

IDRC-Supported Research & Its Influence on Public Policy

Results From a Cross Case Analysis

Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

I. Purpose of this Analysis

We are dealing with 22 case studies of IDRC-supported research projects, whose subject matter ranges across the spectrum of international development – trade policy, mining, health, education, fisheries, and so on – and we are seeking to generalize from these cases. The lessons we are attempting to draw are about the factors that are conducive to policy influence of the IDRC research projects. The purpose of this cross-case analysis is primarily to bring information to IDRC in ways that enable it to manage future projects in more productive and efficient ways.

The findings of this inquiry, nevertheless, are not necessarily unique to IDRC. Many international aid organizations face similar issues, and it is our hope that other organizations will find ideas and experiences in these pages that they can make use of in their own work. Furthermore, we would like to contribute to the evolution of empirical work in international development and to the development of better theoretical bases for the field as a whole. Even beyond international development, we hope that we can make a contribution to an understanding of the interconnections between research and policy in the broader reaches of policy. Substantial research has been done in this area, in the tradition of what used to be called “research utilization,” but almost none of the prior research has been done in developing countries. To make contributions across such large arenas represents grandiose hopes for such a delimited study, but we hope that our work nudges knowledge and theory along, if only by a few steps.

II. Conceptualization of Policy Influence

A. Key Terms

In this study, we use the term “**policy influence**” to mean much more than an immediate and direct effect on legislation or administrative regulation. We include a range of effects, some of them specific changes in current policies, some of them minor adjustments, some visible in the short term and others only in a long term view, some occurring because of transmission of research findings to high-level government actors and other effects that occur indirectly, perhaps operating through local governments, NGOs, and public opinion, some of them characterized by a gentle shift in the climate of opinion among scientists and social scientists on matters related to government action. We elucidate the meaning of “policy influence” in the next section.

When we talk about “**research**,” we subsume the whole apparatus of the research enterprise. Thus, our inquiry is not limited to the use of specific data or data systems, nor to the findings of particular studies. Of course, we include the array of facts, generalizations, beliefs, and theories that arise from empirical work. But we also take into account all the accoutrements of research: the choice of variables that are chosen for study, the way that the variables are operationalized, the emphases in a set of studies, the

issues that are taken for granted because they seem unproblematic and are therefore not addressed in the research, the types of scientists who are brought into the research arena (economists? civil engineers?), the theories selected to underlie the work, the way that research direction and research results are negotiated with various interested parties and publics, the use of advisory bodies, the openness of the data to other scientists and publics, the inclusion of a range of authorities in the research process, the ways in which data are analyzed, how conclusions are drawn from data and the parties that participate in interpreting the meaning of the research for political action. One feature of research that permeates the cases is the training and experience that they inherently provide to researchers not only in research methods, although this is paramount, but also in communicating the findings of research to policy makers and practitioners. All these and many more features of research can have an influence on a political system. To give only two examples among many, the actions of the Syria Brackish Water project in working with local farmers and using working farms for experimentation provided a model for other undertakings in the country. Similarly, the Ukraine project's actions have been followed in further government activities, such as the project's willingness to share its data and data systems across many agencies and to work collaboratively with business, governments, and international agencies. In fact, the widespread use of advisory committees in IDRC-sponsored projects has enhanced collaboration in many places, especially between government agencies and universities.

Our definition of research, like our definition of influence, is wide and inclusive. This report attempts to capture the full range of IDRC project experience in the policy realm.

B. Types of Policy Influence

One type of influence of IDRC's support of research is certainly **improvement in the capacity of researchers and research institutions** to study their own country and its institutions and activities. In some developing countries traditions of research are weak, or have been interrupted by wars or occupation. With IDRC assistance, the knowledge and skills of researchers are enhanced. Training and mentorship opportunities give appropriate preparation to scientists in many fields to engage in highly competent research. Universities and other research institutions gain the infrastructure and learn the techniques for providing support for sustained research inquiry. One example is MIMAP-Senegal. CREA, an IDRC-supported research institution, gained sufficient strength and skill to undertake the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, with the help of government partners, to attract international donor funds.

A parallel kind of influence is making **research more relevant to current concerns** in the country. IDRC intends most of the research it supports to address issues that will advance development. Some scientists in these countries have absorbed the academic reward system of Western research universities where the goal is to publish in the international literature without concern for the relevance of the work to local issues. The idea of research for application – for use – has been blunted. One influence of IDRC projects is a move toward use-oriented, applicable research. The Asian Fisheries project is a good example of this outcome. In the early years of the project, the emphasis was on

preparing social scientists, primarily economists, to engage in research on fisheries alongside biologists. In later years, the emphasis shifted to policy relevant research on management of “capture fisheries” and aquaculture systems.

An outgrowth of this increased competence can be **improvement in the communication of research knowledge** to actors in the political arena. This means that researchers take seriously the responsibility to disseminate their findings and understandings, have the technical skills to transmit knowledge and ideas, and arrange multiple opportunities to communicate. Whether they communicate directly to national policymakers or to informed publics (such as NGOs and local authorities) or to university classes training the next generation of policymakers, they move the ideas from research into currency. As an example, the Latin America Trade Network project, LATN, devoted a large proportion of its time to communicating with policymakers in the Latin American countries in the network, high-level and mid-level bureaucrats, and with negotiators engaged in actual international negotiations.

Thus, one type of policy influence is improvement in the capabilities of researchers and research institutions to undertake high-quality research on subjects on the public agenda. It also involves moving the information and ideas into the public debate. This type of influence operates through the activities of researchers who become more skilled, more application-oriented, and more communicative in their research endeavors. It is similar to Lindquist’s category of “expanding policy capacities.”

A second type of influence has to do with **intermediation between research and policymaking**. Researchers are motivated to pass on the knowledge they have gained and become adroit in arranging forums, advisory bodies, and networks for transmitting their knowledge – and their questions. They interact not only with other researchers but also with participants in the policy process. They help policy actors to interpret the data in light of issues on the policy docket. The appearance of new forums is one indicator of this type of influence. Both researchers and policy participants confront new concepts and ideas and engage in continuing dialogue. This type of influence has a resemblance to what Lindquist has called “broadening policy horizons.” An example is Ukraine, where policymakers and heads of research institutions worked on the same team in the Environmental Management Development project and together lobbied for changes in legislation when barriers appeared.

A third type of policy influence is **expanding the capacities of political actors** to make informed use of data and research knowledge. Here it is people who participate in public discussion and decision making who take an active part. They become skilled in understanding the import of the information they receive. Once informed through any of multiple channels about research and data, they participate in making meaning out of the data. In the MIMAP-Bangladesh case, research analyzed the poverty impacts of microeconomic policies. Among other activities, the project established a computerized data collection system on poverty and helped two government agencies, the Bureau of Statistics and the Planning Commission, to do the poverty monitoring and analyze the data. This information became the main source backing the Finance Minister’s budget.

When research has permeated a policy field, it can cause some participants to change their minds and/or to develop compromises or innovative policy proposals. In the Jordan Greywater Reuse project, one outcome was that government personnel promoted the policy possibilities in urban agriculture based on reuse of greywater, i.e. water already used for cooking, laundry, or other non-toxic purposes.

A final type of policy influence in this study is an actual **modification in programs, regulations, systems, budgets, administrative provisions, or legislation**. Similar to Lindquist's category of "affecting policy regimes," this type of influence is unusual simply on the basis of research. In order to lead to a change in policy, more than research is needed. As previous inquiries in the US and Western Europe have shown, research alone is usually not enough to make significant change unless the research confirms what important people wanted to do anyway. Policy change generally requires support from powerful people and powerful interests and consonance with a prevailing set of beliefs. An example from the case studies is Nepal's IT Policy Development project. The government of Nepal determined to adopt a national policy on information technology (IT) in order to capture the economic and social benefits that it saw neighboring countries acquiring, and it commissioned the IDRC-funded research organization ICIMOD to provide research for the policy's development. The end result was the adoption of an IT policy for Nepal; all the pins had been lined up before the research was undertaken.

C. Limitations of the Analysis

Written Cases

We are basing our analysis on the written cases. Often the case does not make clear which project activities and events were promoted by IDRC and which were the outgrowth of local recipients' own diagnoses and prescriptions. We have tended to err in the direction of ascribing to IDRC much of the incentive and initiative for project activities, which may be an exaggeration of the intentions and authority of IDRC. Still, by its choice of recipient researchers and research institutions, through negotiation of project terms of reference, and by its staff monitoring and oversight, IDRC has had much to do with what projects do and how they try to accomplish their aims.

Some of the cases, although amazingly informative, are skimpy on details about what projects actually did. Particularly when the project deal with technical issues, such as international trade or economic policy, it is not always clear how research topics were chosen, what the research covered, or what it found.

One impression we gained from the cases is that some of the case-writers tended to give a positive gloss to events. Even relatively small uses of project documents, such as a reference by a ministry official to a project datum, tended to be seen as heralding policy influence. We acknowledge that we may be wrong, but we have an impression that the cases reflect a positive spin on the extent of policy influence. We leave it to IDRC staff to determine whether the tone of the cases gives an accurate impression of events in the field.

Shortage of Counter Examples

The project cases for this investigation were chosen because they were considered examples of successful policy influence. It turned out that a few of them, five in our estimation, had little policy influence. But those are the only cases of policy failure we have for comparison. In our analysis, we draw lessons about conditions that are associated with policy influence such as clear articulation by IDRC at the start of the project of an intention to influence policy, ongoing contacts with government policy makers about the project research, and involvement of a range of groups and civil-society associations with the project. However, because of the paucity of contrasting cases, we do not know whether such strategies are unique to successful projects or whether they are also characteristic of projects that do not have policy influence. The lack of comparison makes our conclusions tentative. It is possible that some of the conditions and activities that we infer are related to policy influence would also appear in cases where policy influence was minuscule.

Even when contrasting influential projects with the few projects studied that had little influence, the comparison is uneasy. Unsuccessful projects usually suffered from multiple handicaps, e.g. the context changed, key decision makers left their positions, researchers were untrained, etc. Thus it is impossible to pinpoint the *key* reason for influence failure. Our analysis on occasion has to resort to comparisons with the same handful of cases, which lacked many of the characteristics that seem to portend policy influence. We do not know which of the characteristics were paramount.

In a further investigation, it might be possible to include more cases where the project exercised no discernible influence. However, even if we had larger numbers, unsuccessful projects are not always useful to study. So many obvious things go wrong, often many things at once, that it is not easy to ascribe failure to one or a few factors. Still, we want to acknowledge that our analysis is constrained by the fact that a criterion for case selection was successful policy influence. Someone nominated each case as successful, and our judgments of the factors behind that success are limited by the paucity of comparisons.

CONTEXT

Analysis of the context of policy influence in these twenty-two IDRC-supported projects leads to two prevailing conclusions. The first is that there are no “best practices” when it comes to research influencing public policy. Rather, it is about the confluence of factors that interact in a variety of ways leading towards, or away from, influence. The second is that projects are both successes and failures depending on when and from what perspective they are viewed. The purpose of the strategic evaluation was not to assess the overall success or failure of each project but to look at them through the lens of whether and how they had an influence on public policy.

Below we analyze, first, how the relationship between three factors - decision-makers’ need for research, IDRC project’s ability to engage in advocacy, and the ease of implementing research recommendations - leads to or away from policy influence. Then, we examine additional contextual factors that enhance or inhibit the policy influence of IDRC projects.

I. Relationship among decision-makers’ need for research, project advocacy, and institutional structures for implementing policy proposals.

The analysis of contextual factors revealed that in order for IDRC-sponsored research to have some impact on policy making, there should exist either a strong desire among decision-makers for such research or effective advocacy by project staff for the relevance of the research to policy. If there is weak desire for research among decision-makers, there needs to be strong project advocacy; a strong interest in the research by decision makers needs little promotion of the research. In either of these situations, institutional structures need to be available to implement recommended policies. Characterizing this relationship is useful for helping to answer the following questions:

- Should the project focus primarily on knowledge generation to aid a decision process of policy-makers or can it be less constrained in its choice of research areas?
- What type of leadership is demanded of the project?
- What is the nature of the advocacy connected with the research and affecting its potential to influence?
- To what extent does the project have to address the implementation of research findings as part of its policy influence objective?

Five types of relationships between decision-makers’ desire for research *and* research project advocacy are proposed. These are dynamic types and we see evidence of projects moving among them.

A. Open window of policy influence. Policymakers want research results for decision-making purposes and are ready to act on them

In this case there is a government desire for knowledge in a decision process. To make an effective contribution, the researchers generally need to have built a relationship of trust with the decision-makers and have a reputation for high quality research and timeliness. The researcher or research group needs credibility but not an agenda of its own. Policy-friendly presentation of findings may be less important here given the policy-makers' intention to act. There is little or no need to consider institutionalization of the issue as the decision-makers have determined to proceed and are considering how to do so. This is illustrated by the MIMAP-Senegal case where the research group was asked by the government to play a central role in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper production process. They were brought in based on their reputation and the relationships of the head researcher and were contributing to a government decision process. Policy influence was also achieved in Acacia projects in Africa and in IT policy development project in Nepal, where IDRC initiatives were responsive to the governments' search for ways to use the IT industry to promote economic growth. Similarly, in Viet Nam, IDRC-funded economic research projects were started at the request of the head of one of the central economic research institutions in the country and produced results that appeared to serve as a basis for many economic policy decisions in the country¹. In sum, in cases where decision-makers want the type of research offered by IDRC projects in order to make policy decisions, the likelihood of impact on policy is high. In this welcoming context project staff may not need to exert its own efforts on dissemination of research recommendations.

B. Partially open window of influence. Policy makers consider the issue important but do not have the necessary structures or activities in place through which research recommendations can be implemented.

In this context, the issue is well known to the government, and it is clear that there are public policy implications. But there is no clear decision process in play. In this situation, the project needs to communicate clearly to policy makers. It might also consider the institutional structures that are able to implement the recommendations (or implications) of its research. If there is no system in place to implement the proposed recommendations, the research findings may never be acted upon. The TEHIP case study is instructive. The challenge was how, and at what point, to institutionalize the TEHIP tools within the central Ministry of Health. A lack of coordination among the various players in the health sector led to a halt of the project after its pilot phase. In the Philippines, the need to increase poverty monitoring in order to address the poverty gap was articulated by the MIMAP researchers and their work resonated with policy makers. However, as with TEHIP, the challenge here appeared to be moving beyond the local level contribution and institutionalizing the poverty monitoring system at the national level. MIMAP-Bangladesh, on the other hand, is an example of successful institutionalization of research activities within government institutions. The project staff

¹ It is hard to trace with certainty the effect of specific projects on policy decisions in Viet Nam, since political decision-making is an opaque and secretive process.

worked from the very beginning to train the officials in the Bureau of Statistics and in the national Planning Commission in the use of the economic analysis tools, thus placing the weight of the project implementation on their shoulders. Since the staff at one of these institutions was also involved in designing a national economic development plan as well as the PRSP for the country, they drew on the MIMAP research in formulating these documents.

These and other cases suggest that government interest in research is not a guarantee of its influence on policy. It seems crucial that decision-makers have a plan for implementing the lessons from the research within government structures or current activities. When such a plan is missing the project team may need to work with relevant decision-makers on developing it; for example, they may decide to train government staff as in the MIMAP-Bangladesh project.

C. Partially open window of policy influence. The government has been working on the issue before and acknowledges the need for such research but has more pressing priorities and/or a shortage of resources to engage with it.

In this context, the issue is generally known but leadership clearly resides within the research project. The government is interested in addressing the issue in the future, or would like to address it now but does not have the resources or has more important priorities to take care of. The links to decision processes are generally weak. In this context the project staff should first of all be concerned with *moving the issue up on priority list* of the policy makers, before thinking about undertaking the research proposals in a resource-scarce policy environment. An example of the project doing well in such a context is the Environmental Management Development in the Ukraine (EMDU) program. Research on water quality was conducted by local researchers long before the IDRC project. However, the work was under-funded and technologies were out of date. The IDRC project strongly advocated the use of new water testing technologies and bringing data and evidence to policy formulation on water management. The staff also worked on creating popular support for the project, which helped reinforce policy makers' attention to the research. To make its work practical and advance its implementation, the project offered cheaper technology solutions for environmental testing and trained government officials in maintaining and updating the databases on water quality.

