

Global Development Network Bridging Research and Policy Project Final Project Proposal – January 2002

Introduction

The link between research and policy is of great current interest, to both researchers and policy-makers. It was the theme of a series of panel discussions at the Bonn and Tokyo Meetings of the GDN, and of a follow-up workshop held at the University of Warwick in June 2001 exploring three key questions: How can policy-makers best use research, and move towards evidence-based policy-making; how can researchers best use their findings in order to influence policy; and how can the interaction between researchers and policy-makers be improved?

The Tokyo discussions and the Warwick workshop demonstrated a strong felt-need for more work on these questions, building on past work, but focusing especially on the link between research and policy in development situations. There should be strong involvement and leadership by developing country researchers and policy makers. The GDN would provide a suitable umbrella.

The theoretical basis underpinning the project has drawn on a number of sources, but especially the following two papers. The Policy Process, An Overview by Rebecca Sutton¹ provides an introduction to analysis of the policy process. It identifies and describes theoretical approaches in political science, sociology, anthropology, international relations and management. Getting Research into Policy? by Diane Stone² identifies and investigates a number of perceived 'weak links' between research and policy and relates these to some of the underlying factors influencing policy makers and researchers.

This document presents a project to take the issue forward. It is based on ideas generated during the Warwick workshop, further developed by an international team of specialists, and through an electronic conference with funding from the GDN, the UK Department for International Development and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, culminating in a discussion during the 2001 GDN Conference in Rio de Janeiro. A list of key contributors is attached as Appendix 1.

This 3-year US\$3.12 million project is unconventional in three respects. First, the nature of the topic does not lend itself easily to standard quantitative techniques of research because the link between research output and policy impact is almost invariably context specific. Standard statistical techniques may therefore be of limited value. The proposed solution involves a range of techniques ranging from surveys to case studies. While simple generalizations are not to be expected, it is hoped that the use of several research instruments will increase the likelihood of identifying tendencies that might inform future efforts. Second, the project is in part a research exercise, and in part a support service. The intention is to facilitate learning at a very practical level while the research is still in process. Indeed, it is hoped that the joint implementation of a research program and an action program will generate important synergies to the benefit of both. Third, it is a process project, seeking to capitalize on the enthusiasm and work of early champions to maintain momentum during a first phase of implementation, which will establish a research-policy community to systematize a wide range of existing experience while defining both a longer term project management structure, and the issues and methodology for more systematic research.

¹ **Sutton, R. The Policy Process: An Overview**, ODI Working Paper 118. 1999. The Overseas Development Institute, 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE11 7JD, UK.

² **Stone, D. Getting Research into Policy?** Paper presented at GDN01, Rio De Janeiro, December 2001. The Global Development Network, Suite 1112, 2600 Virginia Avenue NW Washington, DC 20037, USA.

Goal

The goal of the project is: *Improved policy development and implementation in developed and developing countries to reduce poverty.*

Purpose

The project's purpose is: *Enhanced understanding and capacity among policy-makers and researchers of how to improve research-policy links and impact.*

Outputs

The Bridging Research and Policy Project will:

- Increase awareness among policy makers of the value of research.
- Establish an international coalition of policy makers, researchers and communicators interested in collaborating to improve linkages between research and policy and develop synergies with and between other sector-based initiatives (eg COHRED, IFPRI etc).
- Enhance understanding of how to improve the impact of research through strengthened research/policy linkages.
- Establish a cutting edge web site "learning platform" for researchers and policy makers.
- Commission new research on research/policy linkages and impact.
- Generate lessons, recommendations and practical tools through further analysis of the case studies at a series of regional and international write-shops.
- Produce a range of information materials for use in guidelines and training.

Project components

The 3-year project will comprise the following:

1. Core project

The core project will

- **Establish the infrastructure and mechanisms to implement the project** including the Steering Committee and Management Team.
- **Establish a community of policy makers, researchers and communicators** (including people who attended the Tokyo/Warwick meetings, people who participated in the GDN e-conference in October/November 2001, and others) to discuss and debate themes, issues and recommendations as they emerge from the case-studies, and synthesise lessons into useful recommendations and practical tools for policy makers and researchers.
- **Undertake surveys** to provide a quantitative foundation for the research. These will include during the first year: a survey on a sample of policy-makers already identified by the Research Department of the World Bank, focusing on their use of research and factors thought to influence their decision-making process more generally; and a survey of a GDN sample of 500 research institutes throughout the developed and developing world, focusing on the interests of the researchers in influencing policy and their success in doing so. The surveys will be linked. In the survey administered to policy makers, respondents will be asked to rank the research institutes in the second survey in their own country according to their influence on policy. The ranking will allow some of the standard multivariate statistical techniques to be brought into play. Respondents in Research Institutes will be asked to identify "research-oriented policy makers, who could be invited to join the project.

