Domestic Financial Management and Domestic Resource Mobilization (Group C). Following Thorbecke's (1996) review of research, it became evident to most (although not all) of the network that there was a need to encourage more micro-economic work, in particular on the issue of poverty. At that point the old group A was merged with group B (the old group A had already been receiving some proposals on the theme of poverty), and a new group A entitled "Poverty, Labour Market and Income Distribution Issues" began.

This transition has gone reasonably smoothly. Some RP's feel that diminishing returns to additional macro work have still not yet set in, and that it is better not to spread scarce resources too thin. The majority however feels it has been a positive shift, although it is too soon to examine the quality of final reports in Group A. In any case it will take a while for the beneficial effects of new technical workshops from filtering in to new
research proposals and projects. Other observers have suggested that AERC could add
different research in the area of business economics as part of a long-run funding strategy
(discussed further in section 6). Others have suggested that it may be important to add new
research areas periodically as policy priorities change, and to help to maintain AERC’s
public profile and donors’ interest.

At the same time as a thematic research group on poverty began (offering about
$120,000 per year in new research grants, plus the attendant share of the workshop costs,
and costs of technical workshops), a much larger collaborative project on the same theme
began, with a projected $5 million in funding over 4 years. This collaborative project has
also held technical workshops, and includes a substantial component of capacity-building.
There have been similar overlaps in the past, for example the two trade projects undertaken
built on the trade thematic group (AT).

In the reviewer’s opinion, because the CP modality is so new and has grown so
quickly in scale (from $10,000 in external funding in 1994/5, to a predicted $2.1 million in
external funding in 1998/9), there remains considerably fine-tuning of the relationship
between CP’s and thematic research. Some of the most important recommendations of this
review are on this issue, and are discussed in detail in section 2.2 below.

Several of those interviewed discussed whether additional new themes should be
introduced in the thematic groups. Suggested topics include market failures, privatization,
the environment, the role of institutions, and even political economy. Various RP’s argued
that what was needed was not to create new theme groups, but that micro topics could be
cautiously introduced within existing theme groups. To some extent this already happens:
Group C receives some proposals in informal credit markets and group AT receives some
micro studies of particular sectors related to trade policy. Group B could be expanded to
look more broadly at the topic of market imperfections (related to its mandate to cover
growth), and group C could expand into public finance as well as money. The introduction
of new areas would be heralded by technical workshops and plenary sessions.

Given resource constraints, AERC will likely move only slowly in this direction
(the hallmark of past success has been its caution in making important changes - with the
possible exception of the CP’s). Without changes in funding however, projects intensive in
data collection are unlikely to be added. Nor, in this reviewer’s opinion, is it a high
priority to move to add work on political economy. The AERC has included political
economy in papers for plenary sessions, and has collaborated with other social science
networks with interests in this area such as CODESRIA. AERC’s comparative advantage
has been in technically-sound policy-relevant research. It is more straightforward to inform
researchers how to use poverty lines or co-integration techniques, than to distill the best
practice in political economy. The political economy approach is important, but AERC is
already thinly spread with its more technical portfolio.

Recommendation 2.12:
As funds permit, AERC should consider introducing more micro topics within existing
research groups B, AT and C, although these groups may remain on balance more macro in
focus. Group A is already more micro in focus, but should continue to sponsor macro
work in the area of labour markets and poverty.

2.2. Collaborative Projects

Collaborative Projects were the big growth area of AERC activities in Phase III and
especially in Phase IV. External (restricted) funding of these activities grew from $10,000
in 1994/5 to an expected $2.1 million in 1998/9, whilst allocation of unrestricted AERC
resources to these project ranged from $532,000 in 1994/5, to a net surplus of $150,000 in
1996/7, and an expenditure of $619,000 projected for 1998/9, if the very low overhead rate
of 15% is applied. There are four such projects ongoing, and two completed. These
projects are "Africa and East Asia Comparative Development Experiences", "Managing
Transition from Aid Dependence in Sub-Saharan Africa", "Africa and the World Trading
System" (recently completed, and now in dissemination phase), "Poverty, income
distribution and labour market issues in sub-Saharan Africa", and "Explaining African
Economic Growth Performance". Other projects are under discussion.

These projects have provided one answer to the question as to how to continue to
involve senior researchers who can no longer be accommodated in the thematic groups,
because of scarce funding. They may also assist AERC to move to a role that some
members desire, namely an African policy "think-tank". Nevertheless the rapid growth of
these projects has raised some issues.

2.2.1. Overlaps of interest between Collaborative Projects and thematic research

There is considerable overlap between these projects and the thematic research.
Some of this overlap was quite deliberately planned: for example the CP on "Africa and the
World Trading System" was designed to build upon thematic research and to extend it in a
particular direction, and the CP on poverty was designed to help build momentum for the
thematic research group on poverty.

I examine below the extent of this overlap. I may overestimate this overlap: for
example, I do not have information as to when an individual was involved with a CP, and
when he/she was involved in another capacity (such as Board member, member of the
Secretariat, Group Chair, member of the Advisory Committee, Resource Person). A given
individual could have been involved in one modality at one time, and switch to another
modality at a different time. In my own case, for example, I co-authored one paper for one
CP in summer 1997, and was asked in October 1998 to serve as a reviewer for Phase IV.
Individuals who serve as Co-chairs of a CP or who contribute papers to a CP are normally
paid, although members of the Secretariat who do so are not. Board members have
contributed papers and been paid, with the knowledge and approval of the Board.

All the projects have steering committees, on which the Executive Director and the
Director of Research both sit, sometimes with other members of the Secretariat. Resource
Persons are also heavily involved in these steering committees and (occasionally) Board
members. Steering committee members do not receive financial compensation for their
assistance.
The overlap between the Advisory Committee and the CP's is modest. One member of the AC has written one paper for a CP. (However members who have left the AC have been more involved, for example the outgoing chair of the AC was Coordinator of two of the five current projects, and wrote a paper for a third: it should also be stated that currently 5 of the 13 positions on the AC are vacant).

The Coordinators of the CP's receive compensation for their work (which can be very heavy: there are usually 2 Coordinators per project: one project has only one). Two of the four Group Leaders are also Coordinators of 3 of the 6 CP's; another four Coordinators are RP's, leaving only 2 Coordinators who do not serve in other capacities (one of these is a former RP). Another Group Leader is heavily involved in CP's, contributing papers to four of the current ones, and serving on the Steering Committee of another.

There is therefore quite a strong overlap between the Research Sub-committee of the AC, and the CP's. While the 4 members from the AC are not involved in CP's, the presence of the 3 other Group leaders in discussions changes that perspective (note that the fourth group leader is already a member of the AC and is already on the Research Subcommittee). These three additional persons are heavily involved in the CP's, as described in the paragraph above.

Those writing papers in the CP's may also received financial compensation for their work. No less than 16 of the 26 RP's have written papers for CP's (Of the RP's who serve as Group Chairs, one has contributed papers to 4 of the projects, a second Co-ordinates two projects and has contributed papers to a third, and a third coordinates one CP and has contributed papers to three others, and the fourth is not involved. Of the remaining 22 RP's, one coordinates one project and has written papers for two others, another two coordinate one project, one coordinates one project and has written papers for one other, one has written papers for two projects, and seven have written papers for one project. This leaves 10 who have not been involved in CP's (although some of these 10 have only been RP's for a relatively short time).

Members of the Secretariat can (and occasionally do) also write papers for the CP's, but this is already covered by existing policy such that they cannot be paid for this involvement.

The overlap between involvement in CP's and thematic research was something that was not foreseen at the time the articles of the AERC drafted, quite simply because there were no such projects. At that time, Researchers and Group Leaders were paid only for their time worked in the thematic groups, at the workshops. At that time, members of the Advisory Committee and the Research Subcommittee did not have any significant effect on AERC's budget, which was the domain of the Board.

This has changed with the advent of the CP's. The Advisory Committee can decide whether or not to recommend approval of a CP in the Secretariat's Strategy of Work, or to advise on the scale of the CP (although the Board has oversight). Members of the
Advisory Committee can encourage the Secretariat to begin a new research initiative, if they can raise funds, although again the Board has the final say. Advisory Committee members and Group Chairs can then write papers (for pay), co-ordinate the project (for pay) and make links with their home universities outside Africa (for pay), and at the same time their home university can collect overhead. At the same time the Groups Chairs remain in charge of decisions as to whether or not to allot research funds to thematic research proposals which may in some cases overlap with work they are commissioning on the CP's.