D. Closed window of policy influence. Policy makers are not interested in the research program.

In this context, there is no government involvement or interest in the issue, and so a strong research agenda and advocacy are needed to obtain influence. While individuals in the government may know of the issue, it may be controversial or not yet have affected a key political constituency. The research group has to promote the agenda in the policy and public domains and draw attention to the issue. Here, advocacy is central; the communication and dissemination of the issue to diverse audiences is important. The project team has to work on creating even an initial interest in the issue. As in earlier

cases, it might also establish the structures to move the issue forward. Potential for failure is high. In the case of financing education reform in Guatemala, it was not the government's priority to focus on ethnic and gender differences in educational spending; in addition, the country was undergoing political and economic turmoil at the time. In these conditions advocacy of the project staff was essential. However, the researchers did not assume a sufficient leadership role to identify and target the key government ministries and the nongovernmental players who could be interested in the issue and have an influence on policy-making. The team also failed to recognize the importance of timing in policy processes and the timing of the project's results was not in sync with the timing of the education budget.

In the High Altitude Mining case, researchers found that mining at high altitudes in Peru adversely affected the health of miners and their families. However, the national Ministry of Health was not receptive to these results, which challenged the traditional belief that people adapt to living and working at high altitudes. Shortly after the project was completed, the Peruvian government underwent political and economic reforms. This resulted in a new policy agenda and further hampered any kind of influence the research might have had. Another example of government disinterest can be seen in the project on brackish water use in Syria.

Successful examples of strong advocacy by the project in the face of the lack of government interest are SRISTI and the Peru Copper Mining project. SRISTI created awareness among policy makers of the importance of its work and was able to institutionalize its activities through government structures. It accumulated convincing evidence, tailored its appeals to specific decision-makers, and proactively created networking opportunities for government officials and project staff. Similarly, the Peru Copper Mining project was able to influence government and private industry by gathering evidence, building relationships with officials, and wide publicity. These and other cases indicate that in the context of little or no government interest in the issue, the project should not only produce, but also engage in, advocacy for implementation.

The above analysis suggests that the ideal condition for policy influence is policy-makers' strong interest in research for the purposes of policy creation. However, interest alone is not enough; policy makers should have structures and procedures to implement research recommendations. Future IDRC-sponsored projects may benefit from the analysis of these contextual factors before engaging in action. The project teams should ask: How much interest is there in this type of research among policy makers? Are there structures and procedures in place that enable policy makers to implement policy recommendations of the research? The answers to these questions will inform the project staff about 1) how seriously they should engage in advocacy work for their project; and 2) how much effort they should put in working with policy makers on implementing the policy proposals stemming from research.

II. Additional Contextual Factors Relevant to Policy Influence

In addition to the three contextual factors examined above - decision-makers' desire for research, the advocacy activities and abilities of the project team, and the ease of implementing research proposals - there are other factors that either facilitate or impede policy influence. Some of these factors are external to the project, relating to the situation in the country and in its decision-making bodies. Not much usually can be done about these factors by the IDRC, except for, perhaps, focusing efforts on those countries where fewer external barriers exist and where external facilitating factors are present. However, there are also contextual factors that are internal to the project. At least some of these factors are in the power of the IDRC to influence.

A. Stability of relevant decision-making institutions

In several IDRC-supported projects low policy influence appears to be a result of the instability in the policy-making structures involved. In most cases this instability became apparent after research had already been carried out and it was time to implement the recommendations. For example, in the case of High Altitude Mining project in Peru, budget cuts led to the elimination of the government institute dealing with occupational health risks that could support policy proposals based on the study. While research on health hazards of working in the mountains had been produced, lack of a relevant government agency impeded use of the results. In another case, during the IDRC-funded research into educational budget in Guatemala, the government went through drastic structural changes, with decision-making powers moving from the executive to the legislative branch. The project staff was not ready for these changes and thus was not able to lobby the new structures. Instability in the national policy-making structures was also a challenge for the research activities of LATN, as well as for the Environmental Management Development Program in Ukraine. However, in the latter case, the project staff was to some extent able to overcome these challenges by addressing its research-based messages to a much wider audience (e.g., through TV programs) as well as to more stable governmental structures (e.g., the president of the country). In some cases less fluid decision-making structures may be found at regional or local levels. Relying on provincial decision-making structures that appeared to be quite stable was one of the factors in the success of institutionalizing the Poverty Monitoring System in the province of Palawan in MIMAP-Philippines project.

In sum, the instability of relevant decision-making structures may be detrimental to policy influence of the IDRC-funded projects. Fortunately, project efforts suggest that it is possible to identify the decision-making structures that are more stable and to focus energies on collaborating with these structures.

B. Capacity of policy makers to use research

In several cases, and especially in LATN and G-24 projects, the policy makers who were the recipients of the IDRC-funded research had low capacity for research utilization. In the case of LATN, government officials appeared to be unfamiliar with basic concepts of trade negotiations. In G-24, the finance ministers of the developing countries were initially skeptical of the econometric models generated by the research group. In both

cases the research staff had to devote more attention to basic education of government officials than it had initially planned. In addition, the government officials from developing countries in the case of G-24 were frequently in a position of dependency on IMF/WB funding, and thus tended to be timid and conservative in using research findings to propose changes in international financial policy-making. These examples suggest that in the cases where policy makers either need basic training before they can benefit from research findings or are torn by competing interests, policy influence may be less pronounced or slower. These factors may need to be considered by IDRC project designers. For example, additional time may be allocated early in the project to educate government officials about the basic ideas behind specific IDRC-funded research and its relevance to policy.

C. Decentralization versus tight government control

Whether the country has a centralized or decentralized government does not seem to be unequivocally associated with particular policy outcomes. Whether decentralization is a help or a hindrance to policy influence depends on the nature of the project, specifically on whether the project aims to have an effect at the same level at which the decisions on the issue are made. For example, the MIMAP-Philippines project was aimed at institutionalizing poverty monitoring tools throughout the country. However, this project was conducted under conditions of decentralized responsibility for poverty monitoring and poverty eradication. MIMAP systems of poverty monitoring were successfully instituted in one of the provinces of the Philippines, but project staff encountered difficulties in trying to institutionalize such systems nationwide, since the relevant national institutions did not feel they had the authority to dictate to the provinces. In the TEHIP project, the government was interested in actually promoting decentralized decision-making by health workers at the district and local levels, and the pilot project carried out through IDRC was valuable for learning how to do so. Similarly, in the case of Acacia projects the governments were interested in using IT to facilitate the decentralization of decision making, and the projects were quite successful in helping them. The projects provided tools that could support the process. Over all, it appears that when the projects were trying to exert policy influence in line with the government decision making structure, they were able to have greater policy impact.

Tight central government control over the country and over research priorities can be either beneficial or detrimental for policy influence depending on the nature of the project. It appears to be beneficial for national level policy effects when the research is aligned with country interests. Thus, economic studies carried out by IDRC-trained researchers in Vietnam were of great interest to the government as it strove to re-orient itself from a central to a market-based economy and needed well-researched economic reform proposals to attract donor funding. As a result, IDRC research was supported by major research centers in the country and the results of the studies were in the air in the policy-making arena. On the other hand, in Syria, with its equally strong central control of decision making, the focus of the Brackish Water project was not a priority for the government. Even though the project was carried out by an internationally renowned research institution, the research results were never utilized for policy purposes.

In sum, it appears that IDRC-funded projects have a chance at policy influence when the intended level of influence corresponds to the decision-making structure in the country. If the project aims to have a national effect while the decisions are made locally, policy effect is less likely. Instead of pre-planning the level of policy influence in IDRC projects, it may be useful for the IDRC to conduct some initial investigations into what level of policy influence is actually possible in a given case.

D. Special opportunities in countries in transition

Two research projects were in countries whose institutions were in transition from communism. The projects on Environmental Management in Ukraine and on economic restructuring in Viet Nam were effective not only in generating policy-relevant research and affecting policy, but also in teaching local researchers and policy makers new approaches to inter-institutional collaboration and decision-making. These countries were undergoing transition to more liberal approaches to governance (Ukraine) and economy (Viet Nam), and thus were attuned to new ways of functioning. For example, IDRC partners in Ukraine observed that IDRC staff had brought with them a new culture of management characterized by open information sharing, consultation with all relevant stakeholders before decision-making, and basing decisions on research evidence. It appears that in countries that are undergoing transitions IDRC-funded research has a potential to affect not only *what* policies are made but also *the way* they are made and the way research is utilized.

E. Economic pressures on the government

In most of the cases where the government expressed a clear need for and an interest in the project, it was responding to economic pressure. For example, MIMAP projects appeared to be successful largely because there was pressure on the governments to produce Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in order to receive donor funding, and the data generated by the projects could be used. Similarly, in Viet Nam the politicians needed to attract donor funding and thus were interested in producing feasible economic proposals. Finally, in Acacia projects and in Nepal IT policy development case, the governments felt the need to develop their economy and saw IT development as an effective strategy. These examples suggest that the likelihood of project influence is higher if it is linked to the economic needs of the country. When this is not the case, the project has to be able to undertake advocacy work to prove its worth and significance to policy-makers. SRISTI is a good example of such a process, as described in the section on partnerships.

F. Stability of project staff

A substantial number of the research projects were hindered in their effectiveness by the instability of the project staff. In some projects, such as ECAPAPA and MIMAP-Senegal, staff instability was largely due to the fact that researchers were young and inexperienced and were eager to find new opportunities for themselves with their

enhanced skills. In other cases, such as MIMAP-Bangladesh and MIMAP-Philippines, there appeared to be a relationship between the complexity of the econometric models operated by the projects and staff turnover. While it is unclear what came first in this relationship, staff turnover has been an especially big challenge in these cases since training in the use of the econometric models is labor-intensive. In the Acacia-South Africa project, the participants' instability was linked to the way they were selected. In this particular case, the primary selection criterion for the advisory committee for the project was being representative of the diverse South African community. Other important criteria that would ensure membership stability were not considered. In sum, such factors as young and inexperienced staff, complexity of research tools, and lack of attention to important selection criteria are likely to increase staff instability and so hinder policy influence. However, the experience of some projects suggests that it is possible to carry out successful work even in the face of high staff turnover. In the Jordan Greywater Reuse project and in SRISTI, continuity of staff existed at least at the leadership level, and this continuity appeared to be crucial to projects' effectiveness in influencing policy, even though their other staff changed.

G. Learning opportunities for researchers to produce policy-relevant research

Even though in several cases the explicit goal of the projects was building researchers' capacity to conduct policy-relevant research, the amount of guidance, support and training received by researchers in these projects differed. On the one hand, researchers in the Ukraine Environmental Management program and in the economic studies in Viet Nam were given clear benchmarks for the quality of research expected of them and were provided with opportunities to develop new research skills through interactions with internationally established researchers. They were assisted in shifting from theoretical to applied research, and were able to closely interact with policy-makers. On the other hand, researchers in the ECAPAPA and Guatemala projects were expected to develop policy-relevant research skills but were not provided with any systematic training opportunities and experiences to develop such skills and were not held accountable in their work to certain quality standards. While additional reasons contributed to the success of the first two projects and to the failure of the latter two, attention to development of policy-relevant research capacities seems to be one of the factors in promoting policy influence.

H. Overlap of management functions among several bodies

Several projects suffered from confusion of management roles within the project, which reportedly inhibited their impact on policy. This appeared to be primarily a challenge for large projects with many participants. For example, in the G-24 project three bodies were responsible for the research agenda – the research coordinator, UNCTAD, and the Liaison group that connected researchers with country officials. Since their research priorities differed, this led to conflicts and detracted from the effectiveness of the project. Similarly, in the cases of Acacia-Uganda and Acacia-South Africa projects, there was a lack of clarity about the difference in the roles of the two governing bodies, the secretariat and the advisory committee. This also led to logistical difficulties and limited the projects' potential. It thus appears important for complex projects with many

managing parties to invest time in crafting the coordination and responsibility-sharing mechanisms early in the project.

I. Conflict of interests among involved bodies

For the multinational projects, such as G-24 and LATN, an additional challenge appeared to be conflicts of interests among stakeholders. For example, the policy influence of LATN appeared to be hindered by the conflict between the trade interests of the region promoted by LATN and the interests of the national vested interest groups (mostly representing the business sector). Similarly, in the case of G-24 there was a conflict of interests between providing immediate answers to the research needs of government officials and working for longer-term outcomes by initiating dialogue with wider audiences regarding the policy-making process itself. In both cases, such conflict of interests appeared to hinder the potential policy influence of the projects. One potential approach to dealing with such conflicts, at least for cases similar to G-24 where stakeholders have similar goals, may be to engage in strategic discussions with all stakeholders regarding the way they expect policy change to happen. Such program theory discussions may help the parties clarify and evaluate possible mechanisms of change and hopefully agree on common strategies for action.

This analysis of project context has several implications for planning future IDRC projects. The data suggest that these *external* factors that may facilitate policy influence: 1) stable government structures at the level the project hopes to influence; 2) policy makers with the capacity and knowledge to use the research; 3) economic pressure on decision-makers that make this type of research useful; 4) correspondence between the degree of centralization in the country and the level of decision-making that the project wants to affect; and 5) being a country or a region in economic or political transition. The following *internal* contextual factors are likely to increase chances of policy influence: 1) stability of the project staff; 2) provision of systematic learning opportunities for researchers; 3) coordination of management roles within the project; and 4) absence of the conflicts of interest among the participants within the project.

We are not implying that IDRC should undertake projects only where all conditions are favorable. Obviously, some risk-taking is inevitable and potentially useful. For example, regarding the last item, avoidance of conflicts among participants, such a condition may be in inherent tension with IDRC's interest in involving a wide range of stakeholders in the project. As the array of interests represented in the project increases, the likelihood of conflict increases. But conflict is not necessarily bad. Experience suggests that it is usually better to let people express their differences in an organized forum where some kind of resolution or compromise is possible than to leave critics on the outside to snipe.

IDRC'S INTENT TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY

The main concern regarding IDRC's intent is, do projects tend to have more policy influence when such influence is an explicit goal from the outset? In determining the answer to this question, it is useful to ask: What *is* IDRC's intent in any given project or program? Was IDRC's intent to influence policy explicit, implicit, late-developing, or non-existent? How is that intent manifested? To what extent is intent related to level, type, and success of policy influence? *How*, and in what ways, does intent relate to policy influence?

Under most circumstances it is reasonable to expect that a project that intends to influence policy will be more successful at doing so than projects that do not. However, evidence from a few of the cases suggests initial intent to influence policy is not always required to eventually have policy influence. Although intent may alter the extent or type of policy influence the project may have, under such circumstances IDRC's (or its recipients') ability to respond to changing conditions and new opportunities will determine the project's potential for policy influence.

I. Explicitness of Intent

Projects vary a great deal in the explicitness of their intent to influence policy and the extent to which IDRC and the recipient organization felt this was an important element of the project. In a number of projects, evidence from the cases suggests IDRC and the recipient organization clearly and *explicitly* intended from the beginning to influence policy at one level or another. Under the clearest of circumstances, IDRC *and* recipient organization researchers all clearly identified policy influence as an important goal of the project. Researchers devised project strategies and planned activities with policy influence in mind as an important goal. An example of this is the Ukraine Environmental Management project in which IDRC, the recipient organization, and key government actors all agreed from the outset that a change in environmental management policy was an important element of the project.

In a number of other projects, either IDRC or the recipient organization placed less emphasis on policy influence, even though it seems *implicit* in their strategies and actions. In yet other instances, some projects begin with *no clear intent* to influence policy; however, in response to changing project and contextual conditions, and in varying degrees, over time they develop an interest in doing so. At this point, however, it would be wise to insert a note of caution.