- **Collect a wide range of case-study experience** from developing and developed countries where research has, or has not contributed to policy. These will include examples of policy-driven processes and research-driven processes; policies at different levels - local (eg land use), national (eg fiscal policy, or PRSPs), regional and global (eg climate change, or the process of incorporation of “participation” into development paradigms); policies in different types of institution - official (eg National Governments, International Bodies) and unofficial (eg Foundations, Think Tanks, NGOs and the media); and policies in different sectors (eg Energy, Health, Education, Agriculture). During the first year, the project will search for, gather secondary material, and document experiences from a wide range of academic, government, non-government and media sources. Special efforts will be made, for example targeted mail-shots, personal contacts and commissioning journalists, to elicit case-study experiences from policy makers, NGOs and other elements of Civil Society. Analysis of these early case-studies (and the surveys) will allow the project to identify the key themes and issues, and specific hypotheses, and to develop standardized approaches and systems to commission further more detailed case-studies during the second year. The project will seek to achieve a balance of case studies across regions, sectors and themes including examples where research has influenced policy, and where it hasn't, and will use a wide range of research methodologies to learn from government, non-government and private sector experience.
- **Host "RAPNet"** - a "Research And Policy" knowledge web site including: Regularly updated news page and a quarterly electronic and printed newsletter describing progress and emerging issues; case-study material (original electronic documents if possible); one-page key issue abstracts of each case-study; synthesis documents drawing out the key themes; e-discussions; links to related projects, contacts and other resources, and towards the end of the project, conclusions, recommendations, practical resources and other materials for training.

2. Contracted research and synthesis

The project will fund specific research studies (primarily from researchers in developing countries) to explore in more depth issues that emerge from the initial analysis of the case-studies, and surveys. These may include research on specific research-policy models, for example parliamentary research units, global policy networks, and e-networks; or the impact of research on policy processes, for example the impact of research on NGO capacity building, or on SME development; or on specific themes such as “The relative merits of independent and publicly funded research for policy purposes” (Appendix 2 lists some examples of case studies that were proposed during the project preparation process, and Appendix 3 lists some of the themes identified during the GDN E-Conference). During the first year the project will develop a research framework, research topics, and a competitive process for applications for funds. Then researchers will be invited to submit proposals for appropriate research projects to be completed during the second and third year. The project may also commission work from experts in the field to synthesise lessons from the case-studies, research studies or wider literature.

3. Regional write-shops

During the second and third year, the project will finance a series of regional “write-shops” chaired by regionally respected Policy Makers, bringing together researchers, policy makers, NGOs and the media to discuss and synthesise experience from the case studies and commissioned research. The main outputs will include synthesized and edited regional case studies, and the participants conclusions about factors which strengthened or weakened their impact on regional policies. These will be published locally and on the knowledge web. Institutions in developing countries which have contributed to the project will be invited to bid for contracts to organize the write-shops.

4. International write-shop

An international write-shop will be organized at the end of the third year (immediately preceding the Dec 2004 GDN conference) to synthesise global lessons from the results of the regional write-shops and research programme. The main outputs will be (1) a description of the factors for successful policy-related research (distilled from the regional write-shops), (2) practical techniques to ensure strong links between research and policy and (3) a series of illustrative case studies. These will be published as a book, on the knowledge web, in a wide range of publicity material for the media, and training and information material for the knowledge web.

5. Training and information activities

The case-studies, research studies, and write-shops will all contribute information which will be made easily accessible for policy makers, development practitioners, researchers and training institutions on the knowledge web. The annual review meeting in December 2003 will consider whether the project should also invest further resources during the third year (and thereafter) in developing more specific training and information material, and/or training and capacity-building activities.

Management and Governance

The Bridging Research and Policy Project will be an autonomous project, initially under the GDN, guided by a Steering Committee and the conclusions of an annual review meeting. The project will be administered within the GDN, with most components of the “core project” and other activities contracted to individuals and organizations involved in development research and policy in developing countries. The web site and learning platform will operate as if it were an integral part of the GDN web-site but will be sub-contracted to an organization with practical experience of running web-sites and learning platforms in a relevant field, under the guidance of a chief editor with internationally recognized expertise.

Overall intellectual leadership and governance will be provided by a Steering Committee, chaired by an internationally respected developing country policy maker, including policy makers from each region, the GDN, “Core Project” funders, and representatives from the research community. The Steering Committee will meet annually at the GDN Conference.