Some of these overlaps were quite deliberate and designed to yield synergies. However, there is also the risk of excessive "coziness" and an inward-looking mentality. Here are some hypothetical examples.  
*Example 1:* A RP in a thematic group gives advice as to whether or not to fund a research proposal, with considerable overlap with his/her own CP.  
*Example 2:* A RP in a thematic group suggests to a Researcher that he/she modify the research proposal so that it is more complementary to the CP.  
*Example 3:* A RP in a thematic group recommends that the Researcher in the thematic group supply some results to the CP.  
*Example 4:* A RP in a thematic group recommends that the Researcher delay his/her project so as to benefit from some results from the CP.  
*Example 5:* A coordinator of a CP is aware of the overhead received by his/her home institution (but does not negotiate it), but does not advise AERC that this rate is very substantially higher than AERC's rate.  
*Example 6:* The Research Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee (and subsequently the Advisory Committee) takes a decision whether or not to encourage a given CP to go ahead: the coordinator of that CP and individuals who expect to write papers (and hence to be paid by the project) participate in the discussion at the Research Subcommittee as it is making the recommendation, and/or may sit on the Advisory Committee as it in turn deliberates.

The reviewer is not aware of any improper behavior. To the best of her knowledge, all those involved have acted in good faith and in a professional manner. However, transparency is the buzzword these days, and it is highly desirable to set the best possible example. Moreover the existing process with substantial overlaps, limits the group of individuals engaged in AERC work. It is desirable to spread responsibilities, such that a wider group of African researchers gain experience in this research modality, and such that the AERC has access to the widest possible range of experts. Openness and mobility are very desirable attributes for the long run health of research organizations and networks. The reviewer feels that the importance of these attributes far outweigh the potential synergies of the present system.

The reviewer is cognizant of the fact that within Africa, the pool of senior researchers is still somewhat limited (although growing). She therefore suggests the following pragmatic guidelines: firstly, the most undesirable overlaps should be proscribed. In her view, membership of the Advisory Committee (which can in turn imply membership of the Research Subcommittee) should preclude involvement in a paid capacity in a Collaborative Project. (This is not difficult to fulfil at present, particularly with five vacant
positions on the Advisory Committee). Advisory Committee members should also not coordinate CP’s (even in an unpaid capacity). She was surprised that the Board had previously permitted Board members to write papers for pay in the CP’s: this would not be permitted by Boards of other research organizations (such as the CGIAR Boards).

Secondly, Group Chairs in thematic research groups should not also serve as coordinators of CP’s. Group Chairs who write papers for CP’s or are on their steering committees should absent themselves from discussion of the CP’s by the Research Subcommittee.

Finally, a balance should be maintained within thematic research groups, such that they are not dominated by participants in the CP’s: at least half of the RP’s in a group should not be also participating in the CP’s. Participants in the CP’s who wished to observe the thematic research groups could do so at the discretion of the Group Chair, but as with other observers, would not be party to the technical deliberations.

**Recommendation 2.13:**
The Secretariat should move as a matter of some urgency to draft a policy on overlaps of interest between participation in CP’s and other AERC activities such as membership of the Advisory Committee and serving as Group Chair in a thematic group. It should also set a policy on the degree of overlap desired between CP’s and the group of Resource Persons. Existing participants with overlapping roles should be asked to choose in which activities they continue to participate. The policy should also specify the time interval required to wait, after ending involvement in one modality and switching to another modality of involvement.

2.2.2. Competition for funding between CP’s and other AERC activities

When the collaborative projects began, they were seen as AERC-directed activities, and in 1994/5 and 1995/6, the amount of external funding was very modest ($10,000 and $30,000 respectively), and the rest of the expenses were financed from core (unrestricted) funds. When external restricted funds soared to $1.6 m in 1997/8 (and $2.1 m in 1998/9, projected), the degree to which AERC is driving the process becomes more of a question. What is clear, is that there is a very large supply of funding by donors for this kind of activity. In 1996/7, AERC began to collect overhead on external funding for collaborative projects. The rate of 15% was chosen, which is considerably lower than many universities outside Africa charge. However, the collaborative projects do entail significant use of resources: the Deputy Director of Research spends the majority of his time on CP’s, and the Research Director estimates they take about half of his own time. Over the last four financial years (1994/5 to 1998/9) restricted funding (tied either to the CMAP or to collaborative projects) has grown from 45% to 51%.

The scale of AERC funding going into the collaborative projects increased rapidly between 1996/7 and 1997/8, and again between 1997/8 and 1998/9. Using an overhead rate of 15%, it is estimated that around $610,000 of core funding is going to CP’s in 1998/9. Given that core funding has now levelled off (between $3.6 and $4.0 m over the
four financial years 1995/6 to 1998/9), it is unsurprising that as more core funding has
gone to CP's, the budget for other activities has been pinched. It is highly undesirable to
cancel technical workshops (for thematic research) and the Senior Policy Seminar as a
result, as happened in 1998/99.

The restricted funding for collaborative projects has other insidious effects. Many
donors tie their unrestricted funds to collaboration with universities/institutions in their own
country. USAID has adopted this policy with AERC (as well as with other research
organizations such as the CGIAR centres). This has unfortunate consequences for those
donors from countries who do not tie their funding to projects or to linkages with
universities in their own countries.

The reviewer strongly endorses the recent decision by the Board and the Secretariat
to carry separate accounts for the CMAP, the "core mission" activities (thematic research,
PhD dissertation funding), and the collaborative projects.

Recommendation 2.14:
The reviewer strongly recommends that AERC review its overhead policy, and consider
adopting a higher rate where projects make significant use of AERC resources, such as the
staff of the Secretariat, AERC capabilities for organizing seminars and workshops, etc.
Some donors have fixed lower limits on overhead. If these donors also provide core
funding, then it may be reasonable (although not desirable) to accept a lower overhead rate.
AERC would not normally accept an overhead rate lower than that of a developed country
partner in a particular project. The AERC should consider going back to some current
donors to CP's, to renegotiate a more appropriate overhead rate.

2.2.3. Other concerns about collaborative projects
Various individuals interviewed expressed concern over the process of approval of
CP's. Until now, the Advisory Committee has not had access to information on the level
of funding of the CP's (in part because of the strict separation of jurisdiction between the
Board and the Advisory Committee, namely budgetary and academic matters). The
Advisory Committee has now requested this financial information: without this (or without
some surrogate such as number of staff-weeks devoted to these activities), it is impossible
to make an informed decision as to whether to approve a particular project and if so at what
scale.

Another question raised by researchers, was what was the process for inviting
researchers to join a particular collaborative project? This again goes to the issue of
transparency. As the AERC develops email listservers (for current researchers, for
researcher "alumnae", etc.) it will increasingly become possible to "post" information
about upcoming projects, such that relevant network members can express their interest.

Recommendation 2.15:
The AERC should include in the suggested pamphlet "Opportunities for AERC members"
information as to how researchers can become involved in collaborative projects, and what
the expectations are of those selected to participate.
2.3. Other research activities

There are some other miscellaneous research modalities. Around $110,000 is allotted to non-thematic and comparative research. Some 2-3 projects annually are approved to compare country experiences. About $60,000 is allotted to special workshops, such as the recent one on policies for manufacturing in sub-Saharan Africa, sponsored by OECD Development Centre and the IMF, along with AERC, in November 1998. Another $60,000 is allotted for technical workshops which support the thematic research, on topics such as econometrics, panel data, CGE modelling, etc. These are perceived as valuable both by researchers and RP’s, and the techniques discussed frequently appear subsequently in research proposals. These workshops have been temporarily discontinued during the budget shortfall in 1998/9 (along with the Senior Policy Senior), perhaps because they seem to be less of a pressing priority. However according to at least one RP, too long of a hiatus would be undesirable and adversely affect the quality of the thematic research proposals.

One issue raised by some researchers, was the method by which individuals were selected to attend technical workshops (current researchers are eligible, and are selected at the discretion of the Director of Research, possibly with collaboration of others such as RP’s, Group Leaders).

Recommendation 2.16:
It would be desirable to write down existing practice as to how individuals are selected to participate in technical workshops or other such periodic workshops, in the interests of transparency. This could form part of the suggested pamphlet on "Opportunities for AERC Network Members" - see Appendix C.