Given the nature of the cases we have reviewed, it would be foolhardy to draw too fine-grained a distinction about the explicitness of IDRC's intent to influence policy. One might be tempted to review the cases and ascribe labels to each such as explicit, implicit, late-developing, and non-existent intent and then compare them to see what type and level of policy influence they achieved. However, this would be simplistic. Rather, it would be safer to *start* by saying that, in general, projects that explicitly intend to have

policy influence seem to do a much better job at achieving it. There are many exceptions to this generality, though, and in practice initial intent does not *automatically* translate into policy influence. In fact, most of the evidence from these cases suggests there is no direct “one-to-one” correspondence between initial intent and actual policy influence. The situation is much more nuanced and complex than this kind of simple analysis would suggest. In other words, there are a variety of factors that are intent-related that must be taken into account when determining the relationship between intent and level of policy influence and whether or not intent translates into policy influence. The following sections include discussions of these factors.

II. Contextual Factors that Influence Intent

Numerous contextual factors (i.e., political, economic, organizational, structural, etc.) affect the extent to which, and the type of, policy influence a project has. In addition, however, these contextual factors also affect IDRC and/or its recipient organizations’ *intent* to influence policy. This in turn affects the relationship between the two (intent and policy influence). Evidence from the cases suggests there are three elements of the projects’ context that are most important in facilitating or inhibiting IDRC’s intent:

A. Political Context

Since projects are conceived, developed, proposed, and eventually implemented by organizations, and organizations exist within a larger political context, macro political contexts often affect IDRC and/or their recipient organizations’ intent. In some cases this larger macro political context constrains the potential projects IDRC can consider. An example of this would be the Syria case, in which IDRC and the recipient organization (ICARDA) had to settle for fairly modest intentions to influence the national government’s water policies. The national government was quite impervious to policy-relevant research unless it fell within a very narrow and well-defined area of issues that the government was already inclined toward. In other cases, however, the macro political context was quite conducive to policy influence and promoted IDRC’s intent to influence policy. Examples from this kind of setting would be the several Acacia ICT policy development projects. In all cases (Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, and Senegal), but to varying degrees and manifestations, the projects were taking place in countries that had recently experienced great political turbulence but were now stable and were trying to rebuild themselves. The governments of each of these countries realized that ICTs could help them in their development and therefore saw the Acacia projects as an opportunity. This favorable macro political context allowed IDRC to have a much more ambitious intent to influence policy.

B. Economic Context

Economic factors often exert as much control or pressure as political factors. In fact, evidence from many of the cases suggests that these factors go hand-in-hand more often than not. An example of a case in which positive economic factors affected IDRC’s intent to influence policy is the South Africa Acacia project. Rebuilding their economy

at the beginning of the post-Apartheid era, the country's leaders were anxious to explore ways of re-entering the global market. IDRC was able to take advantage of this improving economic context and expect, from the beginning of the project, to have policy influence.

In other circumstances, negative economic factors create opportunities for IDRC to intend to have policy influence. Examples of such cases are the LATN, G-24, and the MIMAP projects. For instance, in the MIMAP Bangladesh project, the poor economic situation created an opportunity for IDRC to assist the national government in building its capacity to undertake and monitor anti-poverty policies and programs. Due to the economic context, IDRC intended to have a fair amount of policy influence. In both the improving and worsening scenarios, IDRC was seen as an asset that could help the country improve its economic standing. The potential to influence policy in later stages of the project was facilitated by the initial economic context, which *allowed* IDRC and/or the recipient organization to intend to have policy influence.

C. IDRC Context

IDRC seems to fund projects in a variety of different ways and on a variety of topics. Sometimes they fund projects individually, sometimes as part of an overall strategy to promote a certain sector or technology, and sometimes in partnership with other donors. Likewise, IDRC chooses to fund projects in a select number of development sectors. Each of the approaches they've chosen has its own strengths. For instance, funding some individual, independent projects allows IDRC to take advantage of opportunities that may arise infrequently. In such cases, the intent to influence policy will likely be higher than other cases where a project setting is not ready for the very same project. For example, in the Peru Copper Mining project IDRC's intent to influence policy was facilitated by a unique opportunity to get involved at a strategically important time. As a result of IDRC's flexible funding context, its intention to influence policy turned into fairly dramatic policy influence since they were able to help get national environmental laws and mining company policies changed.

IDRC seems to be quite successful in promoting contexts favorable to policy influence when their intention is to promote multi-project or multi-country programs in a sector or on an issue. For example, the Pan Asia Networking (PAN), MIMAP, Acacia, and Water Demand programs establish an overarching and supportive context through which individual countries and organizations can express their intention to influence and change existing policies. This not only occurs as a result of project funding, but it is also a result of the high quality and targeted technical assistance, materials, and proven processes that larger scale programs can offer. Under such circumstances, recipient organizations have a much higher likelihood of intending to influence policy. In turn, this tends to increase the chances of eventual policy influence.

III. National, Regional and Local Policy Influence

The connection between IDRC's intent to influence policy, and its ability to do so, appears to depend in some cases on the *governmental* level of policy influence it is seeking. Does a project seek to change policy starting at the top of the national government and working its way down? Or, does it start at the grassroots level and work its way up? Or, is it some combination of the two? Evidence from the cases suggests that no particular way is inherently better than the other. Rather, the likelihood of eventual policy influence depends a great deal on many of the particulars in the given policy context. Therefore, the likelihood of future policy influence seems to depend on IDRC and its recipient organizations' ability to identify which approach is currently, and in the near future will be, most suitable given the prevailing policy context. Then it is a matter of matching its intent to this prevailing policy context. For example, if IDRC and its recipient organizations are determined to influence policy right away at the national level, nationally relevant program activities and strategies should be taken into consideration during the project development stage.

Under more flexible conditions, when making a determination about which governmental level it is appropriate to begin focusing on it is important to consider several factors. First, it is important to consider how quickly IDRC and/or its recipient organizations want to see tangible evidence of policy influence (more on this in the next section). Second, it is important to make choices about starting points according to the particular contextual factors of the policy environment. In some cases one can expect things to change quite rapidly, whereas in others, it may take quite a bit of time to see any tangible impact. For example, in the Jordan Greywater Reuse case, IDRC took a very long-term view, even though (and particularly because) it intended to influence policy at the national level. Given the local contextual factors, it could not go straight to the national government and demand that it change its water and agricultural policies. Rather, IDRC and researchers from the recipient organizations had to build their own capacity over time and started by working at the grassroots level. Over time, as they increased their own capacity, they were able to gather data and information the government was interested in and then they were in a position to be able to influence the government. Another similar case would be SRISTI, where the researchers took a much longer view and responded to opportunities after they had strategically chosen to begin at the grassroots level.

Ultimately, IDRC and its recipient organizations' intentions to influence policy make the biggest difference when they have been successful at matching their strategy about where they begin with their own organizational capacity, the contextual factors mentioned above, and the opportunities that may arise along the way.

IV. Timeline Intended for Project and Policy Influence

The connection between IDRC's intent and its policy influence can depend on how quickly they expect to see policy influence. As mentioned in the previous sections, this is largely determined by a number of contextual factors. First and foremost, this is guided

by what is prudent given the type and level of policy influence IDRC expects. While the evidence suggests it is possible to intend to have deep policy influence in the short run, this is usually an exception since there are so many factors that determine a national government's policies. However, one such case is the Nepal IT policy development project. In that case, the country's National Planning Commission had been authorized to establish the nation's first IT policy. Taking advantage of the opportunity for funding from IDRC's PAN program, the government indicated their desire to have IDRC fund ICIMOD, an international research centre based in Nepal, to manage the policy development process.

The original intention to have policy influence in such a short time period (6 months) was reasonable for four reasons. First, the government itself had invited IDRC. Under such conditions it is much more reasonable to expect that the recipient organization's activities would lead to eventual policy influence. Second, the recipient organization was doing policy research on a set of topics that were well delineated for them ahead of time by the National Planning Commission. Therefore, the research they conducted was seen as relevant and it responded directly to a need the government itself had expressed. Third, the recipient organization had a great deal of capacity to conduct research and develop policy. ICIMOD is a member of the global Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and has steadily built its organizational capacity since the early 1980's to the point that it is seen as a highly respected and capable organization within Nepal, in South Asia, and internationally. And lastly, the ICIMOD officer who responded to the request from the Nepali government was a former IDRC Officer who was familiar with, and committed to, the idea of research-based policy influence.

In the vast majority of other cases, IDRC intended to influence policy over a (varyingly) longer period of time. Taking the mid and long-term view was important in most cases because it allowed the recipient organization, their eventual government counterparts, and other partner organizations, individuals, and communities to develop their capacities. Instead of expecting quick returns for their efforts, they realized that change is difficult, requires learning as well as careful planning and strategizing, and is often a very iterative process with continual steps forward and backward. The Asian Fisheries and Jordan Greywater Reuse projects are good examples of this. For instance, the Asian Fisheries project has taken a very long-term perspective. IDRC did not intend to influence policy right away. Rather, it first focused on building the research capacity of the project's scientists and then in the 4th phase of the project was able to start influencing policy (and has continued to do so beyond IDRC funding). If they, and the recipient organizations in the Jordan and SRISTI cases, intended to influence policy at the national level right away they would have faced fierce resistance or been ignored.

V. Whose Intent?

The question of the connection between intent and policy influence should also be considered from the perspective of whose intent we are talking about. In a number of cases it is difficult to detect IDRC's presence versus the recipient organization. We are not clear whose intent is affecting policy influence. Therefore, we are limited in our

ability to say whether IDRC's intent to influence policy is or is not directly related to its ability to do so.

Why would this even be important in the first place? While it is not widespread, evidence from a couple of the cases suggests there were different viewpoints between IDRC and their recipient organizations as to the intention to influence policy. For example, in the Lebanon project the case writer explicitly states that researchers from the recipient organization, American University of Beirut (AUB), initially saw what they were involved in as solely research, not a policy process. In fact, the writer mentions that, had the researchers seen the intention of the project as policy influence, they most likely would not have agreed to become involved with the project since they weren't interested in getting involved with the political process. This also seems to be the case with the researchers in the Peru High Altitude Mining project.

Over time, however, the researchers from AUB came to see their research as having an important potential contribution to natural resource management policy. Once this shift occurred, their intent to influence policy also shifted. However, due to the larger political context, the policy influence of their project was limited to the local governmental level and the local community. While the case is lean on details, the writer mentions that IDRC had the intention from the beginning to influence policy but the project development and other pre-project discussions with AUB didn't center on policy influence in any prominent way.

What is the impact of these differences? It is a bit difficult to tell for a couple of reasons. In the Lebanon case, for instance, the project failed to have any policy influence at the national level. However, the project was seen as a success among the local farmers and communities where it took place, as well as the local government officials. And the most likely reason why the project failed to have greater national-level policy influence seems unrelated to the lack of congruity between IDRC and the recipient organization on intent. Rather, given the focus and particulars of the project (politically unimportant province far away from the capital, etc.), it seems as though IDRC should have had more modest hopes for the project or changed the focus and setting of the project from the beginning. The incongruence between IDRC and the recipient organization is not necessarily bad. However, in order to avoid potential problems of many kinds both parties may want to discuss these different expectations up front.

These differences in intent seem to largely be a result of the way researchers versus IDRC see themselves and their role. While we discuss the importance of IDRC's role in another section, it is important to recognize that some researchers see themselves as researchers only, while others see themselves as researchers in a policy process. Examples of the latter would include the Peru Copper Mining, Ukraine Environmental Management, and Nepal IT Policy Development projects, where there seems to be a great deal of congruence around a project's intent between IDRC and the recipient organizations.

While there are likely a variety of factors that will determine the nature and quality of a relationship, if there is incongruence between the two partners (IDRC and the recipient organization) one of the chief differences may be who initiates the project, IDRC or the recipient organization. A research group that is dragooned into accepting a policy mission, like the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, in the Peru High-Altitude Mining case, is not likely to put much effort into communicating its findings to decision makers.

VI. IDRC Intent as Design

One of the most important ways IDRC's intent to influence policy manifests itself is through its focus on different aspects of project and program design (in comparison to actual programmatic activities). Evidence from the cases suggests that when a great deal of attention is paid right at the beginning of program development to design-oriented factors, the effort increases the likelihood that the project will achieve its intended policy influence. The design factors are discussed in the following sections.

A. Key Projects and Issues

IDRC and their recipient organizations appear to pay a great deal of attention to *issues and projects* that have great promise but, for one reason or another, have not received the support they need. While we deal with this factor in more depth in our section on IDRC's roles, it is important to recognize that IDRC's intent to influence policy, and its subsequent ability to actually do so, are often a function of the issues they choose to address in their project activities.

Strategic attention to the choosing of projects or issues to work on seems to begin with knowledge and awareness of what topics and issues are of importance to powerful policymakers and/or the public. As evidence from some of the cases would suggest, when IDRC pays close and careful attention to the strategic importance of a proposed project, there seems to be higher intent and ability to influence policy. This allows IDRC to spend its money on sectors or issues that have been under-funded or have not received sufficient attention by other donors, governments or NGOs. Likewise, it makes the best use of IDRC and the recipient organizations' expertise.

Positive examples of this would be the Ukraine Environmental Management project and the Acacia projects. In the Ukraine project, for instance, IDRC focused on a strategically important issue that enjoyed great public and governmental support - cleaning up the Dnipro River. Few other organizations had earnestly addressed this issue, even though the river is the only source of drinking water in the country and an object of great pride for all Ukrainian citizens. Seeing an opportunity to undertake a publicly important project on an environmentally important issue, IDRC decided to implement the project. As a result, the project enjoyed the support and involvement of senior government officials, which allowed the project to intend to influence policy right from the beginning. From the outset the favorable project context increased the likelihood of subsequent

policy influence. The evidence from the Acacia ICT projects and others (such as the Nepal IT Development project) suggests a similar pattern.

Conversely, evidence from the Guatemala education project and the ECAPAPA projects provide two negative examples. The Guatemala project demonstrates what can happen if the project's strategic focus is not in sync with its political context. Specifically, while the Guatemala project focused on increasing attention in the education sector to an ethnic and gender perspective, the country's key policymakers were attempting to downplay differences between segments of their population. Although researchers had intended to (and did) focus on a policy-relevant issue, the policymaking context in Guatemala was not ready for it. In the ECAPAPA projects, IDRC and/or its recipients seem to have focused on an issue—assessing the economic viability of agricultural technology—that was already being addressed by numerous other organizations. While it was, no doubt, an important area of development, the short time period allotted for the projects, the inexperience of the researchers in regard to policy-relevant research, and the initial lack of attention to discussions about policy influence at the national government level limited IDRC's ability to intend from the outset to influence policy. Low intent was associated with the project's low policy influence.

B. People

Evidence from the cases suggests that the focus on *people* in IDRC and recipients' projects are often indicative of their intent, and later ability, to influence policy. This strategic approach to choosing project staff and partners through whom to work seems to manifest itself in important ways. First, IDRC and recipient organizations seem to take great care in selecting the right individuals to be part of their research teams. The importance of this factor is perhaps most easily demonstrated in cases where this does not happen. For instance, in the MIMAP Philippines project, IDRC's intention to influence policy was limited at least partially due to the high staff turnover. Since the local recipient organization was not able to hire staff that were committed to the long-term nature of the project or possessed the right skill set, they had to replace staff too often. When IDRC faces staff issues such as this, along with limited organizational capacity and leadership, it contributes to a decrease in the recipient organization's intent to influence policy and this shows up in their eventual (low) policy influence.

Second, a great deal of evidence from many cases suggests that IDRC and recipient organizations take great care in choosing partners with whom they will network and build coalitions. This seems to be a function directly of who the potential partner is; their local, regional, or international reputation; and the suitability of their organizational focus to the project's needs. Indirectly, the choice seems to be a function of what kind of policy-relevant research the partners will bring to the project. A good example of this is the Jordan Greywater Reuse project. IDRC's Ottawa-based Program Officer who works on projects throughout the Middle East and North Africa, Dr. Faruqi, took great pains to identify and then cultivate a long-term relationship with a representative of the Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management (INWRDAM). This organization not only had a good reputation in the Middle East and North Africa

(MENA) region, but it also had research that was relevant to the project's focus. IDRC's choice of a strategic partner such as this is indicative of its intent to influence policy and eventually contributed to the project's rather high success in changing national level policies.

