

Linking policy, practice and research in international development

Prem S. Bindraban & Sietze Vellema



Report 127



Linking policy, practice and research in international development

Report of an interactive process reflecting on 4 years of experiences in research and capacity building in international development

Including the proceedings of a workshop organized on:
Thursday 29 June 2006
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The Netherlands

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Acknowledgement

The inputs of all participants have been highly relevant in this process and we would especially like to acknowledge the contribution made by policy makers, development practitioners and researchers during the workshop in Utrecht, June 29 2006. We appreciate the openness of our colleagues of Wageningen University and Research Centre to seriously reflect on work they have been involved in for the past years and to use the challenges brought forward in our conceptual note for this purpose. Robin Pistorius is particularly acknowledged for his great effort to assume a difficult task to reflect on this rather sensitive process. We also thank the respondents to the interviews. A special thanks to Ben Rutgers for the excellent organization of the workshop. The illustrations by Esther Mosselman made during the workshop shed a colourful picture of the complex issues we discussed and are used to flavor this document (though it is humor in Dutch).

1. Introduction

Prem Bindraban & Sietze Vellema

This report is about the relationship between policy, practice and research in the context of international development. The report contains reflections on how research in a number of fields, such as market and chain development, agro-biodiversity, water and rural economic development, relates to the formulation and implementation of policy. Our reflections are grounded in the work done in the programs of Wageningen University and Research Centre on international cooperation and capacity development, which were executed through a grant of the Dutch ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in the years 2002-2005. The report considers effective linkages between policy, practice and research as an important condition for having an impact on sustainable development in rural economies and food provision. In our experiences, the element of capacity building has become part and parcel of this relationship. Our insights in effective operational modalities were complemented by the views and perspectives of consulted stakeholders engaged in international development. The statements brought forward by the study of the specific work fields were discussed during an (inter)active workshop with policy makers, practitioners and researchers.

The various sections of this report contain a wealth of information on the research-policy-practice realm provided by a large number of parties involved in the process who are invited to draw their own lessons from these events. All participants in this reflection process indicated the desire to strengthen collaboration in order to enhance the impact of their own efforts. The search as to how this can be best achieved is a continuous process that should be cherished and reflected upon on a regular basis.

The report has the following elements:

First we present some conceptual thoughts (Chapter 2) with regards to the relation between research, policy and practice, as to how to enhance the use of research. These thoughts have been based on deliberations among researchers within Wageningen UR which was presented as a position paper, and on a literature review taking note especially of the debate that developed in the United Kingdom. In identifying the roles and positions of Wageningen UR, as a knowledge institute, in relation to the domains of policy and hands-on interventions we distinguish between different configurations, i.e. science networks, implementation coalitions and consultative platforms, which indicate that researchers maintain different relationships with policy, practice and peer researchers. This is the starting point for further exploring the nature of the relationship between policy, practice and research.

Chapter 3 presents conceptual thought on capacity building and knowledge development and discusses explicitly the experiences in working on sustainable development in the South.

In Chapter 4, we reflect on the lessons we have learned in the context of this research-policy-practice realm, in four different thematic areas and a programmatic element tailored to policy support during a 4-year period. The thematic case studies identify specific issues, phrased in the form of statements, which further unravel the relationship between policy, practice and research. The case studies identify various dimensions of effectively presenting research findings in the policy domain, a task of scientists, and they also indicate a necessity for users, primarily policy makers in different ministries, to more explicitly claim and utilize the knowledge pool in their policy process.

We invited a journalist, Robin Pistorius, to interview various stakeholders about their perspectives on the effectiveness of research in development policy and practice (Chapter 5). Virtually all stakeholders call for more collaboration as each player has its abilities and limitations in impacting on development and policy. Whereas science cannot provide answers to all policy questions, policy makers may not be able to accurately distil researchable questions from their dynamic policy process. This may weaken the use of research and analysis in problem identification and analysis at the beginning of the policy cycle as well as a further understanding of the mechanisms leading to certain outcomes of interventions at the end of the policy cycle. A possible consequence is that research primarily feeds the actual implementation of policy measures. Another aspect is that practitioners, for example from Civil Society

Organisations, can take up the role of broker between policy and research, although some were hesitant to take up this role without knowing the impact of their effort on policy agenda.

During the workshop, participants used the lessons learned in four thematic fields, to confront some pressing issues in the research-policy-practice realm by means of statements including a battle of statements. 'How a researcher can inspire a policy maker (and vice versa?)' turned out to be a key element in linking research to policy (and practice). The entire session was introduced and guided by Robin Pistorius, as a relative 'outsider', and the rector magnificus of Wageningen UR, Prof. Martin Kropff, and the Director Science and Knowledge generation Ministry LNV, Dr. Hoekstra, reflected on past, current and future developments in the research-policy-practice realm. These deliberations are presented in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 7, Robin Pistorius looks back at the discussions and reflections in this process and presents his views as a relative outsider to this problematic. He further contextualizes the relationship between policy, practice and research by using the insights derived from the interviews, background documents, and workshop deliberations. He describes the articulation of knowledge demand and supply and identifies the possibilities of Civil Society Organizations to act as brokers. His observation is that an improved cooperation between research and policy could enhance the impact of science and policy, as the actors have different but complementary views, objectives and means. Generally speaking strongly networking scientists and policy makers do reach a mutually reinforcing level of collaboration to enhance their impact.

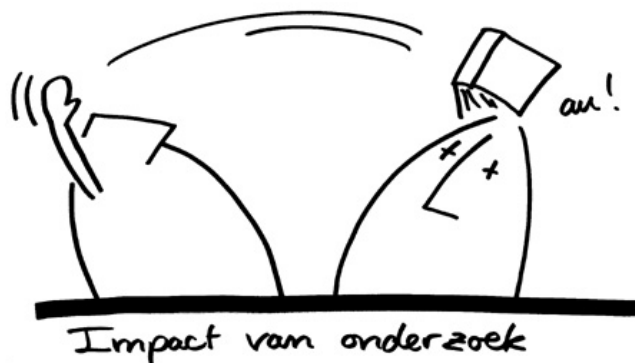


2. Linking policy, practice and research in international development – A concept note

Sietze Vellema & Prem Bindran

2.1 Introduction

How can policy, practice and research be combined to have an impact on the long-term goals in international development, such as summarized in the Millennium Development Goals? As researchers in international development, it is difficult to give a straightforward answer to question what the immediate impact of our work is on development; often, we are engaged in scientific analysis with a focus on long-term developments, which is carried out through open-ended experimentation. Likewise, policy measures or strategies usually have a more indirect impact on development, for example by setting the conditions for change rather than invoking change itself. Practitioners in international development usually have a more tangible effect on a local situation. At the same time, the relation of these localised interventions on more structural problems in international development may not be present and sometimes even contra productive from a long term perspective. Hence, different players impact on international development in different ways. The questions addressed here is how these different endeavours are related and what we can do to make them coherent in order to enhance the impact of policy makers, practitioners and researchers on development in the South.



This introduction reviews literature and attempts to unravel the nature of the partnership between these different realms: policy, practice and research. We first build on the case studies and a selection of literature that examines the relationship, often referred to as gap between policy and research, for identifying some major issues. Next, we elaborate on this relationship in the context of international development, which entails different conditions for engagement of research with policy and practice.

This larger document collates the outcomes of a project that reviewed the linkages between research, policy and practice as evident in the LNV funded research programme on International Cooperation over the period 2002-2005. Elements of a programme on Capacity Building over the period 2004-2005 were considered as well, where we perceive capacity development as integral part of research. The objective was to draw lessons that would improve the design, implementation and impact of future research programmes that would contribute more effectively to policy and capacity development, to actual development and to novel scientific insights in the international arena. The review process involved three elements:

1. The production of four thematic review papers written by Wageningen UR staff involved in the field of international development.
2. A series of interviews undertaken with policy makers and representatives from civil society organizations (CSO), conducted by a journalist.

3. An interactive workshop involving representatives from LNV, DGIS, Wageningen UR and development organisations reflecting on the relation between policy, practice and research.

The initiated process of reflection addresses two central issues:

- The evolution of research activities within the programme towards an altering mode of operation in the formulating process of research programmes that is increasingly aimed at policy support and at increasing the utility of research products in the policy development process.
- The impacts of the programme activities on the key international development issues and on the positioning of Wageningen-UR in global matters.

Our insights in these matters as presented in the review papers were used during a workshop with different players in international development looking for effective linkages or bridges between policy, practice and research in the context of international development. The main audience of the exercise are policy makers of the ministry of LNV (and DGIS), representatives from civil society organisations and researchers of Wageningen-UR.

2.2 Research programme International cooperation (2002-2005)

2.2.1 Background

The research programme 'international cooperation' aims to:

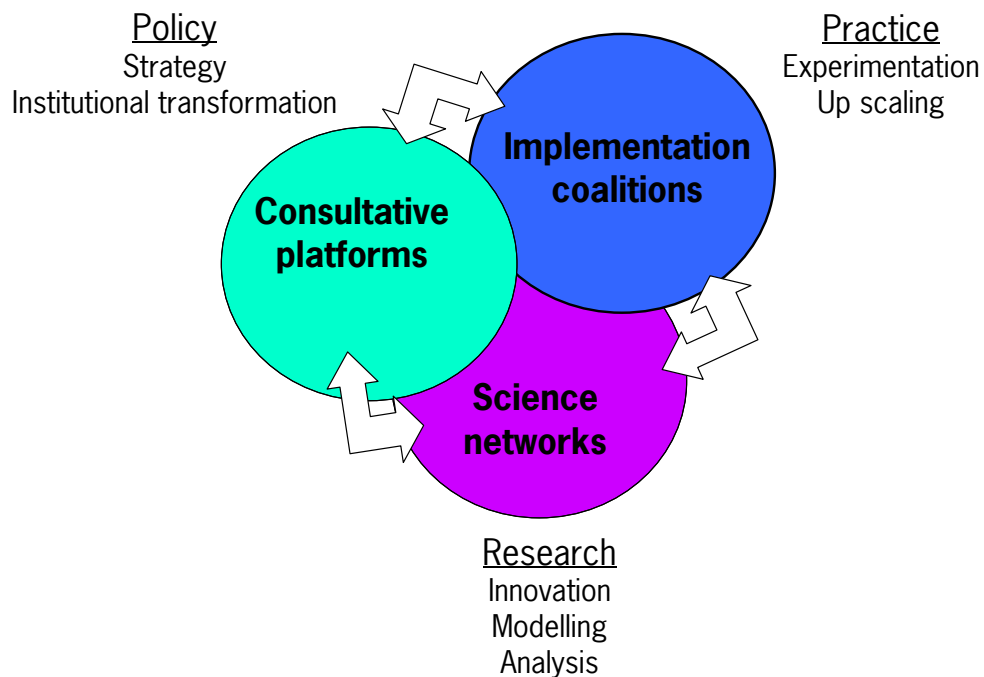
- Contribute to the development and formulation of policy instruments in order to support the integration of Low Income Countries (LICs) into the world economy,
- Generate and disseminate knowledge and strengthen the research capacity of partners in the South,
- Strengthen strategic partnerships, and
- Contribute to the protection of ecosystems and landscapes of international value.

Key areas of the programme are addressed through four sub-programmes on:

1. Trade, Markets and Sustainable Development
Here the main aim was to analyze 1) food safety and food quality regulations in local and international food chains, 2) issues related to market access, in particular of fresh produce, and governance in cross-border supply chains specifically for coffee and cocoa. Dovetailed to this research process was the support given to local counterparts in strengthening their insights in these matter.
2. Integrated water resources management (IWRM)
International debates on water are intense and the search for effective approaches in IWRM is ongoing such as at the FAO-LNV Conference on Water for Food and Ecosystems with our support. Capacity building and training are major components of this programme. These activities are being modified to more flexibly comply with the specific demands of stakeholder groups and to widen the scope of water related issues.
3. Biodiversity and nature management
The aim was to enhance agro-biodiversity in agricultural practices, manuals were developed to guide farmer field schools in participatory plant breeding and to set up participatory approach towards market strategy development for products obtained from growing a wider diversity of crops. To more sustainably manage nature predator-prey interactions and vulnerability of sea-ice dependent ecosystems were assessed for the Antarctic. The relation between bird populations and habitat availability and management were unravelled for the flyways of migratory birds.
4. Rural Economic Development
This theme dealt with the increasing conflicts between stakeholders in expanding peri-urban areas into agricultural lands and in designing options to reduce the environmental impacts of intensification and diversification. Tools and approaches developed during the earlier part of the programme formed the basis for successful multi-stakeholder platforms to jointly analyze the issues at stake.

2.2.2 The knowledge system

The work of Wageningen UR in the field of international development covers a variety of activities in the fields of policy, practice and research, obviously raising different expectations of the use of these programmes in the policy domain. For identifying the different roles or functions of researchers in international development, we distinguish three types of knowledge configurations covering the pallet of activities in which knowledge institutes are engaged: science network, consultative platform and implementation coalition (see diagram below). A knowledge configuration is a comprehensive concept that outlines an approach to facilitate the linkages between stakeholders, while assigning specific roles to each stakeholder. As a consequence research efforts will become much better embedded in on-going development or negotiation processes while assuming its own responsibility in generating and providing knowledge and information to the process meanwhile shaping the process itself as an active actor.



Technological and social engineering is embedded in implementation coalitions, which links research to practice and also involves skills and dealing with uncertainty and the stubbornness of social and material realities. Knowledge institutes can support consultative platforms in making better decisions, by supporting evidence-based policy making and by asking better questions. We have also identified roles as intermediaries in processes aligning various stakeholders, for example setting agenda or selecting competing options. Finally, research depends on its presence in science networks, which have an open and exploratory nature, empirically investigate complex situation, and develop baskets of options. In these networks, researchers collaborate to create a deeper understanding of principles, to develop technologies and methods and to broaden the horizon in intervention strategies. The challenge lies in making the white arrows work: creating effective feed mechanisms between the three configurations.

2.3 Policy, practice and research

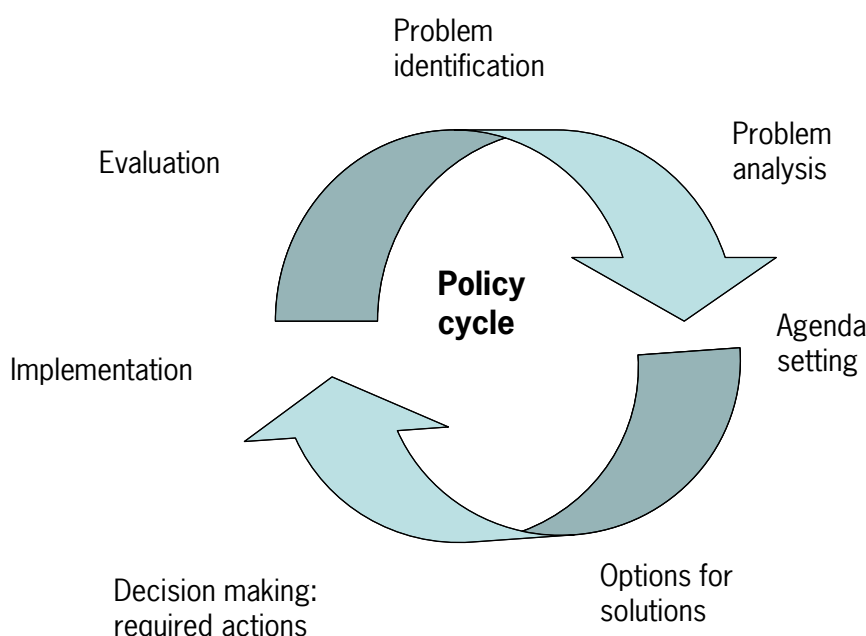
For further unravelling the problematic of linking policy, practice and research, we discuss a number of issues. We approach this from the perspective of research and discuss the linkages with policy (3.1 and 3.2) and place research in between practice and policy (3.3). Firstly, we describe an ideal version of the policy cycle for showing that research does not always cover all stages in the process of making policy, and, in our experience, may even tend to concentrate on the implementation aspects of policy. Secondly, we discuss some options for furthering the

engagement of research with policy. Thirdly, we introduce providing feed back from practice to policy as an important function of research agenda setting.

2.3.1 The policy cycle

The first step in assessing the link between policy and research is to realise that policy making, in an ideal situation, includes a certain sequence of steps. The diagram below is an ideal and sequential representation of the policy process. It tells us that policymaking comprises different process steps, which have a certain phasing in time. The question for researchers is how their work fits with the policy process taking place during a specific phase.

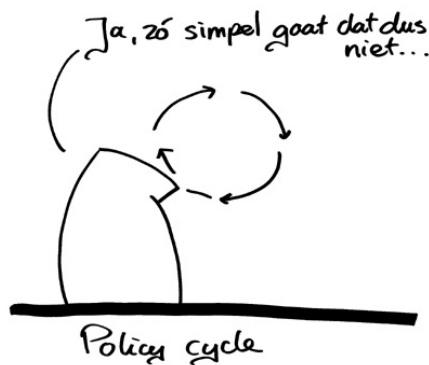
Throughout the policy cycle different type of information is required from research institutions depending on the stage of the cycle. In the policy cycle different processes can be distinguished, including problem analysis, generation of options for solutions, decision on actions to be taken, implementation and evaluation of the actions. The generation of information through research may call for different approaches ranging from quick scans of literature studies, such as for problem description, to comprehensive collaborative research projects including a range of stakeholders in an international arena, during an implementation phase.



An example of the role of research addressing the various stages of the policy cycle is presented for the thematic case on Trade, Markets and Sustainable Development dealing with commodities (Chapter 4), addressing the coherency of policies between trade and development, showing that research can play a role in all the different phases of the policy cycle. The nature of the research activities differs for each phase. The outcome of the work in the field of commodities, namely research inputs addressing different phases of the policy cycle, was largely coincidental and confronted researchers with scattered policy audiences (Chapter 4, biodiversity). The different phases may also require different styles of 'policy entrepreneurship', like the ones distinguished by Court and Maxwell (2005): story teller, net-worker, engineer and fixer. A possible consequence of this view is that research teams assemble different styles in order to be able to act in the different stages of the policy cycle.

The reflection on work in the field of biodiversity (Chapter 4) reveals a different situation, wherein research and policy advice primarily targeted the implementation of policy. Here, a potential danger is that the task of researcher is essentially to make policy work, for example by providing social-technical answers to specific implementation problems. This involves technical and institutional engineering in which professional judgements rather than evidence-

based analysis play a decisive role. Obviously, ministries and departments commissioning research want to see impact of research in policy and practice, which is linked to priorities in and realisation of policy, agreed upon in national or multilateral platforms. On the other hand, research also needs the opportunity to design or experiment with novel approaches that do not have an immediate relevance for day-to-day policy or in business applications. A strong involvement at the level of policy implementation, however, has the danger that research is mainly steered by immediate and sometimes ad-hoc concerns. Consequently, the effect of research is constrained to a single phase in the policy process and lacks interaction with important steps in the policy cycle, such as problem analysis or evaluation. For research organisations, this implies that teams should not be composed only of scientists from multiple disciplines to address complex implementation problems, but also scientist should be involved with different skills and experience to develop or translate scientific findings tailored to audiences acting in different phases of the policy cycle.



2.3.2 Engagement with policy

In development processes, different or conflicting interests between actors or coalitions importantly steer processes of change. Also, issues concerning certain actors may be salient. Still, there seems to be a general agreement that the task of research is not to do politics, but how then to position research in an intrinsically political terrain of development policy and change. A major lesson from the policy support work (Chapter 4) is that policy driven research should not bias research in terms of arriving at results that just support rather than question existing policy positions. Yet, it also suggests that policy relevant research must have an eye for the wider policy context and understand that policy making implies negotiations and settlements as well as making decisions in the face of uncertainty.