AERC now also fulfils a "clearing-house" role which does not appear anywhere in its budget or description of activities. In part because AERC has been so successful at setting standards, the members of the Secretariat are approached frequently (20 or more times per year) to act as a clearing-house. This may involve recommending researchers for projects or consultancies; recommending individuals for long-term jobs; or advertising fellowship opportunities. The Secretariat senior staff estimated that they were approached regarding short-term consultancies/projects 15-20 times per year. Often this activity was relatively time-consuming. It was not merely an issue of suggesting a name for the job, but involved AERC implicitly as a guarantor of the work done.

Recommendation 2.17:
Suggesting names is an expected part of the activity of the Secretariat. However where this involves a non-trivial use of AERC resources, the AERC should charge accordingly. This could involve a "finders fee" or a small proportionate overhead fee.
3. Training program
3.1. Brief description of program

The AERC has since the beginning had a training component to its activities. This originally included PhD thesis support, to permit African doctoral students to return to their home country to collect thesis data. This activity continues (around $180,000/year is provided to between 12 and 15 students, who receive approximately $12,000/year each on average).

Over time, it was appreciated that support to graduate training needed to be intensified, in view of declining foreign assistance for graduate study abroad, and its increasing cost. AERC commissioned a series of Special Papers (numbers 5 through 11) on graduate training in economics for Africans, which led to the proposal for establishing the CMAP (Collaborative Masters Program). The CMAP began in 1993 with the pilot teaching of electives at what became the JFE (the Joint Facility for Electives), and has since continued. At that time AERC also initiated a program of support for doctoral study abroad (currently around 12 students per year are supported, at a cost of about $25,000 each per year; students can be supported for up to four years), to try to help staff development at the participating universities. The CMAP is now a very significant component of AERC's activities, both in terms of resources used (around $2m per year) and the time and effort in co-ordination required.

The CMAP currently involves 20 universities from 15 African countries. Of these, 7 are currently designated as category B and offer the core courses for the Masters. These are the Universities of Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Ghana Legon, Zimbabwe, Addis Ababa, Malawi and Botswana. The other 13 are designated as category A and send students to the category B universities, and receive support to help them upgrade. These include three universities in Kenya (Kenyatta, Moi and Egerton Universities), two in Ghana (Universities of Cape Coast and of Science and Technology Kumasi), Makerere University (Uganda) and the Universities of Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique) and Mauritius. Category A universities receive institutional grants of up to $30,000 per annum, and category B receive a start-up grant of $80,000, plus operating grants of $5000 per foreign student and $3000 per local student. Thesis grants of $5000 per foreign student and $2000 per domestic student are also received.

The AERC also funds the JFE at the Kenya Commercial Bank Institute (KCBI) in Karen, Nairobi, where all CMAP students take 2 elective courses in intensive manner (over 13 weeks) along with an optional course in research methods and computers. This initially cost about $5000 per student, and now costs about $4000 per student.

The number of students enrolling in the CMAP in the category B departments has increased from 40-50 per year at the beginning, to over 100 in 1998/9 and 1999/2000. This is matched by the number of students attending the JFE which began at about 60 and reached over 90 in 1997, 98 and 99 (see table 3.1).
3.2. Previous evaluations: conduct of current evaluation

The CMAP has been evaluated recently (UNECA, 1997, with another incomplete evaluation by the ACBF which has not been released). The EC evaluation was very detailed, involving a questionnaire to students administered at the JFE, travel by the evaluators to eight different countries and 11 of the participating 20 universities, consultation with faculty and with government "clients". The report was very positive and recommended continued funding for the next phase of at least as much in real terms as in the recent past. AERC’s response is contained in AERC (1998b).

The report made a rather long list of recommendations intended to further strengthen the program. A number of these recommendations have been implemented in the year-and-a-half since the report was issued. For example, the report encourages teaching new electives in Managerial Economics/Financial Management: the JFE in 1999 is teaching both Corporate Finance and Managerial Economics (both of which were oversubscribed). The report encourages AERC to rewrite the proposal for the PhD: this is being done currently. The report recommends that Policy Analysis and Economic Management be incorporated as a core course in all departments rather than taught as an elective at the JFE. The policy course has now been integrated into the curriculum of five of the seven category B universities (Ghana and Botswana have still not done so), and based on the fact that it was the least popular elective at the 1999 JFE (only 8 participants) it would seem very likely to be phased out soon. The report also encouraged AERC to consider alternative modalities to the JFE, and the AERC has commissioned a report by Dr. Peter Kimuyu and Dr. Akpan Ekpo on the topic (see also discussion below in section 3.3.2).

Other recommendations have been taken under advisement (the recommendation for more regular review of course syllabi; the recommendation for improving the quality of liaison with client representatives and employers of graduates; the recommendation for improving the system of internal review and for implementing suggestions of external examiners).

In some other areas, recommendations required changes difficult to implement within eighteen months. The present evaluation underscores some of these: the EC report commented on the country distribution of foreign student scholarships to the CMAP (discussed in section 3.3.1 below). The EC report also encouraged the AERC to involve itself in the development of courses with an applied or policy oriented emphasis. The present report would concur with this, as a way to cater to the needs of young professionals in government (while also maintaining the academic courses oriented to the needs of future researchers). Similarly this reviewer agrees with the EC evaluators on the importance of taking into account human resource planning and staff development policies within the public sector, when planning CMAP courses.

Some recommendations of the EC report were difficult to implement based on funding constraints, such as concerns about the reduction in the level of grant per student,
the restricted funds available for equipment and library resources for departments, and the suggestion that there should be field trips included in the JFE.

In view of the very recent EC review, the present review is more of an update. It involved visiting the JFE in July 1999 and talking to 16 current students (including students from all 7 category B departments, from 10 different countries; students were interviewed from different backgrounds, both with work experience - public and private sector - as well as students entering graduate study directly from undergraduate). Interviews were also conducted with 6 of the JFE lecturers teaching in the first session of 1999, with 2 former lecturers from previous years, and with one Chair of a participating Department. Interviews were also conducted with 7 CMAP graduates (in a variety of jobs in the public and private sectors as well as one continuing on to PhD study: the graduates were all from Kenya but had not necessarily studied in Kenya). A wide selection of documents were consulted (Appendix B).

3.3. Evaluation of CMAP

3.3.1. Should AERC begin to phase out support to CMAP?

AERC support has been crucial in supporting the quality of the CMAP. Although libraries in the participating universities are unimpressive by developed country standards, they would be worse without such support. Computer access for Masters students at their home universities is generally poor, again by comparison with developed countries. Students in Botswana and Zimbabwe have access to computer labs and to email (and even one terminal which accesses the Internet in Botswana). Students in the other five category B universities have no such access during their core courses, although they may do so in the course of writing their research papers. Even though faculty at these universities do have access to computers, they are not all by any means familiar with current statistical packages. Thus the computer course taught at the JFE is extremely useful. Even the students from Zimbabwe and Botswana stated that they were exposed to packages which they did not use at their home university. Thus AERC's support of physical resources is very important.

AERC's support of the electives has also been crucial for the Master's program. The JFE offers eight electives each year (of which students take two). The largest departments in group B (Nairobi, Legon and Zimbabwe) each are able to offer about four electives (and students at these universities take two of these in addition to the JFE two). Universities may try to offer even more than four electives, but not all of the same quality. Malawi offers only two electives, Ethiopia and Tanzania offer the policy course as a core course but no electives, and Botswana does not offer either the policy course or any other electives at present. Thus the eight offerings at the JFE enhance considerably students' choice (and indeed the Managerial Economics and Corporate Finance options do not exist in the participating universities).

It is clear however that it is too soon to consider withdrawing external support. Botswana provides a good example. The EC report (December 1997) commented that "this is without a doubt by far the best resourced department amongst all those associated with
the CMAP". This may still be true in terms of physical resources 18 months later, but the key weakness in Botswana (heavy reliance on expatriate faculty) has made the program there now extremely fragile. The Department cannot offer any electives (or the policy course) and the numbers of students fell dangerously below critical mass in 1997/1998 with only 5 students, although this rebounded to 13 in 1998/9.

Moreover, one of the key resource constraints - namely faculty trained to the PhD level - still has not been addressed. The sheer cost of foreign PhD's means that AERC has been able to support very few. AERC has supported 23 PhD fellowships since 1993 (either full or partial fellowships). Of these 23 individuals, 8 have already completed their PhD, and another 2 are expected to complete in 1999/2000. This has led AERC to propose a collaborative African PhD (see below). Only one category A Department (Malawi) has succeeded in upgrading to category B status in the last 6 years (another Department, Zimbabwe, joined directly as a category B participant).