Lastly, IDRC appears to take great care in the design phase to strategically choose whom they want to influence. There is a sense from the cases that IDRC and recipient organizations realize they have limited resources to work with, and therefore they must choose where to focus their efforts and which activities to target. Evidence from some of the cases suggests that an important distinction on this factor is the extent to which IDRC sees those they need to influence as potential demanders or suppliers of policy-relevant research. If IDRC sees itself as building demand for policy-relevant research, it will orient its efforts toward increasing policymakers' ability to absorb, understand, and use research that others generate. An example of this would be the MIMAP Bangladesh project where significant portions of the project's activities were designed to develop policymakers' capabilities to understand the research they were receiving. In the same project, many researchers and policymakers were also trained in how to generate their own policy-relevant research. This primarily consisted of capacity building activities, but designing this in as part of the project's intended goals contributed (along with other factors) to IDRC's increased ability to influence national-level policy.

C. Structures

Even with the best possible people, development projects in which IDRC intended to influence policy needed to be successful at planning and establishing organizational *structures* to facilitate various phases of the project cycle. These structures can be national or local, enjoy a great deal or no status, they can have great official authority or none. For instance, each of the countries involved with the Acacia projects established its own advisory committees which were envisioned as having a great deal of authority vis-à-vis their host national governments. In cases where the implementation went as planned, the attention to the design of an advisory committee was indeed associated with greater policy influence. This can be seen in the relatively greater policy influence the Mozambique Acacia project had in comparison with the Senegal or South Africa projects. Likewise, the Viet Nam project had a high-level advisory committee to guide and direct the project activities and, as much as the evidence from the case suggests, the policy influence of the project was assisted by the presence of the advisory committee. On a smaller scale, the Jordan Greywater Reuse project was able to set up community-level bodies to represent the views of local constituents. These too were credited with an important part in overall policy influence.

Whether or not structures play an important role in the projects' policy influence has to do with the extent to which their form, level, authority, etc., match their purpose. For instance, while the Senegal Acacia advisory committee tried to be inclusive and get people from a wide variety of backgrounds and levels, its policy influence was limited in the long run because it was designed without consideration of the need to have the status of a national-level body in the eyes of important government officials. Conversely, the

local community committees that were set up on the Jordan Greywater Reuse project were appropriate given their purpose and they ended up having a fairly important impact on even national-level policymakers.

D. Processes

IDRC seems to signal its intent to influence policy by careful attention to the *processes* involved in the projects. Evidence from the cases suggests two main themes. First, IDRC has often envisioned project activities as iterative processes, rather than discrete phases to be executed in a linear fashion. This manifests itself in a number of ways. Primarily, it shows up in IDRC's intent to be as flexible and responsive to ongoing project conditions as possible. A good example of this is the MIMAP Senegal project in which IDRC and the recipient organization (CREA) were able to take advantage of an opportunity to draft Senegal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Instead of plunging ahead on their predetermined course, the researchers were able to re-think their strategy and focus in response to the changing context. As a result, they ended up producing a document that was important to the government and greatly enhanced their standing in the country. Two negative examples are the cases of ECAPAPA and the Guatemala project on financing of education. In these cases, the projects were planned to proceed in a linear, non-iterative fashion, with the involvement of policy-makers as the last step. It appears that the projects' less-than-substantial policy influence is at least partly due to this more rigid approach to project planning.

Second, IDRC and a number of its recipients seem to demonstrate a great awareness about what overall project activities are needed, given a project's context. Evidence in some of the cases suggests that great care is often taken to consider when researchers will need data, demonstration projects, capacity building, etc. Likewise, a great deal of importance is placed on how to bring partners or groups of partner organizations into the process at strategic times. In another section we discuss partnerships in more depth, but the intention to plan for and include such partnerships at strategically important points in the project seems to be strongly connected to its future policy influence. In most of IDRC's projects, this shows up in a variety of ways – conferences, workshops, policy forums, etc.

IDRC'S CONCEPTION OF ITS ROLE

What are the ways that IDRC has conceptualized its role in the projects? Do differences in IDRC's conception of its role in a project make a difference for the extent of policy influence that the project attains? While we recognize that there is no one-to-one correspondence between any single feature of a project and its policy influence, we want to try to identify the nature and effects of IDRC role, to the extent possible.

In the cases in the current study, IDRC takes a variety of positions vis-à-vis the project. It may start with one position and maintain it through the life of the project, or it may alter its role as the project develops. Not infrequently, IDRC wants to accomplish multiple goals in a project and cycles through a number of roles. The concept of role is an evolving one, with multiple possible positions even at a single point in time.

IDRC has a basket of goals and intents over the span of its activities. Under any particular set of circumstances, it will activate one (or several) roles to help it accomplish those objectives. The roles that appear to be most central in the cases in this study are: (1) supporting research and research institutions and increasing their capacities, (2) leveling the policy playing field, with particular reference to bringing under-represented groups into the policy process; (3) increasing the capacity of policy makers to use data and research; (4) maintaining the integrity of its principles and policies as a granting agency; and (5) helping its grantee projects to influence policy. Within each of these main goals, IDRC has sub-goals, which we discuss below. The key point is that because of its multiple concerns, IDRC can cycle through several roles in the course of its relationships with a project. For example, as the project improves the research skills and achievements of researchers, it may become obvious that policy makers need help in making use of the new information and therefore a training function is needed. Or it may become clear that there is an opportunity to help institutionalize a new structure for linking information sources to the policy process.

In addition, undoubtedly support from IDRC sometimes serves to legitimate the institution its supports and the research it does. Such legitimacy would give the institution and its researchers more opportunity to influence government policy. However, while such processes no doubt occur, we have no evidence of them in the cases we analyzed. The IDRC role is likely to change over time. It is difficult to specify which role is more conducive to policy influence at any given time. It is the responsiveness of the IDRC role to evolving circumstances that seems to be critical. Perhaps the one generalization that seems clear is that when IDRC funds research for the sake of building knowledge, with no expressed interest in influencing policy, policy influence is less likely to occur.

I. Supporting Research

The procedures that IDRC uses for developing and monitoring projects seem well suited to encouraging policy influence. The following sections further define and illustrate the several roles it plays.

A. The Countries' Own Research

Most basically, IDRC pursues the policy of growing local research capacity instead of importing research from developed countries. Viet Nam is a clear case in which a communist country moving toward a market economy was helped to develop its own research and policy capability to make the transition. The research programs dealt with various aspects of economic restructuring such as trade liberalization and privatization of state-owned enterprise. Similarly, in the G-24 project, the developing countries receive support for doing their own research to aid in financial negotiations with international bodies.

A corollary of the support of homegrown research is that the perspective of the developing country provides the take-off point. The G-24 research program has shaped a developing-country agenda for reform of the international monetary system. Under one Research Coordinator, the project agenda was based on priorities articulated by participating countries. Under the next Research Coordinator the project became more concerned with changing the paradigm for international monetary negotiations by giving more weight to developing-country perspectives. During this regime, the project drew on economic theory and expertise. Rather than accept mainstream economic theory as the underlying approach, the Research Coordinator and research staff looked toward a paradigm shift in the very process of negotiation and the environment in which international financial policy is made. However, tensions arose with participating countries, who had other priorities, about whose decisions should prevail in G-24.

SRISTI is another clear example of IDRC support for a local agency pursuing its own agenda. In this case the research had to do with maintaining indigenous knowledge and informal science.

The IDRC role of granting the research initiative and the definition of priority questions to local researchers generates a greater sense of local ownership. It usually increases the chances of policy influence. Moreover, the policy has gained great appreciation from recipient institutions. According to the case reports, both researchers and policy makers approve heartily of the opportunity to run their own projects; they compare their experience with IDRC favorably to their experience with other aid agencies. They have pride of ownership of their research.

But not all projects are locally developed. There are cases in which IDRC had an idea and/or a mechanism that it encouraged local researchers to adopt. The MIMAP cases suggest that IDRC took the lead in introducing a new approach to the conceptualization of poverty and a mechanism for measuring it. MIMAP-Bangladesh represents a case

where IDRC encouraged the researchers to adopt a multidimensional conceptualization of poverty and develop a system for collecting data in order to monitor the effects of macro policy on poverty. The TEHIP project sought to pilot in Tanzania a coordinated system for health planning that had been developed through international cooperation. The project fit Tanzania's current emphasis on decentralizing health care.

The principle of giving the initiative to local researchers works best, of course, when there is existing research capacity to define needed research and appropriate corresponding research strategies. However, there are times when IDRC employs more of a "learn-by-doing" approach when strong research capacity does not already exist. Under such circumstances, even though there may be less policy influence and lower research quality in the short run, IDRC opts to support local researchers in the interests of the longer term. In fields where research resources are limited and/or rudimentary, it is necessary for IDRC to take a more active stance for a time. As the recipient institution gains understanding and skill, IDRC may have to press for making policy-relevant concerns part of the research agenda.

B. Increase Research Capacity and Skills

IDRC also takes on the role of upgrading the technical skills of researchers. This was true, for example, in the ECAPAPA project. IDRC saw its role as capacity building in agricultural research. Few connections were crafted to policy, and the project had little influence. In the Asian Fisheries project, IDRC funded the University of Vancouver to provide first-rate training to social science fisheries researchers (degree programs and on-site consultation). In the Acacia Uganda program, local researchers from Makerere University were paired with international experts. The Syria Brackish Water project led to the training of students at the University of Aleppo faculty of agriculture. Capacity building is obviously crucial if the grantees and their institutions are to sustain and develop their potential for linking research to the policy process. Learning the standards that govern professional research practice is also important for researchers who want their work to be published in scientific journals and enter the international literature.

C. Increase the capacity of research institutions and their stability and reputation

This is a parallel role for IDRC. There is one case where a project seems to have contracted with individual researchers to do the work, rather than to work through a university or other research organization (ECAPAPA). This individual style of work proved to be a mistake. It raised questions of accountability and prevented benefits from accruing to the research institution. The researchers on the project also frequently moved to other opportunities for work or study, leading to high instability in the research. Where research institutions were supported, more lasting benefits accrued.

A positive example of increasing the capacity of research *institutions* comes from the Arsaal, Lebanon project. Due to Lebanon's civil war, researchers in the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences in the country's famed American University in Beirut were forced to discontinue their long-established practice of field-based and applied

research. Once the civil war was behind them and with IDRC funding, faculty researchers and their new graduate students took the opportunity to re-build the university's capacity to undertake extension and field-based research activities.

D. Moving the researchers toward policy-relevant studies over time

The main function of IDRC is to support research in the service of international development. Often, the emphasis is on supporting research without much concern in the near term for the effects of that research on policy. In these cases, the chance for influence on policy is initially low, and the potential for later influence depends on steps taken to move the research toward policy relevance. Sometimes IDRC sees itself almost exclusively as building research capacity. In the Peru High-Altitude Mining project, the activist NGO that sparked the project had a policy agenda, but the researchers were content to do the research and publish a book without much dissemination of the information to miners, mining unions, or government agencies. There was almost no follow-through.

In the Asian Fisheries project, IDRC initially saw its role as bringing social scientists into fisheries research, securing the interest of social scientists in the subject matter and increasing the receptivity of biologists who had previously dominated the fisheries research field. Later, after three phases of the project had been completed and the research knowledge and skills of the researchers had progressed, IDRC then prodded them toward policy-relevant research. Like the Asian Fisheries project, the Ukraine project staff was helped to move from an emphasis on scientific research for the sole purpose of building knowledge to an emphasis on developing studies that were responsive to needs in the area. Ukrainian researchers, who were used to seeing their research as a route to journal publication, began to conceptualize research questions that grew out of the needs of the Dnipro Basin. A final example comes from the Jordan Greywater Reuse project. While Jordan had a fairly well-established history of traditional agricultural research, IDRC staff were able to use the results from a series of demonstration projects they funded to encourage Jordanian researchers to conduct larger-scale research on the benefits of greywater reuse. As the results from these new studies were collected and disseminated to national policymakers, the new information contributed toward the development of several agricultural and infrastructural policies.

E. Building on prior knowledge

Another hallmark of IDRC is the alertness to existing knowledge. It sometimes brings knowledge to the attention of prospective recipient institutions that orients them to productive activities. Although not mentioned in the previous section, the Jordan Greywater Reuse project developed on the basis of prior projects in the neighboring West Bank and in Jordan itself which IDRC staff identified and publicized. In a somewhat different vein, Nepal-IT drew on previous research conducted by the Computer Association of Nepal, which had been conducting and promoting IT research for years.

F. Supporting Exchange

Another role that IDRC takes is to expand the boundaries of research and researchers from the immediate locality to wider reach. In a number of cases, IDRC helped to expand the contacts of researchers across institutional and national boundaries, in order to generate, exchange, improve, and shape the knowledge they create. The LATN, G-24, and Asian Fisheries projects were built on the premise of cross-institutional and cross-national sharing of information. In many other projects, such as Ukraine, Syria, and some of the Acacia projects, exchanges among researchers took place in university courses and workshops and at forums, conferences, meetings, and direct contact. MIMAP researchers in Bangladesh supervised the work of other MIMAP researchers, such as those in Nepal and Vietnam. As researchers shared ideas and data, the interchange enhanced the quality of the research they performed.

G. Open Information Sharing

A variation on the information emphasis is an IDRC press for openness and transparency – a sharing of information across institutions and interests. In former Communist countries, such as Viet Nam and Ukraine (and elsewhere as well), government agencies were used to keeping their information secret, because knowledge is seen as a form of power in inter-agency dealings. IDRC encouraged them to share information and provide access to databases to all parties that could use the data. Not only did this increase the efficiency of government work, it also set an example for openness in other aspects of policy making.

H. Emphasis on data and data collection mechanisms

A number of the projects were dedicated to developing data systems and training local people to manage them and make use of the data. In the MIMAP projects, IDRC introduced a new approach to conceptualizing poverty and encouraged adoption of a data system that would enable the government to monitor changes in the extent of poverty. It was expected that these data would help the government to understand the effects of policies on poverty and increase their ability to adopt and implement poverty-reduction policies. In Bangladesh and Senegal, where the governments were emphasizing reduction of poverty, the data were used in the five-year economic development plan and for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for international donors. These projects had an influence on policy because IDRC had foreseen the need for definition and measurement strategies and was ready to help.

The MIMAP-Philippines project highlights a limitation to the IDRC role of introducing new data systems. Although the project was successful in much the same way as Bangladesh and Senegal, at least in one province, it was seen that decision-makers needed considerable training before the system could be operational. Furthermore, the econometric models that were to be applied were complex, and few people understood how to use them appropriately. A similar disregard of overly complex data initially

occurred in the Ukraine project. However, this was resolved in a later stage of the project and contributed to the project's ability to influence policy. The lesson to be drawn is that a simpler set of data and data analytic strategies can lead to greater influence. When complex systems are introduced, adequate training has to be scheduled for a sufficient number of system managers, staff, analysts, and prospective users of the data. In cases where the nature of the data required by new data systems far exceeds system administrators' initial capacity, researchers' capacity to influence policy appears to be diminished.

TEHIP is another project in which the IDRC role revolved around the introduction of new data and information tools. The IDRC role was (with CIDA) to develop a package of procedures for the health system called Essential Health Interventions Project, and it enlisted Tanzania as a site to test this approach to evidence-based planning. TEHIP made available to national, district and local health officials a variety of public health and disease prevention tools in the service of health planning. Here the emphasis was on making data intelligible and accessible to health workers at the district and local level and promoting interaction between them and their national counterparts grounded in data. While the TEHIP project was largely seen as a success, the challenge of scaling up this kind of data-focused intervention is underscored by the fact that the Tanzanian Ministry of Health has had difficulty implementing the program beyond the project's two pilot districts.

In the Acacia projects we see that an intended research and information system (ELSA) had little impact, largely because it was launched late. Other project activities were already under way, and ELSA never played a significant role. Timeliness is obviously important.