The institutional set-up of projects may also bring along interactions with other stakeholders than the traditional peers of international agricultural research, e.g. the National or International Research Centres under CGIAR. In the context of developing countries, Ahmed (2005) observes the emergence of civil society organisations as key players in using information in advocacy and also in framing the policy debate. Another observation of the situation in developing countries is that external actors, e.g. donors, can also have significant influence on policy. The strategic policy line of donors may, for example deregulation, contrast with the willingness inside the country to accept a more active role of the state in supporting, for instance, export schemes. In addition, Richards (2004) argues that it is worthwhile to work with different institutional modalities, e.g. public service oriented CGIAR institutes (including NARCs), humanitarian civil society organisations, or market-driven public-private partnerships, because this may lead to competing (technological) agenda and then the outcome of research and consultation offers something real to choose or select from. The work of Hall (2002) and the advice of RAWOO (2005) emphasize the value of taking on board the notion of innovation systems, emphasising the institutional arrangements between different actors and further substantiating non-linear perspectives on technological and institutional change.

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has framed the discussion on the relationship between policy and research in terms of engagement with changing policy. Court and Maxwell (2005) suggest that effective research

deliberately sets out to change policy. For research to have an effect of the form and content of policy, it may be important, as Taylor (2005) suggest, to first 'win' the argument about what the problem is before trying to win the argument about what the solution is. Thus, the intentions and motivations of the research teams matter. Revealing the researchers' subjectivity may also be important when interacting with a pallet of users and stakeholders – public & private, North & South or strategists & practitioners – with multiple views on the problems addressed by policy. A task of research may be to articulate these different views and styles, to line out the consequences for policy and strategy and to understand the different interests in a specific situation.

An insight from the case studies presented in this report is the active role of researchers in organising and facilitating multi-stakeholder processes. Often, strategic policies, both public and private, induce these consultative processes when they arrive at the phase of implementation. Researchers take upon the role of brokers in change processes in a specific social setting. The involvement in policy making challenges research to introduce evidence-based information in such a way that it informs and helps stakeholders to come to grips with or act upon complex or tenacious problems.

Garret and Islam (1998) write that policy makers are not able to specify the exact information they need far in advance. The inability of the policy maker to predict future information needs weakens the link between research information and the policy decision. On the other hand, it is the policy analysts or the decision maker's staff who are usually charged with interpreting research and providing specific choices to the policymaker for action. Intermediary actors could also translate research information or make it accessible to non-researchers. Products can be strategically and proactively 'wholesaled' to intermediaries, or selectively 'retailed' directly to the policymaking audience through a variety of communications strategies.

Court and Maxwell (2005) advice researchers to use detailed, rigorous case material to inform high-level policy debates; think about long-term trends that have implication for short-term oriented policy debates. They also recommend focusing on policy inputs rather than on the possible outcomes of policy, because the policy inputs are within the span of control of the policy makers. Outcomes and impacts are important in retrospective, but have less relation with the daily activities in the policy cycle. Similarly, a task of research may be to find ways to identify potential outcomes, rather than actual outcomes or impacts, by answering '*what if*' questions. A '*what if*' question may also contain a suggestion for change in policy or practice.

2.3.3 Feed back from practice to policy

The case studies included in this report show a strong commitment to the actual problem addressed by the various projects, e.g. the decline in biodiversity in a specific location, declining levels of soil fertility or intensive use of pesticides polluting the environment, or the absence of income earning opportunities for farmers. As a consequence, the research and capacity development projects are inclined to become strongly action and result oriented, which is sometimes also expected by policy makers commissioning the projects. The question this raises is how the involved researchers, acting as practitioners, use theoretical insights to inform practical actions. In the action-oriented projects, learning modes and reflective observations are frequently implicit rather than identified as explicit activities. Moreover, the analysis of previous capacity building activities (Chapter 3) indicates that the role of capacity development in enabling effective policy, research and practice linkages has not been well articulated is not well understood. This underlines the previous observation that the relationship between policy and research benefits from a coherent approach to linking the different phases in the policy cycle, to link hands-on implementation or experiment with strategic and long-term policy.

Installing feed back mechanisms between experiment, implementation and policy is a major lesson from the experience in the domains of rural development and biodiversity (Chapter 4). Projects in both domains have been engaged with novel experiments at a local level, but lacked the capacity to translate the outcomes back into policy. The work was primarily located at the level of implementation or problem solving and does not link back to, for example, incentives or disincentives coming from the policy environment. The need for such feed back may be relevant for up scaling of novel approaches as this requires, amongst others, the right policy conditions.

Accordingly, the research projects did not automatically address strategic choices or systemic changes, which may have been interesting from a policy or strategy point of view. On the other hand, as these projects were heavily embedded in regional networks or implementation coalitions they inherited the potential to use experiment and research findings to establish think-tanks working on alternative approaches or systemic change (cf. Young, 2005). In the case of water, for example, on the ground management practices are closely linked to broader issues such as good governance, decentralisation, democratic principles and empowerment, or cross boundary concerns.



2.4 Discussion: Problem solving – Policy choice

The relationship between policy and research is part and parcel of an iterative and open-ended process, which depends importantly on the relationships between actors and the political-institutional dynamics in the distinguished realms. This implies that the use and application of knowledge and of evidence and information produced by research cannot be understood as a linear process. We approached the relationship between policy and research from the perspective that research rarely provides straight answers to policy makers.

Garret and Islam (1998) emphasize that looking at the process gives more insight in the efficacy of the partnership between research and policy than looking at the actual outcomes. To explain this position, and to introduce a new way of evaluating the impact of research, they distinguish between a problem solving model and a policy space model. The 'Problem solving model' assumes that each instance of information use is a discrete event for which there is a well-defined problem and solution and that the government acts as if it were one person, a 'unitary actor'.

The 'Policy space model', on the other hand, has a different perspective on the relationship between policy and research. It assumes that the greatest influence probably occurs by contributing high-quality information to a pool of knowledge that policymakers can access when they need it and use it as they see fit. Moreover, decisions are not made by one person. Policy makers can advance their own agendas and shift discussions to a setting where they have greater control over resources that influence the decision making process, widening the range of feasible policy options, their 'policy space'. Research is one of the many competing sources of information, enlightening policymakers and putting workable policy option in his or her hands. This suggests that policy oriented research combines an accessible knowledge pool with work on specifically articulated policy matters.

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3. Capacity Building and Knowledge Development

Jim Woodhill

3.1 Introduction

This reflection relates to the 2004 and 2005 period of LNV Programme 435, which focused on capacity development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition (Eastern Europe)

The programme supported capacity building processes through making knowledge, information, and skills available to institutions, organisations and individuals working in the areas of trade and markets, sustainable agriculture and rural development, biodiversity conservation and integrated water resources management.

During 2004 and 2005 considerable change occurred in the programmed when compared to previous years. This included much less focus on regular course in the Netherlands and much more focus on longer term capacity development partnerships implemented regionally. In line with this a much more comprehensive perspective on capacity development and institutional change has been articulated that is highly relevant to the concept of linking research, policy and practice.

This paper offers the following:

1. A brief introduction to capacity development and institutional change.
2. Examples of work undertaken in relation to each of the five LNV themes around which the programme was structured.
3. Reflections of the role of capacity development in linking research policy and practice.

3.2 Capacity building

Although capacity development has become a critical focus of international development in relation to achieving the MDGs, it remains poorly understood. It involves working with individuals, organisations, communities or partnership groups in ways that will enable them to be more effective in setting and achieving their objectives. Capacity building is about change processes and (continuous) learning and is concerned with how individuals can develop, and be supported to use competencies within their specific working environment. From this perspective capacity building is much more than one off training session for individuals. While training is an important component, capacity building focuses on establishing a set of enabling organizational and institutional conditions. Doing this requires long term partnerships and an integrated set of capacity building activities. An effective capacity building programme requires a thorough needs assessment that looks at institutional issues as well as at individual and group learning needs. It generally requires longer term programmes that combine external training, in-house training, action learning, mentoring, backstopping, monitoring and evaluation and advisory services.

3.3 Institutional Change

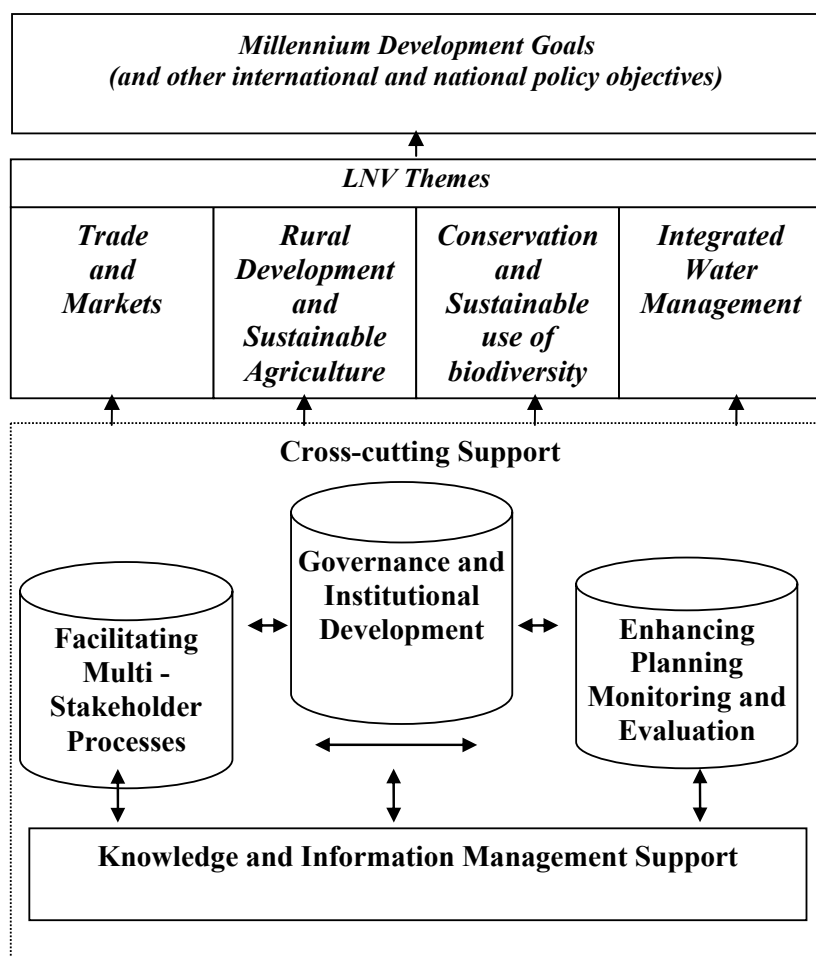
Developing the capacity for different groups in society to be able to understand the implications of current institutional arrangements and work cooperatively and creatively towards new frameworks, more appropriate to the goals of sustainable development, is perhaps one of the most important challenges society currently faces. Capacity development extends to this wider institutional domain supporting learning processes in society at large, that is among a variety of organizations. This means working with partnerships or multi-stakeholder coalitions that may include government, civil society organisations and business to bring about changes in institutions such as laws,

market incentives, social attitudes and decision making process (governance structures) that impact on sustainable development.

Sustainable development of rural areas can only take place if there is sufficient capacity and social-political basis to make and implement development orientated policy in a evermore globalising context. This requires adequate levels of institution development:

The heart of the problem in poor societies is often not the lack of funding or technical know-how, but a matter of governance and the resulting inability to make good use of existing institutions and capacities. As a result, a key challenge in development cooperation, in particular for the international donor community agencies, is to help overcome these fundamental institutional and capacity barriers to development and to assist partner countries in implementing societal change processes. Institutional capacity development is at the core of that transformation and must be considered an exercise in social innovation rather than purely a technical improvement. Social or societal learning¹ is based on a governance-oriented approach to institutional capacity development, which looks at delivering aid in ways that build ownership, mobilize local capacity and produce institutional change.²

The following schematic representation illustrates how strengthening capacities of individuals, organisations and institutions was organised along programmatic/ thematic lines:



¹ Jim Woodhill, 2005: Facilitating Complex Multi-Stakeholder Processes. A Societal Learning Perspective.

² Jean Bossuyt, 2001: mainstreaming Institutional Development: why it is important and how can it be done.

In the different thematic programmes as well as in the cross cutting support programme a distinction between activities can be made:

1. training through open access courses aiming at capacity building of individuals in key positions in relevant organisations
2. training through regional or partner organisation focused tailor-made programmes, targeting specific knowledge needs
3. trajectories for capacity building with a partner organisation or a group of partner organisations
4. institutional development trajectories in combination with capacity building: developing and implementing (international) conventions, regulations, legal frameworks, and organizational capacity building
5. policy advice and capacity building to government and non-governmental/ private sector organisations
6. creating e-based knowledge platforms and networks

Many of these activities have been developed in close cooperation with international partners (individuals and organisations) and national partners and colleagues from other WUR departments/ institutes. Multi stakeholder processes involving different stakeholders in knowledge processes, demand articulation and knowledge circulation are increasingly integral part of the processes for institutional and organisational capacity building.

In the following section four case studies will describe the work undertaken within the the 435 Programme. The focus of the case studies is on how in the different projects the link between capacity building, institutional development and knowledge development, articulation, and knowledge circulation have taken place and to which effect. The case studies represent the reality of four thematic areas and the cross-cutting support programme as indicated in the framework above.

Some case examples:

- Innovative approach on livelihoods and market access
- Rural development and sustainable agriculture
- Regional cooperation in Ecological networks
- Capacity building for integrated river basin management

3.4 Rural Development and sustainable agriculture

A great variety of activities were undertaken in the thematic area concerning specifically Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). GAP has been defined as standards developed by public and private sector to produce safe and good quality food as well as other agricultural products. The activities related to GAP were implemented through courses, special seminars and projects.

All of the activities were undertaken in close cooperation with actors from other WUR institutes, national and international networks and organisations in the field of sustainable rural development and agriculture. In terms of participation it can be noted that in all activities diversity of and multi stakeholder representation was essential. Most courses and seminars involved new participants with a wide geographical, organisational/ institutional background. They came from public institutions, private sector businesses and not for profit (development) related organisations. Knowledge articulation before and during courses and seminars was as essential as the role that the IAC played as knowledge broker between different actors involved in the programme. The intention of most courses and seminars was to bring together and validate knowledge from academia, with knowledge from applied research and development activities, with commercial private sector generated insights and knowledge. In the confrontation new knowledge was generated. Many lessons learned were drawn from the activities. These were formulated as insights, recommendations, questions for further research or proposals for capacity building based on identified needs in a multi stakeholder environment.

Next to multi-stakeholder approaches as basis for learning and knowledge development another important aspect of the approach in the GAP activities was to identify apparent or very real contradictions in the field of Good Agricultural

Practices. Analysing apparent contradictions has led to growing insights and the generation of knowledge based on the recognition of diversity of interests and effects of options.

This diversity was related for example to questions on linear and non linear effects of interventions, to arguments for or against blanket or tailor –made approaches in dairy protection, of taking ‘footprints’ into consideration in the choice of agricultural production, of taking into account differentiated effects of standardisation or certification procedures for small, middle and large producers opportunities and lastly the issue of trade offs as a development issue.

Knowledge generation and circulation also came about through the linking of agro-technical knowledge with an understanding of the interrelationship with socio-, economic, political and institutional and historical factors and characteristics of certain countries and regions. The strength of the IAC contribution to Good agricultural practices is in the ability to bring together different stakeholders, promote learning and knowledge generation and articulation in varied groups, combine technical with socio-, economic, historical, political and institutional frameworks, and look at problematics from a multi disciplinary and multi interest perspective.

3.5 Innovative approaches to livelihoods and markets

In 2004 the Programme has made a significant step forward in the development of methodology and new approaches to promote economic growth through more effective participation of actors in agro-based chains and markets. There has been a focus on developing products and services specifically targeted to the demand of agricultural producers and other stakeholders in agricultural sectors. Current international strategies of public and private stakeholders in the field of livelihood and market development as well as international trends have been studied and their implications for trade and market development have been analyzed.

Whereas many organizations are active in the field of livelihood development and others promote market development, the cutting edge between these two (livelihood & markets) has been identified as a clear new niche for WUR. A research and development project proposal was formulated to study a number of cases, draw lessons to be learnt by the public and private sectors and develop innovative methods and approaches. The market-oriented approach towards sustainable livelihood development whereby the private and public sector have joined their resources to create an enabling environment to assist small producers and rural dwellers to help themselves has been consolidated further in 2005. The public-private partnerships pilot projects that have been initiated as a consequence of this transformation in mainstream thinking, have started to bear fruit and prove to be a rich source of experiences and case material that is becoming functional for policy advice and formulation, institutional strengthening and general capacity building activities.

In 2005 IAC has initiated the integration of the experiences that have been obtained to date from the pilot initiatives into the development of innovative methods and approaches towards market-driven sustainable livelihood development and applied in the areas of capacity building, institutional strengthening and policy development. The implementation of the first edition of the international course on market access and sustainable development, and the initiation of the partnership project on fresh vegetable chain development in Ethiopia are two examples of capacity building activities in 2005 that have been successful in building on the new insights and approach.

The advisory services within the context of the CFC Consultative Group, the M&E of the partnership projects initiated under Agri-Profocus umbrella, and the assistance to the development of the phytosanitary services in Zambia, are examples where IAC in 2005 has been active in assisting in the strengthening of institutions and policies in the domain of market and livelihood development. To enable easy access to the developments in this area, a start has been made with the development of a web-based portal. Cross-cutting ‘themes’ like Participatory M&E and multi stakeholder approaches have been integrated in the approaches used for livelihoods and market. Bringing together different stakeholders in for example the horticulture sector in Kenya and the fresh vegetable chain development in Ethiopia have proven their additional value in looking for solutions that create win-win situations for different actors in the product- market chain.

3.6 Regional cooperation in Ecological networks

Various new activities have been developed in close co-operation with partners in CEE countries and funding schemes were addressed to support the implementation of these initiatives. The attention of IAC's activities has gradually shifted from building capacity in the new EU member states to the new neighbours and candidate countries e.g. Serbia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ukraine and Belarus. A number of projects were carried out to support the development and implementation of ecological networks and the capacity building and institutional development activities formed a significant part of the activities performed.

Most notably in:

- *North Livonia Project (PIN-Matra)*

This project aimed at improving co-operation in water and biodiversity management in the transboundary area between Latvia and Estonia and at improving the capacities of local management organisations in transboundary co-operation. This has been achieved through the establishment of various transboundary workgroups in which experts of both countries had to work together in research and inventory activities. The results of the workgroups were discussed in joint meetings to achieve the desired integrated approach.

One of the most tangible outputs was the establishment of a Joint Committee on Transboundary Co-operation with representatives of the responsible ministries of both countries plus a variety of local stakeholders (both government and non government).

Due attention has been paid to improve not only transboundary co-operation between the two countries but also to enhance cross sectoral co-operation between nature conservationists, water management experts, agricultural experts and tourist experts. Workshops were organised in which experts of various sectors had to work together on the elaboration of an Integrated Master Plan for North Livonia.

The capacities of the local organisations in project management were improved by contracting these as Local Project Implementation Organisations and by giving them responsibilities in project management activities like, contracting procedures, tendering procedures and accounting. IAC provided the required back up and support to allow these organisations to perform their tasks.

