



Linking policy to research, capacity building and practice

A study to identify key factors for successful linkages between policy, research and capacity building, and practice within the Policy Support Cluster International (BOCI) Programme funded by LNV

**Capacity Development and Institutional Change Programme
Wageningen International, the Netherlands**

Authors: Simone de Hek, Cecile Kusters & Mirjam Schaap

Date: June 2008

Wageningen International



WAGENINGEN UR

For quality of life

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
1. SUMMARY	4
2. INTRODUCTION.....	10
3. KEY FINDINGS.....	17
3.1 AGRICULTURAL COUNSELLORS	17
3.2 WUR-DLO	25
3.3 DIRECTORATE KNOWLEDGE.....	28
3.4 CLUSTER BOARD INTERNATIONAL (CBI)	33
3.5 LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE LINKAGE BETWEEN POLICY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE	39
3.5.1 Search strategy.....	39
3.5.2 Introduction to current thinking about research-policy link	40
3.5.3 What can policy makers do to increase the use of evidence?	44
3.5.4 Examples to learn from.....	48
4. DISCUSSION	51
5. CONCLUSIONS.....	69
6. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	77
ANNEX 1: Results online survey Agricultural Counsellors	84
ANNEX 2: Summary of six interviews with Agricultural Counsellors.....	105
ANNEX 3: Combined results 5 interviews DLO representatives	106
ANNEX 4: Results interview with Directorate Knowledge (DK)	106
ANNEX 5: results interview Cluster Board International (CBI).....	106
ANNEX 6: Results interview CBI- Marcel Vernooij	106
ANNEX 7: Literature references and excerpts/citations from selected publications	106
ANNEX 8: Interview Mr. John Young.....	106

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the result of a process in which many people participated. We would especially like to acknowledge the contribution made by the Dutch Agricultural Counsellors, the members of the Cluster Board International of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV), the representatives of the WUR-DLO institutes, the members of the Cluster Management within WUR-DLO and the persons involved from Directorate Knowledge. We highly appreciated and enjoyed their openness and commitment to this study. We would especially like to thank Patricia Wagenmakers, who was the main contact person at the Directorate Knowledge and responsible for this study. Through her constructive and valuable support in an open, intense and communicative relationship we have been able to adapt and tailor this study as much as possible to the specific needs of LNV. It was good to see that during the study, through the various discussions on individual and group basis, already some of the issues that came up during the study were taken a next step towards improvement. The commitment and dedication by Patricia and others involved have been of utmost importance in this respect.

Simone de Hek
Cecile Kusters
Mirjam Schaap

1. SUMMARY

This report is the result of a study that was conducted for a Multilateral Knowledge Project and has been carried out in demand of and in close collaboration with Directorate Knowledge (DK) of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). The objective of the study was *“to identify the key factors that enhance successful linkages in terms of knowledge between policy and research & capacity building and practice in the international arena and to draw lessons of it that can support policy workers to improve these linkages”*. The focus of the study has been narrowed down to the research process (including the demand articulation, implementation and monitoring & evaluation) of the research & capacity building activities requested for by the LNV Agricultural Counsellors (out-posted to the Royal Netherlands Embassies) and funded by the policy support (BO) programme *“BO Cluster International”* (BOCI). BO Cluster International aims to contribute to economic development and poverty reduction in developing countries. The following methodology was followed in the study: 1. literature study; 2. online survey amongst 23 Agricultural Counsellors; 3. individual, group and phone interviews with different stakeholders involved in BOCI. A clear distinction was made between 3 different phases of BOCI: 1. demand articulation; 2. project implementation; and 3. monitoring and evaluation. These 3 phases were divided into 12 steps, which have been taken as the basis for analysis.

The results and impact of this study cannot only be found in this study report but also in the process towards it. By having individual as well as group activities a learning process took place at various levels, generating discussion and awareness but also interesting initiatives, e.g. DK and Cluster Board International (CBI) took responsibility for discussing some of the preliminary findings of the study with the Agricultural Counsellors during the Counsellor's week in February 2008 in the Netherlands. Also a process has been initiated to improve the communication during the different steps of the BOCI process. It is hoped that this study will support the improvement of the process as well as the effectiveness of the BOCI programme, which has been existing since only two years, and has really taken off now, as can be concluded from doubling of the number of research questions submitted by Agricultural Counsellors in the second year compared to year one.

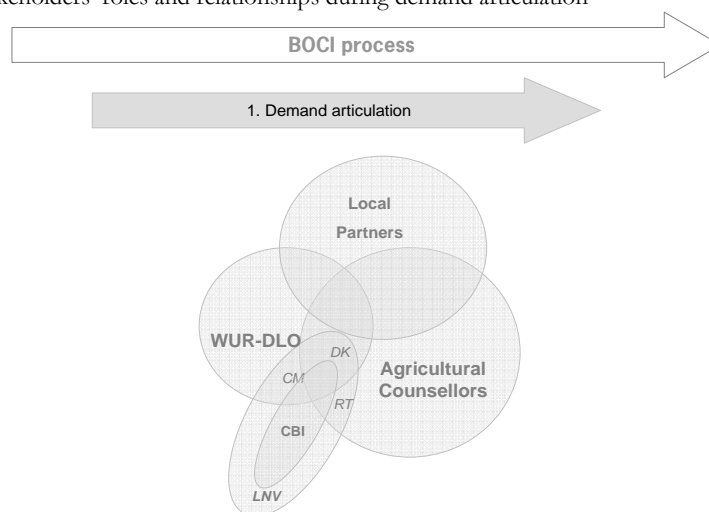
Little research is done on policy-research-practice linkages in research for international development from a policy worker's perspective. Most work has been done on the supply side. Traditionally, the link between research findings and policy processes has been viewed as linear, but more likely policy processes are dynamic, complex and chaotic and should be viewed as a multi-direction process between policy, research and practice. This study shows the need for and the development towards more multi-direction and multi-stakeholder perspectives within BOCI.

There is clearly (a need for) a changing role of Agricultural Counsellors in the bilateral programme towards more involvement and responsibility. Supporting Agricultural Counsellors in playing a more central role is therefore key in further strengthening the process and improving the impact of the research and capacity building within the BOCI programme. Generally, throughout demand articulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of BOCI there is vagueness about **roles and responsibilities** and in many situations this creates misunderstanding and reduces the usefulness of the results and therefore the success of the BOCI projects. Improved **communication** between the stakeholders is a must. Specific efforts should be directed at a more structured guiding of these **multi stakeholder processes**, which include policy makers, researchers and practitioners.

Looking at the demand articulation process and the **levels of participation** of different stakeholders in the different steps, one can see that the involvement of stakeholders during BOCI may be high in early stages of the demand articulation, but very low at later stages of a project which may cause problems in terms of transparency, understanding, and commitment of the various stakeholders involved. It may also lead to inadequate understanding and translation of the original research question into a proposal and implementation of a project that really addresses the original needs.

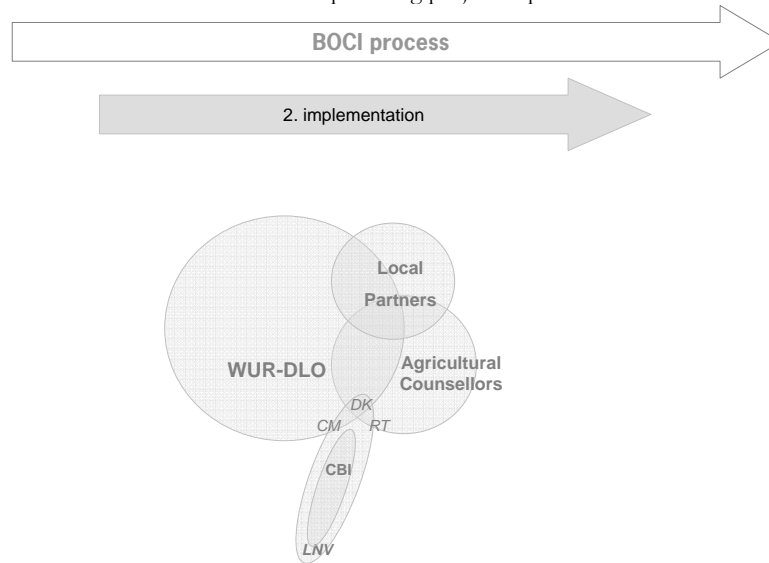
During the **demand articulation** phase the formal roles lie mainly with the LNV policy workers: Agricultural Counsellors, Regional Teams (RT) and Directorate Knowledge (DK), although not always structural nor formal. Participation of local partners is found to be crucial but is clearly too little. Success factors identified in this phase include **clear roles and responsibilities and good communication** between stakeholders. There is a need to **build bridges** which facilitate greater sustained interaction between researchers and research users (in particular the LNV policy workers but also local partners). The **linkages** between stakeholders should be strong and **continuous interaction** is important. The Agricultural Counsellor should take the most active role, with strong collaboration with WUR-DLO and local partners, like universities or ministries. The bridging role of DK could be strengthened, focussing on processes, and serving the role of a broker between agricultural counsellors, Regional Teams, Cluster Board International (CBI) and WUR-DLO. The role of the CBI can expand, focusing on content and the relation to Dutch Policies, and (more strategically) on agenda setting and advice to RT, DK and Cluster Management (CM), also promoting that policy workers use results of research. CM also can have a more important role providing a bridge for the link between LNV and WUR-DLO. RT's can also perform more the role of a broker/bridge between Counsellors and LNV, but mainly in terms of content. Figure a shows the above described 'ideal' figure.

Figure a: 'Ideal' stakeholders' roles and relationships during demand articulation



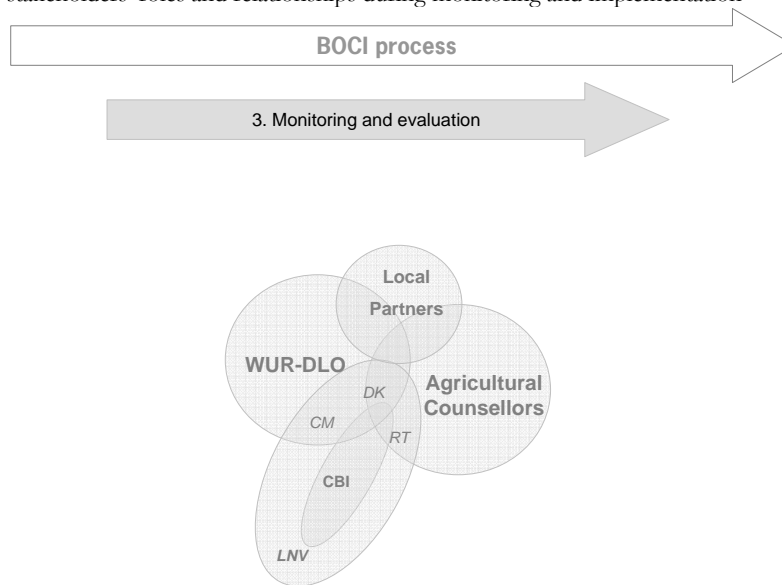
In the 'ideal' figure WUR-DLO is the main stakeholder during the **implementation phase**, but WUR-DLO should be clearly linked with Agricultural Counsellors and local partners. DK and CBI can have "smaller" guiding roles, but regular feedback on the implementation from the Region Teams is recommended. Figure b shows this 'ideal' figure for the implementation phase of BOCI projects.

Figure b: 'Ideal' stakeholders' roles and relationships during project implementation



Monitoring and evaluation clearly needs to be improved. It should become a more shared exercise among all stakeholders, especially when learning is to be included. There are several levels of learning which can be facilitated (when clarity about roles is created) by different stakeholders, especially those who are in the hearts of the links between stakeholders (DK, RT and CM). Figure c shows this 'ideal' figure.

Figure c: 'Ideal' stakeholders' roles and relationships during monitoring and implementation



For involved LNV policy workers it is **recommended to take above described 'ideal figures' as a base for discussion** and to go through a joint process with the following stakeholders: DK, CM, Agricultural Counsellors and CBI of discussing BOCI to agree about a clear division of roles and on how to involve the absent but important local partners. This might avoid overlap and duplication of efforts and result in better use of available resources.

There are many approaches to improve communication and linkages between different stakeholders. This study highlights a **multi-stakeholder approach**. Knowledge brokers or translators between the different stakeholders could facilitate the multi-stakeholder processes by providing bridges, where stakeholders have difficulty to get together, or where this will speed up this process. DK could play a more extensive role in terms of brokerage between the different parties. It is recommended a.o. to set up networks or linkages with existing networks that work on the same issues/themes and organise multi-stakeholder theme meetings related to the policy development process.

Connecting BOCI with the policy processes through a more **strategic / programmatic approach**, knowing better what information is needed, when it is needed, communicating this need well and actively connecting the project cycle with the related policy process will improve the impact of BOCI projects. Part of this more programmatic approach is also linking BOCI with other (multi-lateral) programmes and projects (both from LNV, other Ministries and other organisations) during the demand articulation process. Another important aspect is that there needs to be a shared vision among stakeholders in terms of the expected outcomes of the project and roughly the key strategies to reach this, with underlying assumptions and external factors influencing the possible outcome (a theory of change). It is recommended a.o. that policy workers do a policy context analysis and communicate this to stakeholders involved. Also an effort should be undertaken to streamline agendas: national/local and other Dutch Ministries and international agencies.

Adaptive management is important to adequately learn from and make necessary changes to a project. Involvement of stakeholders in this learning oriented **monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** and project redesign would enhance the impact of a project. BOCI should not only support learning within the projects but could also look for ways to support the horizontal learning across the projects and meta-learning at the level of Agricultural Counsellors, and LNV. Both the Cluster Management (within WUR-DLO and with LNV) and DK (with Agricultural Counsellors and Regional Teams) could play an important role in this meta-monitoring. It is recommended -amongst others- that a participatory monitoring and evaluation strategy should be part of the plan of action of BOCI project and that regular meetings between policy makers and implementing partners should be organised to discuss progress and to assist decision making for adaptive management.

2. INTRODUCTION

This report is the result of a study that was conducted for a Multilateral Knowledge Project (Knowledge Output 2: *Knowledge and learning for supporting Policy and Transition Processes*). This project has been carried out in close collaboration with and as a response to the demands of the Directorate Knowledge, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. The study builds on the results of the knowledge project 2006/7 which focused on the role of researchers. In the current study the main focus is on the perspective of policy makers and aims at the identification of key factors in enhancing successful connections between knowledge, policy, research (including capacity building) and practice, and was carried out by a team of WUR-DLO.

The objective of the study was *“to identify the key factors that enhance successful linkages in terms of knowledge between policy and research and capacity building and practice in the international arena and to draw lessons of it that can support policy workers to improve these linkages”*.

To reach this objective, 3 research questions were formulated:

1. What are key experiences and success stories and tools that policy workers can use to strengthen linkages between policy – research – practice?
2. What approaches and methods can be used for guiding an efficient and effective research demand articulation process for the bilateral BO International research (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Policy Support Research Programme implemented by WUR)?
3. What approaches and methods can enhance the commitment of stakeholders (policy workers, researchers and practitioners) during the research process?

The process of formulating the objective of the study and research questions has been quite intensive and led to a narrowing down of the original scope of Output 2. It was decided to focus on the main demand/interest of Directorate Knowledge, which is: the research process (including the demand articulation, implementation and monitoring & evaluation) of the research & capacity building activities funded by the policy support (BO) programme *“BO Cluster International”*, but only taking into account the bilateral part of the programme. Here research is steered by the demand of the Agricultural Counsellors in the Dutch embassies.

Beleids Ondersteunend Cluster International (BOCI) is a programme financed by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). It aims to contribute to economic development and poverty reduction in developing countries, with special attention to the strengthening of sustainable agriculture and production chains, and nature management. The programme intends to implement a demand-driven approach in which the research agenda should be determined jointly with governments, research partners, NGOs and the private sector in the South.

During the process of demand articulation and formulation of this project the focus was broadened again with an additional demand from Directorate Knowledge to also get more in-depth information from Agricultural Counsellors through telephone interviews with the Cluster International Management. This would help in getting more insight into the BOCI process itself and possible suggestions for improvement.

The methodology for the study was carried out as follows:

A. Literature study:

- Mainly focusing on the linkage between policy workers and researchers, both in the process of demand articulation and the research process itself.
- Sources:
 - Reports on policy – research linkage management at selected Dutch ministries;
 - international articles and reports (international scientific journals, programs / projects / organizations focusing on bridging policy – research gaps, evidence based policy processes)

B. Survey:

Online survey amongst 23 Agricultural Counsellors.