II. Level the Policy Playing Field

A. Empower with Information

Either through the choice of recipient institution or by direct engagement in negotiating the terms of the contract, IDRC seeks to bring more groups into policy debates, usually with an emphasis on groups that have not had a voice in the policy arena. There is a prevailing theme of empowering the underrepresented, largely through developing their information resources and research skills, with a sense of "leveling the playing field." The main avenue for empowering such groups is enabling them to collect or have access to information. For example, the original IDRC role in the Peru High-Altitude Mining case was to give the activist NGO that spearheaded the project (and to a lesser degree, the mining unions) scientific information on the prevalence of Chronic Mountain Sickness among miners. It was believed this would strengthen their case for classifying the sickness as an occupational illness. However, although the research confirmed that high altitudes had bad consequences for the health of mining drillers even when they had long lived at those altitudes, the research had few effects on policy. LATN and G-24 were efforts to make data and theory available to developing nations in their dealings with international bodies. Both projects had intermittent policy success.

Enabling projects to collect and analyze relevant data is a necessary but not sufficient condition for influencing policy. Data by itself is not enough. Other actions must be taken to bring the information to the attention of policy makers and encourage them to pay attention.

Some of the IDRC rhetoric talks about making information available to all parties on an equal footing. In practice, however, this usually means helping the underdog. “Overdogs” have their own information and ready access to more. Evidence from the cases suggests that IDRC in fact intends to support those that have been marginalized in some way.

B. Strengthening Organizations that Represent Marginalized Interests

The Guatemala CNPRE-COPMAGUA project was intended to strengthen the Coordination Office of the Mayan Organizations in Guatemala. COPMAGUA is an umbrella organization for Mayan groups. They were planning research that would influence education reform for Mayans and girls. IDRC support enabled them to be an effective counterpart to government education officials. However, the project had little if any influence, largely because of external conditions (economic crisis, discontinuance of public negotiation of education policy, government shift of attention from ethnic and gender equity to global focus on combating poverty). Further, the work that the organization did on the educational budget issues was hindered by the lack of adequate subgroup data, difficulties of interdisciplinary research, and postponement of dissemination activities until late in the project.

Perhaps a lesson here is that the justice of a cause is not an adequate basis for project support. No matter how appealing an issue, a project’s staff need to be capable of the tasks they propose to undertake and knowledgeable about the types of issues that will receive policy attention and how to connect to the policy sphere.

C. Effects at Center and Periphery

Most of the projects aim for influence on policy at the national level, but some projects emphasize regional, district, or local levels. Note the mobilization of the Ilo district in opposition to the Southern Peru Copper Company, which was degrading the environment. The project effectively appealed to the International Water Tribunal II. Eventually it influenced not only local policy but also national policies of the powerful copper company itself. IDRC also supported regional efforts in the Dnipro River basin in Ukraine. The project made great progress on many fronts, and in its later stages moved to cooperation not only regionally but also between Belarus and Ukraine. The Arsaal project in Lebanon enhanced local community members’ ability to manage their resources in a communal and environmentally sustainable way.

On occasion, a local emphasis emerges by default; other districts do not have the interest or the resources to implement the new policy. Thus TEHIP is having difficulty deciding

how to handle implementation beyond two districts in Tanzania because other districts do not have the capacity to reorganize their health structures in line with its evidence-based approach to health planning. ACACIA-Mozambique gave provincial governments experience in participating in national policy development around ICT. If one includes influence on *local and regional* policy and management in the definition of “policy influence,” the level that IDRC emphasizes does not appear related to the extent of influence.

D. Bringing Projects Together with Other Funders

In a number of projects IDRC took on the role of intermediary between the project and the World Bank or other funders. In the run-up to TEHIP, IDRC saw its role as bringing partners and potential donors together (World Bank, World Health Organization) in a conference in 1993 and then engaging with CIDA to develop the pre-project program and support a pilot project. In the Asian Fisheries project, IDRC shared funding with the Ford Foundation. In the Peru Copper Mining case, IDRC took advantage of the opportunity offered by the International Water Tribunal II to publicize the environmental damage done by the copper company and its over-use of water. Although the tribunal did not contribute money, it did contribute publicity, legitimacy, and international attention.

Collaboration with international organizations and other funders extends the reach of IDRC and is obviously valuable financially and in prestige and influence. But collaboration is not a free good. Social science studies of community development have showed that collaboration takes considerable time and effort, and it often requires compromises that may undermine an agency’s policies and priorities. IDRC seems to engage in it strategically under circumstances that suit its purposes.

E. Widening the Network

Some of IDRC’s efforts to involve more groups in the policy process seem to be only partly about bringing underrepresented groups to the table. IDRC sometimes sees its role as enlisting a broader range of civic, governmental, regional, civil-society groups into the discussion. The Jordan Greywater Reuse project sought to bring in regional water organizations such as the Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management, local community members, and small-scale community-based organizations (CBOs). The aim seems in part to have been to draw on the special skills and knowledge of diverse groups. The key person in the Inter-Islamic Network was a well-respected leader whom the project won over to greywater reuse. He then contacted important officials on behalf of the policy and also assured local groups that water reuse was acceptable to Islam. Nepal-IT drew new institutional partners into the IT policy process, especially private-sector groups which had been excluded from the policy dialogue. Acacia-Senegal widened the range of participants in policy discussions, including private-sector groups and a range of local NGOs and civil society groups. ACACIA-South Africa brought new participants from a variety of backgrounds into the policy process.

More participants tend to strengthen a cause, especially when they bring complementary knowledge, skills, contacts, ideas, and energy. SRISTI, for example, was able to harness the knowledge and resources of universities, business, and government to the support of indigenous science and innovation. Evidence from some of the less successful Acacia Advisory Committees, however, suggests that, in contexts with significant class cleavages, project staff must carefully select which partners to include and when.

III. Increase the Capability of Policy Actors

A. Training potential users of the research information increases the likelihood of policy influence

In some countries, the skill level of policy makers with regard to scientific data is low. IDRC has on occasion encouraged projects to provide training not only to researchers but also to policy makers who would be expected to act on the basis of the information. LATN provides an example. Authorities were much less well informed than had been assumed. LATN provided courses with researchers and private-sector representatives. They also did short-term training and workshops for people in government and developed academic courses and supervised student work in higher education institutions. These kinds of “formal” training supplemented the briefings and reader-friendly publications that had originally been expected to be sufficient. MIMAP- Philippines trained policy makers in econometric models for analyzing macroeconomic policies. Nepal-IT enhanced the knowledge and data for the Ministry of Science and Technology. Acacia-Senegal built local leaders’ capacity by showing them how to gain access to policy-related information. Acacia-Mozambique built capacity in actual ICT usage at national, provincial, and local levels. Enabling policy makers to make use of the products of a project tends to enhance the influence of the project. (When the project pays attention to the difficulties that the policy makers raise, it ought to be able to tailor its systems and findings more appropriately. We did not see reference to this feedback possibility.)

IV. Role as a Funding Organization: Principles and Practices

IDRC’s principles of operation tend to extend the likelihood of influence.

A. Conceptual Pioneering

IDRC tends not to fund projects redundant of other efforts in the area. In choosing projects, IDRC sometimes finds a novel idea and locates a niche into which it fits. For example, in Syria the brackish water project and in Jordan the greywater reuse project brought together relatively new ideas about water usage and environments that had a shortage of water for agriculture. The MIMAP set of projects made available a re-conceptualization of the meaning of poverty and measuring tools for assessing the extent of poverty.

Support of SRISTI represents another novel approach, viz. support of a volunteer organization in India devoted to keeping alive indigenous knowledge and informal science and supporting the consolidation and institutionalization of the organization

within government. In Acacia-Uganda, IDRC broadened ICT from a strictly technical issue to a multi-faceted issue with social, economic, and political potential for development. The Acacia projects generally focused on information and communication as tools to foster development of the country. TEHIP represents an original set of ideas and instruments for making health information accessible to health workers at national, district, and local levels. The Asian Fisheries projects supported the inclusion of social science perspectives in research on aquaculture.

B. Local Ownership

IDRC works on the principle of giving local people the authority to select their own projects and exercise their own priorities. It gives them ownership of the research. It funds them in the work they elect to do and provides training and consultation support as needed. This approach is usually highly beneficial, but one counter-example is ECAPAPA, where the project was not ready to function autonomously and the needed standards and benchmarks were not provided.

One condition that makes local ownership both feasible and productive is IDRC's procedures for screening recipients. IDRC selects projects and people on the basis not only of quality, but also on compatibility of principles. Because of common philosophies of action, local project ownership usually works well.

C. Long-term Support

IDRC sometimes maintains funding for lengthy periods of time. MIMAP-Bangladesh received funding for 10 years. Asian Fisheries were funded for 13 years. G-24, LATN and MIMAP-Philippines were all long term and some other projects, such as MIMAP-Senegal, which were not long term in and of themselves, were based on long term and sustained support of IDRC.

One of the consequences of sustained funding in most of these projects is that the researchers who worked on them gained in experience, knowledge, and reputation. In a number of projects they moved into positions of considerable authority. In the LATN project, for example, the coordinator became undersecretary in the Trade Department and had considerable direct influence on policy. Several participants in the Asian Fisheries project moved into important government and university positions. For example, in Thailand an economist who received training and experience in the project now works in the Fisheries Economics Division and conducts analyses for the Ministry of Commerce and the Department of Fisheries. In Malaysia a researcher obtained his Ph.D. through the project and is now the Director of Corporate Planning and Policy in the Department of Fisheries.

D. Advisory Structures

IDRC procedures call for involving key people from government and particular communities in advisory roles with the project. These strategically placed people

become aware of the research that is being planned and have an opportunity to influence the research agenda. When findings are ready, they are in a position to bring them to the attention of appropriate decision-makers. This kind of structure has important positive effects on the influence of the research on policy. For example, the Ukrainian Management Committee, which consisted of senior government officials and heads of research institutions, had enormous influence on gaining support for the projects' activities – and its ways of work. The G-24 project set up a Liaison Office and a Technical Group to facilitate the interaction between the research program and policy makers in the G-24 countries. (One of the counter-lessons to the generally positive effects of advisory structures is that in the G-24 case, there was a tension of interests among the managing and advisory bodies, which lessened the program's influence.)

E. Maintaining its Credibility as a Research Organization

IDRC is a highly professional and experienced organization, and it takes on some roles in order to maintain its professional identity. It insists (to the extent possible) on high quality research. If the quest for policy influence should come into conflict with the goal of excellence in research, it is not immediately obvious which role would take precedence under which circumstances.

It is obvious that a tension can exist between research excellence and policy influence. When more time is needed to draw valid research conclusions but policy is made now, which master shall be served? In our cases, the issue was never sharply drawn. No instances were reported where validity and influence were in conflict. Case writers did not seek out evidence on the issue. Therefore, our discussion on this topic remains abstract.

F. Not Advocating Particular Policy Positions

It is against the principles of the agency to actively advocate its own policy stands. It is expected to be an enabler, not a participant, in policy discussions. Nevertheless, there are cases where IDRC staff and/or consultants have been seen as actors. A modest example is Acacia South Africa, where IDRC staff and consultants were brought into policy dialogue on communications technology with high-level government officials and others. The purpose for their presence was to address issues of process, not of content. But once there, they were asked their opinions on content issues, and were seen as having an important (if indirect) influence.

On matters that are issues of principle and belief, like tobacco control, protection of the environment, health promotion, and extension of education, IDRC is a right-minded agency. It supports what it perceives to be just goals. The line it tries to draw is between supporting good goals and *not* advocating particular means for reaching those goals. It is sometimes a fine line to walk. Means are often implicit in the ends that are chosen for support.

Another issue is unintended side effects. In the past, other international funding agencies have supported obviously “good” projects that turned out to have counterproductive side effects. For instance, examples from non-IDRC supported projects in southern Asia and elsewhere have been known to widen the gap between well-to-do and lower-income project beneficiaries. Under circumstances with the potential for severe class cleavages, IDRC needs to take into account the potential for counterproductive effects. Evidence from the cases—such as IDRC’s efforts to widen the range of actors involved in policy discussions and their emphasis on fostering the participation of under-represented groups—suggests that IDRC funding procedures are aware of this potentially negative impact.

An interesting sidelight is that even when IDRC acts without policy intent simply to support research, it may be advancing certain ideas and policy stances over others. At the outset of the Asian Fisheries project, it focused on bringing the social sciences into aquaculture research. It was promoting interdisciplinary research. Later it went on to advocate policy-relevant research. But even if it had had no long-term interest in affecting policy, simply bringing economic considerations into discussions of fisheries would have advanced certain ideas and perspectives on the industry. Similarly, adding sociological research focused attention on the conditions of communities that made their living from fishing. People could no longer view fisheries and catching fish as strictly biological issues.

IDRC Inputs

For the purpose of this analysis, IDRC inputs are characterized as (1) the infusion of **funding** or money; (2) the **technical assistance** provided by IDRC staff; (3) **persistence** (especially in relation to the duration of the funding); and (4) the **flexibility** of the support that IDRC provided. Does policy influence tend to be more pronounced when IDRC inputs are larger, such as money, continuity of staff, IDRC’s knowledge of the local contexts (e.g., understanding of the issue, structures, politics, or culture)?

Our working hypothesis throughout this study was that yes, when such inputs as those listed above are larger, the influence of IDRC-supported research on public policy would be stronger, or more pronounced. What we found confirms this hypothesis, yet there were also many other factors that contributed to the influence that did occur which are discussed below.

I. Funding Amounts and Persistence (project duration)

TABLE 1

<p style="text-align: center;">Long Term Support (more than 3 yrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFSSRN (influence) • G24 (influence) • SRISTI (influence) • MIMAP (Senegal, Philippines, Vietnam) (influence) • TEHIP (influence) • Jordan (influence) • EMDU (influence) • Acacia (Senegal, ZA, Moz, Uganda) (influence) • Arsaal (negligible influence) • Syria (no/negligible influence) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Short Term Support (3 yrs or less)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepal IT (policy change) • Mining – Copper & Water Resources (policy change) • Guatemala Education • Mining – High Altitude • ECAPAPA • LATN (phase I only) • MIMAP - Senegal
<p style="text-align: center;">Less than \$200 000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECAPAPA • Nepal IT (policy change) • Guatemala Education • Mining – High Altitude • Mining – Copper & Water Resources (policy change) 	<p style="text-align: center;">More than \$200 000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LATN (influence) • G24 (influence) • TEHIP (influence) • EMDU (influence) • Acacia (Senegal, ZA, Moz, Uganda) (influence) • AFSSRN (influence) • SRISTI (influence) • Jordan (influence) • MIMAP (Senegal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Vietnam) (influence) • Arsaal (no influence/negligible influence) • Syria (no influence/negligible influence)

At first glance, it would appear that a larger amount of money invested in projects does indeed mean that some type of policy influence will occur. But those projects that received more than \$200 000 in IDRC funding also received technical assistance, such as assistance with proposals, monitoring, mentoring, guidance, linking/networking with other institutions, and in the Acacia cases, effective management mechanisms (e.g.,

MAAC, SAAAC). These cases also suggest that the responsible IDRC officers had knowledge of the local context, research field, and/or region in which the research was carried out. This knowledge enabled the officers to encourage the appropriate people to participate in the project and/or enabled them to link the project(s) with other like-minded organizations for networking, or future funding opportunities. For example, knowledge of the local context in Jordan, indeed of the Middle East region, and the central role of religious leaders in decision-making at the community level was critical to the success of the Greywater Reuse projects in Jordan. In Vietnam, IDRC promoted the idea of sharing knowledge and information among and between different institutions – a virtual paradigm shift within a society that reprimands networking and information sharing.

In only two cases where there was less than \$200 000 and the project was carried out in less than 3 years did policy influence occur to any extent (Nepal IT, Copper Mining and Water Resources in Southern Peru). In fact, the research from these two cases resulted in actual policy changes at the national level. What is interesting about these two cases is that they also illustrate demand for the results and strong interest from the government (Nepal) or local authority (Peru).