Attracting more domestic financial support for the CMAP is an option. In most countries, it is unrealistic to expect large amounts. Governments are in straitened circumstances and the queue of those awaiting training in most Ministries is already long. Governments which used to pay for higher degrees now simply permit unpaid study leave. Government employees do not have wages which are high enough to permit them to pay for their own graduate study. The private sector in Africa also does not pay for degree study, although banks for example send personnel on short-term training courses. There are some exceptions: Central Banks have been more generous about graduate study. One possibility is therefore to convince more Central Banks that not only is the CMAP program of high quality, but it is also extremely cost-effective compared to foreign Masters programs, such that three staff can be sent for a Masters within Africa for the same cost as one such foreign Masters program. Maintaining the high-quality electives at the JFE is likely to be an important part of this strategy, as well as continuing to monitor and support the core courses at the category B universities. Similarly, AERC's continued efforts to maintain close contact with senior policymakers is vital to this effort (see section 4). To send staff to the CMAP may require employers to rewrite their training policies, something which some governments are already doing.

**Recommendation 3.1:**
AERC should continue to support the CMAP through Phase V, but plan to phase out its involvement in Phase VI.

If support should not be withdrawn at present, are there further economies which could be made, to make the CMAP more sustainable? One possibility is to discontinue the JFE and decentralize the electives (discussed below in section 3.3.2). The only other obvious possibility is to eliminate one of the remaining small luxuries, namely permitting students from category A universities in countries which also have category B departments to study abroad. In practice this means students from Kenya and Ghana, from the five category A smaller universities. These two countries account for a not inconsiderable share of the foreign students CMAP supported (48 of the 116 supported over the period 1992/3 to 1997/8) plus another 6 students from Tanzania, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe who received
foreign student support for their MA's although there are category B universities in their home countries (UNECIA, 1997, table 3.4). Students who have been able to study in another African country value the experience and argue that much is learned from the exchange. However the JFE provides a similar international experience at a lower cost per student. The cost savings to AERC of not supporting study abroad would be relatively modest - $7000 per student over the two years of the Masters, for about 10 students per year.

A further reduction of the costs of foreign students could occur if Makerere university (the second largest source of foreign students - 15 of the 116 over the period 1992/3 to 1997/8) were able to upgrade from category A to category B status. Makerere is in an anomalous position among the category A universities. It is the only one with a substantial output of its own (non-CMAP) Masters students. The category A universities over the period 1992/3 to 1997/8 produced 186 non-CMAP Masters in economics: 134 of these were from Makerere, and 21 from Malawi (before it acquired category B status), leaving only 31 in total from the other departments over 6 academic years (UNECIA, 1997, table 3.2).

Makerere is even more anomalous in that it is also hosting a World Bank/ACBF-funded mid-career economic policy Masters, whose first intake was in 1999. The costs of the first phase of this program (based at McGill) were over $5.5m (author’s estimate, based on figures provided by Jan Jorgensen), and the costs of the next phase in Africa are in excess of $3m (same source). Not to include enough faculty upgrading to reach the minimum of 6 PhD’s required among the full-time staff for category B status, would seem to be a significant oversight. There are however five faculty members at Makerere who took some coursework at McGill, for whom support to finance their dissertations as "sandwich" PhD’s is under discussion.

**Recommendation 3.2:**
It would seem to be a priority - in view of the numbers of students involved - for AERC to approach the World Bank/McGill University/CIDA/ACBF to co-finance enough faculty upgrading at Makerere to shift that University to category B status. This is essential if Makerere can support a quality MA in economics as well as a mid-career policy MEP serving the region.

**3.3.2. Should the JFE be phased out?**

The EC review felt that the JFE might not remain viable within a year or two, and recommended consideration of alternative measures to achieve the same objectives (UNECIA, 1997). The AERC has currently commissioned a study of the potential for decentralizing the JFE. As hinted above, this reviewer feels that decentralization would currently be premature, and (based on faculty, student and graduate comments) that the JFE is partly what makes the CMAP degree distinctive and of higher value-added.

The JFE is, by the account of students, a very high quality teaching environment. It is set in pleasant facilities in a quiet suburb of Nairobi, conducive to study (some students felt it was too conducive, to the exclusion of allowing them to see anything of Kenya!). It
has by local standards very good computer facilities - 15 up-to-date computers between 90 students, although at the time of visiting in July 1999 the 6 printers were not connected and there was no email and no Internet. There are laptops and access to email for faculty use.

Students and graduates commented enthusiastically on the quality of lecturing, and written evaluations from previous years are also very positive. In 1998, 20 professors were evaluated and 452 student responses were received (each student rated up to 5 professors - 2 per elective, and one in the research methods course). The evaluations were on a 5 point scale (excellent, good, adequate, poor and very poor). 12 of the professors received only grades of excellent/good (with at most one response of adequate and none of poor); 2 professors received grades of excellent/good/adequate, and 6 professors received at least one grade of poor (of whom 4 received at least one grade of very poor); all the professors would have ranked at least adequate on average, and the majority somewhere between good and excellent. It is not possible to compare these with a benchmark (the participating universities do not consistently evaluate their own professors); nevertheless, these ratings are very positive.

Since the professors (other than the Kenyans) are resident, missed classes are very rare. The competitive nature of the application process gives professors a clear incentive to perform well (30-40 applications are received for 16 positions). One university administrator commented that lecturers earn as much at the JFE in 6 weeks, as faculty earn in a whole year at his institution. Faculty also commented very favorably on the opportunity it gave them to have access to better materials which they use to upgrade courses back at their home university. Graduates of the program commented enthusiastically on the unique opportunity to meet and network with other Africans, and to network with employees of similar Ministries or Banks in other countries. One graduate who has since gone on to graduate study in North America felt that the intensity of the work prepared her well for graduate study abroad. Having taken the elective in econometrics at the JFE, she was better prepared in econometrics than many North American Masters candidates.

The cost of the JFE has led to discussion of decentralization. The participating universities also quite naturally feel that the same resources applied to the university departments would improve quality there. As discussed above, it is not clear that it is yet time to decentralize. Not all category B departments would seem to have the capability of offering as many as even four electives. Computer facilities in the participating departments are not such that electives could be offered by distance methods. Another possibility might be to encourage the category B departments to specialize in particular electives; each department might try to offer electives in money and public finance, and then collectively offer some additional variety. Students could then if necessary move to another university to complete an elective of choice. This would however require signing agreements on transfer of credit and exchange of students which are relatively unfamiliar in Africa. Smaller departments such as Malawi and Botswana might not have a large enough body of students to sustain many electives.
It is worth putting in context that the current cost for one student for thirteen weeks at the JFE, is similar to what the new Joint Africa Institute in Abidjan will spend for a two-week training course for one policy-maker.

**Recommendation 3.3:**
The reviewer believes that the JFE is a key component in maintaining the high quality of the CMAP, and excellent "value for money". It should be maintained through Phase V, if this is financially feasible.

3.3.3. Representation of women in the training program

AERC has been concerned about gender balance in economics for some time (AERC, 1995). The proportion of women students among CMAP graduates is only around 15% which is similar to the proportion amongst economics BA's according to current students. There may have been slow improvement over time (one graduate from the 1980's remembered being the only female student in her MA class in Nairobi). There is also a shortage of female role models at the faculty level. Zimbabwe has the most female faculty (four) but other departments have few women. Among the 30-40 applications to teach at the JFE there are usually only 2-3 women, and they are not generally qualified (do not have a PhD). When students were asked if they had ever taken an economics course from a woman lecturer, most had not. AERC has provided 3 PhD fellowships to women (out of 20) and 16 PhD thesis awards to women (out of 129).

Students interviewed suggested that it was difficult to increase the proportion of women. In Kenya for example economics is taught less frequently in high schools (which have shifted to offering the easier subject of Commerce), and admission to university study in economics therefore depends on good grades in mathematics. In Kenya as in many other countries women are not encouraged to study mathematics at school, or given the confidence to believe they can succeed. (One graduate told the story of how her father refused to provide school fees to cover the cost of studying mathematics and economics at A level because he did not believe she would succeed: her costs were covered by her mother and her priest).

It is difficult to increase the proportion of female students in the CMAP, if it is similar to the proportion at the undergraduate level. However, AERC can try at least to provide female role models among the Resource Persons and on the Advisory Committee (where female representation is currently worse than among the CMAP students, despite a much stronger pool of female faculty outside Africa). AERC can also continue to encourage women to complete their PhD's, since female faculty members at the African universities and the JFE are vital role models.