Further the capacities of the local organisations in the implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directive was increased through the combined elaboration of two management plans (one on each side of the border) which were tuned with the requirements of article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Expertise and knowledge in the field of GIS applications in hydrological research were transferred and the knowledge on the EU Water Framework was increased through providing guidance to the local hydrology and water management by experts from the Netherlands.

- *Integrated River Basin Management of the Dovine River (Pin-Matra)*

The objective of this project is to test the combined implementation of the Birds – and Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive in a pilot river basin.

An additional objective was to support the organisational build up of the Ministry of Environment in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and to build capacities of government and scientific organisations in the implementation of the two Directives mentioned.

Various trainings were organised for a broad range of experts and policy makers:

- Setting up a methodology for assessing Favourable Conservation Status of Habitats and Species
- Biological monitoring of surface water bodies,
- Peatland management and restoration.

The investigations and research activities required for the elaboration of the management plan were carried out by local experts supervised by experts from the Netherlands and Denmark. Also in the Project Steering Committee representatives of various sectors like agriculture, water management and nature protection worked together and gave guidance to the project implementation process. Cross sectoral co-operation between the water management

sector and the nature protection sector was enhanced through the organisation of joint workshops and meetings. Expertise was built in the application of GIS in water management through the supervision of the local experts by experts from the Netherlands. One Lithuanian expert has been trained in the Netherlands in using hydrological models for the evaluation of water management proposals. The NGO Nature Heritage Fund was contracted as Local Project Management Organisations.

3.7 Capacity building for integrated river basin management : WetCap

The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty, which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention's mission is the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world (Ramsar COP8, 2002).

In order to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands, the Ramsar Convention identifies inter alia, the need to:

- a. develop the capacity within, and promote cooperation among, institutions in Contracting Parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands, and
- b. identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition, and implement appropriate responses.

With the decreasing core funding for international institutions and the increasing principle of open tendering for research and capacity building assignments, the need for time management, more efficiency and networking amongst these institutions has become of pivotal importance. It is in this process of reduced budgets and competition, that a number of international institutions involved in wetland management, agreed to establish a round table partnership called WetCap.

On the 22nd of April 2005 a Letter of Intent was signed between the members of the Partnership with the main aim to stimulate and develop effective capacity building activities in wetland management and restoration, as part of integrated river basin/ water resources management. The partnership consists of experts in wetland management and integrated river basin management from the following organisations and is supported by the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP) and the Ramsar Secretariat.

- Wetlands International (WI)
- Rijkswaterstaat RIZA
- UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education
- International Institute for Geo-Information science and earth observation (ITC)
- International Network for Capacity Building in Integrated Water Resources Management (Cap-Net/UNDP)
- Wageningen University and Research centre, *represented by*-
- Wageningen International (former IAC) & ALTERRA (WUR)

The partnership was highly welcomed by the ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management and the ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the latter ministry agreed to support the establishment of an advisory board for capacity building in wetland management as part of the contribution of the Netherlands to the Ramsar Convention. The advisory board consists of members of the Partnership, representatives of both ministries involved, the regional Ramsar Centres / Initiatives and is chaired by the SG of the Ramsar Convention.

The Partnership proved to be a success but more investments in terms of time and expertise and core funding is needed to sustain the activities of the partnership.

Main lessons learned so far:

- Open mind / Learning attitude is needed to explore possibilities for joint action and to learn from experience (audio-visual means, maintenance of international partnerships, development of river basin wide knowledge data base, web based communication etc.).
- Enthusiasm is needed to take active part in joint activities.
- Action oriented: parties will only get to know each other well by doing.
- Complementary expertise enables parties to learn from each other, to respect the knowledge windows and expertise of the partners and to look for synergy and added value.
- Focal point for capacity building: sharing of networks and market opportunities.
- Regular communication with and participation of the ministries in training activities is encouraging and is highly appreciated by gov. officials.

Current problems:

- Funding for partnership.
- Fellowships as most participants are unable to pay for themselves and international development programmes often do not include a budget line for training / capacity building.

IAC/Wageningen International has played a crucial role in the process towards the creation of the Partnership. Meetings, workshops on curriculum development, visits and studies on the use of the various audiovisual means and joint implementation of training and other international programmes all contributed to mutual understanding and respect for the different competencies and capabilities of the partners.

On behalf of the Partnership, Wageningen International chairs the editorial board of an interactive website/ platform for wetland professionals. As a member of the Advisory board on capacity building in wetland management for the Ramsar Convention, Wageningen International is able to suitably link up the members of the Partnership with regional initiatives and development programmes in wetland capacity building.

During the CoP 9 of the Ramsar Convention in November 2005 the WetCap partnership organised a site event to assess the needs in the various regions in institutional capacity building in wetland management, opportunities available in the region and the need for institutional support by Ramsar. As such the Partnership was able to extend its international network and involvement in wetland management.

With the recent membership of Wageningen International of the CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) oversight panel of the Ramsar convention, another linkage is made with international GO/NGO organisations involved in wetland management and restoration. New challenges are being explored to promote the inclusion wetland management in NRM policies.

3.8 Cross-cutting issues: innovation systems

The IAC has been providing services, developing knowledge, building capacity and acted as an important knowledge broker on what we call innovation systems which includes an number of the cross cutting issues.

These cross-cutting issues are key to the programme's coherence and integration for sustainability and underpin the work in the other themes. In discussion with LNV the following cross cutting issues have been identified:

- Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Processes (MSP)
- Enhancing Planning Monitoring and Evaluation
- Governance and Institutional Development
- Knowledge and Information Management Support
- Demand articulation and regional Partnership Initiatives

In 2004-2005 the IAC continued to build on its significant past experience and reputation for participatory approaches and established the facilitation of multistakeholder processes and social learning as key element of its innovation system approach. The international course on MSP and social learning with the associated conference on

Power & Partners again attracted great interest. The WUR course to build capacity as MSP facilitator was fully booked and a new course on MSP and local governance in French organised together with KIT received an excellent evaluation by both participants and Dutch MFO financing participants. The MSP resource portal was updated and continued to receive positive feedback by users.

The cross cutting element is illustrated by the fact that IAC thematic groups in water, forest management and chain management were able to integrate MSP concepts in their respective themes. A kit on facilitating multistakeholder processes and interactive policy development for sustainable development, market access and natural resources management has been produced.

Another element of the innovation programme is building the capacity for quality planning, monitoring and evaluation which is central to realising sustainable outcomes of any programme or project. There has been a strong increase of demand for its methodological development for participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation we see a substantial increase of the portfolio of Dutch MFO's interested to review and improve the learning component of their organisation and the design of planning and M&E processes. Regional activities in Eastern Africa became stronger through a joined training at Makerere University in conjunction with the African Evaluation Association and preparation with IFAD to start a major three years M&E capacity building programme for East and South Africa. LNV's and other international actors' international policy agenda also focuses on strategic change within its four themes making governance and institutional issues central. The realisation of the Millennium Development Goals and international conventions and agreements require alternative mechanisms for governance and new institutional arrangements from the local to the global level. Root causes of many development problems lie in inappropriate decision making mechanisms, outdated laws and policies, ineffective public institutions, distorted business practices and ethics, and problematic cultural norms and values. Enhancing innovative capacities for strategic analysis and development of governance mechanisms and institutional rearrangements is a key aspect of this objective. The new framework on rural decentralisation and local governance using multi-stakeholder processes links governance, institutional development and Multistakeholder processes. Capacity building of LNV staff in embassies on institutional analysis was started in South Africa and a policy paper on governance and institutional mechanisms for sustainable development in the market access, trade and rural development sectors is available.

Many of the above mentioned initiatives are strengthened and can enlarge their scope of influence by the use of e-based communication networks and tools. In this context for the IAC example supported the Netherlands Forum on ARD (NFARD) in upgrading its network and launched its new website (www.nfard.org). The development of the website into an electronic Resource Centre will continue into 2005. As part of the web-based capacity building projects a CD based module has been developed which can be used in a diverse range of courses. This innovative self-study training material introduces concepts of adult learning in groups and organizations and assists in developing participants' learning objectives for a course.

A pilot was undertaken to use the IAC's Knowledge Platform during a course abroad where no access to the internet was available. This pilot was very successful and the concept will be duplicated for different user groups in regions with moderate internet access. The functionalities of the Knowledge Platform have been extended with the implementation of a threaded asynchronous discussion forum which can be used e.g. for moderated e-conferences or supporting Communities of Practice. In 2004 a major change in focus has been seen in the WISARD project. Following the recommendations from the review conducted in 2003 we have shifted from managing a system to providing information services. International contacts have been renewed and revitalized with amongst others IFPRI, Metafro Infosys, FAO and GFAR. Although a considerable amount of time has been invested to develop cooperation with EARD Infosys+ this has not led to success. The meetings with international contacts and stakeholders have continued in 2005 and are crucial for future international coherence and sustainability.

It can be concluded that in 2004/ 2005 the importance of institutions, the MSP framework and participative planning and M&E for enhanced learning have seen a strong demand and interest. The core set of methodologies as developed in this theme over time enables to go into specific content area of the other LNV themes. It is intended to integrate the MSP and Institutional projects more strongly in 2005/ 2006 as building capacities for effective institutions is the main outcome of multi stakeholder processes and the main aim of the new Wageningen International.

3.9 Conclusions on capacity building and knowledge development

As this chapter illustrates, Programme 435, during 2004 and 2005 underpinned a diverse range of innovative capacity development activities. This work has been very much focused on moving towards longer-term capacity development partnerships in which individual, organisational and institutional change is dealt with in a comprehensive way.

Some emerging issues:

- **Understanding capacity development:** The role of capacity development, what it is and how it contributes to enabling an effective relationship between research, policy and practice is often not well understood.
- **Investing in the core process:** Capacity development has proved to be most effective when it integrates multi-stakeholder learning and change processes with a particular 'content' area. The IAC's capacity to do this has driven a strong demand for services over the last period. However, there has been an increasing reluctance of LNV to support the activities that establish the underlying knowledge management, multi-stakeholder learning processes and evaluation approaches. This poses a risk to the comprehensive capacity development approach that has been established over recent years.
- **From knowledge transfer to innovation and empowerment::** The type of capacity development that has been undertaken through Programme 435 has focused not just on knowledge transfer but much more on developing the capacities of those involved for innovation with the objective of empowering groups to be effective in their own analysis and decision making. This places capacity development central to any effort aimed at linking research policy and practice.
- **Capacities for partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement:** Linking research policy and practice requires new partnerships and effective multi-stakeholder engagement. In turn this requires that all participants develop the capacities to effectively engage in or facilitate such processes.
- **Creating better linkages with research:** The 435 programme has traditionally operated independently from the 407/404 programme. Linking research policy and practice implies the need for a much better connection between research and capacity development.
- **Capacity development requires specialist skills:** The 435 Programme of capacity development implemented by the IAC was based on a highly interactive approach to adult learning. To effectively facilitate such processes requires considerable skill and experience in course design and facilitation.

The value of a regular course programme: Although there has been a shift away from regular course in the Netherlands it is considered critical to an overall capacity development programme to maintain a core programme of 'flagship' courses. These course enable a core foundation of materials to be developed that can be used for tailor made and regional activities. The courses are important for the international profile of the Netherlands. With some 15,000 participants have attended these courses the alumni network often proves very valuable in undertaking work on a regional basis and for creating an overall favourable image of the Netherlands contribution to development.

4. Thematic cases

4.1 Trade, Markets and Sustainable Development: experiences in coffee and cocoa

Sietze Vellema, Frank Joosten & Don Jansen

4.1.1 Introduction

Endeavours enabling market access, configuring chains equitably, and linking sustainable development to economic development figure prominently in the Dutch policies on agricultural trade and rural development. Collaboration between policy and research intends to create coherency between these policy domains and to learn from experiment and multi-stakeholders processes. This chapter centres on the experiences gained while working in cross-border commodity systems, which led to challenging questions on scale and inclusion as well as on the division of tasks and responsibilities between public and private actors. We start with the major lessons learned about the relationship between policy and research in this field. The remainder of the chapter further substantiates these lessons by identifying three key problems in international commodity chains and by placing the set of research and policy support activities developed during the program International Cooperation (2002-2006) on the policy cycle.



4.1.2 Lessons learned

Connecting phases and realms in the policy cycle

Statement 1

In addition to using multiple disciplines, research teams need to be competent in participating at different points in the policy cycle.

Working with farmers and making international policies may seem to be worlds apart. However, the lesson learned in the field of commodity systems is that hands-on work on sustainability in coffee fields, for example resulting from private standards, is conditioned by policies and enabling services. Thus, when up scaling localized sustainability endeavors, policy and strategy become crucial factors. Understanding the interrelation between the different phases and domains of policy making appears to be important for effectively dealing with the multiple aspects of one dossier: the trade in commodities. The research team was active in different realms, such as farmer field schools, negotiations among chain actors, and intergovernmental bodies. Because research, process facilitation and capacity

development activities interrelated, the research team was able to address different key audiences while considering and working on consistency in the portfolio of activities. Linking these complementary skills and knowledge to a multifaceted policy dossier seemed to be as important as composing a multi-disciplinary teams. Although working at different research institutes, the researchers grew closer and eventually build a virtual and flexible team based on a variety of project activities. This internal coalition provided a strong base for managing the research portfolio, but this was primarily a contingent outcome of personal connections and a shared engagement with the change processes in commodity markets.

Tailoring research to the policy space

Statement 2

Researchers have to understand the political and value-laden nature of alliances that explore new avenues and directions in the given policy space, in order to be able to explain the value of the research's approach and outcome to audiences in different value contexts.

During the 4-years programme International Cooperation, a team of researchers was involved in a set of activities related to the commodity dossier. The more or less coincidental set of activities presented in figure 1 is an outcome of the continuous interactions between policy makers and researchers creating opportunities for and uses of research. The task of the researchers was to provide on-going policy discussion and strategic decision making with ideas, reflection and options. And they tried to identify signals of long-term developments relevant to the current policy debate. The dynamics of these different realms make it difficult to predict information needs far in advance. To counter this and to tailor research outputs as much as possible, one researcher formed a close tandem with the responsible policymaker, acting particularly in the intergovernmental organisations on commodities and exchanging information and ideas on a regular and interpersonal basis. More often, however, the results of research were 'wholesaled' to a pool of knowledge accessible to a wide range of stakeholders involved in specific commodities, such as coffee and cocoa. Research activities and experiments or pilots continuously feed a pool of knowledge from which other users in the same domain, but acting in different institutional setting, can tap. By giving tailor made presentation the researchers tried to translate their ideas and finding to distinct key audiences or to intermediaries capable of linking research findings to concrete priorities in specific situations. The users were not only the involved policymakers, commissioning the research projects, but also other stakeholders acting in the various alliances and processes relevant for the overall goal of establishing sustainability in the world of commodities. In this way, researchers contributed to, for example, the inclusion of sustainability in the policy discussion in the International Cocoa Organisation, project evaluation in the Common Funds for Communities, the drafting of a sustainability code in the coffee sector, or the learning activities of Vietnamese farmers supplying coffee to Douwe Egberts.

Allying practitioners and policy makers in experiments

Statement 3

To allow the development of long term innovations researchers need to have the freedom to 'work outside the box', i.e. to experiment with models for future social-technical development, which may not always have an immediate effect on day-to-day policy or business applications.

The transition to sustainability in commodity system is a complex process containing many open-ended questions. Although the general direction can be described by referring the strategic policy frameworks such as the millennium development goals, the ways to actually implement this direction are still diverse. This is logical considering the diversity in social and agro-ecological conditions. Experimenting with and learning about new technological and/or organisational models is an important source of information for strategic policy research. Particularly when these experiments are not isolated or standing alone, but are perceived in a long-term development trajectory. In this context, it is difficult and perhaps unfeasible to expect closed rather than open-ended answers from research. The

fixing usually takes place in the policy area or in negotiations between different stakeholders. The experience in coffee suggests the importance of alliances of researchers with a selection of coalitions and stakeholders making the actual strategic political decisions about the direction and form of change processes. In the world of commodities, researchers maintained close relationships with organised farmers, trade unions, developmental and environmental organisation, trade and industry, as well as governments and commodity boards, who are, eventually responsible for making things work on the ground. It is not the task of researcher to shape change processes, but their work can be part and parcel of regional networks and implementation coalitions. For this purpose, researchers rely on a certain degree of freedom to experiment, discuss and think without being forced to show tangible results fitting neatly in day-to-day policy or business processes. Commissioners of policy research may not see the direct relevance or applicability of the research effort, but they will benefit from offering researchers and practitioners a room for experiment.

4.1.3 Research and real world problems in commodity systems

The markets for agricultural commodities, such as coffee and cocoa, have been volatile, especially since the role of the International Commodity Organisations in balancing supply and demand in global markets has diminished. The more recent inclusion of sustainability in both corporate strategy and public policy brought about new (pre)conditions for development in commodity systems. At the level of primary production, a new mutual commitment between trade, industry and associated farmers led to a growing awareness about sustainability. Advocacy and constructive engagement of civil society organisations importantly opened new possibilities for collaboration and negotiation in the sphere of commercial transactions in commodity markets. Also at the level of policy and strategy the notion of sustainability is introduced, for example the European Commission launched an action plan addressing poverty alleviation in commodity dependent countries.

Due to these developments, linking sustainable development with commodity chains is a widely shared endeavour. However, the wide scope of sustainability aspects also leaves room for diverse interpretations and actions. Embedding the concept of sustainability in chain configurations brings about a variety of visions and ideas on modes of control and monitoring, which also reflect the different interests and positions actors have in commodity chains. Accordingly, policy and research are not only led by a common ground for sustainability, but also have to manoeuvre between contrasting interests and views.

One of the problems in commodity chains relates to converting sustainability objectives into tangible assets in tune with the livelihood strategies of coffee and cocoa farmers working under diverse agro-ecological and socio-economic conditions. In particular, the involvement of numerous, spatially scattered small scale farmers complicates installing an improvement process.

Secondly, enhancing sustainability performance comes with costs and benefits. In this terrain, the economic side of sustainability comes to the fore, which implies negotiations over distributing economic value or sharing risks and investments, often hampering joint action. It remains an uncharted terrain how to enable a fair and equal bargaining process between economic actors.

Thirdly, sustainability is directly linked to modes of control and monitoring in a commodity chain. This is, however, not a merely technical issue because it concerns power and the nature of relationships. In the case of commodities, this also entails finding alternative institutional solutions for engaging poor farmers with little assets in system still credible for civil society and NGO's. These options may contrast with the targeted interventions and arrangements with well-equipped preferred suppliers often chosen by retail companies.

Finally, sustainable development usually involves actions outside the boundaries of individual production or processing units, such as pollution of local water streams or maintaining biodiversity in local ecosystems. Consequently, achieving sustainability in a commodity systems also entail a certain level of collective actions and an acceptable division of labour between actors not always connected through commercial transactions. Sustainability

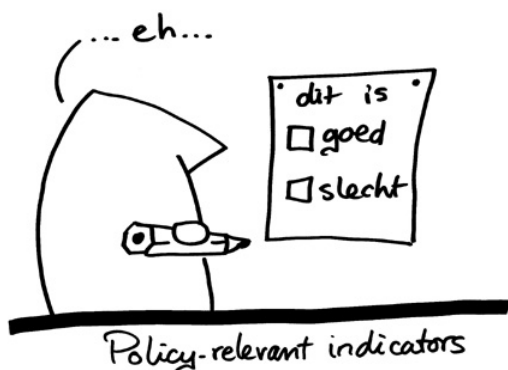
involves a complex transition process as well as building new relationships between public and private actors active at different levels in the commodity chain. There is, however, no blue print for organising this.