Three cases had less than \$200 000 invested by IDRC and had negligible influence on policy. Since these three cases (ECAPAPA, Guatemala Education, and High Altitude Mining) had little to no influence on policy it would appear that more money invested will mean more influence. However, each of these cases also provides evidence that additional factors contributed to the lack of influence. For instance, the ECAPAPA case reported poor IDRC management, including a lack of technical assistance in the form of guidance and follow-up, interruptions in the funding process, lack of incentives for researchers and short time frames for the projects as factors that contributed to the lack of influence. In the Guatemala case, poor timing of the research proposal was cited as a problem, coupled with changes in government. There was also a lack of technical assistance from IDRC in the form of “knowledge of the policy environment” – both the research team and IDRC staff had insufficient knowledge of the new policy processes in Guatemala. The author also reported that at the international level IDRC staff made few efforts to either scan the policy environment for similar work being carried out by other bilateral/multilateral agencies or to foster linkages with other international agencies regarding the IDRC-supported study in Guatemala. In the High Altitude Mining case, there was a failure on the part of IDRC to follow-up after the research was completed, and, as with the Guatemala case, a failure to link/liaise with international organizations to help create momentum and interest in the research. The author of this case study stated that IDRC, as an international agency, is in a much better position than grassroots organizations to engage and foster support from other international agencies.

These three cases show that a research team’s limited knowledge of the policy process will negatively affect its use to influence public policy. Perhaps more surprisingly, however, is that these three cases also illustrate what can, or in these cases, what cannot happen, when there is limited guidance or assistance by IDRC program staff. Factors such as projects being designed in a linear fashion and that lacked dissemination strategies were cited as being key issues for IDRC to pay more attention to. As well,

there were no data in the cases to support the suggestion that IDRC staff helped to connect the researchers to the policy world.

Two of the cases offer counter-examples to the analysis of IDRC inputs since both projects received funding of more than \$200 000 and both received more than 3 years of support, yet the research produced was of little consequence to the policy process in either Syria or Lebanon. However, the *political context* in both of these cases was not conducive to policy influence. In both cases the national government was either not interested in the policy issue or was resistant/hostile to it.

II. Previous History with Recipient

In at least two of the cases, a history with the recipient institution helped to foster an enabling environment for policy influence. In the case of SRISTI, IDRC's previous relationship with the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) facilitated flexibility in terms of persistence (project duration) and the type of funding (core support). The author of this case study specifically stated that this flexibility occurred precisely because of this previous relationship and cautions that if there had been no previous history between IDRC and IIMA, the flexibility permitted with regards to the longer time frame given, coupled with the core program support provided, in all likelihood would not have been possible. Burton also points to this flexibility in the project design as a contributing factor to the project's influence.

Other cases, such as the Greywater Reuse project in Jordan, the G-24 and LATN also illustrate the deliberate selection of recipient institutions by IDRC program staff. As explained by the author of the Jordan case, IDRC selected recipients that were well respected and credible. Each had their strengths in different yet complimentary capacities, such as working with the poor, technical expertise and engineering and advocacy experience (Surani, 2003, p.39). The author states that these features were significant factors in facilitating policy influence.

Another example of this is illustrated in the MIMAP-Senegal case where the recipient institution, CREA, had a previous history of working with IDRC. During the 1980s, IDRC was involved in institution building with CREA, and developed a positive working relationship with its Director, Dr Diagne. Diagne became the project leader for MIMAP-Senegal.

III. Use of Other Research and/or Evaluation Findings in Project Planning

Use of research results and/or findings from evaluations to build on in future projects was found in the Greywater Reuse, Acacia-Uganda, Acacia-South Africa and MIMAP-Senegal cases (e.g., IDRC program staff used their experience from MIMAP-Philippines to develop programming in Senegal). These inputs were seen as being very useful to both IDRC staff and the research partners because the information collected and analyzed from the research and evaluations enabled Centre staff and partners to make deliberate and/or strategic decisions with regards to current program efforts. For example, in the

Greywater Reuse project in Jordan, results of the evaluation commissioned by the CFP program initiative revealed that greywater reuse was in fact an accepted practice in Jordan, even though it was thought to be contrary to Islamic belief (Surani, 2003, p.36). This finding, along with other important information, was incorporated into other greywater reuse projects in the region (Surani, 2003, p.36).

In Uganda, pre-Acacia groundwork included the commissioning of 4 studies to examine the status of human capacity, infrastructure & technology, and the content and application of ICTs for the implementation of Acacia in Uganda (p.35). These studies, together with the establishment of the telecenters and workshops that were designed to raise awareness of the potential of using ICTs for economic development “played a more dynamic role than Acacia in providing a platform for demonstrating and advocating the use of ICTs” (Ofir, 2003, p.39). This early groundwork was significant, not only for providing new knowledge and information, but because data and evidence were readily available to strengthen (or weaken) arguments about using ICTs for development. In this sense, “IDRC assisted in helping shift public perceptions from an understanding of ICTs as a technical issue only, to an understanding of the importance of ‘consumer applications’ and ‘value-adding capabilities’ of ICTs (Ofir, 2003, p.39).

In South Africa, initial IDRC funding during the apartheid period went to South Africans in exile in neighbouring countries. This initial support paved the way for future funding directly to South Africa, mainly in the fields of policy research capacity building and institutional reform. South Africa was also labelled a “funding priority” by IDRC where its support consisted of financing research projects, technical support, training visits and study tours (Ofri, 2003, p.31).

IV. Strategic Funding of Short-Term Projects

Some of the cases illustrate that creating a series of related projects also increased both potential and actual policy influence, especially for projects that were designed for a duration of 12 months or less. For example, in the Jordan Greywater Reuse project, it was noted several times by the case study author that the IDRC PO methodically and strategically utilized technical experiences of greywater reuse and existing partnerships to build successive projects and to call upon partners to assist each other in their areas of expertise – and that this was deliberate (Surani, 2003, p.36). The intentional effort to fund projects strategically in this way not only helped to off-set the fact that the funding amounts were rather small, with the largest amount of money in the Jordan case coming in at just under \$243 000, but also helped to create a critical mass of research which captured the attention of policy makers.

In the Acacia cases of Mozambique and Uganda, case study author Dr Zenda Ofir noted that “the allocation of funding in an integrated approach to ICT development did in fact enhance its potential for policy influence as these projects: (a) could act as demonstration models to learn lessons in the use of ICTs in rural development; (b) directed processes for the establishment of two ICT related national policies; and (c) through a focus on

implementation could provide opportunities for policy modifications in a next policy cycle” (Ofir, 2003, p.65).

V. IDRC Expertise and Technical Knowledge: The Intellectual Contribution

Perhaps one of the most oft cited “inputs” that contributed to a project’s potential or actual influence on policy was the technical knowledge and expertise that was provided by IDRC program staff. The nature of this technical knowledge and expertise was often characterized as knowledge specifically related to the field of study, like ICTs, water demand management, and global trade and finance. Other types of knowledge related to particular methodologies such as economic modelling or poverty monitoring. A key informant in the Jordan case stated that “the technical input from IDRC has helped the counterparts in developing their expertise and has earned them the well-earned respect and good relationships [sic]” (Surani, 2003, p.38).

In the Acacia-Mozambique case, Ofir reported that IDRC expertise was highly appreciated. For the purpose of this study, she characterizes this expertise as: (a) the conceptualization and design of the Acacia program in Mozambique; (b) the insight into the policy environment; (c) helping develop an understanding of the nature of ICT policy, the need for contingency planning and the responsibility of the different sectors in enabling the sustainability of the initiatives; (d) staff bringing in their own experiences; and (e) exposing Acacia researchers and Advisory Committee members to the experiences of other countries (p.102).

In the Acacia-South Africa case, IDRC staff expertise was seen as being just as important as the funding provided: “Apart from their obvious role in the allocation of funding, the IDRC officials were respected and acknowledged for their expertise in the ICT field. They were thus invited to serve on high-level committees, participate in important events and provide advice” (Ofir, 2003, p.35). These committees and events also provided IDRC staff opportunities to disseminate information about on-going research, to connect with other researchers doing similar work, as well as having other avenues for intellectual contributions to the field.

In several of these cases, IDRC was acknowledged as “one of the first organizations to recognize and address “specific issues (e.g., ICTs in Africa, new approaches to poverty monitoring, water demand management). In other cases, the Centre’s input was the provision of international experts to assist with studies that were carried out to support the planning and implementation of programs (e.g., Acacia-Uganda).

In the Ukraine case, IDRC’s insistence to employ and use internationally recognized research standards was central to building the capacity of Ukrainian researchers to carry out methodologically sound research. Not only did this mean that the Ukrainian researchers could now prepare competitive project proposals to secure future funding from various international sources, but it also facilitated their entry into the international scientific community, including being published in peer-reviewed journals and presenting at international conferences (Lyzogub, 2002, p.26).

In sum, these cases show that the expertise provided by IDRC program staff often gave the research and the evidence it generated more credibility than it might have otherwise enjoyed. This often increased the credibility and visibility of the research team, which in a few cases lead to an increased demand for research from the government.

IV. The IDRC Approach and Philosophy

The “IDRC approach and philosophy” was mentioned in several cases as being a facilitating factor to both potential and actual policy influence. The approach and philosophy was described in a variety of ways including: (a) being a “true partner” in development; (b) building trust and confidence between the Centre and its partners; and/or (c) interacting at a high level yet remaining grassroots-oriented.

The Environmental Management Development case in the Ukraine provides an interesting example of this as an input since there was virtually no funding provided by IDRC (funding in this case came primarily from CIDA, with IDRC acting as the executing agency). The author stated several times throughout this case that key informants considered the “IDRC approach” to be a facilitating factor to policy influence. This included “building relationships built on trust, carrying out business in an open and transparent fashion, relying on its local partners as equals, employing local talent to the greatest extent possible, and choosing to build up local institutions to function without the program’s help” (p.14). Another feature of the IDRC approach that is peculiar to this case and the Vietnam case was the sharing and exchanging of information between institutions. IDRC’s willingness to share information was new to both the Ukrainian and Vietnamese contexts, and although it was initially resisted in the Ukraine, the idea began to resonate with researchers and enabled them to not only learn from each other, but also to establish networks and collaborative projects where before there would have been redundancy and replication.

In the Acacia cases, key informants reported that although a few particular IDRC staff contributed to the content of some ICT policies, the primary purpose and overall approach taken by the Centre was to focus on facilitating demonstration projects, processes and events that could provide lessons rather than determine or direct the content of the national ICT policies. This approach to ICT development enhanced the Centre’s credibility among the various African leaders, experts and participants as a supportive and sincere development aid organization. In the Acacia-Mozambique case, Ofir writes “IDRC has generally been applauded for the philosophies that govern its investments...It is acknowledged as a ‘true partner’ in development with approaches and processes that are empowering and focused on building indigenous capacity” (Ofir, 2003, p.5).

VI. Flexibility as a Characteristic of IDRC Support

IDRC “flexibility” was reported as a characteristic that facilitated policy influence in several of the cases. The two cases that best illustrate this are SRISTI and MIMAP-

Senegal. In the SRISTI case, IDRC agreed to program (core) support to enable a newly established NGO to transition from a volunteer-based network of researchers and activists into a more structured and permanent organization. Since this kind of transition requires intermediate/long-term objectives, IDRC needed to be flexible with its requirements since long-term objectives are not easily reconciled with IDRC's usual short-term project support. However, since the Centre had a previous history with IIAM (the recipient for the funds), this flexibility was considered "low risk".

Another example of IDRC's flexibility was found in the MIMAP-Senegal case. As case author Tuplin explains, a few months after the launch of MIMAP in Senegal, the project leader, Dr Diagne, became aware of the country's requirement to produce a PRSP and realized that the MIMAP methodologies and approaches would generate the needed information for this paper, which would feed directly into the policy process concerning Senegal's economy. The IDRC Pprogram Officer permitted significant leeway in this case to accommodate the shift in the program objectives. As with SRISTI, however, it was the previous relationship with CREA and Diagne that helped to facilitate this flexibility since it was considered to be a low risk venture.

VII. Development Interventions a Part of the Research Process

Several of the cases examined throughout this analysis (e.g., Arsaal, TEHIP, Acacia-Uganda and Acacia-Mozambique) integrated development projects and interventions as part of the research process. In the Acacia examples, demonstration projects and the telecenters offered policy makers and national leaders the opportunity to observe the (potential) usefulness of ICTs in development (economics, health, education, small business development etc.). The demonstration projects also provided data on ICTs in Africa thus filling a gap for more research and information in this area.

In the Arsaal case, the author points to what he calls "mini projects" such as water harvesting reservoirs that were implemented with IDRC funds to help the community accept the importance and validity of research (p.21). In the same vein, the TEHIP case study reveals how they used community participation approaches in its research and development components of the project to make the outputs more meaningful to the local people. The activities for this included incorporating community preferences in planning and prioritization processes and community mobilization towards the rehabilitation of the district-level health facilities. As Neilson and Smutylo explain, the "strategic decisions the team made, in collaboration with the MOH [Ministry of Health] and the district, to provide services first in order to demonstrate the value and benefits of the project were apparently successful in giving the local people the incentives and motivation to take ownership and responsibility for health service provision and delivery" (Neilson & Smutylo, 2004, p.24).

Development projects, or demonstration projects, in combination with a research component help to add value and meaning to the research and the results to the local people; that the research is not simply an esoteric theoretical exercise, but that the knowledge generated will help them move towards a better quality of life.

VIII. IDRC Bureaucracy and Funding Allocation Processes

Bureaucracy and project administration/management was reported as being problematic in several cases. In at least four of the cases (Acacia-Mozambique, Acacia-Uganda, Guatemala Education and ECAPAPA) funding processes and allocations were interrupted and thus disruptive to the projects' momentum and timelines. Other IDRC bureaucracy caused further delays in projects. Perhaps the most prominent example of this was the Centre's re-organization and re-prioritization of its programming. These far-reaching changes lead to delays, and to the closure of the ROSA office in Johannesburg, South Africa. Furthermore, in some cases (e.g., Acacia-Uganda, Acacia-Mozambique, Acacia-South Africa) the communication of these changes and decisions from IDRC to the partners were often not clear or timely.

In the ECAPAPA case, there were lapses in funding and delays in deliverables (Ackello-Ogutu, 2003, p.12). Such lapses and delays can hamper efforts to disseminate research results quickly or on demand in order to facilitate their use by policy makers. A lack of post-project resources for dissemination coupled with conventional dissemination strategies were cited by the case study author as being problematic with the ECAPAPA case. Interviewees in this case considered funding to projects especially important – researchers' time, schedules of disbursements, modes of contracting – these are all important factors, particularly if the researchers are involved in more than one research project at any given time. In the ECAPAPA case, the researchers often found their time competing with other projects and would work on those projects that paid them regularly. In this case, one of the research teams in Kenya disintegrated due to a lack of financial or promotion incentives.

The story of ECAPAPA suggests a lack of knowledge or guidance by IDRC staff largely with regards to funding and strategies for dissemination. As many of the other cases reported, using more conventional dissemination strategies (e.g., reports, end of project workshops) at the end of the project seldom influence policy. Some of the more successful cases in this analysis point to the idea of developing and implementing dissemination strategies at the beginning of a project – starting with the proposal and design stages. As these cases illustrate, IDRC officers often played a role at this stage in relation to funding and strategies for dissemination, as well as being able to connect the researchers to the policy community.

In the Guatemala Education case, there was a six-month period in which the project did not receive financial support from IDRC. During this time, some of the researchers left the project in search of other work where they would get paid. Further, although some activities continued during this time, momentum was lost and the timing of the project within the policy process was undoubtedly affected.

Lack of Attention to the Policy Environment/Arena by IDRC CRDI

In three separate cases (ECAPAPA, High Altitude Mining and Guatemala Education) the evaluators note that IDRC staff likely could have been able to provide more input in the form of initiating meetings, dissemination activities or establishing partnerships with other donors and/or international agencies. In at least one case, it was stated by the author that as a donor, IDRC is in a much better position to call meetings, round table discussions and to create linkages with other international agencies:

Another area where IDRC may play a role is at the international arena. IDRC is in a much better position than developing countries' research centers to reach international institutions. It can also help develop institutional links between national research institutions and multilateral agencies, which influence significantly [sic] policies in developing countries. It could be argued, for example, that the policy implications of the Mining and High Altitude study could have been somehow incorporated within the mining regulatory environmental framework in Peru and other Andean countries if the research results would have been timely discussed [sic] with the appropriate government and World Bank officials. IDRC is in a privileged position to promote in the international arena the policy implications of the research that it supports in the developing world, which in turn is key for this research to fulfill its potential for influencing policy (Loayza, 2003, p.20).

