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THE EVALUATION OF EXTERNALLY-FUNDED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author; they do not necessarily represent the views of the International Development Research Centre. The author holds the position of Senior Planning Officer in the Office of Planning and Evaluation.

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THE EVALUATION OF EXTERNALLLY-FUNDED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is an autonomous public corporation financed by the Parliament of Canada which funds research of direct relevance to Third World development and assists developing countries to build up their own research capabilities and institutions. Its primary means of operation is the support of individual research projects which are proposed, designed and implemented by the scientists in developing countries and which respond to the development problems, needs and priorities of those countries.

The Office of Planning and Evaluation is the institutional focus for evaluation in IDRC; it carries out some evaluations itself and it coordinates and advises on those carried out by other parts of the Centre. The major proportion of resources is devoted, **ex ante**, to planning, developing and screening projects and only modest resources are devoted to **ex post** evaluation. The Centre uses evaluation information for policy development, resource allocation decisions, strategic planning and project and program management. Three areas of major concern in recent evaluation work have been the congruence between national development needs and the thrusts of Centre-supported research; the utilization of research results; and the impact of the research on its intended beneficiaries.

In its relations with Third World agencies and institutions, the Centre encourages the use of evaluation information to improve research planning and management and endeavours to build up evaluation capabilities. To this end, we place considerable emphasis on the evaluation process itself -- stressing collaboration and consultation with researchers, managers and research users.

In our experience, the involvement of the key stake-holders in framing the evaluation questions, data collection and formulation of recommendations promotes confidence in and ownership of the evaluation findings.

THE CHALLENGES OF EVALUATING RESEARCH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In an earlier paper presented by IDRC at the Joint Evaluation Conference in Toronto in October 1985*, the increased interest and value placed on evaluation, both in developing countries and in Canada, was documented. Growing recognition of the usefulness of evaluation, for planning and resource allocation and as an accountability tool, is evident in some countries and among donor agencies. The earlier paper predicted a healthy increase in the use of evaluation by Third World governments and development agencies, but anticipated that growth in indigenous evaluation capability would not keep pace with demands for this activity.

In developing countries, evaluation poses a number of obvious challenges. Infrastructural problems may inhibit travel or communication; existing databases may be difficult to access or inadequate as sources of background or baseline information; evaluation skills are often scarce and the few skilled people may be hard to identify and locate. There may also be cultural, linguistic or organizational barriers to carrying out what is often seen as a foreign process using an imported methodology.

Less obvious challenges stem from the fact that IDRC's mission is development, while its mandate is confined to research. Research is only a small, if important, part of the development process. Evaluation issues must, therefore, relate to impact on development, but fall within the sphere of what

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* Evaluations in the Third World National Research Systems: Some Trends and Operational Experiences, Chew, Sing C. and Daniels, W. Douglas, IDRC, October 1985.

can be achieved through research. If the application of research is dependent on a myriad of processes which lead to development, the Centre must be clear about how far it intends to go to bridge the gaps between the successful completion of research and the social and economic advancement of the intended beneficiaries. The challenge is to evaluate research projects and programs on their own internal objectives, on the Centre's own objectives and with respect to the research and development goals of the recipient country.

Given that IDRC funds research which is proposed, designed and carried out by its recipients, the achievement of its own objectives partly depends on others achieving theirs. The two sets of objectives may be compatible and mutually complementary, but nonetheless different, and the evaluation must be narrowed down to those interests of both parties which are manageable with the time and resources available for the evaluation. IDRC must also identify the limits within which it tries to help the recipient institution to fulfill its own objectives. With this approach, utilization of the evaluation results depends on the extent to which the respective interests of the donor/recipient partners are addressed.

Given the scarcity of indigenous evaluation capability and the logistical and methodological difficulties of conducting evaluations in developing countries, it is understandable that donor agencies tend to carry out evaluations using external expertise and aimed at their own information needs. Such practice, while expedient in some respects, has a number of serious drawbacks for developing countries:

(a) the findings may be relevant only to the external agency and not be pertinent to the needs of local institutions;

(b) results may not reflect an adequate understanding of the local situations and problems; and

(c) the provision of collaborative and logistical support to external evaluators puts considerable strain on the already overtaxed resources of developing country institutions.