3.3.4. Increasing collaboration among African universities.

Although universities in Europe and North America (and Latin America and Asia) are increasing student mobility, encouraging exchanges and study abroad, through programs such as ERASMUS and the North American Mobility in Higher Education program, this trend has not greatly affected Africa. The AERC succeeded with great persistence in getting 20 different universities to co-operate on the CMAP, although these
negotiations have been very time-consuming. For example, the new courses on corporate finance and on management economics were discussed in the 1997 EC evaluation (UNECIA, 1997) and taught for the first time at the JFE in 1999, but have still not been approved as suitable electives by several departments. African universities remain relatively unfamiliar with exchange agreements and with transfer of credits between institutions.

This has caused some difficulties for collaborative programs such as AERC's. African universities are developing more differentiated tuition fee structures. For example, Nairobi university has substantially higher fees for foreign (including other African) students as well as privately funded students, and Ghana has slightly higher fees. Hence a large proportion of the higher grant for foreign students under the CMAP is retained by the central university administration at the University of Nairobi, and does not reach either the economics Department or the students themselves. This resulted in AERC not funding any foreign students to attend the University of Nairobi in 1998/9. At the same time, Kenyan students have been by far the largest beneficiary group of students to receive AERC funding to study in another African country.

In agreements between developed countries, it is frequently a condition of receiving external funding that participating universities must sign exchange agreements whereby they agree to exchange students at domestic tuition rates. Or alternatively, the recipient universities have to agree to provide differential fee waivers to incoming students. Both WUSC (World University Service Canada) and CIDA in Canada impose this stipulation. The agreements are monitored to be sure that benefits to participating institutions remain approximately in balance.

Recommendation 3.4: AERC should require category B universities to incorporate exchange agreements/differential fee waivers into the Memorandum of Agreement with AERC as a condition for receiving AERC funding for Masters students from other African countries.

3.3.5. The balance between theory and policy needs.

Students currently studying at the JFE expressed concern about the policy relevance of what they were being taught (some were feeling sufficiently pressured to amass the theory that they found it harder to see the applications). This is an issue, since a large proportion of students do not see their future in an academic environment. AERC statistics (table 3.2) show that of 492 CMAP graduates between 1993 and 1998, 57 went to universities, 188 to government ministries and parastatals, 37 to financial institutions, 177 to the private sector, and the balance (37) to NGO's, other teaching institutions and research institutions. Several students interviewed expressed a preference for a more practical degree such as a Masters in Financial Economics (MBA's were not particularly popular). AERC should therefore (as suggested by the EC evaluation) pay close attention to the needs of government employees, as the largest single employer of graduates. The needs of the private sector are also important as the second-largest employer: from interviews with graduates it appears that the needs in the private sector vary. Some graduates in the private sector conduct research (for example market research for industries
selling to consumers, policy research/lobbying for firms affected by government policy, and in economic research units in banks): these graduates make good use of their Masters training. Others in the private sector in management positions may find less use for their technical training.

In the future it will be important to balance the demand for Masters of Economics degrees, and Masters of Policy Economics (such as those beginning at Makerere and Legon Universities and the University of Nairobi with external support). Graduates working in universities, in research institutions, and in the research departments of Central Banks, Ministries of Finance need to be familiar with the cutting edge theories and econometric techniques, whereas those working in other positions in government may prefer more practical applications. This can be accommodated with flexibly-designed electives. It is not considered desirable to "water down" the content of core courses, even for students not planning to continue with research.

Increasing the linkages between the AERC and the policymaking community is something which is important for AERC's long-run future. Sensitivity to training needs in graduate education is part of this, as is designing short-run training courses incorporating AERC's research results (discussed in section 3.5), as is the dissemination strategy (see section 4).

3.4. A collaborative PhD

The proposal for a collaborative PhD is not discussed at length here since the revised proposal is not complete. AERC has made a convincing case that without some such scheme, Africa's human capital in economics will be "mined out" (see Fine, 1997, Jebuni, 1998, Wangwe and Cassim, 1997). Given the extremely high cost of foreign PhD studies and the decline of external support, African universities cannot maintain an adequate trained faculty complement, and this in turn will have deleterious effects on the quality of training at the MA and BA level.

It is important that the implementation of the PhD does not reduce the funds available for the CMAP in Phase V. A strong case can be made for continuing to support the CMAP through Phase V, although it is likely that donors will wish to phase out funding in Phase VI. AERC estimates that the collaborative PhD would cost $1 million annually in direct costs plus indirect costs of administration of another 15%. Some of this funding could be diverted from existing activities (winding down the almost $300,000 per annum in PhD fellowship, and possibly $100,000 out of the CMAP funds by restricting options for foreign study only to those students from countries which do not offer a Masters program). However a sizeable amount of additional funding would still be necessary.

3.5. Short-term training courses

The AERC has already had some experience of short-term training courses for researchers, in the context of thematic and collaborative research projects. There is demand for high quality short courses for policymakers. Some of this is currently supplied by private firms. The World Bank is also entering this area with the Joint Africa Institute
in Abidjan. This is an area where cost recovery is possible. There are opportunities for AERC to enter into this area, something which is being actively considered. AERC has available already a short-term module on trade and development which could be used, and could readily develop such modules on policy analysis, on managerial economics and on corporate finance. AERC's experience with running international courses at the KCBI facility at Karen (and the high quality and reasonable price of the facility) makes it well placed in Phase V to move into this area of training. These short courses would ultimately be self-financing (including overhead), although modest amounts of core funding could be used initially as seed money.

These short courses can link to AERC's dissemination strategy, in that developing training materials incorporating AERC’s research results is a good way of reaching policymakers. IFPRI (the International Food Policy Research Institute) has been successful in policy impact through a number of two-page "policy briefs" from a series entitled "2020 Vision"; this type of policy brief can be useful for participants in short-term training courses to take home. Those interested in more in-depth analysis can be spurred on to read the original study.

Recommendation 3.5:
AERC should field-test short term training courses as part of Phase V, aimed at policymakers and also at the private sector. AERC may wish to consider producing "policy briefs" based on research studies as training materials and as part of its dissemination strategy.

4. Publications and dissemination

The AERC has several active publication series including the Research Papers (of which 89 should be out by the end of 1998/9), the Special Papers (involving cross-country comparisons as well as commissioned technical studies relevant to AERC's activities, of which there are about 30), the biannual Newsletter, the biannual Research News, a series of books incorporating results from the CP's which will be published by Macmillan, an Annual Report, and a series of executive summaries of the Research Papers. There are other miscellaneous publications including reports on seminars, various informational pamphlets, etc.

4.1. Use of French

One innovation of Phase IV has been commencing publication in French. Currently the Executive Summaries of the Research Papers are all to be published in French as well as English, and so far half-a-dozen Research Papers has been published in French as well as English (typically those thought to be of most interest to the francophone countries).

It is desired to move to more French translation. It is a high priority to publish the informational pamphlets about the AERC in French as well as English, to add a French version of the website, and to publish the Newsletter in French. Freelance translation in Nairobi is expensive (driven by UN rates: one 80-page paper cost $6,000 to translate).
However, translation services available via the Internet are apparently much cheaper (Jeff Fine, pers.comm.). The addition of a bilingual Deputy-Director of Research is a very positive step.

These are initial steps and do not address the more difficult issue of how to get more francophone researchers (other than those from Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire and one or two other countries) familiar with the kinds of techniques employed within the AERC network.

**Recommendation 4.1:**
It is a high priority to make the website completely bilingual, and to publish the key AERC information brochures, as well as the Newsletter and the Research News, in French.

**4.2. Use of electronic mail/internet**

In Phase IV, AERC has made advances with IT. The website (http://www.aercafrica.org) was put up in November 1998. A study has been undertaken of how to wire the Secretariat Offices to an intranet. Currently the office is not networked, and access to email is via only 4 machines. As of January 1999, AERC was to have a dedicated internet connection. The addition of a server and an intranet will make an important difference to communications.

The AERC currently collects email addresses for the researchers, and a large proportion (although not all) are on email. The Resource Persons, with one exception, are also on email, as are all the Advisory Committee members. Many researchers already send their papers electronically. There is therefore the potential for substantial savings on fax and courier costs in future. Possible applications include:

(i) addressbook lists for different constituencies, such as current researchers, "alumnae" researchers, Resource Persons, Advisory Committee members, policy-maker contacts; these could even become listservers (if AERC purchased the appropriate software for the server) whereby members could also email to the list and pursue discussions online.