The idea of IDRC calling meetings is echoed in the ECAPAPA case. The author of this case remarks that meetings called for by donors rather than the local researchers, will more likely be attended by senior level policy makers.

There are also instances when IDRC program staff could have facilitated linkages and dissemination activities with other international agencies, especially those carrying out research and development projects in the same/similar field of study. In the Guatemala Education case, international agencies working in the education sector were unaware of the study. The report also suggests that IDRC was not aware of other international agencies doing similar work. Environmental scanning to stay abreast of the issues and other work being carried out within the international arena is certainly an area where IDRC can provide input and assist projects to establish linkages and partnerships with others who are carrying out similar work, as well as creating awareness of other projects.

PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

At the start of the analysis we hypothesized that partnerships that the project staff builds with other research, advocacy, or policy-making institutions will facilitate policy influence of the IDRC-sponsored research. Here we examine the types of partnerships that were created across the projects and the circumstances under which these partnerships have appeared to contribute to policy influence. Specifically, we attempt to answer the following questions:

- Under what conditions are *partnerships with research institutions* likely to contribute to policy influence?
- Are *partnerships with policy-making bodies* crucial under all conditions or are there situations when the project does not need to invest in building such partnerships?
- What does it take for the project to build a successful partnership with policy-making bodies?
- What are the characteristics of successful partnerships with policy-making institutions?

I. Partnerships with Research Institutions

In all cases IDRC has built partnerships with influential research institutions in the country or even region. The effectiveness of these partnerships in producing policy-relevant research, however, differed for different projects. The important factors seemed to be willingness of the researchers to work on influencing policy, and their capacity to take on advocacy work, either on their own or by partnering with advocacy organizations.

Experience in the projects suggests that initial willingness of researchers to work on policy-related research is important. It is important that a research institution has researchers who pursue not just academic but also policy-related studies. Where willingness to engage in policy-relevant research was clearly not present at the start, the project had minimal or no impact on policy-making. For example, the American University of Beirut (AUB) working on marginal land use in Lebanon, and ICARDA and the University of Aleppo working on the brackish water project in Syria did not aim at policy influence. In fact, it was mentioned that the AUB might not have participated had it known that the eventual goal was policy influence. Similarly, the medical university that conducted research on Chronic Mountain Sickness as an outcome of high altitude mining in Peru saw its role primarily as conducting a study and publishing a book. The case writers suggest that these researchers' purely academic interests may be in part responsible for the limited policy influence. This observation suggests that IDRC staff should partner with research institutions that are comfortable and competent with policy-oriented research.

The capacity of research institutions to promote their research recommendations is another crucial feature that characterizes successful partnerships. Willingness to influence the policy-making process is not enough; research organizations should have the necessary skills and resources. For example, the research institution working in Guatemala on the educational budget proposal was very eager to affect future educational spending on ethnic groups and girls. However, the researchers did not have the skills to identify relevant policy-making and policy-influencing institutions and to develop strategies to reach out to them. Examples of more successful projects show that partnerships with research institutions were effective in cases where a research institution undertook its own advocacy work, paired up with advocacy organizations, or had close connections to decision-making structures. One example is SRISTI, which not only conducted research but also informed, engaged in discussions, and lobbied decision-making organizations at various levels. This organization paid equally strong attention to research and advocacy. Another example is LABOR, an NGO that undertook research on the effects of the copper mining industry on the environment in Ilo, Peru. Although LABOR was already an effective fact-gathering and lobbying group, it teamed up with a major organization with a great deal of advocacy power - the International Water Tribunal. The IWT verdict helped to create publicity and to induce change at government and private sector levels. In the case of MIMAP-Bangladesh, both the Bureau of Statistics and especially the National Planning Commission – research partners in IDRC-funded research – were also closely involved in decision-making. The Planning Commission actually drew on the data generated by MIMAP tools as it prepared the PRSP for the country. Thus, depending on the nature of the research organization, it can decide to engage in advocacy on its own, recruit a like-minded advocacy organization, or forge direct links with government institutions, in order to have an impact on policy-making.

II. Partnerships with Policy-making Institutions

A. Conditions under which partnerships are crucial: The context of weak government support for the project

When IDRC-funded research is conducted in response to decision-makers' expressed need, the decision-makers themselves usually create necessary collaborative structures for research-policy interactions. Examples of such government initiative are seen in the cases of MIMAP-Senegal, Environmental Management Development Program in Ukraine, and economic research projects in Viet Nam. In the latter two cases the government set up committees that brought together researchers and policy-makers, and provided other ways for research results to reach policy-makers' deliberations.

In cases where decision-makers show relatively less interest in IDRC-sponsored research, project staff can initiate partnerships with government agencies and officials. One example of such a process is MIMAP-Bangladesh, where IDRC came in with a packet of economic research and monitoring tools. Although not in response to government request, partnerships were forged at the start with the Bureau of Statistics and the national Planning Commission, which ultimately led to the institutionalization of the poverty

monitoring tools in the country. A similarly strong partnership was established by researchers with the Bureau of Statistics in Jordan in the Greywater Reuse project, and as a result the project's work came to be seen as legitimate and received attention from the government officials. In contrast, in the case of the High Altitude Mining project, strong partnerships with the government structures were not forged. All the partners in the project were outside the government – the NGO, the university, and the mining labor unions. As a result, officials in the government did not know about the findings, and with the budget cuts in the occupational health institution, the project had no government allies to advocate for its work.

These and other examples suggest that when IDRC-funded research is conducted in response to governmental request, working on strong partnerships with government is less important. However, in the context of weak government support it is useful for project staff themselves to initiate partnerships with decision-makers.

III. The process of creating effective partnerships

A. Identifying strategic partners in the policy-making arena

Experience of the projects suggests that it is important to invest time in identifying policy-relevant partnerships for the project. For example, in the case of MIMAP-Philippines, partnerships with national organizations to institutionalize the Poverty Monitoring Systems appeared not to be particularly helpful because of the decentralized nature of decision-making in the country. Decisions about poverty monitoring were apparently made at provincial levels. In the Guatemala project on financing of education, the staff did not engage in a process of identifying and establishing relevant partnerships with actors that had a say in educational financial policy making. On the other hand, SRISTI project staff spent a lot of time identifying like-minded individuals in the government structures, and tailored their appeals for collaboration to their particular interests and needs. SRISTI would start the partnership-building process by inviting relevant agencies to participate in dialogue on important topics, locally, nationally, and internationally, and later follow up with invitations to commit to specific actions. G-24 appeared to use the same strategy, identifying and involving relevant academic, nongovernmental, and international agencies in dialogue about financial policy making; however, the discussions did not seem to be followed up with commitment to specific actions. Commitment is certainly harder to obtain in the case of G-24, since the main decision-making bodies – G7, IMF and WB – are beyond their purview.

These examples indicate that an important exercise at the start of the project may be to map out the relevant policy-making structures and persons at the needed level of policy influence. As the work of G-24 suggests, identifying *policy-influencing* structures – academic institutions, think tanks and others – may be an important additional strategy.

B. Involving policy-making and policy-influencing institutions early in the project.

It is useful if the mapping work suggested above is done early in the project's work, as this would allow early involvement. Early partnerships may even contribute to the

formulation of research questions and research activities and, as a result, partners may be more invested in the research outcomes. For example, in Guatemala the government partners became involved with the project only after the actual research had been carried out, when they were called on to help formulate the budget proposal based on the research. There had been no consultation with relevant policy-making or policy-influencing actors on the importance of the research or on the ways in which the results could realistically be implemented. ECAPAPA projects present another example of the lack of effort to involve policy-makers at the outset. Contacts with decision-makers were planned only at the dissemination stage, and even these efforts were not always well-prepared. As a result very few relevant decision-makers knew of the projects' efforts. The best examples of early government involvement and partnerships are certainly cases where research was initiated on request of the government structures, such as in Viet Nam, Ukraine, Nepal, and others. When the initiative for such involvement rested with the research organization, however, it seemed to be problematic. It might be useful for IDRC to investigate ways of helping project staff to initiate early partnerships.

Encouraging government partners to take responsibility for some parts of the project seems to be an effective strategy for ensuring that the government will attend to the project results. Examples of projects providing government structures with project responsibilities include MIMAP-Bangladesh, SRISTI, and Jordan Greywater Reuse project. The project staff may train the government units to conduct research activities, as happened in MIMAP-Bangladesh and MIMAP-Senegal cases. Alternatively, the project staff may work on creating a new dedicated government unit dealing with the issue addressed by the project, as it happened in the case of SRISTI.

IV. Characteristics of Effective Partnerships

A. Relationships of trust between research and policy-making institutions

It appears that one of the primary conditions for effective partnership for policy influence is a sense of trust between researchers and policy makers. Such trust usually develops when policy-makers not only know about the existence of the research institution but have seen it work and produce data and recommendations that policy-makers can use. An example of such trust-building process was the development of CREA, a research institution taking part in MIMAP-Senegal project. CREA, with the support of the IDRC and other donors, had long been involved in research solicited by decision-makers, even during periods when the government could not finance such research. The history of involvement with government agencies made CREA a suitable partner for the government when it needed help with producing the PRSP for the country. Another example of building trust over time is the economic research program in Viet Nam. At first, apparently various government officials suggested topics that they believed important, and these were put together to create a research agenda. Research centers undertook the work, noting that this was their first relationship with government agencies and they wanted to be responsive to decision-makers' needs. It is possible that the research centers were subsequently able to become involved in more systematic,

programmatic economic research precisely because they had proven that they took officials' interests seriously.

Although trusting relationships are usually an outgrowth of positive working experience, sometimes institutional trust may come from special personal qualities and government connections of individuals involved with the research institution. For example, many officials in the case study of SRISTI mentioned that they were made aware of and engaged in SRISTI work through interactions with the leader of SRISTI, Professor Gupta. Similarly, in the case of Acacia-Mozambique, Venancio Massingue, former head of Informatics Center of the University of Eduardo Mondlane and Vice-Rector for the university, played a key role in the development of the Acacia project and ICT in Mozambique, due to his close connections to key government leaders. "Massingue's energetic efforts to network and market ICTs among this high level group [of key ICT related decision-makers in the Mozambican government] through discussions, demonstrations of the use of computers and the Internet, and MAAC meetings helped to secure and maintain their interest in ICT" (Acacia-Mozambique Case Study, p.61). Other cases where the individuals known in or having positions in the government played key roles in project's influence on policy include the Environmental Management Development program in Ukraine, the Nepal IT policy project, MIMAP-Senegal where the project leader, Abdoulaye Ndiaye was well-known to decision makers, and the Jordan Greywater Reuse project.

B. Wide partnerships with many diverse constituents

In many cases, building partnerships with diverse constituents appeared to be important for policy influence. In the case of the Peru Copper Mining project, the NGO (LABOR) built strong support for a suit before the International Water Tribunal II among local constituencies, the regional multi-sector commission, and two outspoken members of the national congress. They in turn mobilized more than 50 congressmen, who supported the Tribunal's verdict against Southern Peru Copper Company. In the case of Ukraine, the popularity of the National Atlas project among the general public and policy-makers at various levels increased the recognition of the project and made policy-makers more interested. SRISTI is the ultimate example of wide partnerships, as it carried out its work through networks with businesses, formal science organizations, universities and schools, and government bodies. Each of these partners was helpful to SRISTI in advancing some part of its work. Collaboration with students helped SRISTI collect the grassroots data on innovation; scientific organizations assisted SRISTI with conducting experiments to validate the value of the grassroots knowledge; relationships with the business sector were important for marketing the innovations; and collaborating with government officials was crucial in institutionalizing SRISTI's work.

Having many allies is important for at least two reasons. First, it provides more avenues through which the project may affect policy. For example, in the case of Acacia-Senegal, the project staff has engaged a wide group of potential partners – governmental agencies, international donor organizations, private sector entities, local NGOs and other civil society groups, - in its work on IT development. By doing so, the project expanded its

ability to influence policy because it was able to invite allies to engage in relevant parts of the policy process. Use of media in the Ukrainian project, and involvement of the business sector in SRISTI's work are examples of building additional avenues through which the project can exercise policy influence. Second, consultation with many allies contributes to sounder policy proposals that reflect the needs of stakeholders and the reality on the ground. For example, the collaboration of local and district health system partners with national health partners in the TEHIP project in Tanzania allowed the national staff to make well-informed health policy decisions.

It can be useful to have some partner organizations that are vested with authority in the policy-making arena and thus are likely to have an influence on policy. In the case of Acacia-South Africa, for example, although the membership of the Advisory Committee was representative of the diverse population of the country, the project failed to attract institutions and individuals of high profile who could command attention in the government. The project was not as successful as it could have been. Similarly, the Guatemala project on financing of education focused its efforts on the Ministry of Education, where the agency with more authority on the educational budget was the Ministry of Finance. In the case of G-24 one of the project's partners was UNCTAD, a UN organization that in the eyes of the major players in international financial policy was obsolete. The fact that UNCTAD participated in the work of G-24 may thus have limited the legitimacy of project recommendations. These examples once again suggest the importance of early investigative work about the relevant decision-makers and organizations that influence them.

It is not necessary that *all* of the decision-making partners be authoritative. Thus, in the case of Vietnam, the IDRC project team was first paired with the Ministry of Science and Technology, which was a relatively new institution with very little say in the policy-making arena. However, in addition to this arrangement, the projects were supervised by Advisory committees that included heads of senior research institutions and people on the advisory team to the Prime Minister. These links appeared to be influential in adoption of the suggestions of the IDRC-funded studies.

In sum, partnerships with diverse constituents may be powerful. They create more pathways to reach the policy-making world, make policy recommendations more reflective of the reality on the ground, and generate publicity around research results and recommendations. When partners include people with authority, further influence is possible.

C. Coordination of roles and interests in the partnership

Partnerships for all their value may also lead to conflicts of roles and of interests. The prime examples are the two multinational projects – LATN and G-24 – that struggled with tensions between the regional and national interests (in the case of LATN) and between short-term and long-term research agendas (in the case of G-24). In addition, G-24 and some of the Acacia projects (which also operated through multiple partnerships) suffered from a lack of clear delineation of management roles, with operating bodies

within the same project overlapping in their work. An example of effective coordination of roles is the work of two organizational structures (MAAC and MAACS) in Acacia-Mozambique case. Both structures included policy-makers and other stakeholders in the project. The MAAC worked on the national level and allowed the project to build support in various ministries within the national government. The MAACS worked with local entities and brought their perspective to bear on national policy discussions. By fostering partnerships in both spheres, the Acacia project enjoyed a greater potential for success in policy influence. In contrast, in the Acacia-Uganda and Acacia-South Africa projects the roles of the national organizational structures were not well-coordinated, which led to less effective partnerships and resulted in diminished policy influence.

Wide partnerships with diverse participants bring definite advantages. However, for such partnerships to be functional, they require additional effort in building common vision and goals, as well as creating efficient and equitable mechanisms for managing the partnership.

In sum, the analysis of the partnerships created by the IDRC and its recipient institutions suggests several guidelines for the operation of future projects. First, if the main goal of the project is policy influence, the sponsored research institution should be willing to undertake policy-relevant research. It should also be able to carry out advocacy work, either on its own, or by pairing with an advocacy institution, or by establishing close links with relevant decision-making structures. Second, project staff should be ready to initiate partnerships with decision-makers. In the context of weak government support for the project, they should map out the relevant policy-making and policy-influencing structures in the country and develop strategies to reach out to them early in the process. It helps if the project can engage partner institutions in the actual work of the project. Third, the project staff may need help in creating partnerships that are reflective of all the stakeholders, but that at the same time involve people and institutions vested with decision-making authority. Finally, project teams will need to learn how to build common vision across its partnership and coordinate the partners' efforts so that these become complementary.

DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION

At first sight, dissemination of research findings and their implications seem to be essential for influencing public policy. However, the analysis of the case studies does not lend itself to such a straightforward conclusion. Other factors play a role in defining the extent to which dissemination efforts are effective or even necessary, such as the context of the research, the avenues and the audiences selected for dissemination, and the way the information is presented.