4.1.4 The contribution of research to the policy process

The continuous interactions with LNV resulted in a portfolio of research products, coincidentally dovetailing with the different phases in the policy cycle. Figure 1 captures the range of activities that can be placed in the commodity dossier. This must be read as a post-evaluation, because the definition of research activities and results was not based on the policy cycle. The representation does indicate, however, that policymakers act in different phases of the policy cycles, and their expectation of the contributions made by research will depend on the phasing in the policy process.

The research activities of Wageningen UR tried to address the problems mentioned in the previous section by, for example, taking up the role of independent advisors to a public-private initiative on sustainable coffee (Common Code for the Coffee Community), elaborating on insights in monitoring, indicators and control. Furthermore, hands-on field work in Vietnam and Peru, working closely with small producers and coffee companies on making sustainability work in the farm, furthered our understanding of using sustainability as a guideline for changing farming and business practices. These insights were again presented to various platforms, during meetings of the Common Code for the Coffee Communities and the industry-led Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI). The combined experiences derived from participation in a multi-stakeholder process at different levels in the chain and hands-on change processes was used to support and inform the work of LNV in inter-governmental organisations, such as the International Coffee Organisation or the International Cocoa Organisation.

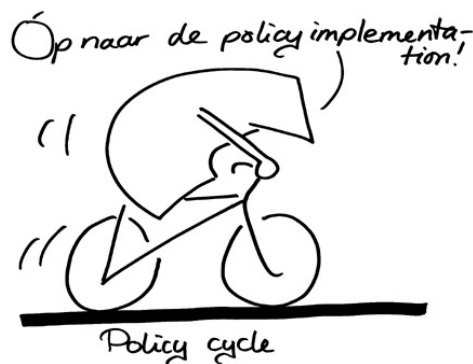
For strategic policy research, researchers made their largest contribution in the steps from problem identification up to option for solutions. However, this work was closely linked to pilot activities, financed by the coffee industry, which aimed to implement the strategic decision on enhancing sustainability. Also targeted contributions to the process towards the Common Codes for the Coffee Communities, i.e. writing a discussion paper addressing the responsibilities of trade and industry, facilitating discussions among stakeholders, making tailor made presentation, drafting parts of the Code paper, or composing a list of economic indicators, contributed to strategic decision made by the tripartite steering committee of this initiative.

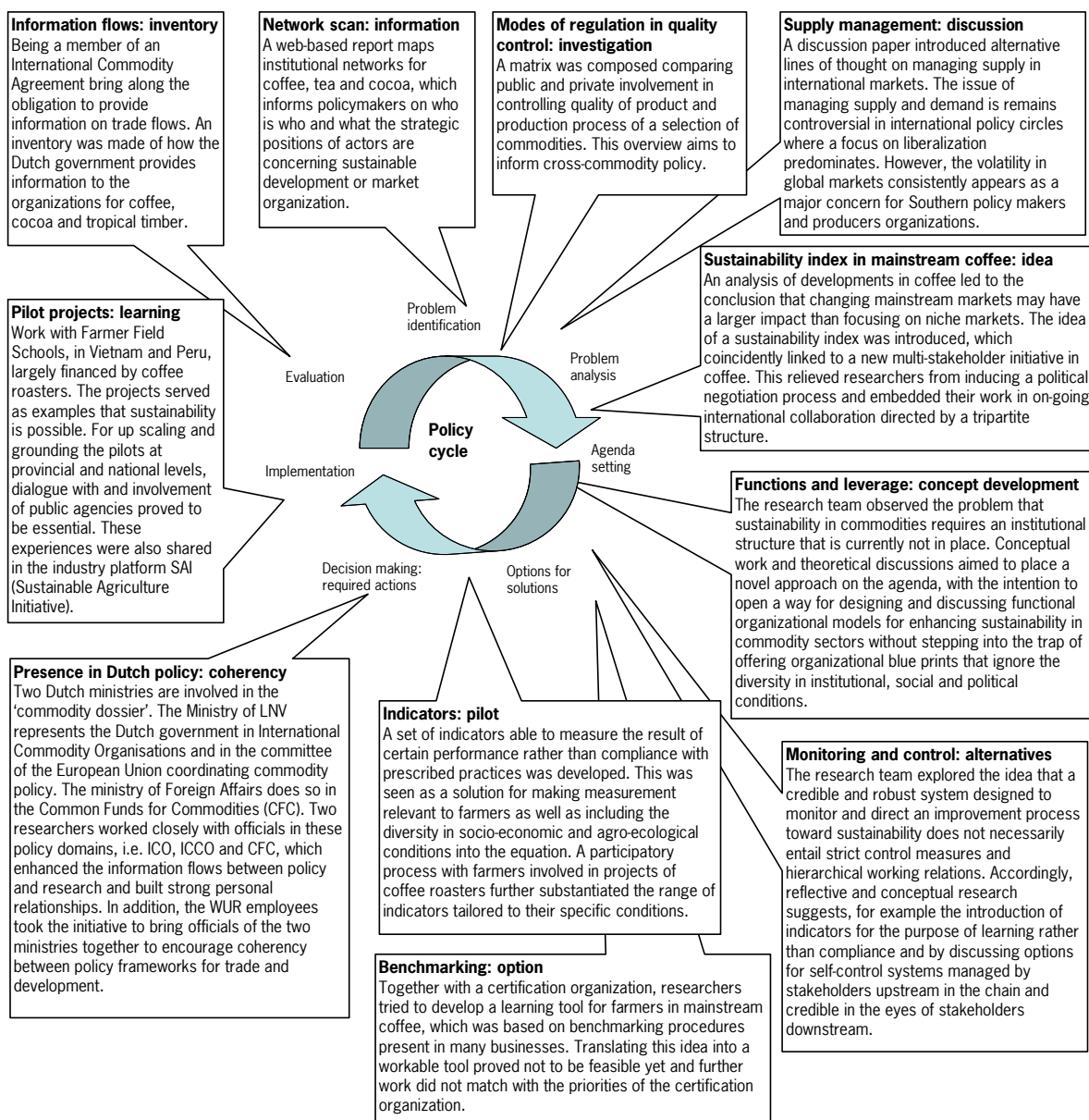


The commodity dossier includes distinct products, e.g. coffee or cocoa, for which the institutional and political dynamics also differ. The overall goal of sustainability guided the action of policymakers, linked to the political agreements made in Johannesburg. However, the political space in coffee, with a very vocal civil society and a wide range of multi-stakeholder initiatives addressing the issue of sustainability, is completely different from the room for manoeuvre in cocoa, where, for example, the controversial issue of child labour seems to dominate the discourse on sustainability. In the case of the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO), the research experience in the coffee sector was used to discuss what steps could be made in the cocoa sector. In particular the ownership of a sustainability endeavour, e.g. formulating a common code, was considered a crucial issue, which also implied finding

a way to engage governments while leaving much of the action with the private actors. A researcher with experience in the coffee sector accompanied the involved policymaker in trying to find feasible policy options and to explore the small steps forward. In the end, researchers assisted ICCO in setting up a survey meant to trace the variety of sustainability initiatives present in the sector.

Sustainability, quality and safety of food products are prominent public concerns addressed by policymakers. Approaching these substantive issues is, however, closely linked to the institutional set up of commercial and policy domains. In particular, the question who cares for what can be answered in many ways, which depends on political and social preferences. This closely links to the policy discussion among EU-members about 'who cares for what'. The distribution of functions and responsibilities is central in an inventory of different modes of quality control in a selection of commodity groups, i.e. coffee, cocoa, bananas, palm oil, timber and aquaculture. The research team was invited by LNV to write a review of and epilogue to a factual description, which gave the researchers the opportunity to add some long-term concerns on the acceptance, scale and viability of quality control to the day-to-day discussion on the technicalities of rules and regulations in food provision. In a parallel project, researchers took a conceptual approach to develop applications of system thinking for multi-stakeholder processes in commodity chains connecting functions in a coherent system, detecting leverage points for effective interventions and responding to the scale, large volumes and numerous producers, apparent in commodity systems. The overall idea was discussed with LNV policy makers and presented to a variety of actors in the coffee sector, in order to see whether the conceptual approach problem definition made sense. Positive responses were received from national players in the coffee sectors in Uganda, India and Indonesia, which may lead to further experiment and refining of the approach to institutional change. The potential of this approach seems to be to find a way to handle politics present in conflict-laden relationships in a commodity system and to work towards a common ground from the idea that sustainability needs collaboration between different functions and therefore between different actors.





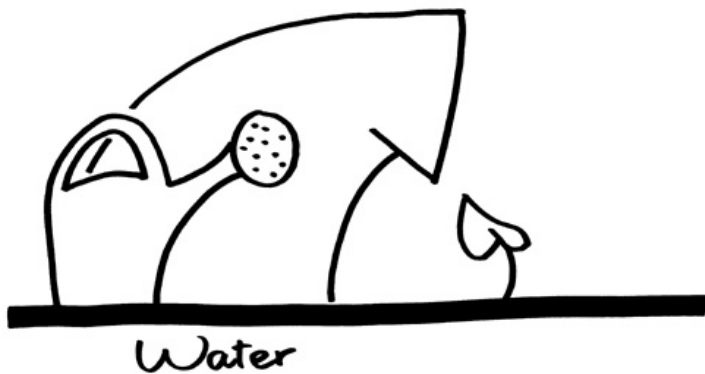
The portfolio of activities under the 'commodity dossier' placed on the policy cycle.

4.2 Water domain paper

Wouter Wolters & Prem Bindraban

4.2.1 History

Following the 'watersnoodramp' (in 1953), the Ministry of LNV established an Institute (ILRI) in 1956 with the mandate to collect and disseminate knowledge on better use of land and water to improve the living conditions of the rural poor and to improve the conditions of the natural environment. The main reasons for the Dutch Government to establish this Institute include (a) the request from foreign sources to share the Netherlands knowledge on better use of land and water, and (b) the fact that The Netherlands has much to offer in the field of what we now call 'integrated water (resources) management'. Due to changes in the demand from developing countries and the support from the Netherlands the aid-oriented program has evolved towards a program for policy support, in particular over the last 4-8 years. The ILRI is entirely embedded within Wageningen UR and participate in the program on international cooperation.



4.2.2 Approach and trends

The approach of the water-related research has always been to conduct work through three different fields of activities: Research, Education and Training, and Advisory Services. The integration of these three fields has led to 'capacity development', especially in the long-term partnerships that have been established (and maintained) over the years. Examples include:

- the Egyptian-Dutch Advisory Panel on Water Management (as of 1976, current contracts until 2009);
- the Indo-Dutch cooperation on Integrated Water Management (as of 1984, current contracts until 2008);
- the cooperation with Indonesia and Malaysia on coastal peat wetlands (as of 1986, current contracts until 2008)

The value of long-term partnerships cannot be overestimated easily. It provides the 'enabling environment' for applied research within implementation programs of developing countries and results directly in policy advice to both LNV and 'local/ national' authorities.

There is a number of trends influencing policy making and implementation:

- Decentralisation: more and more traditional Government services are being transferred to local authorities
- Transition of national to global, where 'boundary conditions' are formulated at high/ global level (WTO, EU, Nile Basin, Ramsar convention, etc.). This also requires more inter-ministerial cooperation
- Transition to less public and more involvement of the private sector.
- An increasingly integrated approach to water, i.e. water is viewed as a (re)source that serves several functions at the same time, while the proper allocation calls for the involvement of multiple stakeholders.

These trends obviously have their repercussions on the water-related research. They imply more trans-disciplinarity, e.g. through the formulation of research together with 'policy and practice'. The implication of these changes is a search for acceptable solutions to a multitude of functions and multiple stakeholders, rather than an optimal solution for a particular function. The mode of operation for researchers moves towards more active participation in change processes. Contributing from The Netherlands to such transitions and trans-disciplinary approaches, necessitates long-term partnerships essential to guarantee a strong link with 'local' policy and practice in developing countries.

4.2.3 Lessons/statements

Based on our research experience over the past 8 years, we have derived the four most prominent lessons.

Statement 1

As resolving water related problems calls for good governance in addition to technical options, LNV (and DGIS) policy makers have to influence international policies and engage in dialogues with policymakers in nations abroad.

Over the past years two more or less parallel research approaches were pursued.

Much of the research was primarily governed by demand from developing countries continuing the specific history of the water program. The demand was both top-down from 'national' level, as well as bottom-up through direct links with the farming communities and water user associations. Increasingly, support was requested by LNV to provide background information and presentations for international conferences in search for them to identify their policy and research agenda on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Support has been given to the development of LNV contributions for the CSD Meetings (review documents on IWRM), World Water Conferences, the FAO-NL Water for Food and Ecosystems Conference (background papers on IWRM and water-related International Treaties), the Round Table on Sustainable Oil Palm, and the Ramsar Conventions.

The impact of research results for developing countries covers a wide variety of nations and issues. For Egypt, for example, the results include:

- Many technical and institutional problems were solved
- The capacity of engineers, scientists and policy makers was greatly enhanced
- Water policy in Egypt was greatly affected, e.g. in the field of user involvement ('Water Boards'), water quality (new Unit within a Ministry), etc.

Water can serve as a vehicle for establishing international cooperation by the Netherlands government, sometimes given in by geo-political reasons. The long-term 'Water Panel' work with Egypt, for instance, was initiated after the oil crises in the 1970s, and the recent 'Water Panel' work with Ukraine stems from the fact that Ukraine is a new EU neighbour, with whom relations have to be built.

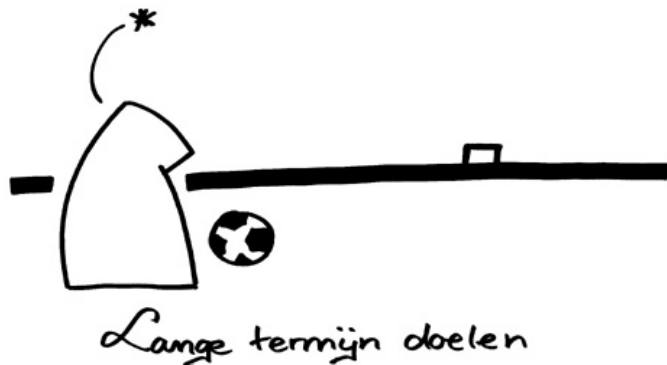
As IWRM is linked with 'good governance' it is strongly related to democratic principles and empowerment. In India for instance, research resulted in an unforeseen mechanism of stakeholder participation. Research results of Wageningen UR were broadcast on local television and radio, which triggered the farming community to approach their local and regional lawmakers to ensure development of beneficial policies and measures for improvement.

Policy and water have much to offer each other but needs to be exploited much further. Water policy interests are present at various parts of the Ministry while so far there was no coordinating body or 'Directorate Water' at LNV. The recent developments in the preparation of the research programme for the coming 4 years has made promising advanced towards a more effective relation between policy and water related research. Most research centres around problem analysis and options for solutions (often through pilots), while it can be extended towards agenda setting and evaluation of policy.

Statement 2

No sustainable impact can be expected without long term partnerships.

Long-term partnerships are of high value in the international 'policy and research' arena, in fact a prerequisite. Such partnerships generate trust, which in turn is a condition for real policy questions to come to the fore. The Governments, both Netherlands' and from partner countries, have the first responsibility in formulating the policy/ research questions, supported by knowledge institutions whenever needed.



Long-term collaboration of Wageningen UR has generated a solid basis of trust developed in various countries with demonstrated skills and knowledge in the fields of crop production, integrated water management, ecosystems, and their inter-relationships under local circumstances. These close relations lead to dialogue on major policy issues that require input from scientific research with high impact on development. In Egypt, for instance, the WUR involvement was not limited to research cooperation, but also facilitated the direct access by Egyptian water policy to overall Dutch (public) knowledge.

One of the objectives of research is to reveal the complexity of issues, whereas policy desires simplified options. Long-term involvement helps to safeguard 'informed' policy solutions, taking relevant and inter-related factors into account. WUR is increasingly asked by LNV as well as partner institutions, to apply its specific knowledge of land and water in the specific context of ecosystem management. For instance, integrated knowledge insights are urgently required for the management of coastal peat wetlands, where several issues play a role in (a) controlling peat-fires to prevent emission of CO₂ gas, (b) restoration of area to safeguard the habitat of the Orang Utan, and (c) the consequences of palm oil cultivation in tropical peat area. Research on coastal peat lands/ wetlands has contributed to:

- the development of the 'Bio-rights financial system' which led to demonstration projects in the field of poverty alleviation and environment
- the 'Global Peatlands Initiative' that now advises the Ramsar Convention via the coordination committee on global action for peat lands. This is also important in the light of policy for carbon sequestration.
- The preparation of water management guidelines for 'wise' development of coastal wetlands,
- the University of Serawak (Unimas) to offers a 1-year post-graduate course on 'Sustainable Use of Tropical Peatlands', including Environmental Impact Assessments, EIA's, for new plantations through the National Resources and Environment Board, etc.

With growing insight in the complexity of ecosystems, improving technical abilities and with globalization 'real world problems' are perceived increasingly in their complexity calling for more advanced research methods that integrate an increasing number of disciplines. WUR has developed innovative and integrating approaches over the last years, e.g. the combination of remote sensing and GIS with field level data on cropping and water use to more effectively identify options for interventions. These approaches provide (first-ever) insight in water 'use' at basin scale and is useful for questions related to allocation, for instance, on how and how much to invest in agriculture, where to

supply nature with more water, how to formulate new water policy, etc. Such performance assessment research also delivers objective information to evaluate, adapt and monitor policies in practice.

Indirect impact of our knowledge on policies also results from the influential positions that some of our long-term counterparts or alumni of the WUR water courses assume, e.g. in the 'national' policy arena's as Government servant, as (independent) consultant/ advisor, as manager/ advisor in the International Development Banks (WB, ADB, AfDB), etc.

Statement 3

It cannot be expected from the private sector to invest or co-finance research in those areas where the interests are mainly public.

The water-related research work under the Ministry funding has been done mostly in the public domain, i.e. for better use of land and water to improve agricultural productivity as well as the living conditions of the rural poor, and to improve the conditions of the natural environment.

Research on water for food and eco-systems does not primarily serve commercial interests but is to a large extent required to safeguard the interests of the rural poor and of nature, i.e. parties with little or no commercial drive. The research undertaken has had large impact on the lives of rural poor through various mechanisms; through straightforward local improvements as higher yields, better application of rainfall, irrigation water, improved drainage conditions, improved management and operation of water supply systems and so forth; and through a better institutional set-up of water use, as the establishment of water user associations, Water Boards, and the like. In China, the proposals (developed in cooperation with DLG, the LNV Service for Land and Water Use) for involvement of farmers in land use committees to decide about land reform has become law. In this era of developing IWRM and attention for 'good governance', 'Water Boards' demonstrate their potential, integrating 'knowledge and societal acceptance'. They serve a public cause (safety, good water quantity and quality, etc.) and often act as the platform to bring together the technical and economic possibilities with societal needs.

Public-private partnerships are becoming more and more an issue, in conditions of decentralisation and less government funding. Nevertheless, it cannot be expected from the private sector to invest or co-finance water research in those areas where the interests are mainly public. Indeed, efforts over the past years to develop such partnerships in the particular field of water for food and ecosystems have been disappointing.

Statement 4

Combining forces enhance impact

The combination of LNV and DGIS funding and direct research participation in panel discussions has turned to be affective in IWRM. The multi-Ministry approach in the cooperation with Egypt (incl. LNV, V&W, EZ, and Union of Water Boards) shows an excellent example of how Dutch (public) knowledge can be of assistance. Careful formulation of each Ministry's interest will help in guiding the international cooperation. Various countries have expressed their interest in the model and cooperation through the 'panel model' is being developed for Ukraine, under LNV guidance.