These activities may be endured for the sake of goodwill or continued funding, while yielding little in terms of increased evaluation capability or useful evaluation information. The avoidance of such shortcomings poses a challenge to IDRC and other development agencies.

IDRC'S APPROACH TO EVALUATION

In response to these challenges, IDRC has evolved a locally-focussed, highly consultative approach to evaluation. We tend to use technical specialists as evaluators, rather than evaluation specialists; and preference is given to local evaluators or those with responsibilities related to planning or coordination of research. This helps add the depth and insight of local experience and sensitivity, and sometimes opens up unanticipated sources of evaluation information. Close collaboration and consultation among the principals involved is sought throughout the process, and scrutiny of the evaluation findings by the affected members of the research community is considered important, both to the quality of the final recommendations and to their ultimate implementation.

IDRC evaluations tend to combine both hard (quantitative) and soft (qualitative) data. Simpler more direct methodological approaches are used, especially when the quantity and quality of data and the evaluation capacity available will not support the use of advanced techniques of collection and analysis. Questionnaire surveys, file analysis, in-depth interviews, citation searches and cost benefit analysis are the primary tools.

In summary, IDRC approaches development on the premise that Third World countries may not try to replicate the ways of the North. Rather, they may adapt technologies to their needs, consistent with available resources and their visions of future possibilities. Similarly, management tools such as evaluation may have to evolve before they adequately serve the needs of developing country research systems. It is suggested that the most effective

way to facilitate that evolution is to encourage in those countries direct experience with, and full control over this process.

TWO CASE STUDIES

IDRC's approach to evaluation can be illustrated in two recent examples in East Africa: one in Ethiopia, the other in Tanzania. In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission (ESTC), a government agency responsible for building and coordinating the country's research and development capability, evaluated all of the research supported by IDRC in national institutions. In Tanzania, a team of staff members from the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) evaluated all its projects supported by IDRC.

The Centre's interest in operational and policy issues in both countries coincided with the two requests for assistance. In Ethiopia, the government was formulating a ten-year national development plan and required information for the science and technology component. The evaluating agency, ESTC, was also seeking to improve its own management of research programs and to build up planning and evaluation capacity in the national research system. In Tanzania, the Sokoine University of Agriculture had recently been granted new status as a fully independent university, with national responsibility for agricultural research and extension. Here the evaluation was to help plan research programs, set policies for efficient and effective operation and to increase the contribution of its research output to agricultural development. For its part, IDRC wanted to improve the delivery and effectiveness of its support to research in both countries. It wanted to explore ways of supporting research other than single, sectorally-focussed projects: in Ethiopia, by determining the need for and feasibility of a country-wide programming strategy; and in Tanzania, by looking at the possibility of providing institutional support through a broad range of coordinated support activities.

In addition to a technical component which looked at the research itself, both evaluations included a management component which looked at the support services for the research. Data for the latter were collected and written up separately, in Ethiopia by the National Productivity Centre, and in Tanzania by a team from the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Faculty of Commerce. The overall objective of the management studies was to identify problem areas and recommend improvements to the organizational, administrative and financial capabilities of the research institutions. It was also expected that they would review those aspects of national policies and government administration that affected research activities. The management studies differed in method and content from the technical components, however, they were consistent with the overall evaluation objectives. The findings from both components were later integrated for purposes of workshop discussion and presentation in the final reports. In describing the evaluation process, this paper refers primarily to the technical side of the evaluation. However, in dealing with the findings, technical and management components are combined reflecting their presentation in the final evaluation reports.

EVALUATION METHOD

The Ethiopian and Tanzanian evaluations used similar methods and addressed largely the same evaluation questions. This did not happen by chance. The Ethiopian exercise was eighteen months earlier and was used as a model by the Tanzanians; Mazingira Institute, Nairobi, provided consultancy services for the technical component in both; and the evaluation coordinator from ESTC participated in the SUA exercise.

Both of these evaluations moved through five phases:

1. **Design and Approval.** Objectives and terms of reference are defined and approved; the evaluation team is recruited; and its members assume their respective responsibilities. The method and data collection instruments are developed and tested and some preliminary data collected from the files.