(ii) paperless (or certainly less paper-using) conferences: since most papers are received electronically, papers could also be made available to other researchers electronically upon request, in advance of the workshops. This also permits researchers to read papers in advance of the conference. (In the long run, papers could be posted on a website, but this technology is a little far advanced of the infrastructure available to many of the researchers at present).

(iii) more rapid review processes: if proposals could also be submitted electronically (most are presently received in hard copy), this could help accelerate the review process.

The Secretariat currently plans to have in-office training on use of email etc, as soon as the intranet is installed. Such training is important not only for the staff, but also for the senior staff (the economists), who are at varying degrees of familiarity with electronic technology. The steps currently underway are very positive, and should both
strengthen communication within the network (by posting information about upcoming seminars and workshops, permitting discussion between researchers, posting job opportunities, etc), as well as cutting fax and courier costs (communications costs were $67,000 in 1995/6 for example).

Recommenation 4.2:
The AERC should continue to move very actively to use of internet and email.

4.3. Long-term role of publications and dissemination

Currently dissemination is accorded a lesser priority than training and research, in that it is headed by a Manager, rather than a Director. However, dissemination should be a key part of AERC’s long-run strategy to cultivate and maintain support within the region, of which financial support is one component. In North Africa, a similar research network (the Economic Research Forum, based in Cairo) obtains some funding from the private sector. The network publishes an economic outlook as a service to members, and also holds seminars with high-profile speakers, open to members. (AERC and the Economic Research Forum are both part of the Global Development Network initiative led by the World Bank). AERC’s long-run survival depends on senior policymakers "buying in" to its mission. The annual Senior Policy Seminar is one component of outreach to this group, as are publications, and as could be short training courses.

At the moment, outreach falls largely under Research. The Director of Research has the main responsibility for overseeing publication of research and for organizing the Senior Policy Seminars (with substantial input from the Executive Director), and the Deputy-Director of Research oversees the website. The Executive Director has chief responsibility for fundraising, and short training courses would fall under the Director of Training. Other organizations have experimented with different structures in order to ensure that outreach receives adequate attention. IFPRI (the International Food Policy Research Institute) at one point had a Director of Outreach, before deciding that outreach should be an integral component of the research process and integrating it into each research division (and appointing instead a Director of Communications to oversee the more technical functions).

Recommenation 4.3:
Outreach (through Senior Policy Seminars, short training courses, as well as publications - both printed and electronic) is key to the long run sustainability of AERC, and its long-run fundraising capability within the region. The management structure of the Secretariat should reflect this.

4.4. Logo

As the AERC matures, its "image" will become more well known. One small but annoying issue is that the graphic used on the logo does not xerox well.
Recommendation 4.4:
The AERC should have its logo redrafted such that it will xerox well.

5. Governance and management

5.1. Governance

The governance structure of the AERC was set up when the organization was ten times smaller (in terms of budget) than it is currently. It was modelled along the lines of the NBER and similar organizations, with a dual-committee structure. The Advisory Committee oversees research direction, and is completely separate from the Board which deals with budget matters. This dual structure has the advantage that the research agenda is not under donor control. At the same time, the dual structure imposes additional administrative costs, and also can slow down decisions. In order to approve the Strategy of Work for Phase V, it has to be discussed in a preliminary way by the Advisory Committee in May 1999, then by the Board in November 1999, and the final discussions occur in the Advisory Committee in December 1999 and the Board in March 2000, before Phase V begins in April 2000. Advance planning is necessary since the Advisory Committee meets only twice per year (at the research workshops), and the Board usually once per year. The Board already has an Executive Committee which meets three times per year, and the Advisory Committee (as of December 1998) also constituted an Executive Committee (comprising the Chairs of the Advisory Committee, of the Research Subcommittee and of the Training Subcommittee, and presumably also the Executive-Director).

In practice the areas of the Board and the Advisory Committee's jurisdictions are becoming more blurred with the growth of the CP's. The Advisory Committee's choice over research direction has an effect on the overall AERC budget (since funds can be attracted for CP's), and the allocation of AERC's research budget between thematic and collaborative research. In 1997/8 and 1998/9, as described earlier, the explosive growth of the CP's has crimped the budget for "core activities", such that some technical workshops on one Senior Policymaker Seminar were cancelled.

Some other issues arise as organizations become larger and need codification of some processes. For example, what is the term of the Chair of the Advisory Committee? Can an individual be reappointed to the Advisory Committee having served two three-year terms? What is the term of a Resource Person's appointment? Currently some seem to have an appointment "for life". It may help to clarify that Resource Persons come at the invitation of the Secretariat, and that there is no automatic presumption that they will be invited repeatedly. There are already unwritten guidelines on these kinds of issues, but it is helpful to have the information readily available in written form.

Currently the procedure for appointing new members to the Advisory Committee imposes most of the work on the Secretariat, and vacancies can occasionally take a year or so to fill. The committee urged at the December 1998 meeting, that vacancies be filled expeditiously: ideally, a new member would have been appointed by the end of the final meeting of the outgoing member's term. Other Boards/Committees sometimes put some of
the responsibility for nominating new members onto a subcommittee, so that the Secretariat has some assistance in this task, and to expand the net for searching for new members as wide as possible.

**Recommendation 5.1:**
The AERC should document the guidelines for the term of Resource Persons members of the Advisory Committee, and the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

### 5.2. Management

This evaluation does not focus heavily on management, since there is a recent in-depth study on this topic (Trowbridge, 1998), whose main conclusions were as follows:

- **governance** was working well (relationships between the Board, Executive Committee, Advisory Committee, Academic Board and the Secretariat); there was a need for AERC to establish its vision for the future, and to continue efforts to obtain funding from African sources to increase the sense of African ownership;
- AERC should clarify responsibility for **fundraising** (which has largely fallen on the Executive Director), and consider an endowment fund;
- **efficiency** was seen as high; avoid further cost-cutting as possibly deleterious to output and morale, and focus instead on augmenting income;
- workloads are beginning to exceed **capacity**, and it was recommended considering having a full-time Deputy Executive Director, a Director - External Relations, an Assistant to Manager - Human Resources and Administration, and converting the position of CMAP Manager to Deputy-Director, Training;
- **diversity** was to be encouraged;
- further **staff development** was desirable, as was improvement of internal communications, and boosting of morale.

The findings were in accordance with a financial review. Price-Waterhouse (1998) noted that AERC's administrative costs had fallen as a proportion of total expenditure. Administration costs were 11% of total costs for the two financial years 1995/6 to 1997/8, even lower than the 15% which is considered acceptable, and in fact the review argued that AERC should evaluate its administration capacity to be sure that it was sufficient to continue growth while maintaining program quality.

Trowbridge encapsulated his recommendations by saying that the staff complement may be "too lean, more mean and less keen". If the AERC increases its activities to encompass a PhD program, it seems likely that the Director of Training (who also acts as Deputy Executive-Director) would need a Deputy Director, just as a Deputy Director of Research has been added. If the overhead on collaborative research is consistently collected and if the overhead rate on these activities is increased commensurate with AERC's input of effort, then that should generate funding to help cover the salary of the Deputy Director of Research. This would then permit some core funds to be reallocated towards a Deputy Director of Training (and it is assumed that AERC would also collect
overhead at the current 15% level, in order to manage the PhD program and short-term training courses).

The current division of responsibility gives the Executive Director the major responsibility for fundraising, and in fact the E-D is the best placed (by virtue of rank in the organization) to attract funding. It may not therefore be desirable to appoint a Director of External Relations, although in future the E-D might require staff assistance on fundraising. Finally, as discussed in section 4 above, the role of dissemination and outreach will increase in future and ultimately this unit may require a Deputy-Director who reports directly to the E-D. Such an individual would also provide key support to the E-D on fundraising and could be a possible alternative to the Director of External Relations position which Trowbridge suggests.

This reviewer feels that hiring additional Deputy Directors of Training and of Outreach may have advantages over hiring a full time Deputy Executive-Director. It may be difficult to recruit a Deputy Executive-Director of the desired calibre unless this position has its own set of responsibilities.

Recommendation 5.2:
The AERC should consider modest expansion of management staff, using as a basis the recent management and financial reviews.