The work carried out under the 'LNV' funding has often been used in combination with 'OS'/ ODA funding, for executing policy-oriented research to assist developing countries with lessons learned, both from joint, in-country, research as well as from elsewhere. The water-related research conducted partly under the LNV funding has filled the necessity to support the rural poor who do not have the capability to 'invest' in R&D for their agricultural activity. The need to invest approximately 2-3% of turnover into R&D for any 'industry' to stay up-to-date has been partly covered through this research.

A related mechanism is that of Dutch 'grant funding' acting as Technical Assistance to guide large-scale water investments supported by the International Development Banks. Specifically formulated/ targeted research as defined by the concerned parties can successfully guide the huge investments. This mechanism has played a major role in the development of the long-term cooperation with Egypt. Also in India, the Wageningen UR research results aroused the interest of the large Development Banks for projects to alleviate poverty, as the agricultural production increased and the life of the farming community improved tremendously. As well, various States formulated policies towards the sustainability of irrigated agriculture, for food production and a future for the rural poor. This mechanism could be further developed to enlarge the impact of research funds on implementation programs.

4.2.4 References

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4.3 Biodiversity

Bert Visser & Arend Jan van Bodegom

The review of this domain is based on two distinct projects that are presented separately, followed by a general discussion.



4.3.1 On-farm management of genetic resources

Explaining the case

Development of policy for the conservation of genetic resources forms an issue to which the Ministry has devoted substantial efforts over more than a decade. The project on Participatory Enhancement of Diversity of Genetic Resources in Asia (PEDIGREA) was established in 2002 to seek novel practical and sustainable approaches for the on-farm management of crop genetic resources at the implementation level. Distinct features of PEDIGREA are its deliberate focus on improving farmers' varieties, active collaboration between farmers and the public breeding sector, devoting substantial efforts to marketing of farmers' products, and applying the farmer field school concept in the area of genetic resources to answer the need for up scaling impact of investments. PEDIGREA intends to empower and strengthen the capacity of farming communities to manage their own genetic resources as an

important component of local agro-biodiversity, thus contributing to the attainment of farmers' food sovereignty, and to the MDG's on eradicating hunger and poverty (1), and ensuring environmental sustainability (7).

To date, PEDIGREA had been working in more than thirty communities and has trained 1437 men and women farmers in FFS rice and vegetables. Experiences have been gained in building relationships with NARS and extension services, as well as local governments. With regards to the private sector, no lasting relationship has been established, largely because of lack of market incentives from the part of industry. The project can be regarded as an implementation coalition between scientists, farmers, and local government.

Reflection

To what extent has the project supported policy development?

Whereas on-farm conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources has been a declared objective of the CBD and the International Treaty, still limited experience has been gained regarding effective on-farm strategies. Since a substantial part of resources occurs in developing countries on-farm, a major challenge is formed by the question how to best provide incentives to developing country farmers to maintain their resources and not to replace them by externally provided seed materials, and how to economize on on-farm intervention efforts in order to reach a wide impact.

Whereas the Farmer Field School model showed to be effective in reaching larger number of farmers with a relatively small budget, and first experiences were gained in addressing the improvement of local market chains, these results have not effectively been reported to policy makers. In other words, the effect on policy development has been very limited. This partly explains why support from agricultural attaches for continuation of the project has not yet been realized. Whereas the issue of 'debriefing' did receive insufficient priority by the project, a further explanation is the absence of a clear policymakers audience' on this issue,

What is the value of integrating different three knowledge configurations into one approach?

The Wageningen team consisted of genetic resources specialists, seed experts and economists as a logical and necessary approach to develop the project. Farmers and scientists both provided knowledge to enable the execution of the project. This knowledge was generally regarded as complementary, farmers bringing in detailed knowledge about their farming and marketing systems, and scientists providing access to resources and technologies, and supporting development of new marketing channels. Whereas the project entails a niche experiment (a limited number of communities in three Southeast Asian countries), the project generated expertise and models for a wider transition with more impact. The project had no purely scientific aspirations, and any peer review would have to combine evaluation of scientific as well as socio-cultural approaches. Such peer review might be expected from the use of the extensive manual on project experiences by third parties, that might result in hands-on criticism, improvements and additions. Methodological approaches were partly taken from the existing Farmer Field School models, and partly self-developed.

What is the value of research/knowledge products for different users?

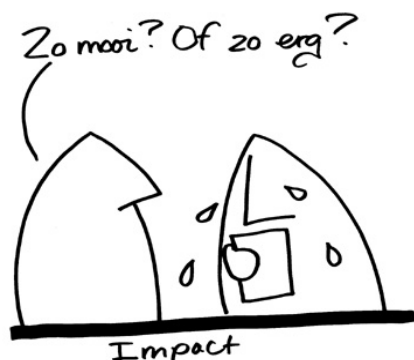
In practice, the results of the project (new skills, new breeding materials) were highly valuable to farmers, and also provided scientists with better insights into the possibilities and relevance of maintaining plant genetic resources on-farm. Farmers formulated the research goals, so the project certainly was demand-oriented. In some but not all cases the project succeeded in changing the traditional views of scientists in the NARS of the three countries involved, convincing them of the capacity of farmers to become breeders themselves, and resulting in breeders enthusiastically sharing breeding materials with the farmers in the project. Whereas the practical work also resulted in important strategic conclusions on the options, approaches and conditions to maintain plant genetic resources, these were not effectively transmitted to policy makers. Whereas a novel Farmer Field School Guide was published, no policy document was abstracted from the project experiences. The experiences, leading to a widened genetic diversity in farmers' fields and improved marketing options for local products, would certainly warrant the production of such document.

How does the tandem of policy and research impact on development?

There is a clear imbalance of the impact of research and policy respectively. Policies at the international and national level have not been revisited to take away disincentives to on-farm management of plant genetic resources. Such disincentives do exist and concern limitations on access to or utilization of genetic resources stemming from the public sector by small-scale farmers, and lack of recognition for the varieties that form the output of farmers' breeding.

Other policies (e.g. trade liberalization, market forces, national seed policies) will need to be attuned such that they do not hamper on-farm conservation.

Whereas the project formed a first attempt to up scaling by involving few professionals and mostly farmers and local extensionists, such attempts should be improved and further developed. As far as this need requires international consensus, policy may become involved (agreements on approaches optimizing impact on development). Interventions at the local level will only be effective if appropriate conditions at higher levels are also fulfilled. This finding calls for integrating policies and initiatives at various scale levels.



Lessons learned/recommendations

The major lesson learned in the project, that focus was heavily on the implementation of policy agreements at the local level, whereas insufficient attempts were made to provide feed-back of experiences relevant to policy makers. Thus, the policy - research relation was only functional in one direction, and policy makers did not get to appreciate the relevance of results at the field level regarding on-farm management of genetic resources. In the future, a direct involvement of policy makers in project planning, implementation and evaluation should get priority.

4.3.2 Implementation of the International Programme for Biodiversity (BBI)

Explaining the case

Wageningen International has supported several stages of the development and implementation activities directly related to the BBI (International Programme for Biodiversity of The Netherlands). Some of these activities have a very supportive character (towards the Ministry of LNV) and are hard to quantify. Others have resulted in more tangible outputs. We will concentrate on the latter and refer to the relation with other less tangible activities when appropriate.

The activities under review are:

1. The preparation of desk studies on several subjects related to or mentioned in the BBI. Subjects were: (a) Knowledge management in policies for nature management, (b) Adaptive Management in the NRM sector, and (c) Mechanisms for payment for environmental services. In these documents existing knowledge on the subject was compiled using available literature from various sources.

2. The establishment and maintenance of the PROFORIS database (www.proforis.nl) with information of Dutch funded international projects on forest, biodiversity and wetlands. Activities for PROFORIS are financed through LNV and DGIS funding. The 'Access' database contains information on 4100 running and expired projects financed through LNV, DGIS, NC-IUCN and LNV-KNIP. Of these 4100 projects, 1260 are displayed on the PROFORIS website with more detailed information.
3. The set up and implementation of courses on priority themes within the BBI: (a) Leadership and Adaptive Management (b) Interactive Nature and Forest Policy Planning and (c) Decision Making in Natural Resource Management (DCRM - valuation of environmental services and payment for these services). From 2004-2005 25 persons participated in the course on interactive Nature and Forest Policy Planning. From 2002-2005 106 persons participated in the Leadership & Adaptive management course of which 18 participated in the regional module in Kenya (2005). In the DCRM course in 2002-2003 25 persons, participated.
4. A fourth activity is the focal point (secretariat) for a CoP for Clean Development Mechanism and forests. This is a group of approximately 30 persons interested in themes related to forests and climate. Results of discussions in this group are used by LNV staff as an input for discussions within the climate convention (UNFCCC). Since 2004 5 meetings have been organized and a website with relevant documentation is maintained.

Reflection

What is the relationship of the knowledge activities and real world problems?

The knowledge domains covered by these activities are: (a) Adaptive Management of natural resources in local situations, (b) Payment for environmental services, (c) Multi-stakeholder processes in the NRM sector, (d) Knowledge management for international biodiversity issues, (e) Forests and climate, and (f) Supply of information on international biodiversity activities funded by the government.

This is a broad array of knowledge domains and the treatment of the domains was from a scientific point of view rather superficial. The domains mentioned under (a)-(e) have direct relations to problems felt in the real world. At international levels these domains have been recognized as important. The domain mentioned under (f) was directly related to monitoring and management of the BBI programme.

How does the work relate to the different phases in the policy process?

The relationship of these knowledge (not research) activities and the Dutch international biodiversity policies is very strong. The BBI is the Dutch governmental framework for the development of the activities. The relation with multilaterally agreed policies is also very strong because the BBI builds on the multilateral agreements like CBD, UNFCCC, CCD.

Several activities relate to the *problem identification phase* of the policy cycle. Firstly the Focal Point of the CoP is an activity at direct demand of an LNV department. The responsible person uses inputs from participants of the group for policy preparation on the role of forests in international climate negotiations (UNFCCC and Kyoto protocol). He gets the inputs in meetings of the network and in reactions by email as a response to his questions. This activity leads to an input in the agenda setting of the UNFCCC.

Secondly the desk study on knowledge management was a direct policy support to the nature department of LNV. It served to get a better idea about problems and possible solutions regarding the management of knowledge on international nature management on various levels.

It is worth mentioning that in the preparatory phase of the BBI (before 2002) Wageningen International provided support to LNV in the preparation of background material and first drafts for paragraphs of the BBI policy document. Several activities are *implementation* trajectories of activities programmed in the BBI. Examples are the desk study on payment for environmental services and the three different types of courses.

The PROFORIS database has a function of *monitoring* which provides inputs for *evaluation* activities of parts of the BBI program (the evaluation phase of the policy cycle). For example, every year a report is prepared for DGIS which provides an overview of the spending on activities on tropical forests. The database is also a tool to provide information to the general public and is part of the Clearing House Mechanism under the CBD.

What is the function of evidence and information in the policy process?

In the activities that we evaluate in this short article the information provided by the PROFORIS database is of a fairly 'hard' nature (figures of spending). It is basic material for the Ministry of Foreign affairs to inform Parliament about the progress regarding international forest issues.

There is no device available to measure impact from, nor a tool to measure impact at different levels. Feed-back on desk studies from LNV is informal (often personal) and not structured. The desk study on knowledge management (in Dutch) was prepared at the request of LNV and formed part of a broader study executed by the Knowledge Department of LNV. It did not contain hard evidence. It was basically the condensation of interviews with several resource persons in The Netherlands, enriched with information from literature. It had some spin-off: it was used to support the secretariat of the BBI theme group Knowledge Management (one of the inter-ministerial groups to support BBI implementation), but did not have much impact there. The other desk studies (on Adaptive Management and Mechanisms for Payment for Environmental Services) were literature reviews and afterwards had a wide dispersal. It is not clear what impact they had. In conclusion the role of evidence is limited.

How does the work engage with changes in policy and practice?

The courses may have an impact on implementation coalitions and consultative platforms in the South. The courses are also given in developing countries, while the knowledge from these courses is also used in projects (longer trajectories) aiming at institutional strengthening (funded by other donors than LNV).

There is no real impact measurement of courses, but it can be assumed that training of people from the South will have some influence on the development of (interactive) policies in developing countries. However, it is clear that the courses do not have any impact on policy development in The Netherlands.

The PROFORIS database does not so much deal with changing policies but rather keep established policies on track (as to a targeted amount to be spent every year).

Wageningen International and its predecessor IAC during a long time experienced a very close steering of its biodiversity activities by the departments of Nature and of Knowledge of LNV, IAC staff functioning almost as an extension of the Ministry. This can be explained by the history that IAC till 2001 formed part of LNV. Another factor is the availability of a clear policy framework (the BBI) in the biodiversity realm. It is of a fairly practical character, and therefore extremely useful as a framework for developing activities, but not so much to plan research as a critical feed-back for changing policies.

What is the value of integrating three knowledge configurations into one approach?

Wageningen International has an important function for *consultative platforms*. This refers to the introduction of the concept of Multi Stakeholder Process (MSP) in the Interactive Nature and Forest Policy course, and spin-off like the development of activities related to national forest programmes. Wageningen International supports the FAO national forest programme facility, introducing aspects of Multi Stakeholder processes. The same is done in the FAO GIAHS project on traditional indigenous agricultural production systems. These activities are directly related to the consultative platforms, more specifically the processes regarding their functioning. Training of staff from organizations in the South may result in better decisions within such platforms in the South. The aforementioned courses are about participatory approaches at sectoral or national level.

The courses on Leadership and Adaptive Management are directed at the level of *implementation coalitions* and deal with participatory approaches at field level. So the package of courses together deals with participatory approaches at consultative platforms and implementation coalitions.

The desk studies use materials from various *research networks*. They are meant to serve actors in consultative platforms in The Netherlands and abroad. Wageningen International staff prepared desk studies which have the character of synthesis reports, bringing together various insights presented in literature. In several cases such studies were used as input for the courses. In the courses in Wageningen staff from Wageningen University participated as resource persons. However, there was not much interaction with science networks within DLO, neither in the desk study activities nor in the courses. The activities of Wageningen International staff on Valuation of functions of Nature both in desk studies and courses also resulted in the participation of staff in the core group that established the Nature Valuation Platform in The Netherlands and organized a symposium.

All the activities under review here show beta-gamma interactions. A weakness of the activities is that the private sector is not involved in any way.

Lessons learned/recommendations

In comparison with other cases in this compilation, in this case the relation with policy makers is quite close. This has several advantages. Firstly the work done by the WUR knowledge worker is policy relevant and there are not a lot of fundamental discussions about its usefulness. Secondly as a WUR knowledge worker you have more time to dedicate to the policy contents of the subject than your colleagues within the ministry. This can be more satisfying. Thirdly for the ministry it is an advantage to have people outside who are quite close to the policy world and can be asked to provide support on short notice.

However, there are also disadvantages. Part of the work is support to policy work and not visible for outsiders. Also the visibility to other civil servants within the same ministry may be low. The lack of profile may result in marketing problems at WUR. Another aspect is the type of projects. The type of project is generally pretty small and on the short term. There may be a high dependency on certain civil servants within the ministry. As a result, planning is sometimes an issue. A last disadvantage is that there is no time to go really into the deep and ask oneself critical scientific questions which deal with policy evaluation.

Potentially persons involved in the type of work described here could perform the role of building bridges between policy makers and researchers. It would be recommendable to make the policy advice relation with the ministry more structural in stead of scattered separated short tasks. The demand for policy advice should be made clearer and better measurable, e.g. with more defined outputs. It would be advantageous to combine the policy advice on the different knowledge domains within biodiversity. If the relation between research and policy advice would be enhanced, the policy advice could be based more on 'evidence' in stead of best practices and/or best professional judgment. In such a situation probably the impact of the policy advice would increase.

4.3.3 General discussion on the two cases

The first case deals with some policy advice at the international level combined with project implementation at field level. The second case deals with implementation of policies - through capacity building - and policy advice at the national level in The Netherlands. In theory it would be nice to combine the activities in the two cases, as they seem complimentary. However, the fact is that the research is on genetic resources with the focus on agriculture, while this case is on many aspects of management of biodiversity generally outside genetic resources and agriculture. It will not be too easy to combine the two as different knowledge domains are at stake.

In the second case knowledge obtained for one configuration (policy advice, desk studies) can be used to feed another (capacity building). There is, however, definitely scope for improvement. If DLO in its research and Wageningen International in its capacity building would co-operate closer more synergy could be expected. This however does not only depend on the willingness of these two actors but also on LNV who should demand for research and capacity building activities which can be related to each other.

From both examples it can be concluded that a clear relation between policy support on the one hand based on field experiences on the other hand has been lacking. Whereas in the former project feed-back to the policy level of field experiences implementing the policy decision to promote on-farm conservation of agro-biodiversity was a weak point, in the second project policy support could not be based on such field research experiences.

So there is little possibility to bring in evidence based information necessary to convince policy makers that certain changes are needed. In the new programme for 2006 there seems to be even less space for such activities. In general LNV does not ask for products and services that are a critical feed-back on policies but rather asks for the co-operation to implement its policies.

Statement 1

We should all be critical of the situation that researchers have not been asked to do research that might be critical of existing policy positions.

Co-ordination within Wageningen UR, and in particular between staff involved in management of natural biodiversity and staff dealing with on-farm biodiversity, has been weak, due to disciplinary barriers.

In both projects the policy audience was found to be small and scattered over several ministerial directions, rendering effective feed-back and policy support more difficult to attain.

Statement 2

More investment is required by both researchers and policy makers to ensure a policy response to the results of field level research which have institutional and policy implications. This requires policy orientated communication, policy debriefings and greater participation by policy makers in project design and implementation.

From both examples it became clear that monitoring was weak. Monitoring of impact of capacity building is a difficult issue. People are trained, and on the longer terms persons and institutions (or even society as a whole) may benefit from it. Making this impact clear is very difficult. In the case of the PEDIGREA project there surely were results, like new skills, new breeding materials which were highly valuable for the farmers. Also scientists in the NARS improved their visions and capacities. So no doubt, there was impact. But no systematic monitoring has taken place neither in qualitative nor in quantitative aspects.

Statement 3

There is little monitoring and a weak understanding of the impact of the research and capacity development services provided for policy development and implementation.

4.4 Rural Economic Development

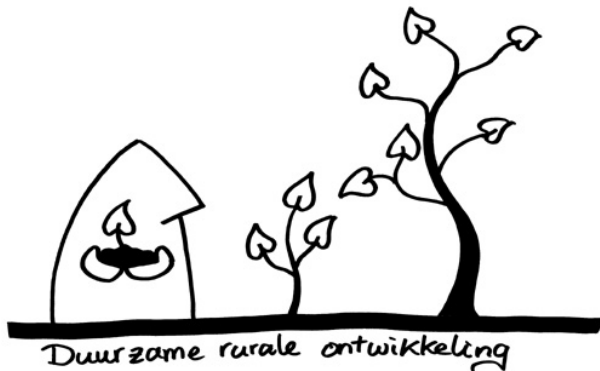
André de Jager & Reimund Rötter

4.4.1 Introduction

A major input for this domain paper are the results of a project which has examined the project activities in the DLO-IC programme in the past 8 years related to sustainable agriculture and rural development. In summary this project has identified a number of important lessons for future research:

- Disciplinary science provide a solid basis for development
- Solutions and new insights require multi-disciplinary and multi-scale approaches
- Reinforce focus on resource use efficiency
- Rural development is not equal to agricultural development
- Crucial decision level: the farm household
- Agriculture and on-farm and off-farm bio-diversity are tightly linked
- Impact depends on institutional arrangements, interaction increases impact
- Invest in involvement of stakeholders

For the way ahead it is concluded that agricultural development remains to play a crucial role in sustainable rural development and poverty reduction, but only in the context of and alongside other economic activities and institutional developments.