This phase required considerable consultation and negotiation among IDRC, the evaluators and the evaluation users. The evaluation objectives were determined by looking for areas of congruence between the objectives of IDRC and each institution. Shared concerns on a number of major questions served as the basis for establishing evaluation criteria. Those selected are listed in Figure 1.

These objectives were then broken down into lists of detailed questions applicable to the projects. This yielded for each project, a list of questions aimed at exploring its contribution to each of the five or six evaluation objectives. The questions were then sorted according to the source of information to which they would be relevant (IDRC files, project leaders, researchers policy makers and other users of the research output, i.e. farmers, extension agencies, etc., and IDRC staff). Figure 2 illustrates the general application of this process for the Ethiopian case showing the overall evaluation questions elaborated to detailed project-related questions and then allocated to the relevant sources of information.

Developing consensus and obtaining approval for the evaluation design and objectives can be difficult; it is helped considerably when the design bears the approving agency's fingerprints, and when the evaluating agency will be one of the primary users of the evaluation results. The highly collaborative nature of this phase allows it to function as an evaluation assessment, ensuring that objectives, resources, data and users can be brought together to generate the information which is required.

Figure 1

Objectives Selected for Evaluating
IDRC-Supported Research

ETHIOPIA	SUA*, TANZANIA
° to support research on Ethiopian priority development problems	° contributing to the R & D priorities of the Government of Tanzania
° to provide knowledge and technology to solve priority development needs	° generation and utilization of information, knowledge and technology for national development
° to build research capacity: manpower, institutions, information systems, support systems	° building research capability, contribution to teaching and staff development.
° to test, apply and use research results, or to ensure that there are mechanisms to do this	
° to use effective administrative and financial procedures	° strengthening and building research support services at SUA
° to coordinate research within and between institutions	° cooperation and coordination with other research efforts at SUA, and between SUA and other institutions