6. The role and future of AERC

The AERC currently plays four major roles (in order in which they were introduced):
- thematic Research
- dissemination
- capacity building via the Collaborative Masters in economics
- collaborative research

All successful networks evolve with changing circumstances. Other potential new activities discussed by those interviewed included:
- extending capacity-building at the Masters level to more applied Masters programs e.g. Masters in Economic Policy or MBA
- extending capacity-building to an Africa-based PhD
- evolving new modalities to involve senior researchers, such as research support for senior fellows, or giving senior fellows more autonomy in running the thematic research groups, or organizing annual conferences on various research themes
- extending the network to be much more inclusive of francophone researchers
- short courses for training/capacity building

Likewise the AERC need not continue to undertake all current activities, and several of those interviewed considered the timeline for phasing out of direct involvement in the Collaborative Masters Program and handing over the responsibility to an independent group.
The discussion of AERC's long-term role cannot be separated from discussion of potential long-term financing, and also has to take into account the activities of other actors in the same areas: in the area of teaching these include the EDI-initiated Masters in Economic Policy, and new programs such as the MPA/MBA program at Witwatersrand supported by the Kennedy School at Harvard; in capacity-building the role of other networks in Africa such as CODESRIA, SISERA, and the new Joint Africa Institute in Abidjan; and other potential new capacity-building efforts such as proposals by the African Governors of the World Bank. The AERC may also have an important role as one of the seven participant networks in the new World Bank-initiated Global Development Network. The discussion which follows is inevitably somewhat subjective and speculative: it also treats in only cursory fashion some of the possibilities, given ongoing other studies by the AERC such as a revised PhD proposal, a discussion paper on extension of activities into francophone Africa, as well as a paper on long-term financing possibilities (Mule and Wilmshurst, 1998).

6.1 Research

In the area of research it is clear that the AERC has been extremely successful, and that the thematic research modality is likely to remain an area of need for the medium term (for the next 10 years). At issue is whether or not the donors will continue to fund this type of activity for another 10 years.

The collaborative projects clearly have the capability for being self-financing (although proper costing of overhead is imperative), and provide one modality for engaging "graduates" of the thematic groups. AERC will want to remain cautious and accept projects which further its own research agenda, rather than simply respond opportunistically to funding availability.

At the same time, the collaborative modality may not be the only way to engage more senior researchers. There is widespread support among those associated with the network for trying to emulate NBER or CEPR. These other networks have senior fellows programs, whereby senior fellows obtain assistance in raising funds for projects, as well as assistance in organizing conferences associated with such projects. Other possibilities could be to give the Group Chairs more of a role in the reviewing of new thematic proposals and the Research Papers, with compensation for their time (activities which are currently somewhat centralized in the Secretariat). Individual researchers could also be given in turn the responsibility for organizing the "special workshops", choosing different themes each year, with the expectation that proceedings would be published as a book.

Long-term funding is again an issue. One avenue is to explore actively the possibility of building an endowment. Whether or not this is feasible for a research organization based in Africa is somewhat uncharted territory, but worth trying. Apparently there are rules of thumb on what is involved: one is that it takes a person-year to raise $1 million; another is that well run campaigns have costs of around 13-15% of what is raised. Trying to raise an endowment would likely involve hiring a full-time development (fundraising) staff member for a year, to make an initial trial. One method which
universities have used in campaigns is "matching", whereby a current supporter agrees to match donations (perhaps with a specified ceiling) over a certain period of time: this technique has been quite successful for universities, and is often attractive for bringing in new supporters.

The AERC may also not have exhausted all possibilities for current bilateral support. Being more inclusive in terms of the nationality of Resource Persons could be helpful in attracting the interest of countries who currently do not support AERC, but who do have interests in Africa.

Lastly, broadening the base of support within Africa is seen by the Secretariat as an important priority, and the recent commitment by the ADB is an excellent step. Support could take the form of Central Banks for example providing research fellowships (using named fellowships to recognize donors may be one mechanism). This would build on the relationships with policy institutions within Africa, nurtured through the Senior Policy Seminars, through AERC graduates of the CMAP working in these institutions, etc. Continuing to build links with the policy community is key to long-run sustainability. It is vital that policy-makers are reminded of the importance of Africa-wide initiatives, since individual countries are likely think first of their own national policy research institutes. AERC should not allow funding considerations to dictate the direction of research, but the dissemination strategy can be tailored with long-run financing as one consideration.

Recommendation 6.1:
Excellent, world-class standards in research have been the hallmark of AERC’s success. As the network matures, AERC now has to define opportunities for its "senior research fellows".

Recommendation 6.2:
AERC has to begin to take a long-term view of funding for research. This could involve building an endowment; it certainly involves broadening the base of support from official donors both within and outside Africa; and it could involve seeking support from individuals and corporations, which may in turn have implications for strategic direction in teaching and training, and for outreach and dissemination of research results.

6.2. Teaching programs

When the AERC became involved in co-ordinating the Collaborative Masters, it was intended that this intervention would be of fixed duration. One reason - among others - is that external donor funding is also likely to be time-limited. African universities themselves are moving to more cost-recovery. The University of Nairobi for example has instituted its own Masters in Economic Policy to individuals who have worked for at least two years (whose background is not necessarily in economics). Participants can study part time and pay fees of around $600 per course, for several courses required. This is becoming increasingly common in other faculties and other universities in Africa. Other new externally-funded programs explicitly intend to move towards local sustainability in the future: the Masters in Economic Policy Programs (EDI-MEP) which have just been
moved to African universities have 3 cohorts of full external funding (one cohort is 30 students in each of the four participating institutions, or 120 students in total), then the intention is that external funding will phase out over a few (3-5) more years.

The AERC’s role in the Masters will then have been to set the standards of consistency and quality in the program. Also, because many African universities are relatively small in size, the AERC has helped universities to achieve scale economies through collaboration. This is in itself an extremely important achievement, and one which has involved an enormous amount of time and management effort. African universities are well behind their counterparts in other regions, in this type of intra-regional co-operation.

The AERC could continue to play various roles. One could be that the Joint Facility for Electives could continue to operate, and perhaps diversify to offer courses to other Masters programs in applied economics. It could also move to offer short (non-credit) courses for professionals. This is a role which the new Joint Africa Institute (modelled on the Vienna Institute) is playing in West Africa. The JAI is based in Abidjan and operated jointly by the IMF, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank. It will offer courses (often 2 weeks in length) for a cost of $3000-$5000 (including local accommodation but not travel) per participant. (There are already private institutions which offer such courses with offices in Nairobi and elsewhere in East Africa).

Another possibility is that AERC could diversify into helping to initiate and co-ordinate other applied economics masters programs. The AERC has not been involved so far in the externally-funded Masters in Economic Policy (set up at McGill and Clermont-Ferrand, and now opening at Makerere University in Uganda, at Legon University in Ghana, in the University of Yaounde, and Cocody University, Cote d’Ivoire). AERC will likely become involved even if indirectly because the same faculty at the two anglophone universities teach in both the MEP and the CMAP. Although students in the two programs are supposed to be from somewhat distinct groups (the CMAP is supposed to be for students who have recently completed the BA, and the MEP for mid-career government employees), in practice the distinction is not hard and fast. If both programs move to cost-recovery, they will be looking in some of the same places for students and funding.

One area in which there is likely to be future demand, which is currently not being strongly addressed, is in Business Economics or even MBA programs. There are some initiatives underway (such as the one supported by the Kennedy School in South Africa). This is not an area currently in AERC’s core interest. The strongest reason for being involved in such an area is with regard to the long-run sustainability of funding for the Masters in Economics and the PhD in economics, which are AERC’s major concern. If AERC is involved only in those programs with the highest "public good" value (the graduates of whom will teach in the other applied economics programs), then AERC is helping to fill a role that the market will otherwise fill only inadequately. However AERC then may miss the chance of cross-subsidy between programs. There may also again be economies of scale arguments, if the Joint Facility could be used to teach electives for MBA or Business Economics Programs. AERC is well-placed to partner with a university or universities outside Africa in a Collaborative MBA or Business Economics Program.
The AERC is also actively considering an Africa-based PhD program (likely beginning as a "sandwich" program). This is based on very strong arguments that demand for new economics PhD’s outstrips the current very slow additions to the stocks (a handful of students a year from universities mainly in Nigeria and South Africa, and a very few who are able to get funding for PhD’s abroad).