4.4.2 Shifting approaches

Research in the domain of sustainable agriculture and rural development was geared to address the real-world problems in Africa and Asia focusing on feeding a growing world population, meeting consumer needs, enhancing rural livelihoods (by increasing income) and safeguarding the environment (i.e. to maintain the quality of the natural resources base and conserve biodiversity).

The research program initially had a rather reductionist character, focusing on specific problems such as soil degradation, water use efficiency, land management practices and production technologies. These disciplinary activities were soon embedded in integrated approaches employing systems analysis, participative multi-stakeholder and inter-disciplinary approaches, focusing on the farming system in the rural development context. Modelling, optimizing resource management practices, farming systems and regional development scenarios were some of the major instruments used. During phase 2 of the programme (2001-2005) increasingly soft system approaches were integrated in the project activities aiming at building negotiating platforms, farmers field schools, multi-stakeholder processes and institutional development processes. Two major approaches can be distinguished on how science was linked to policy:

- Feeding and guiding decision making processes by research and model results;
- Active involvement of policymakers in major steps of the research process.

Limited impact and adoption of research results world-wide and in this programme as well had triggered this re-orientation. For instance a wide array of technologies was available to address soil fertility problems in Sub-Saharan Africa, but soil fertility kept declining. More fertilizer trials obviously did not address the problem of subsistence smallholders in drought-prone agro-ecological zones. Organisation of input supply, market access, input-output price ratio's appeared to be crucial to realize impact. This required new research approaches, but also a much stronger integrating of research into other rural development activities. In phase 2 of DLO-IC a successful start was made to explore effective integrated approaches and so-called implementation coalitions.

The increased understanding of the physical, economic and social system based on previous (disciplinary) work by scientists and knowledge shared with stakeholders is a key element in the further development and refinement of approaches. This requires a guided and informed learning process by stakeholders in multi-disciplinary aspects.

4.4.3 Relation to different phases in the policy process

The majority of work in this domain focused on problem analysis and on providing stakeholders with options for solutions. A variety of models have been applied in rural development projects. Only in the last years increasing attention is paid to common problem identification with all stakeholders and the decision making process. The establishment of stakeholders' platforms in many project activities focuses on those two latter aspects. Still in many activities it appears difficult to identify the right level of policy makers to be involved at the relevant level of project activities. Often this involvement is limited to a joint start and end-of-project meeting.

The activities and outputs in the programme were mainly focused towards the policy making process in the target regions in Africa and Asia. Limited attention was paid to the policy making process in Northern (donor) countries. This, while highly interesting overall lessons could be learned from the results of the various individual activities for international donor and trade policies geared towards rural and agricultural development. The activity conducted this year to examine the lessons-learned in the programme is addressing this gap, but this must in future be fully imbedded in all the bilateral rural development projects.

4.4.4 Role of evidence and information in policy process

In the area of environmental degradation (soil fertility decline), natural resources management and competing claims on natural resources in rural and peri-urban setting, the role of science-based in the regional, national and international policy making has been evident. For instance, negative nutrient balances and soil erosion figures at different scales, presented in alarming figures and colourful maps triggered policy actions (soil fertility policy documents) and determined agenda setting in donor circles. The type of research results with high policy impact are: results at higher scales (national, group of countries), results expressed in monetary values, results translated in crucial policy indicators (GDP, poverty reduction etc.).

Various communication channels are used, ranging from thematic workshops, policy briefs, and direct contacts with Members of Parliament, Ministerial Committees, through publications by international recognized institutions (FAO, IFPRI) and in high impact scientific journals.

4.4.5 Changes in policy and practice

So far in this domain limited specific and strategic activities geared towards policy changes and influencing the policy making process have been implemented. Over the years new implementation coalitions in this domain have been established beyond the traditional research circles: NGO's, Private sector, advocacy organizations, producers' organizations.

Focus in this domain has been on the policy makers and policy making process within the countries in Africa and Asia where the projects were implemented. Little attention has been made to link these experiences to the European and Dutch international, development and agricultural policy process. Also links to policy setting at regional level has been limited.

In order to realize a better impact of the research results, more appropriate communication tools and methods to engage the policy makers in the research process need to be developed and implemented. Scientific sound technical research remains important and should not be disregarded, but much better integrated in other research disciplines and scales including issues such as macro-economic processes, institutions, infrastructure, education, alternative income earning opportunities.

4.4.6 Integrating knowledge configurations

Already sketched above: very important to realize such integration. In the domain of rural development and sustainable agriculture the North-South research networks are those most strongly developed in the International Cooperation programme. Implementation coalitions and consultative platforms are gradually being established, expanding and becoming an integrated part of R&D activities. However, the role of scientists in these latter two still needs to be defined more clearly.

4.5 Experiences with policy support projects

Niels Louwaars & Petra Spliethoff

4.5.1 Introduction

Policy support is considered an important element of the research and capacity building programmes implemented from 2002 through to 2005. Three types of policy support can be differentiated, each with its own distinct functions and values: short, medium and long-term.

4.5.2 Long-duration projects

Wageningen UR provides for long term policy support to LNV in the form of knowledge and networks. These projects of comparatively long duration are commonly built upon knowledge networks and partnerships that are developed over time. Such networks/ partnerships offer ample opportunities for bringing capacities of the various partners into the Wageningen knowledge domain and are considered exceptionally important for policy support because they provide a deep understanding of the complexity of relevant questions while also providing a local reality check of ideas.

These networks are particularly valuable for the tackling of short term policy questions that require local knowledge in other countries, and they may also create access to higher level policy makers in such countries either immediately or after cooperators or students have reached higher positions (e.g. ministers and PS's). Moreover shared knowledge enables a policy dialogue with policy makers and knowledge institutions in the partner countries based on the knowledge developed and may give rise to ideas for further research questions.

4.5.3 Short term projects

The value of this form of policy support lays in the immediate access of LNV policy makers to knowledgeable Wageningen UR staff and their networks. Individual LNV staff can - depending on the question - turn to a particular network of expertise. Prerequisite for the proper functioning of demand and supply is the familiarity with existing knowledge networks and the opportunity of good communication lines between the policy maker and the Wageningen networks on both content and context of the question concerned.

4.5.4 Medium term projects

There are also policy questions that need some time to study. For this category a special 'window' was initiated, in addition to some projects financed through the policy-budget ('beleidsruimte'). In this category also projects are included that are based on questions formulated by third parties, such as FAO (notably in the field of plant and animal genetic resources) and OECD (in the field of trade politics).

The following section concentrates on the latter category of questions.

4.5.5 Lessons learned

4.5.5.1 Articulation of the questions

It is essential to effectively translate the actual policy question of the LNV-staff into a researchable issue. This commonly requires personal (and often multiple) contact between the scientist and the policy maker. Experience shows that scientists sometimes have the attitude to reduce the question to a single component that allows for quantitative research which can constructively be linked to ongoing research and capacities. This may however result in a 'reductionist approach', which does not reflect the complex reality that policy makers are confronted with in their daily work and may consequently fail to provide an exceptionally useful answer. A policy researcher/adviser needs to have a keen 'eye' for the policy context and the complexity of policy formulation and negotiation. One may say that the more complex the question, the more difficult it is to come up with and answer based on 'scientific evidence'. This also means that innovative and interdisciplinary approaches may be needed.

There have also been cases where the scientists formulate a question themselves, anticipating the policy agenda of the ministry especially with respect to international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Water Forum. It appears that such research push is not always bad. Policy makers may not think of articulating a researchable question, may not know where to raise the question and may be glad with the scientist's initiative to discuss a relevant issue. Personal and early contact between the responsible policy maker and scientist is essential to tune the supply to the demand, apart from the need for proper articulation and verification of the policy question.



4.5.5.2 Acquaintance with Wageningen UR

A regular complaint of 'The Hague' (in general) is the poor accessibility of Wageningen UR – 'there must be a lot of knowledge over there but we don't know where'. In addition the perpetual 'image' of Wageningen UR in The Hague of an ivory tower full of 'cocky and stubborn' characters hinders smooth communication. This often results in an attitude to prefer to check with colleagues in the Ministry rather than involving Wageningen unless one has personal contacts or one gets a phone number of a 'useful person' in Wageningen. It takes time to build a good relationship of trust and mutual recognition.

This phenomenon is partly due to the primary focus of attention of most researchers on their science networks, but partly also as a consequence of the job-mobility of policy makers. In addition dossiers tend to be transferred increasingly from one person to another, while often neglecting the transfer of the concomitant knowledge networks. Besides unfamiliarity with Wageningen UR, the complexity of the issues that policy makers have to deal with may be a reason for policy makers to assume that Wageningen scientists are not able to deal with a particular question and that knowledge and expertise has to be found elsewhere. This is particularly the case when the question has a strong legal component. For example, a question on international forestry policy was tendered and implemented by an Austrian institute. The result – a well presented report – appeared not to respond to the expectations of the paymaster. The ex post analysis was that the question was insufficiently articulated and that the communication

distance was too wide to redirect the project. Moreover the contractor kept strictly to the terms of reference and the contract did not allow for flexibility.

This project shows that LNV doesn't always fully realize what to expect from a tendered project and that communication between the ministry and the contracting institution is essential, which is easier with nearby Wageningen. It also shows that Wageningen UR has not been capable to fully express its capacities: the science group international nature management certainly had the juridical capacity to implement the project, a fact that was not known by both LNV and the DLO- programme managers.

4.5.5.3 Communicating results

Scientists are used to write either extensive reports or scientific papers that are often too condensed to be easily accessible to outsiders. Scientists' attention is commonly diverted to 'the exceptions to the rule', which of course may be scientifically most interesting, but may not be the primary interest of policy makers. Policy makers may rather be interested in brief overviews on relevant policy issues, because they often do not have the time to read extensive reports.

Research results thus have to be presented differently for policy support than for scientific publications. Recognition of this phenomenon has stimulated the programme management to start the 'Policy Brief' series. These brief overviews are written in straightforward language with information that is directly relevant for policy makers. The series has a dual role: firstly to inform the Dutch policy makers and secondly as a tool for these policy makers to extend a 'Dutch contribution' to policy discussions to other partner delegations or organizations. An additional advantage for the LNV staff is that these policy briefs commonly link to a much more extensive underlying report with more detailed information on the issue and arguments.

The preparation of these policy briefs requires special skills, and it has to be admitted: some of the early issues have not been exceptionally successful. It is obvious that the LNV-staff (and often also the agricultural counselors) are responsible for scrutinizing the policy brief well before it is used as a hand-out to other delegations.



4.5.5.4 Influencing the result

With an eye on the reliability of the result of a project it is considered important that the researcher is left free during implementation of the research. Of course feedback on the process is possible and even necessary, but direct influence on the result should be avoided. The research result may not necessarily support the existing policy lines. This has for example happened in the past, when advice from Wageningen UR to developing countries in the field of plant breeders' rights appeared not to be in line with policies of LNV-DL. It cannot be that in such a case LNV would be able to claim back the costs of the project or even stop publication. The ministry is however free to ask for exclusion of its name and logo in the publication and may decide not to continue the financing of follow-up research and dissemination.

In almost all cases, however, has LNV directly used the results of Wageningen UR policy research and was glad to distribute the policy briefs to colleagues abroad.

4.5.6 Conclusion

For research aiming for policy support it is essential that:

- there is full awareness (amongst all parties involved) on what is expected in terms of roles and responsibilities;
- the research question is well defined and well understood by the scientist;
- there is sufficient and effective contact between a policymaker and the scientists to discuss and agree on the context of the research question and to allow for timely adjustments when necessary;
- a proper ‘translation’ is made in the report of the research results in view of the related policy context;
- the presentation of the results needs special attention, commonly consisting of a brief summary or overview, based on a full report;
- scientists must be free to produce politically less correct results – good communication can avoid potential problems that may derive from such results.

5. Stakeholder perspectives

Robin Pistorius

Prior to and after the workshop on June 29th 2006, I interviewed a number of stakeholders to get a feeling for the views and perceptions on linking research to policy and practice. I found stakeholders to be very responsive as they all realize the importance of a closer collaboration between various parties to enhance the impact of each on development. Several of the interviews are presented.

5.1 Agri-ProFocus

Joost Oorthuizen, senior consultant & Hedwig Bruggeman, director

Institutional affiliation of Agri-ProFocus

The Agri-ProFocus currently has 20 members. Our partnership is involved in different research and intervention programmes, mostly focusing on producer organizations in market chain development. These programmes link together research institutions, development NGOs and the Ministries and/or embassies (e.g. the WUR-AKK-Agriterro-APF Value Chains and Pro-Poor Development programme, and the KIT-Agriterro-DGIS evaluation study on role of Producer Organisations in development); or they link WUR to development agencies, without involvement of the Ministries (e.g. Producer Organisations profiling WUR-Agriterro or cotton West-Africa comprising Solidaridad, KIT, SNV).

Note on role of NGOs in debate on policy development and research strategies

The suggestion [by RP] to strengthen the role of development NGOs and business in agenda setting on applied and more fundamental research makes sense. The development NGOs are indeed well-contacted in developing countries, to embassies, intermediary organizations but also to private business groups. They are especially useful for agenda-setting on development-oriented research, given their explicit focus on pro-poor development. As they are nowadays focusing on economic (chain and MVO) development their insights gained through their expanded networks allow them to be effective for setting research agenda's with a more commercial, (agri-)business orientation. However, our experience so far shows that WUR and the development NGOs are not very well connected. The NGOs learn mostly through evaluation studies conducted by consultants, who sometimes come from WUR. There is neither tradition nor institutionalized practices of research agenda setting by the development NGOs together with the research institutions like WUR. WUR doesn't have a clear picture of the larger policy questions at stake for the development NGOs, and does not support these NGOs in any structured way in building up a body of knowledge. WUR sees the Ministries as their primary clients, rather than these NGOs. Hence, the idea might be sound, but it needs translation into strategies to close the gap between research and development institutions (CIDIN-Nijmegen might be an example).

The most difficult part of realizing relevant development-oriented research is to ensure that agenda-setting and learning is embedded in a Southern environment. We need an architecture that involves relevant stakeholders in the South, be them local universities, local business groups, or in the case of Agri-ProFocus, Southern producer organizations. In the fashionable world of development aid, fashion rather than real need tends to structure development policy. This requires a regional-based approach of agenda setting, rather than a thematic one. And it has to be building on longer-lasting relationships between these southern actors and northern research and development institutions.

Cases

The Agri-ProFocus partnership led to access of quinoa producer organisations to Royal Dutch embassy program support, and to coordinated action of Agri-ProFocus member organisations (a.o. ICCO, Cordaid, Agriterro, WUR, Oikocredit, Rabobank, FairTrade Original) in chain development and PO strengthening in Bolivia. In Uganda, Agri-ProFocus has led to joined program development of Dutch APF members (a.o. WUR, SNV, Agriterro) and a national producer organisation, and is now entering the phase of a joint effort to acquire funding. The challenge for the partnership is to build up demand-based programmes in a context of largely thematic and supply-oriented members, and to establish cooperation between member organisations that set their own policy agenda's and compete for scarce funds.

Lessons learned

Agri-ProFocus, being a partnership of Dutch research institutions and development NGOs funded by and institutionally connected to DGIS and LNV, is potentially well-placed in order to bring the three parties together in agenda-setting for relevant demand-driven research, teaching and training.

5.2 The Product Board for Margarine, Fats and Oils

Frans Claassen, director

Institutional affiliation of MVO

Agricultural Trade is becoming more and more international. At the same time agricultural produce can and will be used for more than food alone, such as feed and fuel. The Oils and Fats industry is one of the most international operating sectors. For a large part our raw materials come from developing countries in South East Asia, South America or Africa. Our industry is getting more involved in multidisciplinary aspects of sustainable production of our raw materials (palm oil, soy). Particular within these sectors MVO is involved in international Partnerships, Roundtable discussions and other networks (including the 'National – Interdepartmental Working group Soya') where research on the sustainability issues (environmental and social) is part of the agenda. MVO supports a more organized multidisciplinary approach to use the available knowledge and expertise of different stakeholders (government, NGO's, industries and several research institutions) to govern the development agenda and the research agenda in particular.

View on policy development and research strategies

We see that within the programs and agenda's of development organizations (both governments, like DGIS and NGO's) more attention is given to the role of local economies and business development in developing countries. Most (if not all) of these developing economies are agriculture based. Agricultural Ministries (food safety, animal health, and animal welfare) and Agribusiness companies (which are more and more international operation businesses) have the expertise and network to play an important role in:

- (a) assisting the demand articulation for development research and
- (b) giving input and feed back on the research itself.

Cases

- **Bio-fuels**

Many governments support the development of a global market for bio-fuels and biomass. The Netherlands and EU policy makers are hardly aware of the size of the trade volume, the impact of this trend on the international market, the relationships between the markets, and the consequences for biodiversity. Basically there is no intended Dutch policy on bio-fuels. The WUR has investigated the opportunities of the Dutch agricultural sector on the international market, however neglecting the fact that the bio-fuel market is subject to changes on a regional (European) or even global scale. Although useful research is done on 'second generation' bio-fuels, little

research focuses on the first generation bio-fuels and on the possibilities for (or impact on) developing countries of these products. The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture plays a modest role in these discussions, as does the WUR. The University of Utrecht and several consultancy companies seem frontrunners in research.

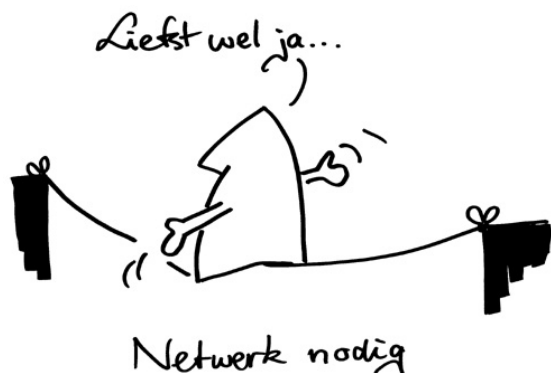
- **Sustainable use and production of natural resources**

This issue has been one of the focal points of the public and private sector. Especially in the palm-oil-, soy-, and wood- production there are many interests at stake. International trade volumes, trade barriers and the position of developing countries are considered crucial for the further development of the sectors. Here, linkages between research, policy, and practice are highly necessary. Relevant debates are held by NGO's and industry, and in some occasions by government. Examples are the Partnerships Palm Oil and the Round Table on Responsible Soy.

Lessons learned

Lessons learned from the Partnerships Palm Oil and Round Table on Responsible Soy:

Due to the multidisciplinary aspects of international development the Cooperation between Ministries (DGIS, LNV), social and environmental NGO's, industry (like MVO) and Research Institutions (more then Wageningen-UR only) works (!) and is in our opinion necessary for a realistic and constructive approach of the issues we all are working for.