* Sokoine University of Agriculture

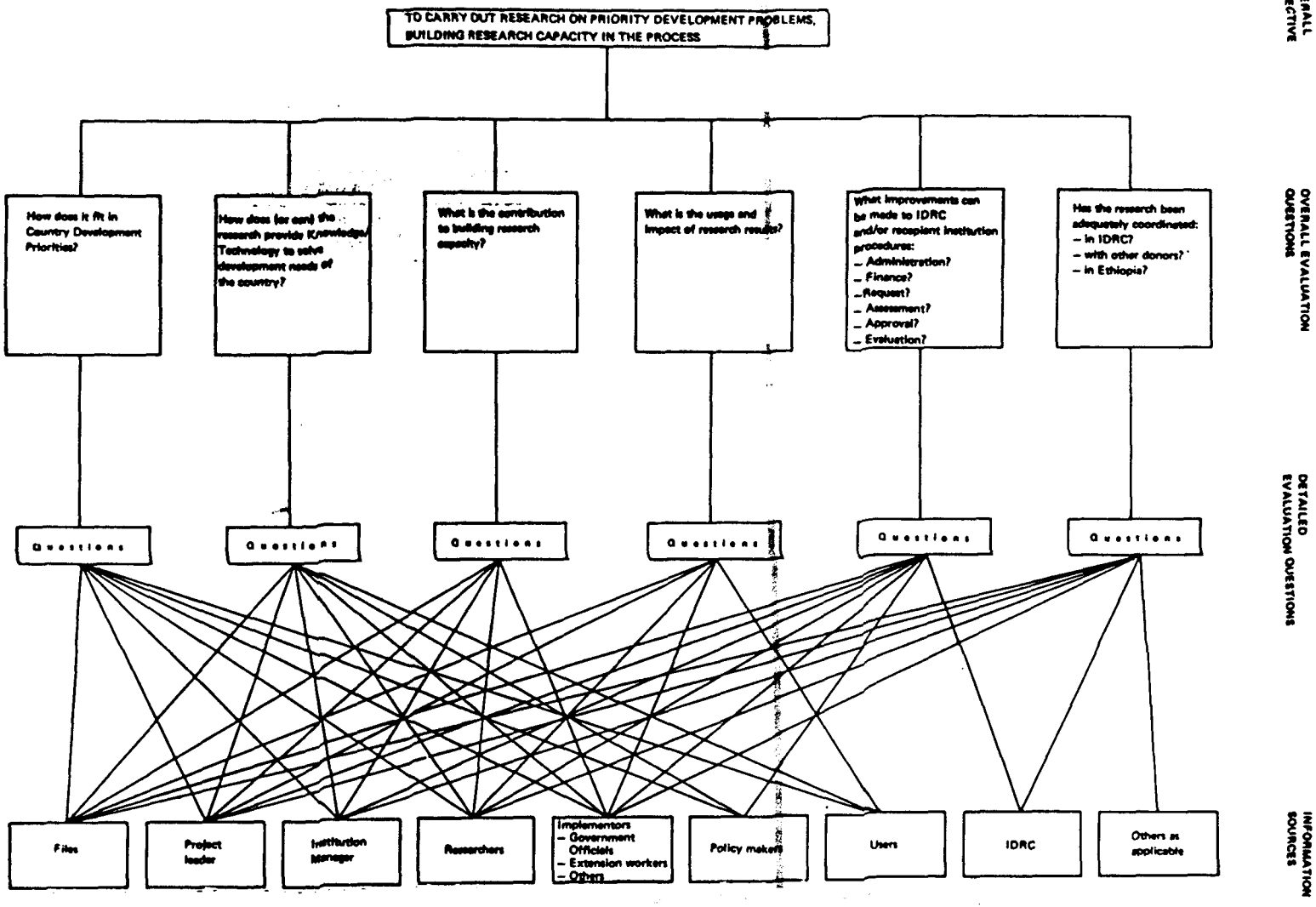

Figure 2: Technical Evaluation Method: Objectives, Questions and Information Sources

Source: Nazreth Workshop on IDRC-Supported Research Projects in Ethiopia, 23-26 April, 1984, Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission

2. **Data Collection and Reporting** has two stages. First, a pilot evaluation of one project is conducted to test out the instruments, to demonstrate the method and to standardize reporting. The team members, who will have identified the information sources for their respective projects and sorted out the relevant questions for each source, collect, analyze and write up the data. This is done for each project. An important function throughout this phase is that of the coordinator who helps gain access to information, advises on the presentation of the data and ensures that deadlines are met.

3. **Data Analysis and Identification of Issues.** This phase involves identifying the major issues cutting across the projects and developing options for addressing them. The individual evaluation reports produced in phase 2 are integrated into one report, summarizing and synthesizing the findings, yet retaining detailed data on each project to facilitate verification and discussion. It is in this phase that findings of the management studies, carried out separately, are integrated with the technical evaluations.

4. **Verification and Discussion of Issues.** The contents of this preliminary report become the focal point in the fourth phase. Comments on the draft report are solicited, and a workshop is convened in which discussion is focussed first on the verification of the data, secondly on the issues, and thirdly on the options for action. It is very important to have all knowledgeable people participate: the evaluators to explain or substantiate the report, the researchers to question and verify the findings, and other representatives of the research-related community to comment on the broad issues.

Based on experience with both the Ethiopian and Tanzanian exercises, potential workshop participants should contribute to the earlier phases of the evaluation. For those stakeholders who cannot be identified until after the issues and recommendations are formulated, a special effort is required to explain their stake in the discussions and to motivate them to participate. Full representation at the workshop is of major importance so that a consensus on the evaluation findings can be reached and realistic responses formulated.

The "issue format", developed by the consultant, was particularly useful for focussing workshop discussion on the important issues. It standardizes the presentation of pertinent facts, states the issue specifying reasons why it is important and the information sources through which it was identified, and presents the recommendations. Other headings identify who in the research system is affected (researchers, farmers, government agencies, etc.), the performance targets (what should be happening), and what efforts have been made to deal with the issue so far. Figure 3 gives an example of "issue format" from the SUA final report.

5. **Final Evaluation Output.** The final report combines the evaluation findings and the output of the workshop. The challenge in this phase is to capture, succinctly, the essence of both. In addition to summarizing workshop discussion on each issue and presenting recommendations, the final report also synthesizes the evaluation findings on each of the 5 or 6 major evaluation criteria established in the first phase. This gives the general picture across the entire set of projects and makes the results more readily applicable to policy or program decisions.