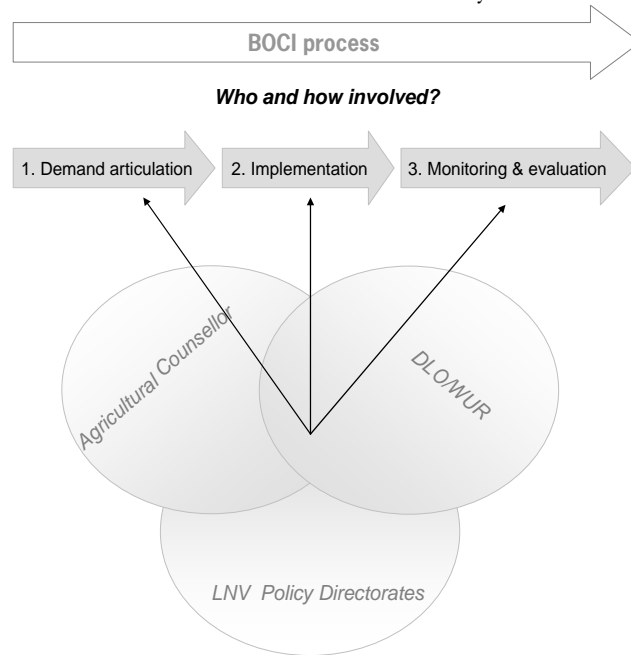
C. Interviews (Phone, Skype, face-to-face)

- Phone or face-to-face interviews with 6 selected Agricultural Counsellors, covering all continents and thematic areas of LNV.
- Interactive workshops (2) with LNV staff, involved in the development of regional plans and in the demand articulation process (Staff from the Regional teams, Directorate Knowledge, Policy Directorates).
- Face-to-face and telephone interviews with stakeholders in related bilateral projects: mainly WUR-DLO staff (5) could be interviewed.
- Group discussion on some of the key findings with Agricultural Counsellors by Directorate Knowledge and Cluster International during the ‘Counsellor week’.
- Representative of organization that successfully bridge the policy-research gap – Mr. John Young, Director of Programmes for the RAPID Group - ODI's programme for Research and Policy in Development, was interviewed in the final stages of the study.

In the figure below (figure 1) a schematic overview is given of the framework of analysis which served as a starting point for this study. The study focused specifically on the bilateral part of the BOCI programme, reviewing the process from demand articulation up to finalization and evaluation of the BOCI project.

Initially the process seemed to be easily divided into 3 main steps: 1. demand articulation, 2. implementation of the project, 3. monitoring and evaluation. The main focus regarding this process was on who (locally, nationally and internationally) is involved and how. The circles in figure 1 represent the main stakeholders: agricultural Counsellors, WUR-DLO (research and capacity building) and LNV Policy Directorates.

Figure 1: Schematic overview of initial framework of analysis



Taking this framework as a starting point, it became clear during the study that the BOCI process is more complicated and can be divided into the following 12 steps:

1. Agenda setting: formulation of knowledge agenda for LNV.
2. Problem identification: identification of research and capacity development needs of the Agricultural Counsellor in the country.
3. Research question formulation: the Counsellor formulates from the identified need a research question that fits in the LNV Policy agenda with an indication of the budget.
4. Research question assessment and selection: within LNV the research questions are assessed on Policy and Knowledge relevance and the selection is made of research questions to be further developed for financing. LNV asks DLO to react.
5. Call for proposals: Cluster management (which is the coordinating body within WUR-DLO for BOCI) sends out an expression of interest within WUR-DLO (1 week). Cluster Management decides which DLO teams are assigned for the research questions.
6. Proposal development: selected researchers develop proposals (3 weeks). WUR-DLO Cluster Management then sends to LNV a planning proposal for all new research questions. This planning proposal is checked within LNV (1 month).
7. Assessment proposals: within LNV the proposals are assessed on Policy and Knowledge relevance.
8. Adaptation proposals: some proposals have to be adapted by WUR-DLO in order to fit LNV priorities.
9. Project implementation: once a proposal has been approved the project is implemented by WUR-DLO.

- 10. Monitoring: during implementation monitoring is done, mainly through a mid-term review and close contact with the Counsellor.
- 11. Evaluation: at the end of the project a final report is written.
- 12. Use of results & impact.

Step 1-8 are part of the demand articulation process, including the selection. Steps 9-12 are part of the implementation process. Further analysis of data has been done in the framework of these 12 steps, as can be seen in the following chapters. The roles of different actors and issues for improvement are presented along these steps, using the following framework:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Demand articulation								Implementation, monitoring & evaluation			

In chapter 3 the findings of the study are presented, from the perspective of each of the main stakeholders involved in this study. The key findings of the online survey and the in-depth interviews with the Agricultural Counsellors can be found in 3.1. It is described how the Agricultural Counsellors see the role of BOCI, how others actors are involved especially during the demand articulation, how they see their own role during the whole process, and where they think the process can be improved. The results of a discussion that took place during the ‘Counsellor Week’ (February 2008) are also included.

In 3.2 the harmonized results of interviews with 5 representatives of WUR-DLO institutes, who have been or are involved in BOCI projects, can be found. The way that WUR-DLO researchers see their role during the 12 steps of the demand articulation and implementation is presented, including links with other stakeholders. Issues for improvement as put forward by these WUR-DLO representatives are also presented.

In 3.3 the results of an interactive group interview/workshop with 3 representatives and individual talks with several persons of Directorate Knowledge are presented. This paragraph shows how Directorate Knowledge representatives view their role and the links with other stakeholders during the demand articulation and implementation. Issues for improvement, which came up during the workshop and individual interviews are proposed.

A similar group exercise has been carried out with 5 representatives from other Policy Directorates, members of the Cluster Board International, responsible for BOCI. Results of an extra interview with the chairman of the Cluster Board International are also included. These Cluster Board members reflected on their role and on issues for improvement within the demand articulation and implementation for BOCI. The findings are presented in 3.4.

Paragraph 3.5 describes the results of the literature review. In 3.5.1 the search strategy to find relevant literature on the subject is explained. Paragraph 3.5.2 gives an introduction to current thinking about the research-policy link, how this has changed and what the role of research could be in policy development. In 3.5.3 the concept of evidence based policy (EBP) is introduced. Different tools and approaches on what policy makers can do to increase the use of evidence (research results) are presented in 3.5.4.

Some four (4) examples of successful settings in which evidence supported policy decision making are described in 3.5.5.

In chapter 4 the roles of the different stakeholders involved in the BOCI process and the linkages between policy makers, research & capacity development and practice are discussed. Demand articulation, project implementation and monitoring & evaluation issues are presented separately. Also success factors are discussed and proposed issues for improvement are highlighted.

Chapter 5 presents general conclusions and a suggested model for the 'ideal' roles of and linkages between policy workers-researchers-practitioners during the demand articulation, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of BOCI is presented

Chapter 6 presents the main recommendations for the different stakeholders involved in the BOCI programme. More specific suggestions are developed at the end of the chapter for each of the key stakeholders involved in the BOCI programme.

Note: due to a late start of the project and an extensive involvement of different stakeholders the project activities have been delayed and reporting could be finalized in June 2008.

3. KEY FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings of the study are presented, from the perspective of each of the main stakeholders involved in this study. The key findings of the online survey and the in-depth interviews with the Agricultural Counsellors can be found in 3.1. In 3.2 the harmonized results of interviews with 5 representatives of WUR-DLO institutes, who have been or are involved in BOCI projects, can be found. In 3.3 the results of an interactive group interview/workshop with 3 representatives and individual talks with several persons of Directorate Knowledge are presented. The results of a similar group exercise, carried out with 5 representatives from other Policy Directorates, members of the Cluster Board International, responsible for BOCI, are presented in 3.4. Paragraph 3.5 describes the results of the literature review.

3.1 AGRICULTURAL COUNSELLORS

In this paragraph the key findings of the online survey and the in-depth interviews with the Agricultural Counsellors is presented. The responses from the online survey and the in-depth interviews with Agricultural Counsellors are integrated. Also the feedback from Counsellors on some of the findings as discussed during the ‘Counsellor week’ 6th February 2008 (by Directorate Knowledge and Cluster International) is integrated as and where appropriate. Detailed responses to the online survey among Agricultural Counsellors can be found in annex 1. A summary of the in-depth interviews can be read in annex 2.

General information

The online survey was made available during December 2007 – January 2008 and an invitation to participate was sent out to a total of 23 Agricultural Counsellors in the 6 regions as defined in table 1 (see below). By mistake 5 of these invited Counsellors (Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, Poland and Japan) turned out not to be included in the BOCI programme. However, these Counsellors might come from embassies taking part in BOCI or they might go to such an embassy for their next posting. 1 of these 5 still filled out the survey. From the 18 Agricultural Counsellors part of BOCI¹, 6 were involved in in-depth interviews, which were conducted by phone or face-to-face. These Counsellors were selected based on an even spreading over continents and thematic priorities of LNV. Four (4) of the Counsellors involved in in-depth interviews decided not to participate in the online survey.

From the 18 invited Counsellors part of BOCI, 9 responded to the online survey. The 10th respondent is from a country that is not receiving BOCI funds. This makes the total response of the Agriculture Counsellors receiving BOCI funds on both the online survey and the in-depth interviews (adding the 4 Counsellors that only had an in-depth interview) 13, which is nearly three quarters. The responses from this group can be called representative. Most Counsellors, who did not respond, informed the project team why they did not reply. The main reasons mentioned for not responding were: upcoming retirement, new in position, illness, and involvement in in-depth interviews for this same study.

¹ Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, Turkey, Croatia, Ukraine, Russia, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, South Korea

REGION	No. non-respondents	No. respondents
Latin America	1	2
Middle East/ North Africa	1	1
Sub Sahara	0	3
Middle & Eastern Europe/New Neighbours	2	2
South Asia	1	3
North East Asia	0	2
TOTAL	5	13
PERCENTAGE	28%	72%

Table 1: Overview respondents online survey and in-depth interviews

Role of BOCI

In both the survey and the in-depth interviews the Counsellors were first asked about the main reasons to use BOCI funded research/capacity development projects. Assistance to local partners was the most common reason indicated. Some Counsellors made a distinction between research and capacity building. Implementation of LNV Policy also turned out to be an important reason. For an overview of the indicated roles and their scores, see table 2.

Roles	Indicated by respondents
Assistance to local partners (including capacity building)	10
Implementation LNV Policy	9
Strengthening (local) network	6
Information & understanding local issues	5
Seed money (to initiate an idea/project but get others to fund on longer term basis)	2

Table 2: Role of BOCI projects - scoring of answers, more answers per respondent possible (Source: Survey)

Generally, BOCI projects have supported the strengthening of the Counsellors' networks, both locally (50-60%) but also in the Netherlands (mainly with Dutch implementing agencies/WUR, 75%). BOCI offers a concrete reason for cooperation (financing) and that stimulates direct contacts. Not only are networks strengthened through BOCI projects. Existing strong networks are also indicated to be important for the success of BOCI projects.

Demand articulation and involvement of stakeholders

During the demand articulation the involvement of the Dutch research institutions and implementing agencies turned out to be most important (80% of the respondents indicate that their involvement is reasonable to high), as can be seen in table 3. Some 6 out of 10 survey respondents claim that collaboration with WUR-implementing agencies has been successful in terms of demand articulation. About half of the respondents indicate that the involvement of the different Policy Directorates of LNV is reasonable to high. Also 50% of the respondents indicate that local institutes are involved in the demand articulation. International institutes play a much lesser role. All respondents indicate involvement of several of the listed stakeholders in table 3.

Involved Stakeholders	No to little involvement	Reasonable to high involvement
Dutch Research Institutes	20 %	80 %
Dutch Implementing Agencies	40 %	60 %
Local Research Institutions	40 %	60 %
Directorate International Affairs	40 %	60 %
Local Business	50 %	50 %
Local Government	50 %	50 %
Local Civil Society (NGOs, CBOs, etc.)	50 %	50 %
Other Policy Directorates	55 %	45 %
Directorate Knowledge	60 %	40 %
Colleagues Dutch Embassy	60 %	40 %
International Multi-Lateral Institutions	70 %	30 %
International NGOs	80 %	20 %
International Research Institutions	80 %	20 %

Table 3: Involvement of stakeholders in demand articulation process (Source: Survey)

Active involvement of stakeholders in the demand articulation can result in more effective implementation of the BOCI projects. The following success factors for active involvement of stakeholders in the demand articulation were mentioned by the Agricultural Counsellors:

- Shared views of partners on LNV policy (2X)
- Good insights in structure, culture, policy and developments foreign country (2X)
- Good personal relationships
- Transparency administrative issues
- Good communication with partners
- Timing
- Commitment partners

The success factors are both relational as well as technical/content in nature.

Perceived roles of Agricultural Counsellor and involved stakeholders

Both from the survey and the in-depth interviews it became clear that the Agricultural Counsellors play or should play an important role during all phases of the BOCI process. The ideas of the Counsellors on the degree of active involvement varies, which also became clear during the discussion in the ‘Counsellor week’. For an overview of ideas about their role during the different steps (the 12 steps as explained in the introduction), please see table 4.

As the Agricultural Counsellor is the “owner” of the research question s/he has an important role to play during the demand articulation process. However, it seems that the collaboration during this phase with different stakeholders, both local and Dutch, needs further strengthening and the Counsellor could play an important role in this. Local research demand should be harmonized with Dutch policy priorities. There is also a need to strengthen collaboration particularly with the WUR-DLO partners as the interpretation of research questions by researchers is not always in line with the original idea of the Counsellor.

Some Agricultural Counsellors play a very important role during the implementation phase by linking up, coordinating and especially monitoring. The Counsellors are responsible for the reporting towards the LNV Policy Directorates. At a minimum they stay overall informed about the progress of the project, and sometimes provide general guidance. There are also Counsellors who actively steer the process and search for follow-up possibilities.

Issues for improvement indicated by Agricultural Counsellors

A clear need for better harmonization of foreign and Dutch demand has been indicated. Currently, Agricultural Counsellors find this harmonization very difficult. This, for example, can result in vagueness at the side of the Counsellors about the approval of research (and capacity development) areas presented to the Cluster Board International. It is also indicated that it has not been clear on what arguments proposed research requests are approved or not. Some Counsellors indicate that also better harmonization with existing projects and other funds is needed, both in the Netherlands as well as in the host countries.

During the selection of research questions and the development and adaptation of proposals, some Agricultural Counsellors think that their role could be more explicit, especially for reflection on local structures, tensions and political settings (also being a bridge for the local partners).

As was also discussed during the 'Counsellor week' the view on who has final responsibility on the implementation of the BOCI project varied. Some Counsellors are more actively involved than others.

Improved contact between Counsellors and Cluster International and improved contact between Counsellors and researchers are proposed. For an overview of issues to be improved, see table 5.

Table 4: Perceived roles of Agricultural Counsellors during the BOCI process

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11 MONITORING & EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
	Coordination of locally driven demand, fitting in LNV Policy	Counsellor writes and sends the research question to Directorate International Affairs (IZ)			Involvement in setting up activity plan with Dutch partners	Some Counsellors provide feedback		Varies from stimulating to follow-up to monitoring and full coordination	For most projects this is a very important role of the Counsellor (although how active varies a lot)	Communication of results

Table 5: Issues for improvement in BOCI process

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11 MONITORING & EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
Better tuning with Ministry of External Affairs	More contact with WUR researchers is highly appreciated	Harmonization of foreign and Dutch demand; harmonization with existing projects and other funds	Could be more interactive and transparent for both the Counsellors and the implementing bodies	Better articulation of demands to researchers	More open communication by Dutch partners, openness to feedback from Counsellors on local settings; commitment of all partners	Could be more transparent and interactive	More involvement of local partners and Counsellors	Should be focussed on practical issues; results should be understandable for all partners	Quarterly steering committee/PAC meetings with participation Embassy	Should be more practical and useable, no scientific reporting (articles)

3.2 WUR-DLO

In this paragraph the results of interviews with 5 representatives of WUR-DLO institutes, who have been or are involved in BOCI projects, are presented. The way that WUR-DLO researchers see their role during the 12 steps of the demand articulation and implementation is presented, including the links with other stakeholders. Issues for improvement as put forward by these WUR-DLO representatives are also presented.

Perceived roles of WUR-DLO and other involved stakeholders

Officially WUR-DLO is not involved in the demand articulation. Researchers should enter into the process when the questions are already formulated and when the proposals have to be developed, which is the task of WUR-DLO. All interviewed indicated that good contact between the Counsellor and the researcher is very important for a good demand articulation. Especially when the BOCI programme started and relationships started from zero, the demand articulation proved to be not clear and both the questions and the proposals were often weakly formulated. Over time the roles of stakeholders changed positively, because of (easier) contact. Contact varies a lot per project. It is difficult to indicate why. The main stakeholders who are involved the least in the demand articulation are the local partners. WUR-DLO is responsible for the development of a proposal but currently, there is too little time (one month) to do this in cooperation with local partners and responsible persons from the LNV Policy Directorates. Especially when researchers have no idea about Counsellors' demands beforehand, nor have a network in the country of subject, one month does not seem to suffice for the development of a proper proposal. Sometimes, when there is high policy need for a project, the Policy Directorates participate actively, which is highly appreciated. For an overview of how the researchers of WUR-DLO see their role during the 12 steps of BOCI process, see table 6.

Issues for improvement indicated by WUR-DLO

Researchers indicate that the demand articulation would work out better if researchers are included at an earlier stage in the demand articulation. Improved communication with the Counsellors and with policy workers from the LNV Policy Directorates and more transparency of the demand articulation could improve the researchers' understanding of the Dutch policy settings and the local settings in the countries. It is often not clear who the question owner is. This improved communication might result in sustainable relationships resulting in more successful projects, with useful results. From a research perspective this sustainability is very important to be able to approach the BOCI projects in a more programmatic manner. The ad hoc character of most of the projects cause that the expectation about impacts can not be high. Flexibility is important, ad hoc projects can be good for obtaining quick results. If projects intend to cause a real impact, there should be a more long term programmatic approach to it. Another issue to improve for more impact is donor coordination.