5.3 Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, directorate International Affairs

Marcel Vernooij, Global Affairs

Institutional affiliation

Mechanisms have been refined and developed in order to enhance the policy relevance of research and promote the translation of policy challenges in questions to be addressed by research and capacity building. The primary responsibility for bilateral projects has been decentralised to the Agricultural Counsellors based in developing countries. Policy officers in The Hague are being made responsible for general and multilateral research issues. Both types of policy makers are encouraged to see the resources available as part of their daily package of tools that they can use for fulfilling their tasks in the policy arena.

View on policy development and research strategies

International co-operation in the field of agriculture, trade and the environment is rooted in several decades of dialogue, deliberations and negotiations. This has resulted in worldwide objectives for sustainable development (people, planet, profit) and poverty eradication, which have been worked out in clear targets, e.g. the Millennium Development Goals and related goals in environmental agreements. Taking these agreements as starting point, a coherent set of international development programmes has been developed in international fora. The multilateral

development framework is interlinked with sector policies and programmes at the national level. Implementation of these policies and programs in developing countries is enhanced through bilateral co-operation and financial support from donors.

This requires some fundamental changes in defining the role of research:

- The focus is no longer on what should be done, but on how to do it. Science and research will have to contribute to the realisation of existing goals, work programmes and targets.
- Disciplinary knowledge and sound functioning sectors remain important, but the political and societal challenges are of an integral nature, requiring interdisciplinary and participatory action.
- Science, research and capacity building are not an end, but a tool in developing an appropriate mix to address specific needs to tackle implementation problems. Such needs are to be articulated at the appropriate scale.

Lessons learned

There is still a strong need to (also) support research for development activities in the south, financially and through providing linkages with science networks in the south. As such, the LNV supported programme for international co-operation has an important role to play. The unique characteristics of such a programme are that it interlinks north and south, policy and practise, multilateral and bilateral. Successful activities are those that are clearly triggered by and rooted in networks in partner countries in the south, fit within objectives and programmes for bilateral co-operation between the Netherlands (LNV) and the partner country, and preferably provide lessons for the implementation and further development of multilateral work programmes. Examples in this respect are among others: the PEDIGREA activities in S.E. Asia (enhancing the use and development of local plant varieties); research and capacity building related to quality standards that are to be met in order to access EU markets such as for shrimps, vegetables and palm oil; and information exchange on good practises regarding water for food and ecosystems.

5.4 Agricultural Economics Research Institute - WUR

André de Jager, senior researcher

Institutional affiliation

A well-functioning institutional setting where research and policy can interact and take decisions at various levels is crucial. At high level all relevant policy directorates need to interact with the cluster management to decide about the major objectives, review operational modalities of the research activities and evaluate the results. At thematic / regional level thematic policy-research teams need to interact on long-term issues and developments as well as use of research results. At project level regular and direct interactions with relevant policy makers and research leaders are required to facilitate efficient use of research results.

View on policy development and research strategies

An effective interface can be developed when on the one hand policy is able to formulate objective and measurable development goals and is able to raise related and well articulated questions and issues which can be addressed by research (applied as well as fundamental). On the other hand research institutions are required too, based on scientific sound and well-embedded participative research activities with essential stakeholder, present results which can easily be incorporated in the political decision-making process. This requires an attitude change from both sides. Policy makers should realize that not all issues can be addressed by research; that serious attention needs to be paid to the articulation of the research question and; that interaction with researchers during the process is required to increase the practical value of the results. The researchers on the other hand must be willing to spend more time on the process, the aftercare and dissemination aspects of research, and must realize that in the end it is always left to the policy (or private sector, small holder etc.) to adopt, use, take into account or neglect the research results.

Lessons learned

Over the past 5 years better defined international and regional policy priorities by LNV have in general led to more focused policy oriented research activities. An active demand from individual policy makers or immediate political priority requiring quick and clear results appears to stimulate and motivate researchers to deliver more policy relevant research results. Multidisciplinary applied research, based on disciplinary excellence, in combination with institutional capacity building and action research as implemented in the LNV BO Cluster International has a significant impact on global and regional policy making at LNV and to a lesser extend in international fora and local policy development. Since most of the activities are implemented with partners in the South and Eastern Europe this approach has an impact in policy-research interactions in these regions.

The process of demand articulation requires further refining, especially for the bilateral research activities. Currently the Agricultural Counsellors determine these priorities based upon their knowledge, network and priorities taking into account the regional priorities formulated by LNV. No active stakeholder consultations take place and this process leads to a wide variety of relative small research and capacity building activities.

The gradually declining research budget at LNV requires a more active linkage and integration process between various Dutch and other donors in the target regions and thematic areas. Both the research institutions and the LNV need to play an active role in these processes. A good example is the setting up of the research agenda in Ethiopia focused on water management and horticultural development, where at national level LNV funds were matched with DGIS funds.



5.5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cultural Cooperation, Education & Research Department

Dr. Caroline Wiedenhoff, head DCO

Institutional Affiliation

The ministry of Foreign Affairs/DGIS has redefined its involvement with research in 2005, building on a large experience with demand driven research in developing countries, but also realizing its responsibility to stimulate Dutch knowledge and research institutions to focus on those needs.

The demands in developing countries are the starting point of development policy. Notwithstanding the clear goals set by the MDGs, development and poverty reduction are to large extent problems of a complex, undefined and unknown nature. The ministry, comprising the embassies, need to co-operate with other actors to better understand development problems and to be able to make reasonable, 'evidence-based' policy decisions.

The ministry therefore explicitly seeks cooperation with institutions both in the Netherlands and in partner countries. Without such cooperation, the ministry (including the embassies) can not seriously define its own role in poverty reduction.

View on policy development and research strategies

DGIS realizes that research can still actively contribute to the understanding of the nature of the problems to be tackled, if only because these are continuously changing. DGIS is not interested in research as such but only in researching the context of poverty reduction, development and innovation. If researchers do not cooperate with policy makers, practitioners in every phase of their work, the results of their research will not be used. If they do not cooperate with other researchers they will see only part of the problem. Dissemination of research results will not work, only intensive cooperation between actors will bring about change.



5.6 World Conservation Union, IUCN, Netherlands Committee

Willem Ferwerda, director

Institutional affiliation

IUCN's scientific work is based on six scientific commission (ecosystem management, environmental law, education and communication, species). It is IUCN's task to act as the linking pin between the outcome of the scientific community including the commissions and connect it to policy makers (government & business) and NGO-community for the sake of implementing IUCN's mission: To influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

View on policy development and research strategies

For biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management issues, research is important, but due to the urgency of solving environmental problems not 100% necessary to improve the results. We already know enough (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment). The question is how to implement all the actions on which we agreed upon in international fora. This costs money and requires 100% political commitment.

Lessons learned

- Scientists who are able to successfully connect to policy makers are very scarce. They are often highly focused on their own research agenda's. Besides they tend to present their results in a very complex manner so that policy-makers tend to neglect them. Personal networking capacity, ability to communicate in a clear manner, determines the impact of scientists on policy making.
- Problem with nature conservation organizations, such as IUCN, is that they have to match ecological long-term goals with short-term goals of policy-makers. The same problem accounts for organizations in International Development.
- NGO's have difficulties joining forces vis-à-vis policy makers. They tend to follow their own agenda's while creating bilateral contacts with decision-makers. The capacity of NGO to alter political and policy agenda's therefore is limited. A successful strategy is to join forces with business.

A successful experience in terms of networking was IUCN's achievement to create the conditions for the emergence of the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance among six Dutch Antilles islands. Besides its broker role, IUCN's task was to supply data on the islands' biodiversity. These data convinced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) that the Antilles, being part of the Netherlands Kingdom, should receive a substantially larger part out of the national budget to protect species and ecosystems than before.

6. Battle of Statements – Notes of the Workshop

Jan Brouwers

An active workshop took place on the 29th of June 2006 where the findings, as presented in the previous chapters, were presented and discussions on the basis of statements derived from the lessons learned in the thematic fields. The involvement of the leaders of both the Research Centre (Wageningen UR) and the ministry of LNV secured the commitment for continuous activities to enhance the mutual collaboration and debates. The conceptual framework with regards to the relation between research, policy and practice, was presented as a sketch by Prem Bindraban and Sietze Vellema. Robin Pistorius, who had interviewed several participants prior to the meeting, introduced the issues to be discussed and moderated the meeting.

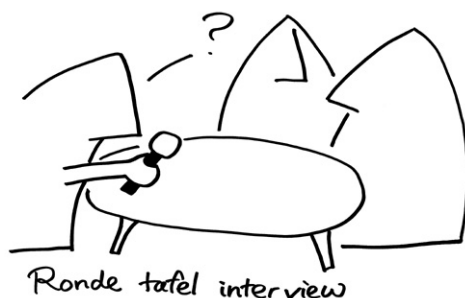


6.1 Introduction by Pistorius

In his introduction the facilitator Robin Pistorius mentioned the objective of the day: deal with the question how can policy and research reinforce each other? Conditions are changing: globalization and internationalization still are becoming more intensive, and pressure on policy makers increases to deal with international issues. Consequently international cooperation needs to be reinforced. At the same time the knowledge market is changing: NGOs and private enterprises, it seems everybody is producing new knowledge. Policy and research seem to be two different worlds. Policy works on the short and mid term, while political prestige is important. Research has long term goals, while scientific prestige and publications play an important role. NGOs seem brokers of knowledge. What does it mean that we seem to live in two separate worlds? How can cooperation between these worlds result in more impact? Because of new developments sharing of information and knowledge seem to be in danger.

6.2 Interview with Hoekstra and Kropff

Janneke Hoekstra (Director Department for Knowledge, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature management and Food Safety, LNV) and Martin Kropff (Rector Magnificus Wageningen UR) were interviewed by Pistorius. They reacted on sketch some Wageningen UR researchers presented on the differences between researchers and policy makers.



Hoekstra observed that the policy cycle is often not as structured as nice pictures suggest. In practice she sees partial solutions, political pressure, etc. What she needs as a policy maker is factual material and suggestions for effective measures. What are the consequences of different policy options?

Kropff recognized the problem of living in two different worlds. Researchers are not consultants. Many questions need long term research in order to generate an answer. Researchers have a lot of knowledge available, but not everything is immediately applicable. The WUR helpdesk is one instrument to help to bring the policy and research worlds together. Through this mechanism specific short term questions can be answered in a short time. Question remains: how to work on long term issues that need a solution? Important for the researcher is to know what drives the policy question, what is the context? Exchange of staff between research and policy institutions is one way to increase the understanding of one another's situation. In 1983 researchers had much liberty, much contact with the Ministry of LNV and extensive projects paid by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DGIS. Demand articulation was basically an issue of the researchers. Since 1995 policy makers try to get more grips on the research agenda. Now policy makers are very much on top of the research agenda.

Hoekstra confirms this view. Indeed policy makers have more involvement in influencing the research agenda. Other directors within LNV are involved in the process. Budgets get tighter, the government acts with less dirigisme and knowledge becomes a more important instrument. The role of capacity building as an instrument becomes more important. But what types of knowledge do we really need? In the demand articulation the agricultural attachés now play an important role. This process is still somewhat crippled, for the ministry this is still a learning process. From both sites (LNV and WUR) some adjustments have to be made. Looking at it from a positive perspective, Hoekstra hopes that within 3 years the demand articulation process is more streamlined and the countries will have more involvement in this process. Considering the situation from a pessimistic perspective, in three years the process is not under control, and there is lack of clarity.

When Kropff considers the situation in about 3 years from a pessimistic point of view, then he sees the research questions from attachés to be very varying. However the MDG's are widely accepted and can provide a direction for research questions. So the result will not be a big chaos. In a more positive scenario countries in the South are involved in demand articulation, there will be a good link between the MDG's, the WUR cooperation with DGIS and WOTRO (that also focuses on contributing to the MDG's) and then there are many chances. In the discussion that follows with the public there is a question on the demand articulation. Often there is a kind of internal dynamics between researchers and policy makers.

Mr. Harro Maat (Wageningen UR) wants to discuss the integration of policy and research. Interaction between the two is necessary, but how to deal with this interaction in order to articulate demand?

Hoekstra acknowledges the need for interaction between researchers and policy makers during the process of demand articulation. But there needs to be a certain distance. Both parties need to maintain a certain independent attitude. Kropff agrees that independence is very important. Researchers should not be too servile towards their commissioners. There are two mechanisms: the cluster management, where stakeholders are represented and in the Knowledge Basis there are also stakeholder meetings. These mechanisms provide a guarantee that the appropriate knowledge will be generated.

Mr. Arcel van Rooyen, who works as LNV representative at OECD, observes that international knowledge articulation is much more complex. For the determination of the demand for Wageningen UR research. The opinion of agricultural attachés is important, but more is needed. Developing countries are still much influenced by others in determining their demands for research. How to involve actors in developing countries in the knowledge articulation process is still a problem.

Kropff believes that it is not that complex. People in developing countries are changing their attitudes and speak out more freely. There are networks: WOTRO, DGIS, agricultural attachés, other staff in embassies, networks of NGO, and the CG's. Together we can get a good idea about the needs. Hoekstra emphasizes the need of involving the agricultural attachés on a regular basis.

A representative from Agri-profocus observes that there are already networks in place, like Agri-profocus and ICCO. Both organizations have a vast network of partners that have needs for research to be carried out by Wageningen or others. Not only embassies should determine research needs, but also actors in society.

RAWOO also struggles with the question how to get the best input from developing countries. Researchers from here come up with ideas, money, procedures that are all hindrances for research over there. The bureaucratization of the knowledge process is a problem. A more chaotic situation might result in more creativity.

Kropff believes that it is important for researchers to have some years of experience in developing countries. Sometimes WUR invites foreign students in order to ask for their opinions and views. No ivory tower' but to realize innovation together. DGIS now has the attitude: let us not predetermine everything beforehand, but leave space for creativity.

Marcel Vernooij (LNV-Department for International Affairs) sees a division in several categories within the Cluster International research:

1. Demand from The Hague. Here two subcategories can be distinguished: questions resulting from Dutch policies and questions resulting from multilateral organizations or agreements.
2. The bilateral part, basically determined by the agricultural attaché, but fitting within the bilateral policies of the Netherlands.

The bilateral part is complex and demand articulation needs attention. The demand from The Hague is more clearly 'pre-cooked'.

Kropff sees big development projects without knowledge components and at the other hand separate research projects. This is not good and an organization like ICCO tries to change that, sometimes by commissioning certain research to WUR. He observes that the demand articulation is making a shift towards foreign countries. We want to know what is happening there.

6.3 Formulation and defence of a thesis

Four Wageningen UR knowledge workers presented very briefly a case and based on that case, formulated three theses. In four groups these theses were discussed. The objective of the discussion in the groups was to come up with one joint new thesis which was supported by all members of the group. Each group assigned one representative to give a brief overview of the discussion in the group, present the new thesis and defend this thesis against arguments from other groups.



6.3.1. Group A

Wouter Hijweege (Wageningen International) introduces the thesis. The thesis was:

Multi- and bilateral: The process of formulation of policy questions can be separated from the researcher. But the articulation process should translate this question into a research question which is context specific. Not-well informed policy makers cannot do this job, neither can not-well informed scientists. It is an iterative process.

There is a need for a good dialogue between policy makers and researchers. Several other arguments are given:

- If the policy maker does not want a dialogue, then you had better not start the dialogue.
- Also other actors should be taken into consideration.

How well informed should a researcher be? A researcher does not need to know all relevant policy documents. But a certain framework is needed and the policy maker can provide this framework.

6.3.2 Group B

The thesis was:

Good interaction between policy and research demands communication and the appropriate man/woman at the right time and place.

Communication is needed at the appropriate moment and at the appropriate place.

- At the appropriate moment: in the political process, you need to have feeling for that.
- At the appropriate place: you need to develop the sense of feeling for that.

Many Wageningen researchers look for solutions. Not many of them deal with issues at the start of the policy cycle. Research has to be politicized: contradictions, agreements between actors in society. The researcher needs antennas and no ready made solutions.

A reaction from other groups is: so researchers are at this moment unworldly. That is shocking! At the right time you have to come up with the right idea. That is difficult. In the public debate results of research are used and abused. But used or abused, in these cases the least we can say that it was relevant research that has been undertaken. As a researcher you have to come up with feasible solutions. For example, in order to decrease pressure on natural resources, you can propose that everybody should be converted into a vegetarian. But that is not realistic. Institutional and organizational framing is necessary in order to execute policy relevant research.

Is an intermediate organization necessary in order to arrange the communication between researcher and society? No researchers themselves have to communicate with policy makers and other actors in society. On the other hand, within DGIS encourages staff members to write their thesis in order to increase relations with research.

6.3.3 Group C

Harrie Oppenoorth (HIVOS) introduces the thesis. There are two theses:

- *More attention is needed for the generation and the 'measuring' of impact of knowledge activities.*
- *Co-innovation by networks of different actors (local/practice, policy & research).*

These two lead to the overarching thesis:

No network, no impact.

Also, many NGOs make policies as it is not a monopoly of the government. NGOs also do research, so research is not a monopoly of research organizations. It is all about co-innovation. Work together with other actors, combine local practice with the laboratory. Impact has to be measured as far as is possible and reasonable. If there is no broad network, then there is no impact. Do not enclose yourself in a 'tower of ivory'. Research is a role to be

determined by politics. Demand articulation should not be in the hands of scientists. Everybody has to network, also during the process of demand articulation. If you want impact, then work in a network.

Other groups wonder if there is not too much emphasis on 'process' in this group. What is the theme we are dealing with? In nowadays sociology networks are very popular: working together makes the actors more active. However, who should work together? This is context specific. How active are other actors looking for results of research? Here is also a role for researchers: how to draw the attention and interest of relevant actors?



6.3.4 Group D

André de Jager (Wageningen UR) introduces the thesis. The thesis is:

Successful research:

- *It has feeling with the field*
- *It inspires the policy sector*
- *It has impact in society.*

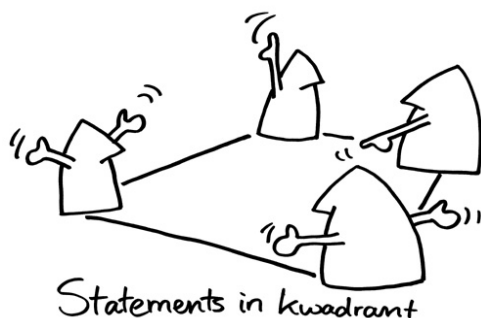
Successful research inspires policy making, it is critical towards policies, it asks questions. Research should also serve policy. Feed-back is necessary, demand articulation is important. When the project is in its implementing stage, it is often very silent. However, feed-back on a regular base is necessary. The researcher should also undertake efforts to promote this communication.

A question from other groups was: What does it mean: research must inspire policy? Can we settle accounts based on inspiration? Some researchers say: yes! Demand articulation costs a lot of time, but the application of the research results is often neglected. However, can you produce inspiring research without a good united demand articulation?

A researcher asks the policymakers: by what are you inspired? The answers are:

- By the governmental political agreements. Not by good books, but by the political masters, the ministers.
- At the start of the research policy makers are inspired by facts and hard arguments. Also by success in implementation: realize policies that work! A good idea inspires: 'if you organize it in such and such a way, it will work.'

However, reality is often different: new policy developments are often not inspired by science. But success in research often does not have a lot to do with inspiration. But good implementation is important.



6.4 Closing remarks

As groups C and D end up with the same number of defenders and as the facilitator is in favor of thesis D, Group D is declared winner. André de Jager, the person from group D who defended the thesis receives a shirt with the title 'Wageningen No. 1'.



The facilitator, Mr. Pistorius asks Martin Kropff and Janneke Hoekstra for their final remarks.