ISSUE NO. T 7

THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE AND BETTER ON-FARM RESEARCH INCORPORATING FARMERS' KNOWLEDGE

Why is it an issue?

The Intercropping Project did not produce usable results because there was no research on farmers' fields or under farmers' conditions. The PGIP ran the risk of producing results not useful to farmers by using artificial fertilizers. Even FSR has been testing crop-specific technologies proposed by individual scientists and using farmers mainly as sources of land and labour. Evaluation surveys showed that, with a few exceptions, most scientists, students, teachers and extension personnel do not consider farmers' knowledge important except in providing baseline information. Technologies are presumed to originate from research sources. Some, but not all, members of the Grain Storage team realized the importance of traditional technologies and traditional knowledge. A major fault of the aborted Charcoal Stoves Project was the failure to properly survey the conditions under which the technological solution was supposed to perform, or to consult users. Similar attitudes affected the Sorghum Utilization Research. If SUA is to fulfill its mandate and produce usable research results, research must include the farmer as a more active participant. Research needs to be carried out under farmers' conditions. Traditional and local knowledge needs to be respected and utilized by researchers.

Who is affected?

Farmers who need improved technologies that will increase their production given existing conditions and resource constraints.

Researchers who need an improved field research method, and access to traditional knowledge if they are to produce useful outputs.

Government which needs an effective way of implementing its policy to improve the productivity and standard of living of the small farmer.

Performance Targets

Short Term: Awareness among more students and researchers of how to document and utilize traditional knowledge; adoption of farmers' conditions as target criteria for the design of technologies (including crop breeding); and, more active participation of farmers in research through researcher/farmer dialogue.

Long Term: Research results which are usable by farmers and others.

What has been done so far?

1. OFSR works more pragmatically with farmers and combines animal and crop investigations.
2. Some techniques developed in FSR Project have shown increased productivity of specific crops and could be adopted by farmers.
3. There is some awareness of the complexities of on-farm research through FSR and of the value of traditional knowledge through GSP.

Workshop Recommendations

T7/1 FSR method should be refined to:
- a) Explain project objectives before entry into the community
- b) Identify small farmer priorities before formulating experiments
- c) Include documentation and consideration of existing technologies (varieties, cultural practices, others as applicable) and socio-economic information
- d) Base decisions (including technology specification and choice) on direct interaction between scientists and farmers and including extension personnel
- e) Include livestock and tree crops rather than focussing only on cropping systems (for example, dairy/traction combinations)
- f) Include extension personnel on a routine basis.

Action: SUA/TARO and other relevant research institutions.

T7/2 FSR management should be improved by:
- a) Having a smaller interdisciplinary team fully involved in field work and including agricultural extension and education personnel
- b) Providing adequate training for field personnel and involving them in decision making
- c) Regular meetings in the field involving farmers, and at SUA, to plan timetable and related resource requirements.

Action: SUA/TARO and other relevant research institutions.

T7/3 Crop and Animal Improvement Programs should be improved by:
- a) Proper documentation of existing varieties or breeds, husbandry practices and environmental conditions
- b) Using farmer/scientist agreed objectives as performance criteria for breeding
- c) Simulating on-farm conditions for selection among genotypes
- d) Carrying out on-farm tests with farmers in the relevant environmental conditions.

Action: SUA/TARO/TALIRO and other relevant research institutions.

T7/4 Other research involving technological innovation should be improved by:
- a) Proper documentation of existing conditions of use
- b) Accepting users' stated needs as performance criteria for technology design
- c) Frequent dialogue with users during technology development on constraints to adoption and use
- d) Proper monitoring of defined performance criteria during on-site user testing.

Action: SUA and other relevant research institutions.