It is indicated that it is very difficult to obtain local commitment to a project. For some of the interviewed it seems to be questionable if the research questions are really based on local demands. Participation of local partners needs more attention, as their commitment is necessary but often there are no official agreements with them. In BOCI there is also no budget available for local partners. Additional funds should be found.

Researchers agree that in most projects the monitoring and evaluation component is very weakly formulated. Causes for this might be the little priority it is given by LNV (no clear demand for it) and the limited time that currently is given for proposal development. It is proposed to have more regular meetings between the policy workers and the implementing partners, especially when projects need adjustments. Researchers also often do not receive feedback on the reports produced during the project. An overview of issues for improvement as indicated by researchers from WUR-DLO, see table 7.

Table 6: Perceived roles of WUR-DLO during the BOCI process

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11. MONITORING & EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
	Sometimes involved development ideas with Agricultural Counsellor	Sometimes assists the Agricultural Counsellor in formulating the right question		Cluster Management sets out tender and assigns	Reformulation ² towards LNV policy needs		sometimes with input from LNV and/or Counsellors and/or local partners	Project leaders are responsible for their action plan	Writing mid-term and final report, and sometimes involvement learning mechanisms	

Table 7: Issues for improvement in BOCI process (WUR-DLO)

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11. MONITORING & EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
	Counsellors often do not know BOCI nor WUR-DLO, so a forum for better contact between researchers and Counsellors is needed	Improved formulation of research questions by agricultural Counsellors for clarity researchers		internal expression of interest, could be improved.	it is often not clear what policy makers want; research should have a research programme instead of working through ad hoc projects			Limited budget for participation of local researchers; clarity is needed between research-agricultural council-LNV		

² With reformulation we mean 'widening' (verbreden)

3.3 DIRECTORATE KNOWLEDGE

In this paragraph the key findings of an interactive group interview/workshop with 3 representatives and individual interviews with several persons of Directorate Knowledge (DK) are presented. This paragraph shows how DK representatives view their role and the links with other stakeholders during the demand articulation and implementation. It should be noted that the image might not be complete, because of lack of time during the interviews. Issues for improvement, which came up during the workshop and individual interviews are also proposed.

Role of Directorate Knowledge and links with other stakeholders

DK plays a general important role during the BOCI process, because DK is the secretary of the Cluster Board International. During the agenda setting, DK, together with the Directorate International Affairs, decides upon the knowledge agenda for the Cluster International. DK has a clear picture of both the policy priorities and the knowledge agenda. DK sometimes assists the Agricultural Counsellor in the formulation of the research question, also by involving people from the Policy Directorates. This creates an important feed-back loop towards the Counsellor, who is seen as the question “owner”. DK developed a standard format for the Counsellors to submit their knowledge questions to LNV. During the question assessment DK is responsible for reviewing the questions on relevance for the knowledge agenda. When relevant questions have been selected, it is DK, being the secretary of the Cluster Board International that communicates with WUR-DLO through an invitation to provide proposals. When WUR-DLO develops the proposals, in some cases DK provides assistance. During the assessment of the proposals DK gives advice to the Cluster Board International on relevance for the knowledge agenda. And after approval of proposals, DK communicates the results with WUR-DLO through a letter of assignment. During the implementation of the project, DK is overall responsible for the project budget. Based on the final report, DK advises the Cluster Board International on a possible continuation of a multi-year project.

Issues for improvement indicated by Directorate Knowledge

Currently the knowledge agenda is not integrated in the regional visions and the yearly plans at country level. Improving this would better ensure that the knowledge agenda is taken on board. DK recognizes that a good relationship between the Counsellors and DK, in which DK might play a more active role, can be very fruitful in terms of proper question formulation during the demand articulation phase. Currently, as BOCI is rather new, the relationships with Counsellors are ad hoc, but improving. The guiding and advising role during the demand articulation could be more structural. Although a lot of work has been done to develop procedures for the BOCI process, DK can play a very important role in further optimizing the current procedure, especially for the demand articulation. This means not only actively linking with the Agricultural Counsellors, but also with the WUR-DLO researchers, when they are developing the proposals. This contact is now mainly informal and non-structural. Also the feedback of several assessments during the demand articulation needs improvement.

The implementation is said to be a black box now for DK, except for the mid-term reviews and final reports that all project leaders prepare. There is a clear need for improved interaction with involved policy workers (from the Agricultural Councils and from the LNV Policy Directorates), but also with the researchers and with the local partners. As DK is also accountable for the success or failure of a project, it is indicated that more attention should be given to the structuring of the monitoring and evaluation system, especially during the development of the proposal. The current reporting lacks focus on the learning element, and should include more elements on outcomes and impact of the project.

Table 8: Role of Directorate Knowledge during the BOCI process

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11. MONITORING & EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
Decide upon knowledge agenda		Sometimes assistance to Counsellor	Assessment on knowledge relevance and advice to CBI; Represents LNV inviting WUR-DLO to provide proposals		Provides feedback (sometimes) to WUR-DLO	Writes letter of assignment to WUR-DLO		Responsible for the budget; Receives mid-term reviews	Pre-advice and advice to Cluster international and Counsellor after final evaluation report	Overall final responsibility, because accountable

Table 9: Issues for improvement (DK)

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	(8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS)	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11. MONITORING & EVALUATION	11. RESULTS & IMPACT
Knowledge agenda in Regional Visions & yearly plans; Regular updating of knowledge agenda	A more active relationship between counsellors and DK	Guiding and advising by DK should be structurally in place	Application of assessment form is bottleneck. Should form be improved or should people be more stimulated to use the form?		More attention for communication and monitoring by WUR-DLO			Is black box for DK. Need for more interaction researcher-policy worker	Reporting lacks information on outcomes and impact	Reporting lacks information on outcomes and impact

3.4 CLUSTER BOARD INTERNATIONAL (CBI)

In this paragraph the key findings of an interactive group interview/workshop with representatives of the Cluster Board International are presented. This paragraph shows how Cluster Board International representatives view their role and the links with other stakeholders during the demand articulation and implementation. Issues for improvement, which came up during the workshop and individual interviews are proposed. Results of an extra interview with the chairman of the Cluster Board International are included.

Perceived roles Cluster Board International and links with other stakeholders

The Cluster Board International (CBI) is composed of representatives of those Directorates who actively participate. Theoretically these include all LNV Directorates, but in practise this turns out not be this way. The same LNV Directorates are also represented in the Regional Teams, where the Regional Visions are developed together with the relevant Counsellors. CBI develops and updates the Knowledge Agenda for Cluster International and decides upon allocation of the budget across themes and regions. LNV Policy Directorates in the CBI, under the direction of the Directorate General, make the final decision about the Knowledge Agenda. Members of the CBI are responsible for linking with relevant Counsellors (depending on policy priority areas). They are important in communicating the existence of BOCI funds and priority areas, especially because all knowledge questions formulated by the Counsellors are assessed on policy relevance by people from the different Policy Directorates. They also may link up with researchers from WUR-DLO during the proposal development. CBI makes the final decision on the selection of research questions that come from the Counsellors. Then CBI brings out the official request for proposals to WUR-DLO, which the Secretary (DK) communicates. CBI also makes the final decision about the distribution of assignments during the implementation. The Cluster Board has the final financial responsibility and decides upon a possible continuation of a project for the next year, per annum. As Directorates very often have an interest in the outputs of a project, they 'feel' responsible for the implementation of the project. A schematic overview of the role of the Cluster Board International in the 12 steps of the BOCI process is given in table 10.

Issues for improvement indicated by CBI

The issues that can be improved are described here mainly in relation to the Cluster International but also implications for e.g. the Counsellors and WUR-DLO are included. The findings show that agenda setting is very broad, and it is proposed to include the knowledge agenda in the regional visions and yearly work plans of the Agricultural Counsellors. This would enhance the clarity for Agricultural Counsellors and WUR-DLO on the settings in which the knowledge questions can be developed. However, generally the regional visions are clear. It is not so much WHAT needs to be done but rather HOW. It is generally agreed that the success of a project very much depends upon proper communication, especially towards implementers (WUR-DLO) and local partners, about the results of question assessments and proposal assessments.

There also seems to be a need to streamline / optimize the current procedures, especially for the demand articulation, in order to obtain realistic project budgets early in the process and a transparent assessment of the questions and proposals and feedback to the Counsellors. Counsellors need proper tools to define realistic research questions, including budget, partners and proposed outputs, outcomes and impact.

The CBI also indicated that the involvement of local stakeholders should start at a very early stage in the demand articulation, i.e. during the question formulation by the Agricultural Counsellor but also during the proposal development by WUR-DLO.

Learning during the implementation process should be (more) systematic with stakeholders. Therefore it is important that the outputs and outcomes of BOCI projects are better communicated and discussed. In general the Cluster Board should put more effort in communicating the existence, relevance and results of the BOCI programme within the Ministry and to the outside world. Another issue that came up is that the planning processes of e.g. the Counsellors (e.g. development of yearly plans), and the demand articulation process (including assessment and selection of research questions and tendering by WUR-DLO) need to be further streamlined.

One of the main issues that came out of the discussions was that in the current process it is not clear who the “owner” of the project is. Who is the responsible for the success of a project? Agricultural Counsellors often feel responsible for the progress of the project because they want to reach their objectives. However, they are not responsible for the development of the research and capacity development proposals, in which expected results and monitoring indicators are often not properly formulated. The Counsellors often do not feel accountable for the results. Final accountability lies within the Ministry, and the Cluster Board is accountable for the successes and failures of BOCI projects. After tendering and accepting proposals, the WUR has a contractual agreement with the Ministry and therefore is also accountable. The role of the Agricultural Counsellor in terms of accountability would need to be further looked at.

In table 11 all relevant issues as discussed above can be found along the 12 steps of BOCI process.

Table 10: Perceived roles of Cluster Board International during the BOCI process

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS)	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11 MONITORING & EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
Knowledge agenda development and update; Budget allocation across themes & regions	Members link with Counsellors & Directorates		Assessment of relevance research questions on policy by members of relevant directorates; Final decision		Feedback	Directorates give advice via members in cluster board Final decision on distribution of funds	Directorates give advice via members in cluster board Final decision	Overall responsible	Assessment of mid-term review and final evaluation report	Final advice on possibility for continuation and on new thematic priorities and changes in overall budget and budget allocations

Table 11: Issues for improvement as indicated during interview CBI

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	(8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS)	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. + 11. MONITORING & EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
Too broad. Recommendation: Include knowledge agenda in regional vision and country year plans.	Quality varies; Involvement local partners? Recommendation: ACTUAL – FUTURE situation should be in problem identification	More involvement local stakeholders needed. The questions should be easily identifiable and should be well communicated. Recommendations: Existence of local network around question, including WUR Capacity development (e.g. training) of Counsellors to assess the quality of articulated questions/project descriptions and proposed budget	Need to synchronise processes (around the year plans) Lack of communication on the results of the review process Recommendations: Streamline procedure. Enhance role DK		Development with local partners and Counsellor; Researcher often does not understand policy context			Question – owner of BOCI project? Responsibility is not clear. High variety of projects. In some cases no contact between researchers, Directorates and Counsellors.	No strict project formulation; Multi-partner projects; guiding commission rarely exists; system of advancing budget could be reconsidered ³ Counsellor has no formal role but has responsibility; No assessment of partners; Involvement of local partners not clear; No impact assessment is done; Not systematically focused on learning – task for cluster board to bring together relevant projects.	Recommendations: carry out impact assessment at every level, not only at project level. Include results in reports to parliament; circulate summaries within LNV; more communication by Counsellors

³ now 100% of the total budget is given to the WUR in advance

3.5 LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE LINKAGE BETWEEN POLICY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This paragraph describes the results of the literature review. In 3.5.1 the search strategy to find relevant literature on the subject is explained. In 3.5.2 an introduction is given to current thinking about research-policy link, how this has changed and what the role of research could be in policy development. The concept of evidence based policy (EBP) is described in 3.5.3 and in 3.5.4 tools and approaches are presented on what policy makers can do to increase the use of evidence (research results). Four (4) examples of successful settings in which evidence supported policy decision making are described in 3.5.5.

It must be indicated that most of the literature focuses on the linkage policy-research-practice mainly from the perspective of research and some from the perspective of civil society. Very little is written about the perspective of the policy makers and much ground still has to be covered in this respect. Therefore, the findings described below are mainly written from a research perspective. However, this is done with an open eye to the possibility to extend these findings to policy makers.

Literature references and excerpts/citations from selected publications are presented in annex 7.

3.5.1 Search strategy

The search for literature has been focused on publications / information on the relation between policy–research–practice, and more specifically on mechanisms of demand articulation for research in development contexts.

Since no specific literature about demand articulation in research processes has been identified in initial searches, the search terms used have been expanded to include “shape research agenda”, “research policy link”, “research priority setting”, “research commissioning”, “commissioning research”, and “needs based research”.

The search for scientific articles has been conducted in:

- bibliographic databases:
 - Bibliographic database “Scopus” (Elsevier)
 - Bibliographic database “CAB abstracts”
- the WUR library catalogue;
- selected scientific journals which focus on (public) policy and/or development (scanned for relevant articles from 2000 onwards):
 - Development in Practice
 - Journal of International Development
 - Public Administration and Development
 - Development and Change
 - Development Policy Review: journal of ODI

- Evidence and Policy Journal 011006
- Internet: search using Google
- Internet: search through specialized portal website (eldis.org)
- Selected websites including information on policy-research linkages in a development context.

3.5.2 Introduction to current thinking about research-policy link

It is widely recognized that research can have powerful influences on both policies and institutions in support of policy objectives and is therefore likely to be an essential element in meeting the different policy goals (DFID, 2002; Court & Young, 2003). However, there is limited understanding of the links between research and policy (Young, 2005; Vibe et al, 2002) and most of the literature found focuses on the role of the researcher in the research-policy link, especially on how researchers can increase the use and impact of their research results in the policy process. There is general lack of studies that cover the role of policy workers and what they can do to improve the policy-research linkage. Several (international) agencies are interested in and working on creating effective / efficient research-policy-practice links (for key agencies, see table in annex 7) and they provide a rich variety of ideas, experiences, examples and recommendations. For this review we focused on those issues useful for policy workers.

Understanding about definitions is important. In this review we follow Young's (Young, 2005) broad definition of research and policy. Research is not only the classical scientific research, but includes any systematic learning process (from theory building and data collection to action research). Policy is not just a set of policy documents or legislation, but is about setting and implementing a course of action.

Policy workers, researchers and practitioners worldwide are recognizing that there is a high need for proper tools to help people decide what to do to increase the impact of their programmes, because, there is a lot of research going on that does not actually relate to many of the problems that policy-makers are looking at. An important insight gaining ground these days is that policy processes can no longer be assumed to be linear and logical or that research influences policy in a one-way process, or that there is a clear divide between researchers and policy-makers. Traditionally, the link between research findings and policy processes has been viewed as linear, whereby research findings are shifted from research to policy, where the findings have some impact on policy makers' decisions. More likely policy processes are dynamic, complex and chaotic. Literature on the research-policy-practice links is now moving to a view that emphasizes a multi-direction process between research, policy and practice, shaped by multiple relations and reservoirs of knowledge (Young, 2005; ODI, 2006).

Diana Stone (2001) describes 12 ways of conceiving research-policy dynamics, which, together, provide a multi-faceted picture of the research-policy nexus indicating that there are many possible routes to 'bridging' research and policy. The 12 steps are described in detail in annex 7.

The lack of impact of research is often said to be located in poor understanding of researchers of policy-making dynamics. Looking at these dynamics, there are no clear steps, strategies or guidelines that will guarantee successful use of research by decision-makers. Still, many efforts have been undertaken to provide tools for researchers. For example, ODI, under the RAPID programme, developed a handbook for researchers: Tools for Policy Impact (Start and Hovland, 2004), providing a good and extended list of research tools, context assessment tools, communication tools and policy influence tools. The lack of impact of research can also be related to the lack of understanding among policy makers on how policy relates to research, and the lack of appreciating the contribution that research can make to policy making.

3.5.3 Evidence based policy (EBP)

In response to a need to shift from opinion-based policy to a more rigorous, rational approach that gathers, critically appraises and uses high quality research evidence to inform policymaking and professional practice, and the recognition of the powerful influence that research can have on policies and institutions, and to bridge the gap between policy and research, the concept “evidence based policy” (EBP) has been developed. EBP, which emerged in the UK, and is gaining ground worldwide, helps people make well informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006). EBP is a set of methods which informs the policy process, rather than one which aims directly to affect the eventual goals of the policy. The pursuit of EBP is based on the premise that policy decisions should be better informed by a evidence, and should include rational analysis.

This focus on evidence based policy making has become part of the ODI RAPID (Research and Policy in Development) methods and tools repertoire. Also DEFRA (the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) is integrating evidence based policy making in its work (Defra website, 2007).

RAPID works on the following three issues:

- how policy-makers can best use research, for evidence-based policy-making;
- how researchers can best use their findings in order to influence policy;
- how to improve the interaction between researchers and policy-makers.