The AERC can also point out strongly the cost-effectiveness of its programs relative to others. Approximate figures suggest that the AERC collaborative Masters program requires about $22,000 of outside funding per student. This is not very different from the $25,000-$26,000 it costs in the Masters in Economic Policy in anglophone Africa (Franque Grimard/Jan Jorgensen pers. comm.: this cost excludes the internship component), but much less than such a program cost in Canada ($60,000 - all figures given in US dollars, all include both tuition costs and living costs, and all are costs of two-year programs). The costs in Africa are also much less than those in US-based mid-career Masters programs ($42,000 for a year at Williams, around $70,000 at Columbia for an 18-month program) and Canadian programs (the program which will continue at McGill will cost $29,000 not including living costs and the costs associated with an internship, for a 16-month program).

The cost of programs at the Joint Facility (around $4000 per student for 13 weeks), while higher than costs at local university (albeit for a different quality of experience) also compares favourably with the costs of short courses mounted by international organizations ($3000-$5000 for 2 week courses at the Joint Africa Institute, excluding participant travel).

The case for cost-effectiveness can be made both to external donors (to encourage them that support for the AERC training programs should continue), and to employers of students from Africa: after all, why should a Central Bank send four of its students to a program at Harvard for one year, when they could send eight or ten to the CMAP, and obtain a very valuable international experience at the Joint Facility for Electives with other African students, with very high quality instruction?

Recommendation 6.3:
The AERC should plan future activities in education and training, including not only the MA and PhD in economics, but also its role in applied economics Masters degrees including MBA’s, and begin offering short courses and ultimately distance courses.

Tables to be added:
table 3.1 is Number of students supported, 1992/3-1998/9 (listed as appendix table 2.7a on table supplied by AERC)
table 3.2 is table II of AERC’s Placement of MA and PhD graduates as of Feb 1999.
Appendix A: Persons consulted, and affiliation with AERC

Ali A. Ali  
Co-ordinator, Poverty project; Chair, Group A

Nora Amu  
CMAP student

Ernest Aryeetey  
RP; former Researcher

Jacob Atta  
Lecturer, JFE; Researcher

Vincent Babuanyisa  
Lecture, JFE

David Bevan  
RP; AC member; Chair, Research Subcommittee

Yohannes Birru  
CMAP student

Amos Cheptoo  
Former CMAP student; would-be-Researcher

Moses Chundu  
CMAP student

Paul Collier  
RP; Chair, Group C

Bernard Decaluwe  
AC Member; RP

Teigist Desslegn  
CMAP student

Shanta Devarajan  
RP

Festus Egwaikhide  
Lecture, JFE

Ibrahim Elbadawi  
Former Director of Research

Luneta Evans  
CMAP student

Jeffrey Fine  
Former Executive Director; currently consultant on teaching and research in Africa

Augustin Fosu  
Director of Research

Richard Gabay  
CMAP student

Geoffrey Gachino  
CMAP graduate

Alan Gelb  
Board Member

Rachel Gesami  
Manager, Human Resources and Administration

Franque Grimard  
Co-director, Masters in Economic Policy Program, McGill University

Catherine Gwin  
Board Member

Simon Harvey  
CMAP student

Gerry Helleiner  
Former Board Member

Hezron Hyangito  
Lecturer, JFE

Jan Jorgenson  
Co-director, Masters in Economic Policy Program, McGill University

Mohsin Khan  
AC; Chair, Group B

Tony Killick  
Chair of Board

Gubhinder Kundhi  
CMAP graduate; AERC PhD fellowship recipient

Real Lavergne  
Previous Co-ordinator, Réseau de Recherche sur les Politiques Industrielles

John Loxley  
Consultant, Phase III evaluation; Consultant, Policy Impact Study

Bill Lyakurwa  
Director of Training

Robert Mabele  
AC member; RP

Dr. Masai  
Member, Academic Board (Head of Dept at Nairobi)

Albert Matongela  
CMAP student

Andygean Mukuka  
CMAP student

Germano Mwabu  
RP

Jeremiah Mwabu  
Reviewer of proposals
James Mwangi  Financial Controller
Geoffrey Mwau  Lecturer, JFE
Francis Mwega  Consultant Deputy of Research
Germain Ndjieunde  AC member; RP
Benno Ndulu  Former Executive-Director
Njuguna Ndung'u  Lecturer, JFE
Salome Ndung'u  CMAP graduate
Gillian Ngola  Manager, Publications and Dissemination
Dominique Njinkeu  Deputy Director of Research; former Researcher
Robert Nthenge  CMAP student
Justus Nyamunga  Former CMAP student; Researcher
Marios Obwona  Lecturer, JFE
Zaddock Onyiego  Administrator, JFE
Barfuor Osei  Lecturer, JFE; AERC PhD fellowship recipient
Ademola Oyejide  Co-ordinator Collab Project on Growth; Co-ordinator, Collab Project on World Trading; Chair, Group AT; former chair, AC
Lineth Oyugi  CMAP student
Caroline Pestieau  Board member
Delphin Rwegasira  Executive Director
Mirriam Saiwa  CMAP student
Bai Sankoh  CMAP student
Moses Sichei  CMAP graduate
Erik Thorbecke  Consultant, Evaluation of Research Programs; RP; Co-coordinator of Collaborative Project on Poverty
Jean-Pierre Timnou  Researcher
Maureen Were  CMAP graduate

Abbreviations
A,B,C,AT  Refer to thematic research groups
AC  Advisory Committee
CMAP  Collaborative Masters Programme
JFE  Joint Facility for Electives (of the Masters Program)
RP  Resource Person
Appendix B: Documents consulted


AERC. Issues arising from the European Union’s evaluation of AERC’s Collaborative Masters Program. Nairobi, AERC, 1998b. (Mimeo.)


Internet: http://www.aercafrica.org


Appendix C: Suggested content for "AERC: Opportunities for members"

1. Under what conditions can a researcher obtain a second research grant (e.g. conditions on publication, etc.)
2. What are the criteria for deciding which researchers can attend a particular technical workshop?
3. What are the expectations for researchers "graduating" from the thematic research modality?
4. How can researchers become involved in thematic projects?
5. How are Resource Persons selected from the group of researchers?
6. Use of the alumnae database and listserver
7. Clearinghouse activities: job postings put on the website, etc.
Appendix D. Terms of reference for evaluation

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to conduct, on behalf of the Board of the AERC, an assessment of the Consortium's programmes and activities during Phase IV (April 1997 - March 2000). It is also aimed at providing a forward-looking basis for desirable programmatic activities during Phase V. The focus of this evaluation is on the following:

- Taking stock of progress achieved under the major research themes, and briefly assessing the adequacy of these themes, in the context of AERC's objectives and evolving policy concerns as well as the circumstances in Sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, the implications of introducing the new theme on Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Market Issues, and the way this has been managed, will be examined. Specifically, evaluate the process and criteria for selecting the research themes and the extent to which they reflect the changing research and policy priorities in sub-Saharan Africa.

- Preliminary review of the growing importance of collaborative research in the Consortium — including its synergy with thematic research, and draw implications for coordination and management, financing, and dissemination.

- A review of progress, quality and relevance of the CMAP, and the potential and desirability for introducing an AERC-administered collaborative Ph.D programme. Of necessity, the latter programme would have to be pursued while preserving the integrity of the current CMAP.

- Cost effectiveness of the labour-intensive research and training programmes; given that concerns have been raised regarding the biannual research workshops (whether the research processing stages could be reduced from the present three to two) as well as the centralised teaching of the CMAP elective courses.

- Efficiency and adequacy of AERC dissemination programmes relative to the objective of enhancing the "development value" of AERC -- in terms of policy dialogue and policy-making in African countries.

- The impact that AERC programmes have had in promoting application of the research capacity and output to policy dialogue and policy-making.

- Review the balance of activities and expenditures in face of growing financial stringency and on the management processes for prioritisation and expenditure control in the face of revenue shortfalls. To make suggestions for the future adaptation and content of AERC's activities, and for resources to implement these activities.

As indicated earlier, the evaluation should be forward looking so as to be able to inform the formulation of the strategy for the next Phase.
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Note to table:
* Category A University Students
** Attrition of Students
  Botswana(1)
  Ghana(2)
  Nairobi(2)
  Addis(1) absconded
  Zimbabwe (1) and 2 who did not participate at the JFE and 3 in 1998
*** Did not attend the JFE.
Table 3.2: Placement of MA and PhD Graduates as of February 1999

1. **Collaborative MA scholarships**

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2. **PhD Thesis Research Grant Awards**

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3. **PhD Fellowships**

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