In the section below, we explore the following questions:

- Is active dissemination always necessary for achieving policy influence?
- What types of dissemination have the projects used and with what outcomes?
- Who has been the dissemination audience and how, if at all, did this choice relate to policy influence?
- What role did the format of the information as well as its timing appear to play in making dissemination efforts effective?

I. Conditions under which dissemination is important for policy influence

In some projects dissemination has been crucial to achievement of policy influence. The prime example is the Peru Copper Mining project. The International Water Tribunal that took on the case of the water-polluting Southern Peru Copper Company used publicity as its main weapon. Evidence from the case suggests that it was not just the publicity itself but also SPCC's *expectation* of possible negative publicity that led to SPCC's changes in environmental practice and spurred new environmental legislation by the government. Other cases where dissemination and communication have been important include SRISTI, Jordan Greywater Reuse project, G-24, and LATN. In several cases, the lack of careful planning for dissemination and communication was one of the factors underlying their failure to exert influence. In the Lebanon Marginal Lands project the desire to affect at least local policy came in the middle of the project. While the project staff was effective in building the capacity of local policy makers in community-based resource management, they had no plans for and consequently no effects on national policy. Other cases where more planned and 'aggressive' outreach to policy makers might have made a difference include the High Altitude Mining project in Peru and ECAPAPA projects.

However, in another group of cases, there was little concerted dissemination effort, and nevertheless the projects achieved some policy influence. In these cases the deciding factor was that the government had a high interest in the research or in the new possibilities stemming from it. Because of this interest, government agencies absorbed the research results and implications with relative ease and on their own. In some cases this happened through collaborative structures set up to bring researchers and policy makers together. One example is the economic research in Viet Nam, where advisory bodies to the projects included heads of central research institutions in the country as well as advisors to the Prime Minister. Similarly, advisory bodies were created in Acacia projects to bring together researchers, government agencies, and nongovernmental and

private organizations. In other cases research was absorbed through frequent but more informal communication between policy makers and researchers. Such communication was helpful to research utilization in the case of MIMAP-Senegal, for example. Other projects where the government was eager to utilize the results of the research and which thus had less need for dissemination included TEHIP in Tanzania, Nepal IT policy development project, and MIMAP-Bangladesh.

II. Strategies for dissemination and communication used by the projects

A. Dissemination through information

The projects have used two main dissemination and communication strategies. We call the first strategy ‘dissemination through information’, and the second, ‘dissemination through people’. Dissemination through information is engaging in what we traditionally think of as dissemination activities – publications, workshops, and conferences. The most basic type is *passing on the information* – through publications, policy briefs, briefings for the media, and so on. Some projects have limited their dissemination efforts to this type. In the G-24 project, the research agenda was initially generated on the basis of the government officials’ reported needs. The research group apparently passed on the results of their research to policy-makers without discussing the implications of their work. The country policy makers complained about the overly scientific nature of the research summaries and briefs, which they had a hard time translating into action. Without dialogue it is difficult for project staff to know how the results are taken, whether they are understood, and whether they have a chance of affecting policy at any level. When there is high turnover among the involved government officials, just sending information to policy makers seems to be an especially fragile strategy.

However, when passing on information, the approach can be strengthened by sharing results at more than one point with decision-makers. For example, in the case of TEHIP researchers shared their results with the government officials both at the early stages of the project and at the end. Frequent communication may contribute to keeping the decision-makers’ attention on the issue and thus increase the likelihood that they will consider the research in their policy deliberations.

Usually, to exert influence on policy-making the project staff needed to engage the policy makers and relevant stakeholders in *discussions about the findings*. Examples of engaging policy makers in dialogue include the actions of SRISTI, LATN, and MIMAP-Senegal. In the MIMAP-Senegal project, CREA, the responsible research institution, introduced regular days for reflection on the state of the economy in Senegal, which appeared to attract policy makers’ attention to the work CREA was doing. However, for such dialogue to be effective, the timing of the research output should match the timing of policy debates. Thus, LATN research staff paid considerable attention to the timing of its research outputs, which apparently made policy makers more responsive to the policy suggestions.

Dialogue with policymakers is more likely to be associated with policy influence when participating policymakers are encouraged to act upon the research findings. Under favorable circumstances researchers are in a position to prompt policymakers toward action. Of the cases we reviewed, SRISTI provides the best example. In this project, SRISTI invited state officials to participate in an international conference on preservation of indigenous knowledge. After the conference the project staff followed up these officials by setting up additional meetings. As a result of the dialogue facilitated by SRISTI, the state of Gujarat committed to, and eventually set up, a governmental structure that would scale up and institutionalize SRISTI's work.

Overall it seems that dissemination is more likely to contribute to policy influence if the project staff moves from simply sharing the results of the studies to engaging policy makers and other stakeholders in dialogue to engender government commitment to specific lines of action. Nevertheless, other cases suggest that even dialogue and resolutions to take action may not be enough. For example, in the case of the ECAPAPA project on natural resource management in Kenya, a workshop for 60-100 people, including policy makers from nearby localities, was arranged to disseminate the research results and to discuss them. Specific suggestions for policy action were made, but no one monitored whether the actions were actually carried through. The research team disintegrated early and did not follow up. In contrast, SRISTI followed up on officials' promises. Of course, it is often neither possible nor politically wise for researchers to try to push government officials to a policy commitment, but when it happens, it seems to be effective.

B. Dissemination through people

The other dissemination strategy appears to be 'dissemination through people'. In some cases this occurs when project members move into government positions and share their knowledge of the research with their colleagues. This was the case of the Asian Fisheries project, where one member now leads a large Bureau of Agriculture Research in the Philippines, which reports to department heads of major government agencies and has direct policy influence on aquaculture. A large number of the early members of the consortium are now deans, chancellors, and vice presidents of universities or senior staff or directors in government fisheries departments. A similar dissemination pattern occurred in the case of brackish water research in Syria, where one of the project participants was appointed a Minister of Agriculture at the end of the project.

Another way that 'dissemination through people' occurs is when people occupying important societal positions also take the leading role in the research project. Thus, in the case of SRISTI, the reputation of Professor Gupta, the head of SRISTI, allowed him to reach out to many government officials and excite them about the concept of indigenous knowledge. Similarly, in the case of ACACIA-Mozambique, Dr. Massingue, former head of the Informatics Center of the University of Eduardo Mondlane and Vice-Rector of the university, became the head of one of the project's supervisory structures, and through discussions with and demonstrations for government officials, captured their interest in the possibilities of ICT.

Finally, ‘dissemination through people’ can be done by finding allies within the government or within groups having influence on the government. Thus, in the case of the Jordan Greywater Reuse project the staff developed close relationships with officials at the Bureau of Statistics. As the officials realized that they shared goals with the project, they posted the research project’s activities on their website, thus disseminating the research ideas to many other agencies and officials in the government. Similarly in Vietnam, the head of the senior research institution in the country, who was also a member of several decision-making bodies in the country, is credited with popularizing the research findings and advocating their implementation.

III. The dissemination audience

Projects reached out to a variety of audiences when engaging in dissemination. The primary dissemination audience need not be policy makers. Policy-influencing audiences can include policy makers, nongovernmental organizations, research institutions, and international agencies that have a say in policy-making, and the public at large. When none of these audiences are targeted, the project is apt to have the least policy influence. In the case of the ECAPAPA projects on agricultural research, the main participants at dissemination events were farmers and local organizations, and thus it is not surprising that no policy influence was achieved. Similarly, in the case of the High Altitude Mining project in Peru the results of the research were disseminated to the miners’ union and to the mining centers. However, little effort was made to reach out to government officials.

The strategy to disseminate the information to *a wide public* sometimes seems to be effective in shaping public opinion, which in turn can later affect policy. Thus in the case of Ukraine, the National Atlas project coupled with the TV series on the state of the Dnipro River created broad awareness of the research activities of the research team, and reportedly facilitated policy influence. Similarly in the case of SRISTI the project staff actively reached out to broad masses, tailoring communication strategies to their specific needs and capacities (including creating a picture-based computer kiosk for illiterate villagers). Its regular newsletter was not overly technical in nature, containing stories of innovators and interesting challenges to the readers. By engaging in such activities, SRISTI was deliberately trying to shape public opinion and to create a broad constituency for its work as a way to obtain governmental legitimacy and support for its activities. Use of media was important in these efforts. Media was reportedly used effectively also in the Peru Copper Mining project, and in MIMAP projects in Bangladesh and the Philippines.

Successful projects remained non-political while communicating with the public. This appeared to be particularly important in Ukraine and was also a lesson learned in Guatemala. Both countries experienced considerable political instability, and partisan messages would have created problems for the projects.

While generally dissemination seems to have greater payoff when the project identifies specific policy makers and other policy-influencing players at the start, in some cases too

much rigidity in dissemination plans may hurt the chances of the project. Thus, in the case of Ukraine the databases were set up to be used by specific decision-makers in the government, but there was high turnover among officials. In addition, many of them lacked expertise and were unwilling to maintain the databases that the project developed. This example suggests that dissemination plans should be informed by the reality on the ground and subject to change as conditions change.

IV. Adapting the format of dissemination to the audience

When disseminating research results and lessons to any audience, the format of the information requires attention. Several projects seemed to increase the effectiveness of their communication by tailoring it to audience needs. For example, the ACACIA-Senegal research team communicated to policy makers the research results on ICT in a manner relevant to their work. Specifically, the database they created provided information on ICTs relevant to local government leaders' new duties under the country's decentralization plan. Information of such problem-solving type made dissemination efforts effective. SRISTI project staff went even further in adapting the messages to the audience by diversifying its communications directed at different audiences. Its dissemination efforts ranged from picture-based computer kiosks for illiterate villagers to databases describing more than 10,000 innovations, to policy proposals written for decision occasions. SRISTI was able to develop these diverse outreach strategies despite its small size and few resources. It is likely that its mode of operation – through networks – allowed it to become more aware of different stakeholders' needs and interests and thus helped it to be sensitive in communication.

However, even the best communications in the best format and style are no guarantee that research will be utilized. As noted in the analysis of contextual factors, external conditions and events can derail the most sophisticated and sensitive dissemination efforts. Probably there is nothing a project can do to overcome a shift in government priorities, an economic crisis, or political instability. But when conditions are propitious, carefully planned and well implemented communications can make a difference, especially when supplemented by the building of partnerships with relevant institutions early in the project. As mentioned earlier, effective partnerships create a sense of ownership of the project by the partners and thus research results are much more likely to be attended to. Periodic and tailor-made dissemination efforts can enhance research-policy partnerships.

CONCLUSION

This report analyzes 22 case studies of IDRC-supported research and the influence that the research had on policy in the countries studied. Policy influence is not the only goal that IDRC maintains for its research program. Our report does not make such a claim. The support of research per se may be an equally valid objective. We do not deal with issues about whether and when other goals should take priority in funding and planning decisions. What our analysis enables us to say is that *if policy influence is a project goal*, an identified set of factors appears to advance such influence.

Our analysis has singled out six themes that encapsulate the factors that we have found affect the degree of influence that a project has had. They are:

1. The political, social, institutional, and historical *context* of the country;
- 2-4. Three elements of IDRC action, namely
its *intentions* regarding policy influence of the project ,
the *role* it plays in the research, and
the *inputs* of money, time, and professional skill that it devotes to the project;
- 5-6. Two elements of project action, namely
partnerships it establishes with researchers and policymakers; and
the nature and extent of *dissemination* of project work.²

We are impressed with the need for extensive reconnaissance before the research project begins. If a project aims to affect policy (in any of the ways we have defined policy influence), then IDRC and the project need to understand from the start what the policy field is like, who the players are, how to reach them, and what they need to know. Such early mapping of the policy field is especially useful when the research is not a response to governments' interest or request. The better informed the project is, the more likely will it be to have an effect on subsequent actions.

Careful planning in advance

In interpreting the cases in this study, we have come to appreciate the importance of careful planning for policy influence in the early stages of a project. In fact, such issues should receive attention during negotiations for the project with the grantee institution.

Identification of persons key to decision making

Preliminary work should identify the likely decision makers on the issues under study. It is important to know who will have a major say on policy matters and what their current

² In addition, there have been separate analyses of projects' time horizon and attention to gender in the projects. This report does not include their findings.

opinions are, how much knowledge they have of the issues, and where they look for advice. Figuring out how to reach them and engage their interest is an important step along the road to policy influence.

Inclusion of outside influentials

By decision makers we mean more than high government officials with official portfolios. Often policy decisions are influenced by outside groups, economic interests, community organizations, regional and local officials, the media, and so on. Lindblom calls them “the policy influencing community” and accords them pride of place in the policy process. Early reconnaissance should identify them -- and their activities and beliefs. Such scanning can give further insight into the likely play of decision politics. It points the way to further engagement with people whose cooperation will be useful.

Design, conduct, and communication of research

When researchers and project administrators understand the constellation of power in the policy arena, they are better equipped to fashion their research in ways that answer the questions and doubts of decision-making influentials. It is often possible to involve them in the research process and give them a say in which issues need to be addressed. When data are becoming available, the project can communicate with them on an ongoing basis. The project has to not only disseminate information but also *listen* to decision makers to hear their interpretation of the information. *Ongoing conversation* is highly valuable for policy influence.

IDRC contributions

IDRC’s contributions are pivotal. IDRC often provides not only money but also expertise and technical assistance. IDRC staff bring their knowledge of earlier research to the project, and they help the project identify key opportunities, understand prior history of the field, recognize the geography of the policy arena, and adopt high-quality methods of research and management. In successful cases, IDRC continues its input of knowledge and strategy over an extended period. A characteristic of assistance that further amplifies policy influence is flexibility of support, making use of a variety of techniques such as clusters of projects, demonstration models, development interventions, and core support.

Building relations of trust

Over and over, we saw that building relationships of trust is critical. IDRC has a long history of dealing with people in developing countries as partners and collaborators, not as minions. This reputation facilitates relationships with project researchers, and IDRC’s ways of work provide a model for grant recipients in dealing with their counterparts in the policy world. Furthermore, IDRC staff sometimes take part in conversations and forums with decision makers, even occasionally providing training for them in coping with data and models, and all the activities progress more propitiously when trust is the

watchword. On occasion, trust takes time to develop. Thus projects in an uncongenial setting may flourish with a longer life span.

Timing

A separate analysis has been done of project timing. We do not include that analysis in this report. Still, several features of timing appear to have effects on policy influence, most notably the availability of project findings when policy is being debated or discussed. In John Kingdon's terms, it is useful to have a research contribution ready when the policy window is open. The longer that support for good projects continues, the more likely will research be relevant, ready, and trusted at appropriate points. Long term support can also give the project team an opportunity to continue its efforts into a period of implementation. However, two projects that received short-term support thrived (Peru Copper Mining and Nepal IT) because they took advantage of strategic opportunities.

A Tangential Note on Politics

IDRC does not take stands on policy matters. Officially it does not get involved in politics. It leaves decisions about what policies to support up to its grantee institutions, which presumably follow the direction of their research results. But in a broader sense, IDRC does take political stands. It engages in political activity when it decides to support a project about the bad health consequences of mining at high altitudes or about the pollution of streams and rivers. It supports policies when it helps set up systems for collecting data on the poverty effects of macroeconomic policy. IDRC supports causes like education for minority children, respect for indigenous medicine, clean air and water, and cessation of tobacco smoking. The orientation of IDRC is the liberal North American consensus.

Whereas much of the developed world takes the values of the liberal consensus for granted, they are not universal. In many countries, underlying features of the liberal consensus are contested; not every culture values a focus on the individual, freedom of belief and association, challenge to authority, and priority of observed "fact" over received ideology. Yet these are the basic values that underlie research in general and IDRC's research portfolio in particular. If this investigation had inquired into a wider array of political issues, we might have been able to say more about whether inconsistencies between research results/advocacy on the one hand and political culture on the other constrained the influence of research in some settings.

Finally, a note of appreciation

We cannot end this report without recognizing the remarkable work that IDRC and its partners and grantees accomplish. We are impressed with IDRC's knowledge, savvy, hard work, and dedication, and with the achievements of its recipient institutions. It is an inspiring story.