Bridging research and policy through this approach should take into account the different notions of evidence by researchers and policy makers (see table 12), which clearly call for effective interaction/communication between policy entrepreneurs and researchers to get the notions together.

Table 12: different notions of evidence

Researchers' evidence	Policy makers' evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'scientific' (context free) • Proven empirically • Theoretically driven • As long as it takes • Caveats and qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colloquial (contextual) • Anything that seems reasonable • Policy relevant • Timely • Clear message

Source: P. Davies, Impact to Insight Meeting, ODI, 2005

Policy processes ideally involve different stages: agenda setting; formulation; implementation; and evaluation. Evidence has the potential to influence the policymaking process at each of these stages. Different types of evidence are often needed for different parts of the policy process, and time considerations are likely to influence the mechanisms available to mobilise evidence (Young & Shaxon, 2006). Table 13 shows the different stages of the policy process and the related evidence issues. It is important for policy makers to know in which stage they are demanding evidence from researchers, so researchers understand better what policy makers want from them.

Table 13: Components of policy process and different evidence issues

Stage of the policy process	Description	Different evidence issues
Agenda setting	Awareness and priority given to an issue	The evidence needs here are in terms of identifying new problems or the build up of evidence regarding the magnitude of a problem so that relevant policy actors are aware that the problem is indeed important. A key factor here is the credibility of evidence but also the way evidence is communicated.
Formulation	There are two key stages to the policy formulation process: determining the policy options and then selecting the preferred option (see Young and Quinn, 2002: 13-14)	For both stages, policy makers should ideally ensure that their understanding of the specific situation and the different options is as detailed and comprehensive as possible; only then can they make informed decisions about which policy to go ahead and implement. This includes the instrumental links between an activity and an outcome as well as the expected cost and impact of an intervention. The quantity and credibility of the evidence is important.
Implementation	Actual practical activities	Here the focus is on operational evidence to improve the effectiveness of initiatives. This can include analytic work as well as systematic learning around technical skills, expert knowledge and practical experience. Action research and pilot projects are often important. The key is that the evidence is practically relevant across different contexts.
Evaluation	Monitoring and assessing the process and impact of an intervention	The first goal here is to develop monitoring mechanisms. Thereafter, according to Young and Quinn (2002), 'a comprehensive evaluation procedure is essential in determining the effectiveness of the implemented policy and in providing the basis for future decision-making'. In the processes of monitoring and evaluation, it is important to ensure not only that the evidence is objective, thorough and relevant, but also that it is then communicated successfully into the continuing policy process.

Source: CIDA workshop 2007- Adapted from Pollard and Court (2005).

In bridging policy and research, as Mr. John Young mentioned during a presentation at the ODI/INASP Research-Policy Symposium in Oxford, November 2006, it is also important to take into account that “ there are a whole load of other factors that influence what policy decision makers do, including evidence from research, but also experience and expertise, their own judgement, the amount of resources they have, values, habits and tradition, lobbyist and pressure groups, pragmatics and contingencies”. In line with this, in a DFID research policy paper on research for poverty reduction (2002) it is stated that research or evidence is only one element in a system. To be effective research must be located more securely in the context of wider ‘knowledge’ or ‘innovation systems. This implies, a.o., that:

1. Effectiveness and impact of research will be a function of a large number of other elements of the system being in place;
2. Success is driven by continuous interactions between supply drivers and demand drivers;
3. User engagement is likely to be a key success factor. It should be increased both to determine research needs and to facilitate the uptake. User involvement in evaluation of the research increases the potential for influence and relevance (Carden, 2004);
4. Networks and trust-relationships between the various players are central to these knowledge systems;
5. Simplistic generalisations about research are likely to be misleading. Research ranges across policy analysis, social science research, scientific and technological research.

From experiences worldwide it occurs that research is most likely to have an impact on policy if researchers, policy makers and practitioners:

1. Understand why evidence is needed in the policy making process;
2. Understand where evidence is needed in the policy making process,
3. Have access to national and international policy networks;
4. Communicate their different concerns in an effective and clear manner;
5. Have the capacity to use evidence in policy processes.

(SMEPOL Evidence based policy making workshop, Egypt, 2005)

3.5.3 What can policy makers do to increase the use of evidence?

Several literature sources argue that policy makers need to understand the value of evidence; become more informed as to what research is available and how to gain access to it; and be able to critically appraise it. The relationship will only work if researchers and policy makers work more closely together to ensure that there is an agreement, between them and within the research community, as to what constitutes evidence (ibid). Fundamentally, there needs to be increased communication and interaction between the research and policy worlds in order to strengthen the integration of policy and evidence. This can be achieved by setting up mechanisms that will facilitate greater use of evidence by policy makers. Means by which to increase the **'pull' factor for evidence** are outlined in Box 1.

Box 1: Encouraging better use of evidence in policy making

Increasing the pull for evidence

- Require the publication of the evidence base for policy decisions
- Require departmental spending bids to provide a supporting evidence base
- Submit government analysis (such as forecasting models) to external expert scrutiny
- Provide open access to information – leading to more informed citizens and pressure groups

Facilitating better evidence use

- Encourage better collaboration across internal analytical services (e.g. researchers, statisticians and economists)
- Co-locate policy makers and internal analysts
- Integrate analytical staff at all stages of the policy development process
- Link R&D strategies to departmental business plans
- Cast external researchers more as partners than as contractors
- Second more university staff into government
- Train staff in evidence use

Source: Abstracted from PIU (2000) and Bullock et al. (2001), in Nutley (2003).

Box 1 also presents issues for **facilitating better evidence use in policy making**. There is a need to build bridges which facilitate greater sustained interaction between researchers and research users. One suggestion has been to encourage early involvement of researchers (in-house and outside) in the policy making process. Another suggestion is setting up intermediary bodies. Another possible response is the secondments to encourage the exchange of staff between government departments and universities. Other possible means by which to increase communication are: fora for discussion and joint training and professional development opportunities for policy makers and researchers.

Issues of networks and trust-relationships come forward in most literature on policy-research-practice links. In a review (Innvaer et al. *J Hlth Serv Res Pol* 2002;7:241) of 24 studies that asked over 2000 policy makers what facilitated or prevented their use of research evidence, the following came out:

- #1 facilitator of research use: personal contact between researchers and policy-makers;
- #1 barrier to research use: absence of personal contact between researchers and policy-makers.

Personal two-way communication between decision-makers and researchers should be used to facilitate the use of research. This can reduce mutual mistrust and promote a better understanding of policy-making by researchers and research by policy-makers.

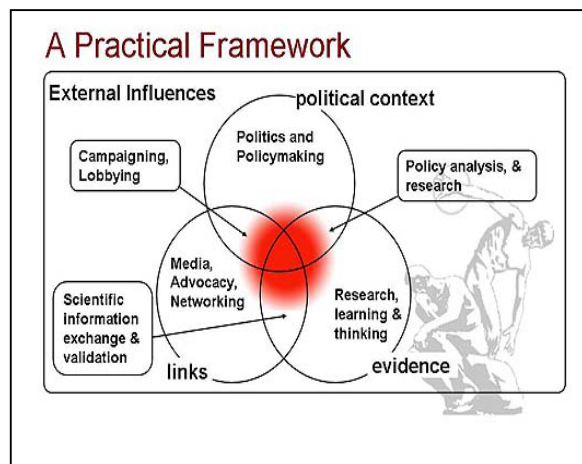
Masood Ahmed, Director General of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), also states that close relationships between policy makers and researchers are very important. According to him a crucial role in these relationships is played by **'translators'**. They are people who have credibility in both the research and policy-making communities and

are able to bridge the two. They not only help to simplify research findings into policy friendly narratives, but also stop misinterpretation or over-simplification to suit policy makers' priors.

In a report from the Science and Technology Committee in the UK Parliament (Scientific Advice, Risk and Evidence-based Policy making, 2006) it came up that it is difficult to engage research and policy making, because policy making is in nature short-term, while the nature of research is in nature long-term. What was recommended in this report was that in order to make policy processes more long-term, policy makers need to make sure that there is an **element of horizon scanning during policy development**, so some sort of looking into the future, though, by its nature, some of the policy must be short-term and politically driven. Not all policy should be evidence driven.

Within the ODI RAPID programme, a **useful framework for analysis** is developed that might help policy makers, researchers and practitioners to understand the role that evidence-based research can play in influencing policy, and therefore understanding the impact that certain research might have, or should have. Especially in the above described dynamic and complex view on the research-policy link. This framework is called the RAPID *Context, Evidence, Links (CEL) Framework* (see figure 2 below). The four components of the framework can provide the user with in-depth and valuable information regarding policy windows, key policy actors and networks, gaps in the existing evidence, alternative means of communication, and trends and changes in the external environment. Addressing all these issues can be a discouraging task. This framework can be used to ease this. The framework is easily mapped onto reality. The political context sphere (upper circle) maps onto politics and policy making, evidence (right lower circle) onto the processes of research, learning and thinking, and links (left lower circle) onto networking, the media and advocacy. The overlap between the political context and evidence represents the process of policy analysis - the study of how to implement and the likely impact of specific policies. The overlap between evidence and links is the process of academic discourse through publications and conferences, and the area between links and political context is the world of campaigning and lobbying. The area in the middle, where all circles overlap, is where there is likely to be the most immediate link between evidence and policy. It is the area where convincing evidence providing a practical solution to a current policy problem, that is supported by and brought to the attention of policy makers by actors in all three areas (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006). In annex 7 more detailed information about the CEL framework has been included.

Figure 2. The RAPID *Context, Evidence, Links (CEL) Framework*



Also within the ODI RAPID programme, a Toolkit for Progressive Policymakers in developing Countries (Sutcliffe and Court, 2006) has been developed, with approaches and tools identified as lessons from EBP in the UK. Especially the sections on: Public-oriented Tools, Getting better Advice and Evidence, and Other Web-based Resources, provide valuable information.

Phil Davies from the UK Cabinet Office (2005) also presents a list of possible solutions based on his experiences:

- Integrate and plan research into policy strategically
- Establish incentives for policy makers to use evidence, i.e. by requiring them to demonstrate the use of evidence in their annual performance reviews;
- Establish (signed-up) ownership of the evidence and commitment to using findings by senior policy makers;
- Require from researchers to clarify the policy /practice issues with users ex ante;
- Establish users' theory of change/logic model;
- Establish answerable questions;
- Establish with researchers a policy-practise timetable;
- Make sure that there is knowledge translation (establish key message clearly)
- Provide appropriate formats for presentation.

The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality has developed two tools, a State-of-the-Art and a Quick Scan, both aimed at quickly identifying available knowledge / information around a certain issue (Roosjens and Stavast). These tools have been developed to enhance the quality of the “open programming” of research (a research fund which is not linked to specific themes, topics or implementation restrictions and which can be applied for at any time of year). The results of the Quick Scan can be integrated in the demand articulation phase of a research process, in the articulation process of a knowledge agenda, and in the development of policies. Based on the Quick Scan it can be decided that further research is needed, but also that knowledge transfer or capacity development is needed. The “knowledge directorate” of the Ministry facilitates the conduct of State-of-the-Arts and Quick Scans.

The same Ministry (Knowledge Agenda Team, no date) also works with the development of knowledge agendas. A knowledge agenda identifies the need for knowledge from a policy point of view. It is used as an instrument to guide the use of knowledge and as a basis for the “kennisprogrammering” (commissioning knowledge services). In annex 7 there is more information on these 3 tools.

3.5.4 Examples to learn from

There is a richness of experiences in how to improve the impact of research in policy making and improving the research-policy-practise links. It is, for example, interesting to see which methods are used for research prioritisation by different organisations that support the international development research. A summary of this is presented in annex 7, coming from a

Review of the British Department for International Development's role in the International Research Effort (Sivadasan et al, 2003).

Below, in a nutshell, four interesting examples are outlined.

1. DFID internal policy making – agenda setting for research (see Dylan Winder, 2006):

DFID is part of the UK government system in which there has been a greater focus on science and evidence-based policy. DFID's approach is much decentralized, because of more than 40 country offices. DFID has its own policy division, which is a sort of internal think-tank formed by people who can turn technical ideas into collaborative partnerships, working with advisory groups with technical staff. A new research strategy has been developed through i.e.:

- Open consultation on the web;
- 3 meetings with top international academics in different relevant sectors;
- Production of 6 relevant background papers;
- Donor consultation and coordination;
- Internal advisory groups.

Within the wider research strategy research is commissioned through providing the following incentives to researchers:

- Any research proposal must have a communication strategy;
- At least 10 % of the budget must be spent on communication (communication is: engaging with policy makers, not only by setting up a website);
- Provision of guidance notes drawn on things like the RAPID Framework;
- Advice;
- Learning workshops for researchers from different sectors.
- For better knowledge management, a Research for Development website, which is an information portal, has been put up.

Learning is a big issue and the issue of capacity building, of policy workers, researchers and evidence users, is very important. More attention should be given to this aspect.

2. The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) is an independent organisation that supports evidence-informed decision making in the organisation, management and delivery of health services through funding research, building capacity and transferring knowledge (see Gold, 2006). CHSRF uses knowledge transfer and exchange, to create a culture of mutual learning, problem solving and innovation, for a strong, Canadian healthcare system, guided by solid, research-based management and policy decisions. They make use of 'knowledge brokers' (possibly individuals or teams in decision-making organizations) who:

- Understand both the research and decision making environments;
- Are able to find and assess relevant research;
- Have entrepreneurial skills (networking, problem solving skills, innovative solutions, etc.);

- Mediation and negotiation;
- Understanding of principles of adult learning;
- Communication skills;
- Credibility.

3. In the case of Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat which was set up in South Africa as a clearing house for policy relevant and academically credible research, it is highlighted that research-policy links are complex and multilayered and that think-tanks can help policy-makers to make informed decisions. The best environment is one where there is efficient and accountable government with competent policy-makers who clearly articulate their research needs. For more reading see Court and Young, 2003.

4. There are many examples indicating the importance of networks, formal and informal, in the policy cycle, varying from global public policy networks (e.g. World Commission on Dams or Global Environment Facility), knowledge networks, communities of practice, and others. Networks can influence the different stages of the policy making process. For example, networks were very important during the policy reforms in the forestry sector in India. These networks included policy makers, researchers and representatives of society. Findings of research were communicated and assessed in these networks. The networks also created a factor of trust and respect. Networks played an important role in strengthening the new policy, by bringing the voice of the marginalized closer to the policy-making and policy levels. For more reading about networks, see Perkin & Court (2005) and Court & Young (2003).

4. DISCUSSION

In this chapter the roles of the different stakeholders involved in the BOCI process and the linkages between policy makers, research & capacity development and practice are discussed. Demand articulation, project implementation and monitoring & evaluation issues are presented separately. Also success factors are discussed and proposed issues for improvement are highlighted. The key conclusions can be found in the next chapter.

Generally it is observed that the roles of the different stakeholders vary per project. It is not exactly clear why. Some interviewed stakeholders think it depends a lot on the (pro-) active attitude of the different stakeholders. Throughout the process of demand articulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation there is vagueness about roles and responsibilities and in many situations this creates misunderstanding. The importance of the role of the Agricultural Counsellor during the whole process is indicated by all stakeholders involved in the study. In tables 14 and 15 an aggregated overview of the perceived roles of each of the key stakeholders in the BOCI programme are presented.

Demand articulation

As indicated by LNV, an important element of the LNV knowledge agenda is guiding the knowledge development by actual demand, and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the demand articulation phase. The demand articulation for BOCI projects should take place within the boundaries of the LNV themes and the regional visions, so the generated knowledge is well anchored in LNV's Policy. The issue is not *what* has to be done (as the projects have to fit within the policy framework), but *how* this has to be done.

From tables 14 and 15 one can see that in the **demand articulation phase** (steps 1 -8) the formal **roles** for agenda setting and articulation of the demand lie mainly with the LNV policy workers, in particular the Agricultural Counsellor, the Regional Teams and DK. CBI has overall responsibility for the programme in terms of finances, agenda setting and assessing the research questions from the Agricultural Counsellors.

DK and other policy directorates sometimes play an advisory role in this process but this is not structural. WUR-DLO and to a lesser extent local partners are sometimes also involved in the demand articulation process but this is neither formalized nor structural.

When relating this to the initial framework for analysis (figure 1), another figure (figure 3) can be drawn, showing more involvement during demand articulation from the LNV policy workers (bigger circles), especially the Agricultural Counsellors, and the relationships between the different stakeholders (through the linking of circles). In the areas of overlap structures/bodies are indicated which are in place to guide/assist/bridge the linkages between the stakeholders.