The GDN will appoint and contract an International Task Force of project champions to initiate and implement project activities during the first year, including establishing the web-site, gathering the early case studies, defining and preparing Terms of Reference for the project components which will be sub-contracted, and recruiting the Project Coordinator. Thereafter the GDN will establish a Management Team, led by the project Coordinator, including representatives from the Steering Committee and main Contractors as appropriate, to assess research proposals, and bids for sub-contracted activities.

Reporting

Quarterly progress reports will be provided on RAPNet. Annual progress reports will be presented for discussion by the Steering Committee and GDN conference participants at an annual review meeting during each annual GDN conference.

Schedule of activities

- Year 1:** Establishment of project, development of ToRs for sub-contracted components, recruitment of Project Coordinator, establishment of web-site, collection of wide range of case-studies, initial surveys; preliminary synthesis of key issues and identification of themes and issues needing further exploration. Annual review meeting to monitor progress and approve plans for remainder of the project.
- Year 2:** Development of standard format for subsequent “focused” case studies, identification of areas for commissioned research; commissioned case studies and research; 3 regional write-shops and associated publications. Annual review meeting at the end of the second year to check early recommendations, consider the longer-term future of the project, and outline proposed information and training activities.
- Year 3:** Further commissioned case studies and research; 3 regional write-shops and associated publications; development of guidelines and recommendations; and implementation of training and information activities. The international write-shop will be held immediately before the December 2004 GDN conference, where the results will be presented at the final annual review meeting.

A more detailed list and schedule of tasks, is presented in Appendix 4.

Budget

Indicative budgets (US\$ '000) are as follows.

Component	Description	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Total
Project Admin	1. Administration costs in GDN, annual review meetings, T&S for Steering Committee.	79	63	63	205
	2 ¹ . Funds to support a task force to coordinate and implement early project activities	134			134
Steering Committee and Regional Coordinators	Honoraria and travel costs for Steering Committee and Regional Coordinators	104	75	75	254
Project Coordination Unit and leadership ¹	A full-time Project Leader plus overheads, admin support and travel and subsistence etc.	46	130	130	306
RAPNet ¹	Editorial inputs, site development, hosting and management.	5	83	53	141
Case Studies ¹	Funds to pay for initial case studies.	115			115
Contracted Research ¹	Resources for small grants (c.25 at an average cost of \$40k) for research studies, case studies and synthesis.		500	500	1000
Regional W/S ¹	Three 4 day write-shops for 25-30 participants in each of yrs 2 and 3, including T&S for participants, facilitation and editing team and publishing.		345	345	690
International W/S ¹	One 5 day write-shop for 25-30 participants in year 3, including T&S for participants, facilitation and editing team and publishing.			175	175
Training & Information ¹	Additional resources for editing and producing training and information materials, printing, and distribution, as determined in the 2 nd Annual Review.			100	100
Total		483	1,196	1,441	3,120

¹ These items will be mostly contracted to individuals and research and policy institutes in developing countries.

Appendix 1: Contributors

This proposal is based on the conclusions of the panel discussions at the Bonn and Tokyo GDN conferences, the discussions at the Warwick workshop, and e-mail discussions of drafts among Bonn, Tokyo and Warwick meeting participants between September and November 2001. Over 250 people signed up for the GDN e-conference on the issue in October and November, of whom over 60, from 16 countries contributed their experience and comments, and several also contributed comments on early drafts of the project proposal. The third draft proposal was discussed during a parallel session at the GDN Conference in Rio de Janeiro on the 9th December 2001, and comments have been incorporated into this draft. Key contributors included:

- Sarah Clarke (GDN, Washington, USA)
- Hugo Fernández A. (UNITAS, Bolivia)
- Catherine Fisher (IDS, UK)
- Elsie le Franc (Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Brazil)
- Laila Gad (Egypt Social Fund for Development)
- Gul Najam Jamy (IUCN, Karachi)
- Robert Klitgaard (RAND Graduate School, Santa Monica, California)
- Kuldeep Mathur (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
- Simon Maxwell (Overseas Development Institute - UK)
- Desmond McNeill (Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo)
- Claudio Molinari (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
- Paul Mundy (Weizenfeld 4, 51467 Bergisch Gladbach, Germany)
- Vikash Nath (UNDP, New York, USA)
- Santhakumar V (Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, Kerala, India)
- Shirin Rai (University of Warwick, UK)
- Diane Stone (University of Warwick – UK)
- Lyn Squire (GDN, Washington, USA)
- John Young (Overseas Development Institute – UK),

Appendix 2: Potential Case Studies

Participants involved in developing this proposal have already identified a number of potential case studies, research and networking activities. Some of these are described below, although the final project will include a much wider range of case-studies from developed and developing countries worldwide.