Martin Kropff concludes that innovation is something you do together, that came out of 3 of 4 discussion groups. More mutual understanding is a necessity; we do not need an intermediate organization to organize the communication. That would create an extra layer of bureaucracy. Policy makers like to be inspired by research, but also need facts in order to be able to implement policies. Research should be used more also to determine the agenda of parliament.

Janneke Hoekstra concludes that researchers need to know the context of their research. The knowledge department of LNV also wants to involve stakeholders in society in determining the focus of research.

7. Reflections on the results of a discussion on joint agenda formulation for science and policy in international development

Robin Pistorius

7.1 Background and trends

The Dutch have a longstanding tradition in institutional and scientific cooperation in natural resources management and development, dating back to colonial times. Since World War II, globalization and regionalization have dramatically altered the position of Dutch foreign development institutions, both administrative and technical. While during the 1980's large science projects carried out by Wageningen UR (WUR) were supported by DGIS and LNV³ on development issues, these initiatives have come to an end during the last two decades. In the 1990s, the longstanding 'axis Wageningen (where WUR is located) – The Hague (the hometown of Government)' is dwindling. The export of scientific and in particular agricultural knowledge is no longer the only domain of Wageningen engineers. Instead, multidisciplinary teams of socio-economic, cultural, juridical and technical experts across the Netherlands, but also civil society organizations and private sector have started to influence national agenda formulation for science and policy in international development.

The nature of policy making in international development due to these multi-disciplinary and multi-actor involvement is moving towards 'multi-lateralization' of development aid, which is one of the many side effects of globalization and regionalization, whereas bilateral relations were common before. These developments urge on the one hand Governmental institutions (in this brief paper only the Ministries of LNV, and DGIS are taken into account) and Wageningen agricultural research institutions on the other, to re-orient and (re)position themselves vis-à-vis each other and a growing pool of international players.

These alterations can be better understood against the background of several structural changes in the organization of Dutch scientific research over the past two decades. We may depict the following trends:

- a. Research capacity and budgets are increasingly clustered in multi-lateral research programmes and accessible only through broad and 'open' tendering procedures, in which Wageningen researchers are not always the 'winners' anymore.
- b. The complexity of multi-lateral regulation and operational frameworks and research programmes has produced heterogeneous teams of experts with no 'natural ties' with Wageningen.
- c. Since the emergence of biotechnology and the related life-science industry, fundamental research has become very costly and therefore increasingly the domain of private investment. Break-throughs in agriculture or other disciplines relevant for international development are therefore less likely to occur in the public domain, and less under public (scientific) or governmental control.

At the same time DGIS and LNV face the following trends:

- a. Globalization and regionalization trends are reflected in an increasingly coherent set of international work programmes for development based on international forums. The agreements on the UN-Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) are an important outcome of the global agenda setting in development.
- b. Increasingly the MDG's provide the framework for critical development programmes, both in the multilateral and bi-lateral context. Governments are more inclined to formulate their research questions in terms of the knowledge needed to achieve MDG's.

³ In this paper we concentrate on LNV and DGIS representing Government and on WUR representing the scientific community.

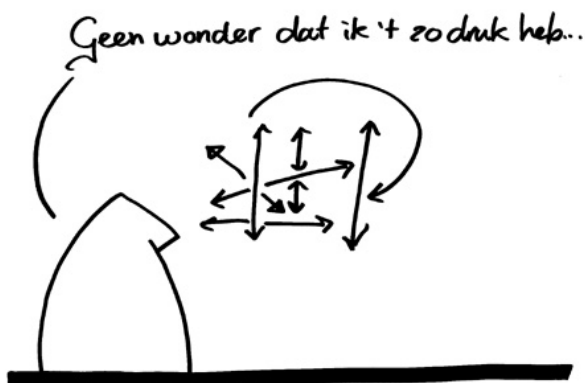
- c. Governments are also decentralizing their own bi-lateral aid policy capacity. Embassies have started to act as 'linking pins' between Dutch and multi-multilateral development aid policies and beneficiaries in developing countries.



7.2 Articulation of 'knowledge demand'

The increasing number of multilateral organizations and agreements (including MDG's), cause demand articulation to develop on a multi-lateral level. Often multilateral frameworks are interlinked with sector policies and agenda formulation at the bi-lateral level. Hence, the influx and demand for knowledge in many developing countries can be articulated in a multi-lateral context while enhanced through bilateral co-operation and support from donors. Considering the interlinkage between bi- and multi-lateral agenda's and demand articulation, Mr. Vernooij (LNV)⁴ witnesses the following challenges and changes in the definition of the role of the demand for research:

- The focus is no longer on what should be done, but on 'how to do it'. Science and research will have to contribute to the realisation of existing goals, work programmes and targets;
- Science, research and capacity building are not an end in themselves, but a tool in developing an appropriate mix to address specific needs to tackle problems encountered during implementation initiatives. These needs are to be articulated at the appropriate scale;
- Disciplinary knowledge and sound functioning sectors remain important, but the challenges, political and societal, are of an *integral* nature, requiring interdisciplinary and participatory action.



Due to the growing focus on multi-lateral aid interlinked with bi-lateral initiatives the scope shifts towards the embassies, where agricultural attachés now play an increasingly important role on the articulation of knowledge demand. They have to match national and local demands in their host countries with bi-lateral and multilateral knowledge- and aid programmes. This process is still 'under construction' and as Mrs. Dr. Hoekstra (LNV)⁵ states,

⁴ Drs. M. Vernooij, Global Affairs - directorate International Affairs Ministry LNV. Personal communication 15 Sept 2006.

⁵ Mrs. Dr. J. Hoekstra, Director Science and Knowledge generation Ministry LNV. Remarks made during workshop June 29, 2006.

and remains somewhat 'crippled'. Hoekstra hopes that within 3 years the demand articulation process is more streamlined while host countries will have more involvement in this process⁶.

A second side-effect of the multilateral focus is that single-issue, of single-disciplinary questions are increasingly rare. This was illustrated by the case of food safety and trade as brought forward by Mr. Claassen (MVO)⁷ stating that: 'agricultural production and trade is nowadays a global issue which cover many disciplines such as food safety, sustainability, social issues, environmental issues, trade policies, etc.'. This broadening and growing complexity of development issues also implies that policy makers have to 'network' with more different actors, such as transnational corporations and (international) NGOs, organize (research) programmes, local organizations, etc.

Finally, a more open focus on the multi-lateral and more complex character of development aid require, according to De Jager (WUR), a more active linkage and integration process between various Dutch and other donors in the target regions and thematic areas. A good example is the setting up of the research agenda in Ethiopia focused on water management and horticultural development, where at national level LNV funds were matched with DGIS funds⁸. Two other important trends in this direction are the DGIS/WUR *Partnership for pro-poor development* (2006) which focuses on 'practical recommendations' for institutional development and capacity building.⁹ The Partnership falls in line with the new DGIS research and knowledge policy (since 2005).¹⁰

7.3 Articulation of 'knowledge supply'

Single-disciplinary, straightforward answers are not satisfactory to policy-makers that are confronted with complex inter-disciplinary, multi-layered, global issues. At the same time as the rector magnificus of the WUR Prof. Martin Kropff¹¹ puts it 'people in developing countries are changing their attitudes and speak out more freely so that representatives from the North (such as agricultural attachés) can get a better idea of their needs.' This means that researchers have to (re-)organize themselves, in order to be able to serve policy-makers on the international, national and local level. 'In 1983 researchers had much liberty, and much contact with the Ministry [LNV]. Since 1995 policy makers try to get more grips on the research agenda. Nowadays policy makers are very much on top of the research agenda.' At the same time, scientists are pressed to leave their 'ivory tower' while policy-makers are forced to consult many more stakeholders than before and to more explicitly reveal the political context of their demands.

Researchers have the social obligation to explain the broadness and 'depth' of today's global (development) issues. According to De Jager (WUR) policy makers should realize that (a) not all issues can be addressed by research; that (b) serious attention needs to be paid to the articulation of the research question and; that (c) interaction with researchers during the process of knowledge articulation is required to increase the practical value of the results. De Jager also states that researchers must be willing to spend more time on the aftercare and dissemination aspects of research, and must realize that, in the end, it is always left to the demanding party (be it government, NGO, private company) to adopt, use, take into account or neglect the research results.

Kropff makes a plea for an active involvement of the South in the demand and supply of knowledge. Southern research organizations, NGOs and (national or local) governments can all help to deliver new data and insights,

⁶ A clear contribution to the process of demand articulation of LNV is the paper: *Knowledge in International Cooperation for agriculture, nature and food*. Vision for 2006 - 2010. LNV, September 21, 2006.

⁷ Ir. F. Claassen, personal communication, Sept 14, 2006.

⁸ Ir. A. de Jager, Agricultural Economics Research Institute - WUR, Public Issues Division, personal communication.

⁹ This cooperative effort identifies three interlinked knowledge domains (Sustainable Agro Supply Chains; Competing Claims on Natural Resources; and Sustainable Use of Agro biodiversity) in which WUR can supply relevant knowledge to policy-makers and the poor. It will provide scientific support to public and non-governmental research- and development organizations as well as to the private sector both in the South and North. The Partnership has identified three interlinked thematic areas covering critical aspects of the globalization process: (i) Sustainable Agro Supply Chains, (ii) Competing Claims on Natural Resources and (iii) Sustainable Use of Agro biodiversity. Institutional Development and Capacity Building is a cross-cutting issue throughout the three thematic priorities.

¹⁰ See: *Onderzoek in Ontwikkeling: Beleidsnotitie over het vernieuwde onderzoeksbeleid* [September 2005; in Dutch].

¹¹ Prof. dr. ir. Martin Kropff is Rector Magnificus of the WUR. Remarks made during workshop June 29, 2006.

with or without cooperation with Northern partners, such as the WUR. Kropff also believes that it is important for researchers to have some years of experience in developing countries. Sometimes WUR invites foreign students in order to ask for their opinions and views. 'No ivory tower but to realize innovation together'. Mr. Visser (CGN)¹² detects 'ivory towers' on both sides (policy makers and researchers), and makes a plea for frequent and open communication on research policy issues. Mrs. Wiedenhoff (DGIS)¹³ takes a similar stance, and advises to organize open sessions in which personal motivations or plans and formal (tendering) procedures are treated on an equal footing.



Still, as Kropff indicates: 'researchers are no consultants'. 'Important for the researcher is to know the backgrounds of the policy question in order to prevent him/her from providing ready-made solutions. Many questions need long term research in order to generate an answer'¹⁴. In other words, although researchers have the obligation to 'show what they know', they should be aware of, and protect, their scientific independence. These remarks support the view that researchers are not necessarily the 'reactive' party when 'policies' (or even 'practice') meet research. One working group of the Utrecht discussion underlined the pro-active stance researchers can take by stating that: 'Successful researchers inspire policy making, are critical towards policies, they ask questions. The researcher should also undertake efforts to promote this communication.'

7.4 NGOs as 'knowledge brokers'

Participants of the Utrecht discussion noticed that the dichotomy between governmental and scientific interests can decrease if more stakeholders were allowed to play a role in demand articulation, such as NGOs. The works of NGOs in the South increasingly confront donors with the fact that knowledge demand and supply is not the domain of only research and governmental institutions. NGOs increasingly also take the responsibility for research programmes. An important side-effect is that NGOs can act as brokers between government and scientific community. They often harbor scientifically trained personnel and well-trained lobbyists. As such they may sometimes be instrumental in both the articulation of the demand and the supply of required knowledge.

NGOs interviewed in preparation of the Utrecht discussion¹⁵ emphasize their position as 'networked organizations' in which global development issues (such as low coffee prices, or the potential of biomass production in the South) were translated into often successful local programmes and in cooperation with local or national actors. Still, as Mr. Ferwerda (IUCN) notes, although NGOs sometimes have good connections with local organizations they have difficulties in joining forces vis-à-vis government¹⁶, and hence have little impact on research agenda formulation.

¹² Personal communication Dr. Bert Visser, director CGN – WUR, The Netherlands. Sept 21, 2006.

¹³ Personal communication Dr. Caroline Wiedenhoff, head DCO Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Interviewed were Claassen (MVO); Ferwerda (IUCN); Bruggeman and Oorthuizen (AgriProFocus); and Nijland (HIVOS).

¹⁶ Personal communication Mr. Willem Ferwerda, Director World Conservation Union, The Netherlands Committee.

7.5 Personal observations and conclusions

1. The interaction between science and government in research agenda formulation within the Netherlands is in a state of flux - depending on institutional developments within the country, new tendering procedures, sectoral policies, NGO involvement, etc. The overall motor of these developments however is the process of globalization and the associated multi-lateralization of development aid (MDG's etc.).
2. The interaction between policy formation, research and practice is not only about agenda formulation, but also about getting the information from the right source and in the hands of the right user. A clear picture of policy targets and research domains may be very instrumental, but in the end the stakeholders involved determine the quality and impact of the 'transfer of knowledge into practice'. Thus, improvement of cooperation between science and policy making is not an end in itself, but a tool to enhance the impact of science.
3. Policy makers and researchers have inherent strengths and weaknesses when it comes to joint agenda formulation for science and policy in international development. Policy-makers tend to have a focus on short- and midterm problem solving; a focus on socio-economic interests; a tendency towards simplification of issue areas to create political leverage; and finally strife to excellence in governance. Scientists, by nature, have an interest in long-term, often complex research programmes with a steady flow of results; a certain independence from socio-economic interests; an autonomous attitude; and strife to scientific prestige. Awareness of the fundamental differences in interest and attitude between researchers and policy-makers can help to overcome communication problems and help to develop mutually beneficial strategies in agenda formulation.
4. The question remains how the interaction between policy makers and researchers can be improved, considering their natural strengths and weaknesses. As several participants stated: 'Successful researchers often have good connections with the field, are able to inspire policy makers, *and* (therefore) have an impact on society.' In other words, good researchers often are good networkers and don't need extra encouragement or platforms to policy circles and agenda's – they already have them. The same can be said about good policy-makers: they already have the contacts with researchers. It may be very rewarding to make visible these existing networking capacities instead of designing new encouragement policies.
5. NGOs can and do well act as 'brokers' between the realm of policy-making and science. A general problem with many NGOs is to link their lobbying capacity and networking skills with their in-house knowledge 'capital'. Scientific data produced by NGOs often remains invisible in the 'grey NGO literature' circle, to the disadvantage of themselves and the cooperating policy-makers and researchers. Concerted NGO efforts to link-up available knowledge and communication facilities vis-à-vis government and science may have interesting advantages for all parties involved.

Appendix I.

List of participants of the Workshop

Participant	Organisation
Wim Andriesse	Wageningen UR
Prem Bindraban	Wageningen UR
Arend Jan van Bodegom	Wageningen UR
Jan Brouwers	Wageningen UR
Hedwig Bruggeman	Agri-ProFocus
Hayo Haanstra	Ministry of LNV
Wouter Leen Hijweege	Wageningen UR
Janneke Hoekstra	Ministry of LNV
Bram Huijsman	Wageningen UR
André de Jager	Wageningen UR
Don Jansen	Wageningen UR
Frank Joosten	Wageningen UR
Martin Kropff	Wageningen UR
Hugo Leemhuis	ECF 4C group
Niels Louwaars	Wageningen UR
Ed Maan	RAWOO
Harro Maat	Wageningen UR
Esther Mosselman	Cartoonist; Zwaar Water
Co Neeteson	Ministry of LNV
Stineke Oenema	ICCO
Harrie Oppenoorth	Hivos
Mathieu Pinkers	Ministry of LNV
Robin Pistorius	Journalist / moderator
Jeroen Rijniers	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Reimund Rötter	Wageningen UR
Ancel van Royen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ben Rutgers	Wageningen UR
Gerrie Tuitert	WOTRO
Sietze Vellema	Wageningen UR
Marcel Vernooij	Ministry of LNV
Patricia Wagenmakers	Ministry of LNV
Caroline Wiedenhof	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Wouter Wolters	Wageningen UR
Jim Woodhill	Wageningen UR
Maarten Zwaan	Rijk Zwaan Holland

Appendix II.

List of interested parties in the results of this process on Linking policy, practice and research in international development

Name	Organisation
Durk Adema	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Haroon Akram-Lodhi	ISS
Jieles van Baalen	Ministry of LNV
Steven de Bie	SHELL
Rob van den Boom	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rik van den Bosch	Wageningen UR
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Rian Fokker	Oxfam Novib
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Jan Maat	Unilever
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Herman Savenije	Ministry of LNV
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Rob Ukkerman	SNV
Roel Vaessen	ECF
Johan Verburg	Oxfam Novib
Patrick Verkooijen	Ministry of LNV
Jan Kees Vis	Unilever
Bert Visser	Wageningen UR
Nico Visser	Ministry of LNV
Jan Vlaar	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Remko Vonk	Wetlands International
Frits van der Wal	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Akke van der Zijpp	Wageningen UR
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Appendix III.

Acronyms used in the report

ADB	:	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	:	African Development Bank
AKK	:	Stichting Agro Keten Kennis
APF	:	Annual Program Fund
BBI	:	International Program for Biodiversity
CBD	:	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCD	:	(United Nations) Convention to Combat Desertification
CEE	:	Central and East European Countries
CGN	:	Centre for Genetic Resources - WUR
CG's	:	See CGIAR
CIDIN	:	Centre for International Development Issues, at the Radboud University Nijmegen
CGIAR	:	Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research
CoP	:	Conference of Parties
CSD	:	Commission on Sustainable Development
CSO	:	Civil Society Organisations
DCO	:	Cultural Cooperation, Education and Research Department of the Ministry of DGIS
DLO	:	Dutch Agricultural Research
DLO - IC	:	Dutch Agricultural Research – Program on International Cooperation
EARD	:	European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development
ECF	:	European Coffee Federation
ECF 4C Group	:	European Coffee Federation 4C Group (Common Code for the Coffee Community)
EU	:	European Union
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAP	:	Good Agricultural Practice
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GFAR	:	Global Forum on Agricultural Research
GIS	:	Geographical Information Systems
HIVOS	:	Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries
IAC	:	International Agricultural Centre
ICCO	:	International Cocoa Organisation
ICCO	:	Interchurch organisation for development co-operation
IFPRI	:	International Food Policy Research Institute
ISS	:	Institute of Social Studies
ITC	:	International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation
IUCN	:	The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IWRM	:	Integrated Water Resources Management
KIT	:	Royal Tropical Institute
KNAW	:	Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences
LNV BO	:	Policy Support program of the Ministry of LNV
M&E	:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goals
Ministry of DGIS	:	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Development Cooperation
Ministry of EZ	:	Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs
Ministry of LNV	:	Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Ministry of V&W	:	Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management
MSP	:	Multi-Stakeholder Platform
MVO	:	Product Board Margarine, Fats and Oils

MVO Nederland	:	Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR Netherlands
NARCs	:	National Agricultural Research Centers
NARS	:	National Agricultural Research Centers
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organisation
NRM	:	Natural Resource Management
NWP	:	Netherlands Water Partnership
ODI	:	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEDIGREA	:	Participatory Enhancement of Diversity of Genetic Resources in Asia
RAWOO	:	Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council
R&D	:	Research and Development
RIZA	:	Institute for Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment
SAI	:	Industry-les Sustainable Agriculture Initiative
SNV	:	SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
SOW-VU	:	Centre for World Food Studies of VU Amsterdam
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO-IHE	:	Institute for Water Education
UNFCCC	:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WB	:	The World Bank
WI	:	Wetlands International
WOTRO	:	Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research
WTO	:	World Trade Organisation
WUR	:	Wageningen University and Research Centre
Wageningen UR	:	Wageningen University and Research Centre