Table 14: Overview of perceived key roles by interviewed stakeholders in BOCI process steps 1-6⁴

Cluster Board International (CBI)	Budget allocation for BOCI across themes and regions	Members CBI might link with Counsellors and LNV Directorates		Makes final decision based on advice of DK and Regional Teams		
LNV Regional Teams	Develop Regional Visions with Agricultural Counsellors	Might give feedback to Agricultural Counsellor on Policy relevance		Members of involved Directorates assess on policy relevance		Sometimes members provide feedback to the researcher
Directorate Knowledge (DK)	Responsible for Knowledge Agenda of LNV		Sometimes assists the Agricultural Counsellor in formulating the question for research or capacity development	Assesses articulated questions on knowledge development/capacity development and sends out invitation for proposals to WUR-DLO		Sometimes provides feedback to the researcher
WUR-DLO		WUR-DLO staff is sometimes involved when having ideas, which are developed with Agricultural Counsellor	Sometimes assists the Agricultural Counsellor in formulating research or capacity development question		Cluster Management distributes tender within WUR-DLO and decides which departments can develop a proposal	Different departments develop action plans for assigned research or capacity development questions
Local partners⁵		Agricultural Counsellor often involves local partners				Project partners, but sometimes involved in proposal development
Agricultural Counsellor	Involved in development Regional Vision; development Year Plan; Feedback to CBI on knowledge agenda themes	Coordination of locally driven demand articulation	Writing and submitting to IZ and DK following format as provided by DK			Sometimes involved in development project action plan by WUR-DLO
ACTORS ↑ STEPS →	1. agenda setting	2. problem identification	3. question formulation	4. question assessment	5. call for proposals	6. proposal development

⁴ An aggregated overview of perceived roles based on interviews with LNV policy workers at different levels and WUR/DLO researchers/project leaders

⁵ Local partners were not interviewed during this study. The roles presented here are indicated by the interviewed stakeholders

Table 15 Overview of perceived key roles by interviewed stakeholders in BOCI process steps 7-12⁶

Cluster Board International (CBI)	Final decision for financing of research and capacity development projects		Not directly involved, but are overall responsible	Assessment of mid-term and final reports	Final advice for continuation, new thematic areas, changes in overall budget and budget allocation
LNV Regional Teams	Give advice to CBI on policy relevance	Sometimes members provide feedback to the WUR-DLO staff	Interested in progress and/or involved in adaptation of action plans during implementation	Assessment of mid-term and final reports	
Directorate Knowledge (DK)	Writes letter of assignment to WUR-DLO		Is responsible for budget and checks mid-term and final reports	Assessment on mid-term and final reports; Gives advice to CBI and Agricultural Counsellors	
WUR-DLO		Project leaders adapt proposals, sometimes with input from LNV and/or Counsellors and/or local partners	Project leaders are responsible for their action plan	Project leaders write mid-term and final report, and sometimes involve learning mechanisms	Results might be useful
Local partners⁷		Project partners, rarely involved in proposal development	Project partners, but no budget allocated to them		Results might be useful, project might have impact
Agricultural Counsellor	Sometimes provides advice to CBI	Sometimes provide feedback to WUR-DLO staff involved	Is client, but often stimulates or coordinates	Varies from checking the mid-term and final reports to active follow up, monitoring and coordination	Can spread results through media, workshops, etc.
ACTORS ↑ STEPS →	7. assessment proposals	8. adaptation proposals	9. project implementation	10. + 11. monitoring & evaluation	12. results & impact

⁶ An aggregated overview of perceived roles based on interviews with LNV policy workers at different levels and WUR/DLO researchers/project leaders

⁷ Local partners were not interviewed during this study. The roles presented here are indicated by the interviewed stakeholders

DK sits in the heart of the links between LNV, Agricultural Counsellors and WUR-DLO. Although their level of participation seems to be not so important (small circle), DK has a crucial role in providing a bridge between these stakeholders. However, this role is not always recognized or visible. The Regional Teams (RT) provide an important platform for the linkages between the Counsellors and the LNV Directorates in The Hague, particularly in terms of the policy agendas. Apart from the development of the regional visions, their role does not seem to be formalized in terms of advice during demand articulation. Between WUR-DLO and LNV the link is provided by the Cluster Management (CM) which seems to play the role of broker between policy makers and research and capacity development. It is not clear how the link between the Counsellors and WUR-DLO is organised and who takes the initiative. Local partners are most often only linked with the Counsellors. Only sometimes do local partners have contact with WUR-DLO.

Figure 3: Stakeholders' roles and relationships during demand articulation

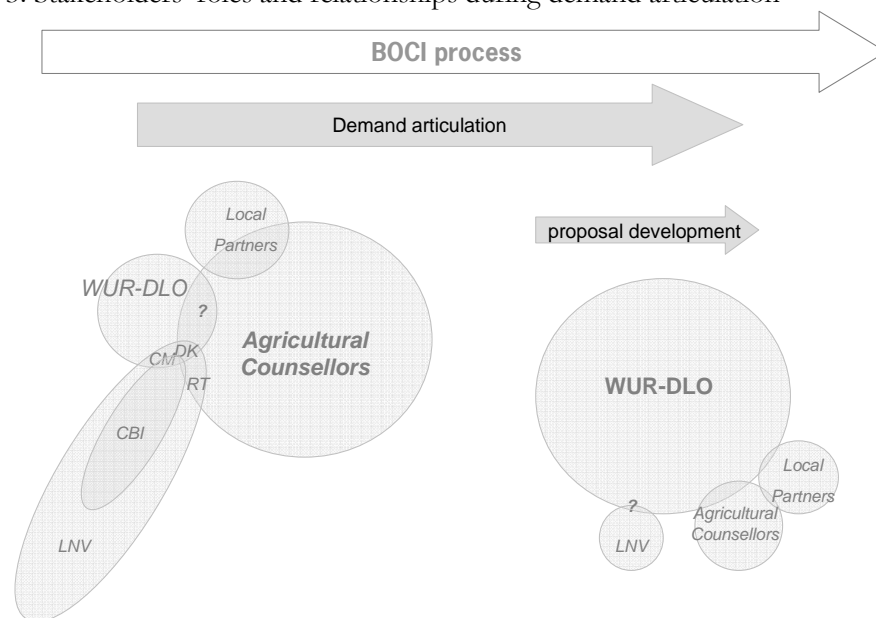


Figure 3 also shows a clear change of roles at the stage of development and adaptation of the proposal, which lays mainly in the hands of WUR-DLO with sometimes some involvement of the Agricultural Counsellor, LNV and local partners. In most cases the question owner (Agricultural Counsellor) has very limited involvement during the proposal development. It is not clear how researchers and policy workers from LNV in the Netherlands link during the proposal development phase.

The assessment of the proposals is a task for the CBI and DK in particular, with sometimes advice from the Agricultural Counsellors. Stakeholders indicated that more feedback to WUR-DLO, Agricultural Counsellors and local partners about the results of the assessment would be highly appreciated.

Some of the **success factors** that are currently supporting the demand articulation phase for the BOCI process are, as indicated by the stakeholders:

- The growing (active) role of the Agricultural Counsellor (e.g. by being clearly the question owner with consequential a more active involvement during implementation);
- Feedback loops during the several steps that take place between policy workers, researchers and the question owner (Counsellor). This has been taking place sometimes and not regularly ;
- Active involvement of DK to support Counsellors in terms of articulating their demand for research (this has been taking place sometimes and not regularly);
- Active involvement and commitment of local stakeholders, based on existing MoUs or creating new ones (with the possibility of setting budget aside for some local partners);
- Shared views of all partners on LNV policy;
- Good insights in structure, culture, policy and developments of foreign country;
- Good personal relationships with all stakeholders involved.

When one looks at the demand articulation process and the **levels of participation** of different stakeholders during the different steps of the BOCI process (for an overview please see table 16), one can see that the involvement of stakeholders varies per step and that a stakeholder may be highly involved in early stages of the demand articulation process (e.g. the Agricultural Counsellor) but very little involved at later stages which may cause problems in terms of transparency, understanding, and commitment. It may also lead to inadequate understanding and translation of the original research question into a proposal and implementation of a project that not really addresses the original need. It was difficult to assess the level of participation of local partners, but in general the participation of local stakeholders seems to be low or, at least, it turned out to be difficult to indicate their level of participation.

Implementation

During the implementation phase WUR-DLO plays the most important role. As they sign a contract with LNV, they are responsible for the implementation of the action plan. Looking at the implementation phase and the levels of participation of different stakeholders (see table 16), we can conclude that other stakeholders are much less involved, although all of them have an interest in the progress of the project. This situation is visualised in figure 5. The relationship between the ACs and WUR-DLO is not clearly defined, nor are the relationships between ACs and local partners or WUR-DLO and local partners (marked as question marks in the figure).

Table 16. Perceived level of involvement of different stakeholders in the BOCI process⁸

Cluster Board International (CBI)	XXXX	XX	X	XXXX	XXXX	X	XXXX	X	XX	XX	XXXX
LNV Regional Teams	XXXX	XX	X	XXX	X	XX	XXX	XX	X	XX	X
Directorate Knowledge (DK)	XXXX	X	XX	XXX	X	XX	XXX	X	XX	XX	X
Agricultural Counsellor	XXX	XXXX	XXXX	X	X	XX	X	XXXX	XXX	XXXX	X
WUR-DLO	X	XX	XX	X	X	XXXX	X	XX	XXXX	X	X
local partners ⁹	X	XX	X	X	X	XX	XX	XX	XX or XXX	XX or XXX	XXX
ACTORS ↑ STEPS →	1. agenda setting	2. problem identification	3. question formulation	4. question assessment	5. call for proposals	6. proposal development	7. assessment proposals	8. adaptation proposals	9. project implementation	10. + 11. monitoring & evaluation	12. results & impact

X = little or no involvement

XX = some involvement

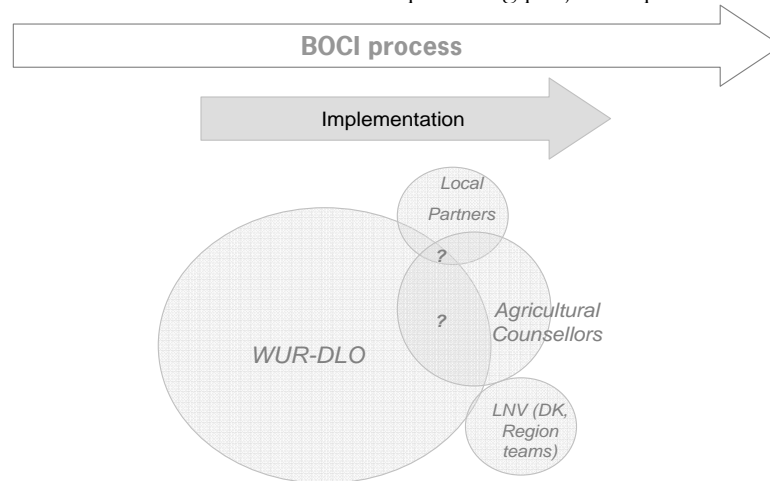
XXX = adequate involvement

XXXX = very high involvement, decision making

⁸ Aggregated overview of perceived roles based on interviews with LNV policy workers at different levels and WUR/DLO researchers/project leaders

⁹ Local partners were not interviewed during this study. The roles presented here are indicated by the interviewed stakeholders

Figure 5: Stakeholders' roles and relationships during project implementation



In some cases, as e.g. policy needs change, adaptations to the project need to be made. A **good relationship between researchers, LNV policy workers and local partners** is crucial for a successful adaptation of the project so that relevant results are created. Limiting the involvement of WUR-DLO to the implementation stage of the project might result in project proposals not addressing the real needs of the Agricultural Counsellors and the local partners. The success of the implementation depends a lot on the involvement of the several partners at the demand articulation phase. **Good relationships and clarity about roles and responsibilities** are created during the demand articulation and the fruits of this will show off during the implementation.

Success factors during the implementation phase are indicated to be:

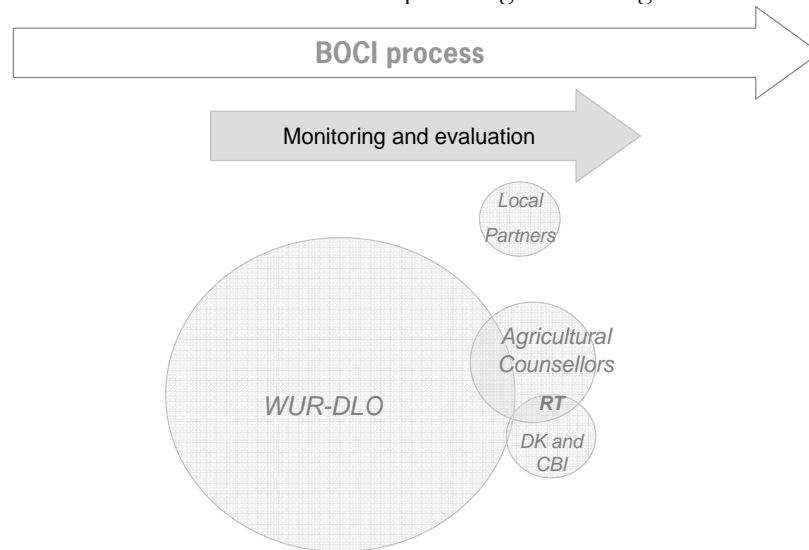
- Clear demand articulation with early involvement of key stakeholders (Agricultural Counsellor, WUR-DLO, local stakeholders);
- Good personal relationships between all stakeholders involved;
- Communication system between Agricultural Counsellors, involved LNV Directorates and possibly also WUR-DLO and local partners;
- Donor coordination within the countries and between Dutch Ministries;
- Regular stakeholder meetings, e.g. every 3 months.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is key to guide the implementation process towards the desired outputs, outcomes and impact. M&E involves defining what information is necessary for learning and decision making, how to gather and process this information, and how to make sense of the results (critical reflection) so necessary decisions for change can be made and communicated. All this needs to be supported by the necessary capacity and conditions, such as human M&E capacity, motivation to carry out M&E and financial resources. For BOCI a clear need for improving the M&E system, especially in relation to a learning process, has been indicated by several stakeholders. Currently M&E is mainly done for accountability purposes – reporting to LNV. An M&E strategy (an overall plan for monitoring and evaluation) is not a specific requirement for a BOCI project. Project leaders from WUR-DLO write mid-term and final reports. It is questionable whether the specific information needs of the different stakeholders are addressed in these reports. The Agricultural Counsellor sometimes takes

up a very active role in this respect, but it varies a lot per project. Learning during a project can only take place when feedback is given on the midterm and final reviews. This feedback is not taking place structurally during the implementation of BOCI projects, and this may limit the critical reflection and learning. This lack of critical reflection and learning results in difficulties to adapt the project during the implementation towards changing needs or changing circumstances. Adaptation in terms of the needs of the policy workers and of WUR-DLO and possible local partners becomes difficult and the ultimate outcomes may be of less importance than when there had been adequate critical reflection on the results with key stakeholders. Continuous critical reflection assures that decisions for change can be made adequately in terms of time and content. Figure 6 shows the roles of the different stakeholders and their relationships during monitoring and evaluation. Local partners seem to not be involved.

Figure 6: Stakeholders' roles and relationships during monitoring and evaluation



What is done with the results of the research and capacity development is mainly an issue for LNV policy workers, and less for WUR-DLO or local partners. Especially with ad hoc projects, there is a risk that researchers and local partners will be less committed. **Ownership** might be an issue as the level of involvement of different stakeholders during demand articulation and implementation varies a lot which might have consequences for expected results and therefore usage of the results. Therefore, it seems very important that there is adequate **communication** between WUR-DLO and policy workers (especially Agricultural Counsellors) in terms of finding out how the project is going, whether it is going the right direction and making timely (suggestions for) necessary adaptations.

In terms of sustainability one could question whether it is the right approach to leave the implementation of projects only in the hands of WUR-DLO while the demand has come from policy workers (in this case Agricultural Counsellors) and the results will be used by the Counsellors and LNV policy workers in the Netherlands.

Improved monitoring involving Agricultural Counsellors and relevant local partners during the implementation process would clearly enhance the success and sustainability of the WUR-DLO projects.

Success factors during the monitoring and evaluation are indicated to be:

- Developing a monitoring and evaluation strategy at the start of the project. This should be based on a clear project strategy;
- Good communication between all stakeholders during the process as a whole;
- Installing regular feedback loops between question owner (Agricultural Counsellor, e.g. with local partner) and implementer (WUR-DLO);
- Direct contact between researcher and LNV policy worker to translate research results into clear and usable policy messages.

Issues for improvement proposed by interviewed stakeholders

In tables 17 and 18 an overview is given of all the issues for improvement, as proposed by the different stakeholders, for the 12 steps in which BOCI has been divided for this study. Most of these recommended improvements are related to **involvement of and communication between stakeholders** and **clarity about roles and responsibilities**. Some specific issues we would like to highlight here:

1. **Inclusion of a clear knowledge agenda in the regional visions and yearly plans** by Agricultural Counsellors. It will be necessary for the members of the Regional Teams and the Counsellors to appreciate the value of such a knowledge agenda. Capacities will have to be built or a broker has to be put in place to guide the specific agenda setting, to make sure that the agenda is specific enough and well tuned with other agendas (e.g. from other Ministries). DK could play this broker role and ensure that the knowledge agenda is integrated in the regional visions and yearly plans;
2. There is a need to **synchronize the project process with the policy process**. If these processes are not in line, it becomes likely that it will be difficult to adapt projects towards changing needs and that expected results may not be achieved. A clear articulation of the demand is also crucial for this;
3. Currently the results of BOCI projects are often not ‘useful’ or ‘understandable’ for policy workers. Researchers often communicate in academic language, but policy workers need **results to be practical and usable in policy processes**. This should be clear from the demand articulation onwards. A **clearly articulated research question** and requiring a communication strategy for communicating the results might help steering researchers towards more practical results. Also improved **monitoring and evaluation** that focuses on the specific information needs of the different stakeholders and involves stakeholders in the M&E process could enhance a better outcome of the project.