- **Education Policy in India** – education policy makers do have room to maneuver and shape policy outcomes, but their motivations and perspectives are influenced by personal and professional values that can counter societal pressures. This case study will explore these and the roles of various actors in shaping the outcomes. (Kuldeep Mathur)
- **Global Policy Networks** - In many issue areas, the autonomy of governments and international organizations is increasingly compromised in the design and/or implementation of public policies. Global policy networks – composed of NGO, government and international organisation actors – are helpful in some issue areas to come to terms with these challenges. This project would evaluate the research capacities, policy roles and different strategies of a range of different knowledge networks. (Diane Stone)
- **Legislation to improve women's participation in institutional politics at the local and national levels in India** – this study will explore how research contributed to the development of this strategy. Whether new research was commissioned or existing research results were considered, if at all, or whether the legislation was mainly driven by political contingency, and the role of researchers in the process. (Shirin Rai)
- **Education policy in South Asia** - Despite a huge amount of research, there seems to be very little shift in the structure of education spending in South Asia - this adversely affects both the poor and poor girl children in particular. The major part of the already small budgets is spent on higher education and very little on primary education. This study will explore why the policy makers are not listening to years of research? (Shirin Rai)
- **Research Incentives in India** - A broad incentive analysis, within the framework of new institutional economics, of why Policy makers do or don't take into account the results of research and why researchers do research. (V.Santhakumar)
- **Linkages between the Planning Commission and Government in India** - A short historical analysis of how socio-economic research is used, partly used, misused and neglected in the policy-making process. (V.Santhakumar)
- **World Bank projects in India** - A study of the relationship between research insights and the direction of World Bank projects in South Asia. The study will look at a matrix of issues - such as the role of policy environment, administrative machinery, level of democracy and public accountability, economic and other participation by the potential beneficiaries of the policy. (V.Santhakumar)
- **Civil Society participation in development of Bolivian PRSP** - The Bolivian Strategy for Poverty Reduction was approved in June 2001, principally on account of the significant progress made in the involvement of civil society in its preparation. However, no suitable indicators have yet been developed to measure the level of participation required to assure adequate ownership. The first objective of this study is to design, apply and validate a set of indicators to measure the participation of civil society in the implementation of the Bolivian Strategy for Poverty Reduction. The second objective is to determine the level of participation required to assure ownership. (Hugo Fernandez)
- **A Caribbean Health Policy Network** - A proposal to establish a multidisciplinary Caribbean Health Policy Research Network [RENPHER]. This Regional Network will work closely with, and provide direct and indirect research support to policymakers and managers in the health sector. (Elsie LeFranc)

Appendix 3: Potential Themes

Analysis of the literature, and contributions from the GDN E-Conference has already identified a number of themes which the project could explore further through invited case studies. These include:

- The relative merits of independent and publicly funded research for policy purposes.
- The impact of separation between research and dissemination activities and the professionalisation of research communications.
- The effect of career incentives, either within the civil service or academia, on the objectivity and relevance of research.
- Alternative methods and consequences of involving policymakers in research design and implementation.
- The impact of personal relationships between researchers and policymakers.
- The use of action research in bridging the gap between research and policy.
- The relative merits of long and short term research in the face of changing policy needs.
- The relative merits of country-specific and cross-country research.
- Methods to build capacity for high-quality research.
- Accessing research in different languages.
- The use of networks and communities of practice to bridge the gap between research and policy.
- The impact of policymakers' backgrounds and training in accessing and integrating research findings into policy formulation.
- The potential role of the media in bridging research and policy.
- The potential role of government information officers and communication strategies.
- The potential role of International Financial Institutions and other international donors in bridging research and policy.

Appendix 4: List and schedule of tasks

	2002				2003				2004			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Project Management / Governance												
Establish and operate International Task Force	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Establish and operate Steering Committee	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Define sub-contracted components and prepare ToR	■	■										
Recruit and support Project Coordinator		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Select and operate sub-contractors (international tender process)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Reports to GDN Conference				■				■				■
RAPNet and Project Community												
Establish initial RAPNet site on GDNNet	■	■										
Publish initial project papers and invite members to join	■	■										
Publish early case studies, and run early e-discussions on GDNNet		■	■	■	■	■						
Design new RAPNet site					■	■						
Operate RAPnet						■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Initial Case Studies												
Design process, prepare documentation and invite contributions (on GDNNet)	■											
Establish and operate case-study forum on RAPNet		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Publish initial case-studies		■	■	■								
Preliminary synthesis of themes and issues				■								

	2002				2003				2004			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Contracted Research												
Identify topics and issues and define mechanism for awarding grants												
Invite proposals and award grants												
Research Underway												
Publication of Research Findings on RAPNet												
Synthesis and Dissemination												
Synthesis of findings and publication on RAPNet												
Regional Writeshops (one immediately to precede GDN Conference)												
International Writeshop (immediately before GDN Conference)												