Figure 3: Sample Issue Format

The evaluation method described here starts with five or six general criteria which identify the main areas of concern for the evaluation. Work then progresses to the setting of specific questions, identification of information sources, collection of data and analysis of findings. The findings are grouped according to the main issues which emerge and the research community then changes and refines these issues and endorses a set of recommendations addressing each one. This progression is illustrated, with material from the SUA study, in Figure 4. The detailed questions posed to, for example, project leader, farmers and field assistants yield a set of findings for a particular project. These, when combined with findings from other projects, indicate a generalized need or "issue". Recommendations are then directed at the various aspects of that issue.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Ethiopia and Tanzania are the second and third countries in Africa in terms of the amount of support received from IDRC between 1970-1982. In Ethiopia, over an 11-year period, IDRC supported 22 projects amounting to a total of $4.1 million. At the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), over a 12-year period, IDRC provided $2 million for 12 research projects. In both places, most of the projects were in agriculture. In the SUA evaluation, the number of projects was small enough (8) that all completed projects were evaluated. In Ethiopia, a sample of 5 projects was selected on the criteria of size of grant, range of institutions represented and range of IDRC divisions represented. The Ethiopian evaluators looked at projects which were carried out by five different institutions in contrast to the Tanzanians who were evaluating projects all within one institution.

The management studies were undertaken independently by local management consultants, working under broad terms of reference which asked them to look at all aspects of research support and management. They were free to explore areas which emerged as important as their work progressed. It is interesting

Figure 4

Generation of Issues and Recommendations

Evaluation Criterion: Generation and Use of Knowledge and Technologies

Evaluation Sources:

	Project Leader	Farmers	Field Assistants
***Detailed* Evaluation Questions:**	- Has project contributed *to farmers' knowledge* and agricultural practices? - What constraints to application of technology by users?	- Any constraints to *adopting practices* recommended in trials? - How different are they from past practices? - How useful/what benefits from the new practices?	- Which farmer *problems were* picked up in the research? - Which practices were passed on to farmers?

Findings:

- No set packages or practices for dissemination were developed.
- Some of practices tested in trials were inappropriate to farmer conditions.
- Packages were incomplete -- needed studies in related disciplines.
- No useable output -- problem environment not defined.
- What scientists learned from farmers was as important as what farmers learned from scientists.

Issue: Need to promote interdisciplinary and interdepartmental research geared to producing useable results.

Recommendations:

- SUA should encourage research to be carried through to extension package form.
- SUA should communicate relevant research findings in Kiswahili.
- Students should be involved in inter-disciplinary field work.
- Researchers should attend training courses on decision-making, technology choice and interdisciplinary research methods.

that, in both studies, the technical evaluators reported on some management issues and the management consultants addressed issues on the technical aspects of research. This section presents some of the overall results from each evaluation; the technical and management findings have been integrated.

The Ethiopian research projects were found to address development priorities, but to be weak in facilitating utilization of the results. In the provision of knowledge and technology for development, they performed fairly well: a number of high-yielding crop varieties, and new technologies for pumping water were produced. The contribution of IDRC-supported research to the building of research capacity in Ethiopia was substantial, yet further improvement was called for in all sectors, primarily through the systematic integration of training components in research projects.

The weakness in the utilization and impact of research results apparently grew out of several factors: poor linkage between research and user organizations; the production of inappropriate technological solutions; and the lack of continuity between research and production systems. There was considerable concern at the final workshop to find ways of encouraging researchers to produce results which have direct application and can be disseminated through the extension services. Recommendations were formulated giving direction for both IDRC and other donors, as well as national institutions and agencies, to address these problems. For example, based on the finding that results obtained in agricultural experimental stations often did not hold up under farmers' conditions, it was recommended that farmers and other research users actively participate in formulating projects; and that on-farm trials should include a full range of agronomic components replicating the conditions under which the results will be eventually used. In other areas, more attention to the post-research phase was recommended, such as the testing of prototypes, and studies on the economic and technical aspects of production and distribution.

The SUA evaluation showed that, with regard to the building of teaching and research capacity, the IDRC-supported projects had contributed significantly to the capacity of the institution. Some weaknesses were found in inter-disciplinary and applied research which affected both the quality of research and the training of students. Recommendations addressed these problems. The inadequacy of research support services was the most critical area of weakness identified. Research support staff and researchers often lacked important skills, and the institution needed basic equipment, supplies and a better management infrastructure. A major thrust was recommended to create a manpower development plan for support staff, and to provide training in skills such as: procurement, inventory control, financial management, bookkeeping, inventory and stock control supervision.

Although IDRC-supported research tended to focus on national development needs, there was no systematic guidance given by the university to its researchers on priority areas. Research areas tended to be selected according to the researchers' perceptions and interests, without a guiding framework at the national or the university level. Recommendations were formulated to address this constraint at both levels.