Table 17: Proposed issues for improvement per stakeholder in BOCI process steps 1-6¹⁰

Cluster Board International (CBI)	Agenda setting is too broad, need for knowledge agenda in Regional Visions and Counsellors Year Plans	It should be more clear how local partners are involved; already in the phase of problem identification it should be indicated what impact is expected	Improved local stakeholder involvement and improved research question formulation are needed	Need to synchronize BOCI process with Counsellor year plans process		Improved involvement of Counsellors and local partners; improved awareness of researchers about policy context
Directorate Knowledge (DK)	Need for knowledge agenda in Regional Visions and Counsellors Year Plans	Improved and more (pro) active relationship between DK and Counsellors	More structural assistance to Counsellors	Assessment form should be improved and better used. Need to communicate results of assessment of question to ACs		More attention should be given to monitoring and evaluation
WUR-DLO		Improved awareness among Agricultural Counsellors about BOCI	Improved research question formulation by Counsellors		The current tender set out by Cluster management is good but should be more transparent	Research questions not clear, no research strategy/program within LNV. Not enough time for proposal development, no time to design + include M&E strategy
Agricultural Counsellor (AC)	Improved tuning of agendas with Ministry of External Affairs	Improved contact with WUR-DLO researchers	Improved harmonization of foreign and Dutch demand and improved harmonization with existing projects and funds	More feedback to the Counsellor, which creates more transparency also towards the local partners	Improved articulation of the demands towards the researchers	Improved communication researchers-Counsellors; improved commitment all partners especially local partners; More time to build relations
ACTORS ↑ STEPS →	1. agenda setting	2. problem identification	3. question formulation	4. question assessment	5. call for proposals	6. proposal development

¹⁰ In this table proposals of interviewed stakeholders can be found. Local stakeholders are not included as they were not interviewed.

Table 18: Proposed issues for improvement per stakeholder in BOCI process steps 7-12¹¹

Cluster Board International (CBI)			Need for clarity about the roles and responsibilities. There is confusion about who the question owner is	M&E system should be given more attention during demand articulation; roles of stakeholders are not clear; need for systematic focus on learning both within the projects but also within LNV	Need for impact assessments at project, national and Dutch policy levels; Need for better communication and sharing of results
Directorate Knowledge (DK)	Need to communicate results of assessment to WUR-DLO		More interaction between researcher, counsellor and policy makers LNV	Reporting lacks information on outcomes and impact	Reporting lacks information on outcomes and impact
WUR-DLO	Need for communication about results of assessment	Improved communication with Policy Directorates and Agricultural Counsellors	More clarity about roles and linkages research-policy makers LNV- Agricultural Counsellors is needed There should be a budget for local partners	More attention needed for learning oriented M&E: request M&E strategy in proposal and provide more time for proposal writing Maybe also build (learning oriented) M&E capacity	Projects are often so <i>ad hoc</i> and short term that researchers have little feeling with it
Agricultural Counsellor	Need for more transparency on results of assessment. Need for more interaction with other stakeholders	Improved involvement of local partners by Counsellors	Project should focus on practical issues and produce understandable results for all partners. To be communicated clearly to WUR-DLO (this is related to proposal development)	Improved involvement of other partners	Improved results, being practical and usable (no scientific publications)
ACTORS ↑ STEPS →	7. assessment proposals	8. adaptation proposals	9. project implementation	10. + 11. monitoring & evaluation	12. results & impact

¹¹ In this table proposals of interviewed stakeholders can be found. Local stakeholders are not included as they were not interviewed.

5. CONCLUSIONS

To reach this objective of this study, 3 research questions were formulated:

1. What are **key experiences and success stories and tools** that policy workers can use to strengthen linkages between policy – research – practice?
2. What **approaches and methods** can be used for guiding an efficient and effective research **demand articulation process** for the bilateral BO International research (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Policy Support Research Programme implemented by WUR)?
3. What **approaches and methods** can enhance the **commitment of stakeholders** (policy workers, researchers and practitioners) during the research process?

This chapter tries to answer the above mentioned research questions. At the end of this chapter a suggested model for the ‘ideal’ roles of and linkages between policy workers-researchers-practitioners during the demand articulation, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of BOCI is presented.

First we would like to mention that the **impact** of this study lies not only in the study report but that the **process itself** was as important. By having individual as well as group activities a learning process has been initiated which generated already some interesting follow-up initiatives during the research process, e.g. the fact that DK and the CM took responsibility for discussing some of the preliminary findings of the study with the Agricultural Counsellors during the Counsellor’s week. Also a process has been initiated to improve the communication during the different steps of the BOCI process. We hope that these conclusions will continue to stimulate this learning process towards an improved BOCI process as a whole and an improved impact of the BOCI projects at large.

Key experiences and success stories and tools for policy workers

In the literature and as confirmed during the interview with John Young from ODI’s RAPID program (ANNEX 8) there has been little work done on research-policy interactions in international development from a policy worker’s perspective. Most work is done on the supply side.

The success factors as indicated by interviewed stakeholders supporting the BOCI demand articulation are mainly based on **clarity about roles** and on **good communication and relationships** with the several stakeholders involved. From the literature it also is clear that fundamentally, there needs to be increased communication and interaction between the research and policy worlds in order to strengthen the integration of policy and research. Young also supports this in the interview (ANNEX 8), identifying that there is need for engagement of critical stakeholders in the various stages.

As in the demand articulation process, the success factors that support the implementation of a BOCI project are indicated to be based on good communication and relationships with the several stakeholders involved. Indicated success factors during the monitoring and evaluation of a BOCI project are also based on good communication with each other and learning from each other.

It can be concluded that in all phases bridges, which facilitate greater sustained interaction between researchers and research users, can improve the communication and relationships and thus improve the results. We see that the broker or “translation” role to enhance interaction between the different stakeholders could be partly played by DK in initial stages of the demand articulation, as and where necessary and requested, and by CM during the rest of the BOCI process. To enable DK's and CM's broker roles, the Agricultural Counsellors as well as the WUR-DLO researchers would need to be more (pro) active in linking up with DK (or other policy directorates) and CM. A clearly formulated demand and project strategy, and based on this a well defined M&E process that involves stakeholders in a shared learning process, would significantly contribute to better project outcomes. Greater engagement of DK in general is unlikely to happen, according to John Young of ODI (ANNEX 8), regarding the universal tendency of decreasing government departments. The idea is not to increase DK's responsibilities, but to change its role towards a more brokering one.

There is clearly a changing role of Agricultural Counsellors in the bilateral programme towards more active involvement and responsibility, showing to be key in communication and interaction between stakeholders during the process as a whole. Supporting Agricultural Counsellors in playing a more central role during demand articulation, implementation and monitoring & evaluation is therefore key in further strengthening the process and improving the impact of the research and capacity building BOCI projects. This support could consist of brokering between stakeholders, support in demand articulation and in improving capacity to better coordinate, and support shared learning during monitoring and evaluation of project process and outcomes.

Approaches and methods for improved demand articulation

There are many approaches and methods to improve demand articulation. An approach we would like to highlight here is the **multi-stakeholder approach**. It is clear from this study that there is need for improved communication and interaction between stakeholders in an early stage. Currently the levels of involvement of different stakeholders in the demand articulation process vary a lot per step in the process. This may generate confusion and lack of transparency. More interaction and transparency is needed. Now this interaction is informal and personal, but it is recommended that specific efforts should be directed at a more structured guiding of multi-stakeholder processes, that include policy makers, researchers and practitioners. One method to do this is organizing multi-stakeholder sessions during Regional Team meetings, or regular multi-stakeholder theme meetings. These meetings can focus on demand articulation in the early stages, and on project strategy design, implementation and M&E in later stages. The Agricultural Counsellors could play an important role in this respect.

Integration of ideas and needs should take place not only during the formulation and articulation of the demand/research question (mainly in the hands of the Agricultural Counsellor), but also during the development of the proposal which now mainly lies in the hands of WUR-DLO. Brokers or translators between the different stakeholders could facilitate the multi-stakeholder processes by providing bridges, where stakeholders have difficulty to get together, or where this will speed up this process. DK could play a more extensive role in terms of brokerage between the different parties if necessary.

Connecting BOCI with the policy processes through a more **strategic / programmatic approach**, so also knowing better what information is needed, when it is needed,

communicating this need well and actively connecting the project cycle with the related policy process will improve the impact of BOCI projects. Agricultural Counsellors and other LNV policy workers indicated during this study that the **flexibility** within BOCI is very important. Within a more programmatic approach space to address *ad hoc* needs should be considered. Not all policy development can be evidence driven, as by its nature, some of the policy is short-term and politically driven, which can be addressed by providing the above mentioned flexibility.

Part of this more programmatic approach to improve impact is also linking the BOCI projects up with other (multi-lateral) programmes and projects (both from LNV and other organisations) during the demand articulation process. Young (see ANNEX 8) strongly recommends engagement of other Ministries who have had long-term experience and expertise in the field of research for international development (like the Ministry of International Affairs). Another important aspect is that there needs to be a shared vision in terms of the expected outcomes of the project and roughly the key strategies to reach this, with underlying assumptions and external factors influencing the possible outcome (theory of change).

Furthermore, **adaptive management** is important to adequately learn from and make necessary changes to the project as and when needed. Involvement of stakeholders in this learning oriented M&E and project redesign would enhance a better outcome of the project.

Approaches and methods to enhance commitment of stakeholders

Commitment can be improved by active involvement of the stakeholders in the different phases, improved communication, clarity about roles and regular feedback towards all stakeholders involved.

Regarding the **active involvement of policy workers** it is important for all policy workers involved in BOCI to understand what the use is of the information that comes from research, and how to use it. Worldwide, there seems to be no “culture” amongst policy workers to appreciate the contribution that research can make to policy making by actually integrating the research results into the policy cycle. Research on this issue also concludes that policy workers have little interactive relationships with researcher. To change this “culture”, specific efforts should be put into place in order to create more awareness on evidence based policy making and more opportunities to interact with researchers. Organisations like ODI and DFID set up extensive training programmes for their staff on evidence based policy issues. Capacity development of policy workers in evidence based policy making should go hand in hand with setting up mechanisms that will facilitate greater use of evidence by policy makers. These “pull” mechanisms (see box 1 page 34) make sure that research results are indeed used by policy workers.

Early **active involvement of local stakeholders** (as part of the multi-stakeholder process) in the demand articulation has also shown to support local stakeholder commitment. The Agricultural Counsellor should play an important role here providing the bridge between the local stakeholders and the Dutch policy workers in the Netherlands.

Regarding **regular feedback and reflection**, the Agricultural Counsellors and other partners should be further assisted and guided in the **project monitoring and**

evaluation. M&E is key to a successful project in which the stakeholders learn from each other to make sure that the project provides answers to their real needs. Furthermore, the BOCI Programme should not only support learning within the projects but could also look for ways to support the horizontal learning across the projects and meta-learning at the level of Agricultural Counsellors, and LNV. Both the Cluster Management (within WUR-DLO and with LNV) and DK (with Agricultural Counsellors and regional teams) could play an important role in this meta-monitoring. This could enhance the effectiveness and contribution to impact of the BOCI programme as a whole.

The roles of the different stakeholders vary per BOCI project and throughout the process of demand articulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation there is vagueness about roles and responsibilities and in many situations this creates misunderstanding and undermines commitment. The roles, although varying per phase, should be clear and the linkages between all stakeholders should be strong. **Continuous interaction** is important.

Important is to agree with all stakeholders WHAT their roles exactly are and what processes, approaches and tools will be used for developing and assessing the demand, formulating and assessing the proposal, and monitoring and evaluation. For example, based on the results of this study, we can conclude that bridging the gaps between WUR-DLO, local partners and the Agricultural Counsellor might be a primary responsibility of the Counsellor, which should be supported by DK and CM. Below, in the presentation of the 'ideal future' it will be indicated, where possible, what our conclusions are about the specific (change of) roles of the different actors.

'Ideal future'

Visualizing the discussion in chapter 4 and looking at the above described conclusions, the following 'ideal' figures (figures 7, 8, 9) of the roles of and linkages between policy workers-researchers-practitioners during the 1. demand articulation, 2. implementation and 3. monitoring & evaluation can be drawn:

Figure 7: 'Ideal' stakeholders' roles and relationships during demand articulation

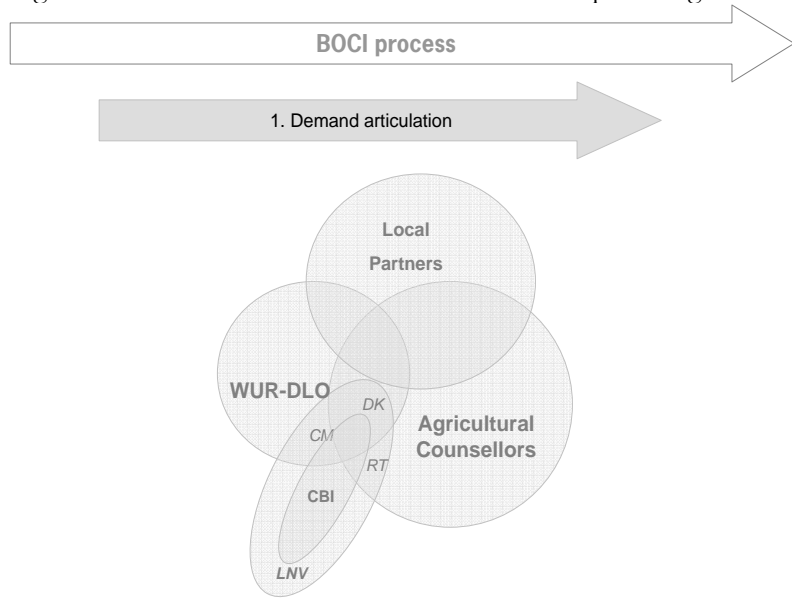


Figure 8: 'Ideal' stakeholders' roles and relationships during project implementation

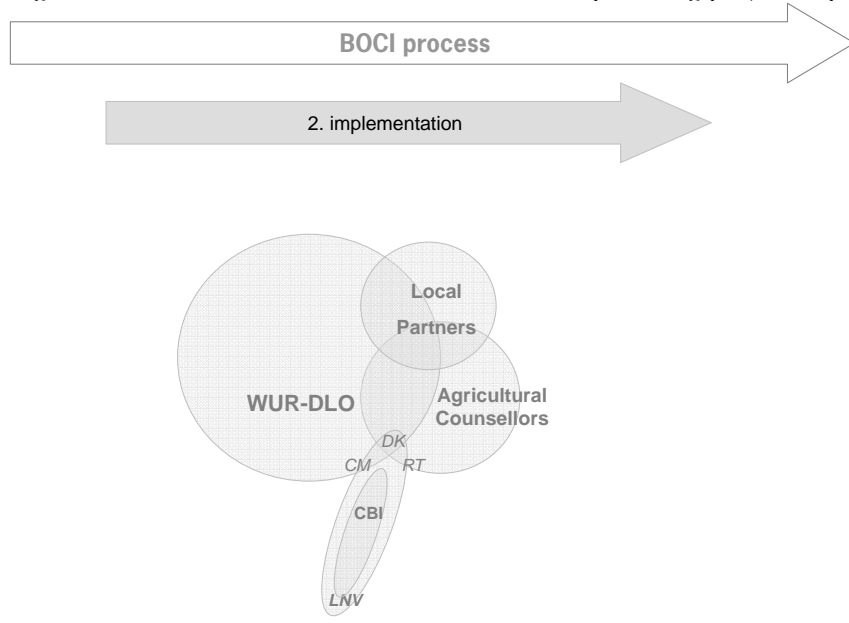
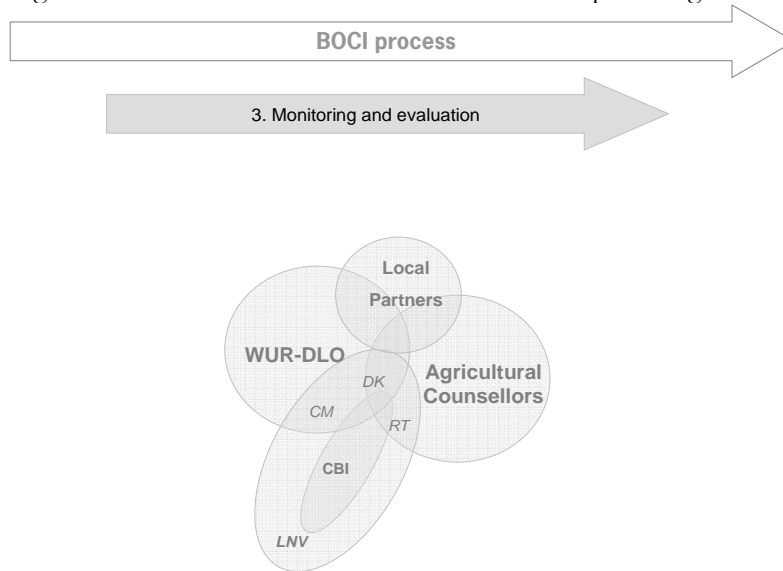


Figure 9: 'Ideal' stakeholders' roles and relationships during monitoring and evaluation



During the 'ideal' demand articulation the Agricultural Counsellor has the biggest role, with strong cooperation with local partners and WUR-DLO. The role of DK is expanded, focussing on processes, and serving the role of a broker between agricultural counsellors, regional team, CBI and WUR-DLO. DK can also guide the knowledge agenda setting, providing a bridge with all stakeholders, to make sure that the agenda is specific enough and well tuned with other agendas (e.g. from other Ministries). The formal and informal roles of the different parties would need to be clearly communicated. The role of the CBI can also expand, focusing on content and the relation to Dutch Policies, and (more strategically) on agenda setting and advice to RT, DK and CM, also promoting that policy workers use results of research. WUR-DLO Cluster Management also has a more important role providing a bridge between LNV and WUR-DLO. The Regional Teams are also performing more the role of a broker/bridge between Counsellors and LNV, but mainly in terms of content, assuring that research is used to answer to real policy needs. DK can perform the (informal) role of broker but more in the initial phases (demand articulation) rather than during implementation. Also the roles are very clear and well communicated to all parties involved.

During the 'ideal' implementation phase WUR-DLO is the main stakeholder, but clearly linked with Agricultural Counsellors and local partners. The main responsibility for the project implementation is with WUR-DLO but that responsibility includes continuous reflection with involved stakeholders. DK and CBI have smaller roles in this phase, staying informed about progress and providing a broker role where necessary. Regular feedback on the implementation from the Regional Teams is necessary, especially for keeping activities linked with policy dynamics. The Agricultural Counsellor can perfectly provide a bridge between the researchers and the Regional Teams.

'Ideal' monitoring and evaluation becomes a more shared exercise among all stakeholders, especially because (shared) learning (e.g. about progress, contributing towards impact, new information) can enhance the success of a project. There are several

levels of learning which can be facilitated by different stakeholders. Learning within the project to assure that the project provides the expected evidence of results at the expected time should be facilitated by the Counsellor, in interaction with WUR-DLO and the local partners. Learning from results of projects as well as processes (meta-level) would be facilitated by CBI, facilitating distribution of success stories within LNV but also outside LNV. CBI can also provide a learning platform for Counsellors to learn from each other, before, during and after projects. DK can play a pivotal role in this respect and can also use the learning for further improving BOCI processes and procedures (or better: guidelines) without reducing flexibility for the different stakeholders involved. WUR-DLO Cluster management, in collaboration with CBI can provide a learning platform for LNV policy workers, researchers and practitioners to learn at meta level from the BOCI process. Each of the different stakeholders will need to be clear about the specific information needs so that M&E becomes a focused and relevant activity integrated with (adaptive) management towards impact.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter describes the main recommendations for the different stakeholders involved in the BOCI programme. More specific suggestions are developed here for each of the key stakeholders involved in the BOCI programme.

It must be noted that BOCI has been in place for only two years now. Within these two years a tremendous effort has been put into the process by a wide range of people. The number of research questions that were submitted in the second year to LNV was double the amount of the first year, which indicates that this BOCI programme is relevant to the needs of the Agricultural Counsellors in their respective contexts. The recommendations below should be seen in this light – the programme is still young and a lot still needs to be improved. However, the general observation is that overall there is an urgency and need for the BOCI programme and successes have already been made so it is important to keep the momentum going for further improvements.

General

This study did not include interviews with local stakeholders. Although it was planned for, it turned out to be impossible within the scope and time of this study. It is recommended as a follow-up to consult local stakeholders to learn what their issues are. After all, the local stakeholders are indicated as very important during the several stages of the BOCI process.

Another recommendation would be to, taking the 'ideal future' as presented in the conclusions as a base for discussion, go through a joint process with the following stakeholders: DK, CM, Agricultural Counsellors and CBI of discussing BOCI and agreeing about a clear division of roles and on how to involve the absent but important local stakeholders and research community. This might avoid overlap and duplication of efforts and support better use of available resources.

Below some suggestions are given for the issues that could be further improved, following the conclusions.

Enhancing the clarity of roles **and improving communication and relationships** between the different stakeholders:

- Among policy workers awareness is needed on why evidence through research is needed in the policy making process. Also awareness is needed on the existence, use and importance of the BOCI programme. CBI already set up regular communication about BOCI in internal newsletters and during meetings. The communication however, can be improved to also include discussion about roles, relationships and communication. It is also recommended to organise workshops and training sessions provided by experts on evidence-based policy making;
- It is important to develop a general communication strategy taking into account all stakeholders during the whole BOCI process, from demand articulation till implementation and use of results, making use of existing platforms, networks, magazines and newsletters (CBI). An information portal by LNV for Agricultural Counsellors, WUR-DLO and other stakeholders on the BOCI aims and objectives, on the demand articulation process and on formats etc. could be an

effective tool to support this. NB: the process to develop this communication strategy has already been initiated during the latter stages of this study;

- Communication can be informal and personal but also needs to be formalized for particular issues. Communication between policy workers and researchers can be improved by organising multi-stakeholder sessions during Regional Team Meetings or theme meetings in which policy workers, researchers and practitioners can participate (CBI, AC, RT);
- For improved communication it might be useful to put in place *'translators' or 'knowledge brokers'*: people who have credibility in both the research and policy-making communities and are able to bridge the two. DK shows to have these qualities and is sometimes acting as a knowledge broker in BOCI projects, but this role could be developed into a more explicit one. Furthermore, it is important to also identify persons within LNV and WU-DLO who already are playing similar roles, in order to get their support in terms of brokering knowledge or 'linking pin' or to learn from them how they do this;
- Furthermore at project level a communication strategy needs to be put in place. This communication (e.g. through policy briefs) should be clearly linked to M&E so that it serves the function of adaptive management towards impact. Project coordinators could be required to include a communication strategy as part of a monitoring and evaluation strategy for learning in the research plan of action (WUR-DK);
- Improved guidelines for reporting should be developed, not only formats but also feedback and reporting processes such as regular meetings, information on websites, etc. DK could play a role in systematizing this. However, this should be more a stimulating factor rather than a control factor, and should not increase the level of bureaucracy and leave enough freedom WUR-DLO and the Counsellor for the reporting of results;
- WUR-DLO needs to ensure that the results of the research and capacity development activities are translated into a language that can be clearly understood and used by policy workers. Some capacity development may be necessary in this respect.

Improving BOCI through a **multi-stakeholder approach** (in addition to the related recommendations above):

- To support a multi-stakeholder approach setting up networks or linking with existing networks, e.g. global public policy networks, knowledge networks, communities of practice, and others, should be stimulated/implemented by policy workers;
- Multi-stakeholder theme meetings could be organised related to the policy development process (so independent of the projects);
- During the project, learning workshops for different stakeholders could be organised so as to review successes and lessons for improvement;

Improving BOCI through participatory **monitoring and evaluation**:

- The information needs for the different stakeholders and how the information will be should be clear to all involved. A multi-stakeholder

workshop at the start of a project could be organised. This can be done virtually or face-to-face;

- Regular meetings between policy workers, especially the Counsellors, and implementing partners to discuss progress and to assist decision making for adaptive management. Policy makers from the different Directorates in The Hague can be involved virtually;
- To support the Agricultural Counsellors in their active role during M&E, they can be trained on participatory monitoring and evaluation;
- Guidelines can be developed on how monitoring and evaluation can be used as a learning tool for adapting and improving the project towards the expected results;
- A participatory monitoring and evaluation strategy should be part of the plan of action of BOCI project;
- There needs to be a shared vision in terms of the expected outcomes of the project and roughly the key strategies to reach this, with underlying assumptions and external factors influencing the possible outcome (theory of change).
- Reporting during and after the project should be not only on activities and outputs but also on possible outcomes and expected impact.

Improving BOCI through a **strategic/programmatic approach**:

- Policy workers should have more appreciation of the contribution that research can make to policy development and policy implementation and better understanding on how policy relates to research. Specific workshops and training sessions to enhance their capacity in this respect are suggested;
- Clarity about the policy context is important, both for local partners and for WUR-DLO researchers. It is recommended that policy workers do a policy context analysis and communicate this to stakeholders involved;
- Policy workers need to think through more strategically what results are really needed and how the results of research and capacity developed will be used in a wider context;
- An effort should be undertaken to streamline agendas: national/local and other Dutch Ministries and international agencies;
- Within LNV incentives could be established for policy workers (both in the Netherlands and in the countries) to use research results, i.e. by requiring them to demonstrate the use of research in their annual performance reviews;
- Within LNV transparency and ownership of the research results from BOCI projects and commitment to using research results by senior policy makers could be stimulated.

Additional, specific recommendations for each of the key stakeholders are mentioned below.

Policy makers – Agricultural Counsellors

- It is recommended to support more involvement of the Agricultural Counsellors throughout the BOCI-process, from demand articulation to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Such a changing role has implications for existing

capacities. A training needs assessment among Agricultural Counsellors to find out their knowledge and capacity development needs to adequately support the BOCI-process might be necessary.

- After the agenda setting for a possible BOCI project, a workshop could be organised with relevant local stakeholders and other funding programmes that have activities within LNV priority areas;
- During the demand articulation multi-stakeholder meetings could be organised to specify the particular local need and further articulate the demand. The involvement of WUR-DLO should be stimulated in the demand articulation process;
- Involvement of local partners in the process as a whole should be supported by the Agricultural Counsellor;
- The Agricultural Counsellor could actively search for harmonization with other policies of e.g. foreign country, other Dutch ministries;
- It is recommended to stimulate, promote and organise more communication to the outside world of the results of the research and capacity development activities.

Cluster Board International

- It is recommended to harmonize policy planning processes at the levels of the different stakeholders: Agricultural Counsellors (year plans), CBI, WUR-DLO, particularly during demand articulation.
- More time should be given for proposal development by WUR-DLO.
- CBI could promote/create amongst policy workers a more programmatic approach (less ad hoc) and working towards sustainable impact;
- More flexibility is needed to allow for adjustments during the project implementation, which can be supported by regular feedback with stakeholders involved. CBI could create this flexibility in BOCI;
- Involvement of local partners in the process: should be more clear; separate budget to be set aside for involvement of local partners;
- CBI could provide more communication within LNV, but also to the outside world on BOCI results, through internal newsletters and policy briefs, etc;
- Clarity on the “problem owners” of the BOCI research projects is needed. A review should be done on roles in terms of e.g. accountability, especially looking into the role of Agricultural Counsellor;
- CBI could support the streamlining of processes and procedures, and create the necessary preconditions to allow for integration of the a knowledge agenda in the regional plans/ visions and in the year plans by the Agricultural Counsellor

Directorate Knowledge

- We recommend continued streamlining of processes and procedures; especially around the demand articulation process (and the development of e.g. year plans by Agricultural Counsellors). In view of the restructuring of DK this should be done as early as possible and systems should be put

place, including reflection moments on the systems and procedures. However, increase in the level of bureaucracy or reduction in the level of flexibility should be avoided.

- DK could also play a role in formalizing the roles of the different stakeholders involved in the BOCI process to ensure clarity of roles and avoid misunderstanding. In this formalizing of roles enough flexibility for necessary adaptations in the different contexts is needed;
- DK could be more (pro) active in terms of structured linkages with Agricultural Counsellors and WUR-DLO;
- DK is overall (financially) responsible and should be more involved during the implementation process, particularly in terms of M&E. DK can help to improve the M&E to focus more on shared learning and project management as well as for more strategic directions (impact). Assisting in clarifying information needs for different stakeholders could be a possible role for DK;
- DK could be more active as a broker: advising and guiding the Agricultural Counsellors and WUR-DLO during the demand articulation process. Also to improve communication between Agricultural Counsellor and WUR-DLO as and where needed. This does not necessarily have to happen in person (or face to face) – also electronic communication and learning platforms could play a role in bridging the gaps.
- DK can support CBI with integrating the knowledge agenda in the regional plans/visions and in the yearly plans by the Agricultural Counsellors;
- There should come more clarity on the role of DK in CBI – decision making or assessment and advice?
- DK should do a review of the existing DK tools offered to LNV policy workers, the State of the Art, Quick Scan and '*kennisprogrammering*' in terms of its possible use for the BOCI programme.

WUR-DLO

Although this study did not specifically focus on researchers a few suggestions that came out of the study are worth mentioning. This is by no means complete:

- There should be more interaction between the researcher and the Agricultural Counsellor during early stage of demand articulation;
- The researcher should improve communication on progress with the Agricultural Counsellor and DK during the implementation of the project;
- There is a clear need for better communication of results (more practical, easy to understand) and therefore this issue of 'translation' of research results into usable information for policy workers should be further specified in the plan of action;
- For each project, WUR-DLO needs to come up with a clear M&E plan, including a communication plan of giving and receiving feedback on the (preliminary) results so that the project can be managed adaptively

ANNEX 1: Results online survey Agricultural Counsellors

Dear Agricultural Counsellor,

On behalf of the Board of the Policy Support Cluster International Cooperation, we would highly appreciate your cooperation in a project aiming at the identification of key factors that in enhancing successful linkages between policy, research & capacity building and practice. Please, take your time to carefully read and respond to the questions of this online survey. The survey is part of a study on the role and effects of knowledge projects in your work, and on how to improve these.

Increasing attention is being paid to the knowledge support in the bilateral part of the international policy arena. In order to further improve the process of demand articulation and project performance, we are interested in learning from your experiences and your opinion on future challenges.

We apply a two-way approach: 1. in-depth interviews with a selected number of counsellors involved, evenly distributed among the regions, and 2. a general survey to find out the views of all counsellors involve. In addition we will carry out face-to-face interviews with several policy workers of LNV. All this will be supported by an extensive literature review and the reflection of some external experts. The results will be documented by February 2008 and discussed during the counsellor's meeting in that month.

At the end of this online questionnaire you have the possibility to read the responses from your colleagues. Responses are anonymous. All respondents have been given a code, which you are requested to fill in at the beginning of the survey.

While answering the questions, please do not close the browser or leave the survey, otherwise the programme will lose all the information that you have already provided. Please fill in this questionnaire **before January 18, 2008.**

Should you have any problems or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We thank you very much for your cooperation!

Wageningen International

1. Please fill in your personal code that you received through mail.

2. Can you please describe what you want/wanted to achieve with BOCI funded WUR research and capacity building projects? More than one reason can be explained.

-Integral part of the implementation of the LNV policy in my country

-Identification of possible fields for future cooperation (policy level and agri chain level)

Get more information on certain policy issues (technical, social, etc) which are gaining importance in the region where we work

* Get a better, scientific understanding of local issues.

* Be provided with more in-depth knowledge and accurate numbers and data

* Provide assistance to local partners in areas where NL has more knowledge/experience

The LNV-department has changed its strategic focus on doing business with the country I work in. Since three years there is no development relationship with this country anymore and changes in agriculture are mainly expected from the private sector now. For this reason the focus of our work has changed from development projects to matchmaking between Dutch and country agricultural sectors. The market in this country is extremely promising yet difficult. To overcome these difficulties we need more in-depth knowledge of the cultural and business habits of this country and also about the factors that are keeping Dutch industry back to invest on a large scale in this country. For that reason we request market access research to be done by WUR and by private local companies.

- gather information on facts, get a clear picture

- solve practical problems in sustainability projects

- raise profile, strengthen network, improve image NL

- 'seed projects'

- Collect information on the situation in the field "Strengthen network", gain profile, prestige, Solve practical problems for projects related to sustainability "Put our money where our mouth is"

Capacity building related to the WSSD partnerships between NL and this region.

Research on how to involve small producers in export processes Research for development of the fruit and vegetable sector (local level) Research related to eco tourism and biodiversity

Creating a trade basis

With BOCI funded research and capacity building projects I am able to assist the local government in formulating strategic programs to strengthen key agricultural sectors and to further develop the national rural policy of the country.

As I understand, projects in developed countries do not qualify for BOCI funded WUR research, although I can think of situations in which studies also in developed countries could contribute to the policy making process in The Netherlands, for example the state of affairs in aquaculture, biomass etc. As I'm quite new to the my post I have no

experience with any BOCI projects myself and as far as I know, no projects were initiated by my predecessor.

Further extension and strengthening of bilateral contacts through projects that provide a desired contribution to objectives formulated by them.

In general the level of the Universities and research institutes in the agricultural field is quite good. However the transfer/communication of knowledge and research results towards the end user (f.e. farmers and growers) is insufficient. The Dutch classical 'OVO'-triangle in these countries (RO and BG) is (still) missing. Farmers and growers need more practical training and advise. So regarding capacity building we should in my opinion work on these issues and involve from the Dutch side more organisations like PTC+, AOC, CAH-Dronten, DLV, GD etc. Some fields of interests could be: dairy (quality), horticulture (quality), energy crops (yields), Organic production, and genetics/gmo.

3. Please, list the partners from your network active in the demand articulation process of BOCI funded WUR research and capacity building projects:

LNV counterparts (IZ, I&H) Dutch agribusiness Economic network region (CG's and NBSO's, NABSO's) WUR Counterparts third countries (governmental bodies)

WUR local office for Latin America

- policy makers of the Ministry of Agriculture in The Hague (Dept. I & H and IZ).
- companies in the Netherlands that are interested to do business in this country

Local WUR office has been helpful but mostly by pointing others towards BOCI-funding. Also, local research organizations and companies have helped. Some of the details were filled out by the applicant after they had been instructed what the format was.