With regard to the generation and use of knowledge and technologies, IDRC-supported research at SUA did produce many papers, a germplasm collection, a number of new crop varieties, and several prototype technologies. However, like the Ethopian projects, links between research and utilization were poor. Although several projects tried to involve users in their work, the methodological approach needed improvement. The workshop participants recommended a decentralized system of research and extension at the national level with the capacity to do "domain-specific research".

With on-farm research, as in Ethiopia, it was recommended that technological specification be done through farmer-researcher-extension agent interaction. Inclusion of the farmers' critical environmental conditions was recommended for all agricultural research. Another finding which echoed the Ethopian evaluation was the need to build the capacity to produce adequate quantities of seed for national testing and distribution once new crop varieties are proven.

CONCLUSIONS

The locally focussed, highly consultative approach to evaluating R&D in Third World countries described here has its challenges.

Compared with relying on a stable of proven northern consultants or on head office staff, contracting good evaluators in developing countries is not easy. Reaching consensus on the evaluation method and criteria can involve the reconciling of many diverse interests. The verification and discussion of evaluation findings by the research and development community requires that the evaluation itself be of high quality and its findings credible to that community. The final product of the entire exercise depends on full representation at the final workshop and a high level of commitment on the part of the participants.

Nonetheless, IDRC experience indicates that this approach can produce useful results and be a positive, productive exercise for those involved. The final reports in both the Ethiopian and the Tanzanian evaluations were widely accepted within the respective research communities. Researchers and administrators welcomed the opportunity to have their concerns recognized and debated by colleagues, and placed on the record as a message to institution management and government agencies. In both cases, the final reports were published and distributed within the country and to external donors.

In Ethiopia, there is evidence that the evaluation results are being utilized. New work units have been created within ESTC to carry out some of the recommended research planning, and management changes; funding has been requested to support administrative capacity building; results from the management evaluation are now used as teaching material in management improvement courses; and inter-agency committees have been formed to jointly formulate agricultural research projects. IDRC has changed its practices in Ethiopia in recognition of ESTC's role in monitoring and coordinating national research and development activities.

At SUA, the intention is to use the evaluation as the basis for wide-ranging changes, however, action is still pending. The final report is being distributed to donor agencies by the university as a statement of areas where support is needed. For its part, IDRC has established a working group in its Eastern Africa Regional Office to work with the university to develop a proposal for a more integrated program of support based on the evaluation report.

While these two exercises were successful in terms of quality and acceptance of output, challenges remain to improve the evaluation process and increase the utilization of the results.

One is often struck by the realization that some of the findings of **ex post facto** evaluations would have been very useful during the project. In both of these evaluations research staff commented to the effect that evaluation should be built in as an ongoing component to help guide projects as they unfold. This is both a strong endorsement of the evaluation process and the suggestion of major weakness. It is a message to program planners and evaluators that evaluation should, whenever possible, be an integral part of a project. Thus it could play a vital role in helping the project achieve its objectives; and it could improve evaluation output by providing baseline or pre-project data for later analysis. IDRC routinely monitors ongoing projects and uses annual review meetings to chart progress. This informal kind of evaluation tends to assess progress towards achieving internal research objectives. A more formal evaluation component could provide feedback on progress towards development-related objectives.

Traditionally, an evaluation exercise concludes with the generation of recommendations. Stopping at this stage may be appropriate for external evaluators who are "objectively" communicating their findings to decision makers. However, when the evaluators themselves are among the users of the findings, and when other stakeholders have a role in formulating recommendations, the process could perhaps be taken further. Could it not yield a concrete action plan for implementation, a timetable, and a system for

following up on progress? If the decision to evaluate implies willingness to take action based on the results, then this should be acceptable. It would require, however, some new consensus building techniques to enable the workshop to identify main thrusts, set priorities and allow various actors to assume responsibilities for implementation and monitoring. In the two cases dealt with in this paper, there was clearly no decision making mandate given to the final workshops. Yet some of the participants did indicate their intentions to act individually on specific recommendations; and others were willing to jointly promote action or decision-making in the appropriate places. Taking evaluation in this direction would be a move away from pious hopes for objectivity towards a commitment to implementing the results.