Local Horticulture Council (used to be local Flower Council and the Fresh Produce and Exporters Association of this country). Ministry of Agriculture, Wildlife Service, School for field studies, Private partners

- Ministry of agriculture
- Local agricultural service
- Local Agrifood Corporation
- Dutch Lady (Friesland Food)

Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, the Ministry of Irrigation, The Ministry of Social Solidarity, The Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of International Cooperation. The stakeholders in the private sector

No remarks.

Ministry of Agriculture Universities NGOs

1. Local Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 2. Local Agricultural Universities 3. Local Institute of Agricultural Economics 4. Local AgroBioInstitute 5. Local Institute of Plant Genetics Resources 6. Local Extension Service

4. Please, describe the key roles of the partners you listed above:

Identification possible research projects LNV: match with policy goals

Establish contacts and provide with draft proposals

Partners are all sparing partners in the process of articulating the questions we have for the researchers.

Projects varied enormously in character so hard to give a overall picture

Formulation the need for capacity building and/or research and the possible solutions (activities and budget)

Advising on the formulation of research wishes

In the framework of the privatization policy of the government the stakeholders/partners from both the public and private sector are working closely together to develop strategies and policies to strengthen the competitive edge of the sectors. The research facilities offered by The Netherlands is supporting this process at a national level.

No remarks.

- formulating policy - contributing to formulation of policy and transfer of knowledge - implementing knowledge and formulated policies

1. to set up strategy and action plans (in for example the organic sector) 2. research: to improve quality of agricultural products such as milk and fruit and vegetables and to search for better varieties (yield) for energy crops + exchange of students 3. institution & capacity building within the Institute (agricultural economic research) 4. research in especially crops (f.e. genetics and GMOs) 5. research and protection (genetic data bank) of (wild) varieties 6. extension and advice towards farmers and growers

5. Should the <u>roles</u> of the above mentioned partners <u>change</u> ?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
yes		30.0%	3
no		70.0%	7
		<i>answered question</i>	10
		<i>skipped question</i>	1

6. If you answered yes on question 5, please explain why:

Especially for the WUR network a more integrated approach/strategy towards the country in question would be very advisable

The government policy is to privatize as much as possible

Unless, maybe joined projects could be initiated with the host country in the field of for example development co-operation, benefiting both parties.

In my opinion the roles are ok. However, the Ministries, universities, research institutes, extension services and schools should work more together! Many former state research institutes have now to find research projects in the (private) market.

7. Please indicate to what extent you collaborate with the following stakeholders in the demand articulation process of the BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building projects?					
	no involvement	little involvement	reasonable involvement	high involvement	Response Count
Local government	10.0% (1)	40.0% (4)	20.0% (2)	30.0% (3)	10
Local business	30.0% (3)	20.0% (2)	20.0% (2)	30.0% (3)	10
Local research institutions	20.0% (2)	20.0% (2)	30.0% (3)	30.0% (3)	10
Local civil society (NGOs, CBOs)	20.0% (2)	30.0% (3)	30.0% (3)	20.0% (2)	10
Colleagues at the Dutch embassy	20.0% (2)	40.0% (4)	40.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	10
Implementing agencies (DLO, etc.)	20.0% (2)	20.0% (2)	30.0% (3)	30.0% (3)	10
International NGOs	30.0% (3)	50.0% (5)	10.0% (1)	10.0% (1)	10
International multi-lateral institutions (UN, WB, etc)	40.0% (4)	30.0% (3)	20.0% (2)	10.0% (1)	10

7. Please indicate to what extent you collaborate with the following stakeholders in the demand articulation process of the BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building projects?					
International research institutions (e.g. CGIAR)	40.0% (4)	40.0% (4)	20.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	10
Dutch research institutions	20.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	40.0% (4)	40.0% (4)	10
Directorate Knowledge (DK)	50.0% (5)	10.0% (1)	40.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	10
Directorate International Affairs (IZ)	30.0% (3)	10.0% (1)	40.0% (4)	20.0% (2)	10
Other policy directorates	33.3% (3)	22.2% (2)	22.2% (2)	22.2% (2)	9
Other (please specify): 1. Dutch agribusiness; 2. Directorate of Industry & Trade; 3. Directorate Industry and Trade; 4. Industry and Trade					4
	<i>answered question</i>				10
	<i>skipped question</i>				1

8. Please indicate how and with whom the collaboration has been successful in the demand articulation process:

LNV directorates Dutch agribusiness WUR-implementing agencies

see 3

Directorates of the Ministry of LNV and WUR

Again, projects vary a lot. We have brought some under the umbrella of existing MoUs

With the local partners the formulation of the demand and with the Dutch partners the possible project activities.

Met MAFC en Dutch Lady

Both the national policy of the fisheries and the poultry sector have been developed with support of WUR specialists based on a roadmap that has been developed and coordinated by this office. Presently, with support of the research program, the rural development policy of the country is established

No remarks.

Difficult to bring foreign and Dutch demands together in the demand articulation process. Especially in the phase after the first initial ideas on paper. In stipulating the actions to be undertaken the steering power of the Dutch side is too big

1. Local government; the under question 6 mentioned organisations contacted the Agricultural Office for possible cooperation. Furthermore with the RO and BG Ministries several multilateral (EU-Phare, World Bank, etc.) and bilateral projects have been implemented. 2. Representatives of Local Research Institutes approach me during visits and meetings and asked for co-operation in certain fields. With the help of contact person at WUR we find for them the right partners. Nice example is the reorganisation of the so called Cereal Institute (Fundata) in Romania, which was done with help of experts of Wageningen UR. 3. I discuss together with my Agricultural Assistants of our Offices in the region the possibility for possible co-operation. A good example in my opinion is the recent Greek mission of Dimitra to the Netherlands to discuss with DK, PTC-Oenkerk, AOC, Veeopro the possibilities for co-operation in particular the dairy field. 4. DLO was and is involved in many projects (agriculture, nature, etc.) in this region and in my opinion the contact person at WUR played an important role in that. 5. The World Bank is doing also quite some huge projects (food safety and veterinary issues, irrigation, etc.) in RO and BG. However my experience is that the preparation is a quite slow process and it takes quite some time before the projects start. 6. I have good contacts with my colleagues within the Department Knowledge and International Affairs.

9. Please list critical success factors for above described successful collaboration:

Shared views on LNV policy goals and role LNV

Good insight in the structure and do's and don'ts in the third country

* research should be policy relevant

* results should be 'practical' and 'understandable', also for non-academics

Good personal relationships.

Clear view of developments in the country in the Netherlands.

Clear articulation of the questions.

Awareness of the components that make the difference in granting a budget.

It must be demand driven and good (short) communication with the Dutch partners

- Conviction that projects/initiatives can be reached

- The need to cooperate

Critical for the success of the collaboration is the timing. In our case: the present policy of the government to privatize and the need of the national government to develop a coherent rural policy to stabilize the country.

No remarks.

1. To have one contact person in Wageningen UR, so we can find the right Dutch experts and organisations.
2. The Netherlands and in particular Wageningen and Lelystad has a excellent reputation. We should keep this reputation!
3. As Office it is important that we visit universities, research institutes, etc. because in that way you get a good overview of the latest developments and about what is needed

10. To what extent are you personally involved in the implementation process of the BOCI financed project after approval?

Depends on subject (close link with activities bureau or not) and researchers (suitable project manager for third country or not). In general we receive a regular update of the activities.

Overall informed, providing of general guidance. No day-to day involvement.

Very much involved as client.

From all the way to little

Monitoring progress of the project and participation in workshops/seminars

My role is mainly stimulating (making sure that things start rolling) and monitoring

The full coordination of the process

Not.

little;

I sent this year (2007) for the first time 4 project proposals to The Hague. So, the next step is the approval and if (a) project(s) is/are approved I will follow the progress of the project(s) and will report to the involved LNV-colleagues if there are certain problems.

11. Please describe how you are involved:

Varies from in depth discussions on content project and project's partners to reading the updates on the process.

Overall informed, providing of general guidance. No day-to day involvement.

I am involved as client. For that reason the outcome is of personal importance for the execution of our tasks in this country.

trying to put together a mission on the basis of sector report, monitoring progress, getting press attention, looking for follow-up

By reports and (briefing) visits of the experts to the embassy. Participation in workshops/seminars

My role is mainly stimulating (making sure that things start rolling) and monitoring

I formulated the different roadmaps (*stappenplan*) and have the responsibility to make sure that the different steps are implemented. I also involve all relevant stakeholders (local and international) in the process. Additional funding is created both locally and via international donors

No remarks.

I have contact with the local partners so now and then and they know they can approach me about the projects. This is to monitor if everything is going ok

I sent this year (2007) for the first time 4 project proposals to The Hague. So, the next step is the approval and if (a) project(s) is/are approved I will follow the progress of the project(s) and will report to the involved LNV-colleagues if there are certain problems

12. Please explain how this involvement can be improved?

In general we invest quite some time to get to know the project manager from Dutch side which pays off during the implementation phase.

Did I say that improvement is needed?

- Better articulation of the demands to the researchers.
- More knowledge of the planning process of the projects.

Having early guarantees that projects will be approved

No need for improvement

-

As timing is essential to make use of the momentum of the decision making process, time is a limiting factor

No remarks.

More open communication by Dutch partners. Willingness to listen to advices of the AC. Not as much on the content but on local structures, tensions, political setting

In my opinion we should follow the same structure with some of the other multilateral or bilateral projects. This means that during the implementation of the project we should have once every quarter a Steering Committee/PAC-meeting and in which the Embassy (Agricultural Office) participates.

13. Please explain to what extent the BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building projects help you in the development of your network with the following stakeholders?

	does not help	helps a little	helps considerably	helps a lot	Response Count
Local government	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)	55.6% (5)	11.1% (1)	9
Local business	11.1% (1)	33.3% (3)	33.3% (3)	22.2% (2)	9
Local research institutions	11.1% (1)	33.3% (3)	44.4% (4)	11.1% (1)	9
Local civil society (NGOs, CBOs)	33.3% (3)	44.4% (4)	22.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	9
Colleagues at the Dutch embassy	55.6% (5)	44.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9
Implementing agencies (DLO, etc.)	22.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	66.7% (6)	11.1% (1)	9
International NGOs	22.2% (2)	66.7% (6)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	9
International multi-lateral institutions (UN, WB, etc)	55.6% (5)	33.3% (3)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	9
International research institutions (e.g. CGIAR)	44.4% (4)	33.3% (3)	22.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	9
Dutch research institutions	11.1% (1)	11.1% (1)	55.6% (5)	22.2% (2)	9

13. Please explain to what extent the BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building projects help you in the development of your network with the following stakeholders?

Directorate Knowledge (DK)	22.2% (2)	55.6% (5)	22.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	9
Directorate International Affairs (IZ)	33.3% (3)	33.3% (3)	33.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	9
Other policy directorates	33.3% (3)	44.4% (4)	22.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	9
Other (please specify): 1. Dutch Agribusiness; 2. Industry & Trade					4
<i>answered question</i>					9
<i>skipped question</i>					2

14. How does the BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building projects help you in linking with the following stakeholders?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Local government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MoU; 2. supporting the bilateral policy topics 3. Networking 4. x 5. The linkage is already there before the project is formulated 6. – 7. We are seen as a reliable and capable partner 8. Because of BOCO programme we have something (budget + knowledge) to offer 	88.9%	8
Local business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practical advice 2. By mapping network 3. x 4. - 	44.4%	4

14. How does the BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building projects help you in <u>linking</u> with the following <u>stakeholders</u> ?			
Local research institutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Image 2. Partners Dutch researchers 3. Networking 4. x 5. – 6. Because of BOCO programme NL has something (Budget & knowledge) to offer 	66.7%	6
Local civil society (NGOs, CBOs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. – 2. x 3. - 	33.3%	3
Colleagues at the Dutch embassy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have budgets, they do not have 2. No need 3. x 4. - 	44.4%	4
Implementing agencies (DLO, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct contact 2.- 3.- 4. With help of a contact person of Wageningen UR to find the right expertise and organisation in the Netherlands 	44.4%	4
International NGOs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No partner until now in BOCI 2. – 3. X 	33.3%	3
International multi-lateral institutions (UN, Worldbank, etc)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No partner until now in BOCI 2. – 3. x 	33.3%	3
International research institutions (e.g. CGIAR)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No partner until now in BOCI 2. – 3. x 	33.3%	3
Dutch research institutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. via implementing agency or in process of selecting projects 2. close contacts with local WUR office 3. x 4. Because of the demand from RO and BG side we come in contact we several Dutch research institutes 	44.4%	4

14. How does the BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building projects help you in <u>linking</u> with the following <u>stakeholders</u>?			
Directorate Knowledge (DK)	1. via information on procedure 2. x	22.2%	2
Directorate International Affairs (IZ)	1. discussion on link with LNV policy and priorities 2. x	22.2%	2
Other policy directorates	1. discussion on link with LNV policy and priorities 2. x	22.2%	2
Other, please specify:	1. agribusiness: participation in project 2. x 3. No remarks	33.3%	3
	<i>answered question</i>		9
	<i>skipped question</i>		2

15. Please mention 1 BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building project that according to you does/did very well in terms of network development and interaction between the different stakeholders.

Sino-Dutch Pesticides Environmental Risk Assessment Project

I am only since 4 months at this position and can not answer this question yet

Not applicable as I have not been in this job long enough.

Sustainable vegetable exports

Support/capacity building WSSD partnership programme

Dairy project

The development of the national fisheries policy of the country that presently is implemented; The development of the most important Fishery NGO of the country supported by OS funds as a result the WUR research & capacity building project

No remarks.

I do not have this experience yet. However with my experiences with other projects, I found one good example a project to reorganize the structure of the Romanian Research Institute for arable crops (Fundata). If I remember correctly the project was financed by the World Bank and they were looking for two experts of the Netherlands to do the job. With help of the contact person of Wageningen International we came up very fast with two good Dutch experts, who did a great job.

16. Please mention 3 key critical success factors that have supported this good interaction between stakeholders:

success factor 1:	success factor 2:	success factor 3:
Partners are key figures in this subject see 15 practical	Good sensibility for third countries context by Dutch researchers -- can be multiplied	Support from high level (both ministries) --
Getting the stakeholders together relevance project	Stakeholders formulation their mutual interest Ambition of local government	Stakeholders working to a solution together Growing demand for dairy products
Timing No remarks.	national policy to privatize No remarks.	The Netherlands could coordinate this process because of the fact that our country is small and has no hidden agenda No remarks.
The agricultural Office in the capital as one contact point for the local partners	One contact person/point in the Netherlands for Wageningen UR (for me important)	Fast reply from the Dutch side on this Romanian request

17. Please mention 1 BOCI financed WUR research & capacity building project that according to you does/did not do very well in terms of network development and interaction between the different stakeholders

Wise use of wetlands in Jiangsu, China
see 15

Not applicable as I have not been in this job long enough.

Biotechnology Report written by Wageningen International

No negative experience

Nvt

Rural development policy. 5 ministries are working closely together in formulating a national rural strategy. Both the EU and other donors have great interest in supporting the program

No remarks.

I do not have (less positive) experiences with projects in this field, because of the reason I mentioned in the former answer. The only two aspects I would like to mention is: 1. World Bank projects in general takes too much time regarding preparation and implementation 2. My experience is that experts of Wageningen sometimes are too much focussed on the theoretical level (for example talking about numbers and articles of EU-regulations), while they forget the more practical level (in other words what does it mean in practice and give some practical examples). I hear quite often, the training or workshop was (theoretical) very interesting, but we missed the practice.

18. What according to you could be done better in this project?

Necessary political support from local side was lost due to not supported choice of local research partner and a project manager who was not sensible for this situation and the consequences (although the LNV office warned him).

see 15

See 17

Everything, starting with commitment

Nvt

It is essential to keep the momentum

No remarks.

Regarding point 2: Experts should take practice more into account and should come with practical examples. In other words how do you deal with this issue in practice. Furthermore I would like to mention that for us it is very important that we have one contact person/point for Wageningen UR. However, there is more than Wageningen and I would like to suggest that also other involved organisations (like for example University in Enschede) in the Netherlands have such a contact person/point.

19. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, or questions regarding this survey?

Missing the possibility to comment the internal procedure concerning the approval of suggested projects: this could be done more interactive in a way that all parties know (counsellor and implementing body) in what stage the decision is made and which arguments were used to (dis)approve a project.

I have difficulties in understanding question 14

No

All questions almost relate to all projects - well, the approved projects only I guess. Obvious questions have not been asked: so how can be improve the cycle e.g.? How cane we avoid overlap with existing projects that I am not aware of but tackle similar issues?

Nvt

No

No remarks.

Good survey. My only comments is that because of the period (end of December), we don't have much time to fill the questionnaire in a more relaxed way. But any how I did my best and forgive me for the spelling/textual mistakes.

ANNEX 2: Summary of six interviews with Agricultural Counsellors

At the start of the knowledge project survey six exploratory interviews were made with counsellors. The six covered all continents and thematic priorities of LNV, providing a fairly good overview of important issues and trends.

The role of Counsellors

Counsellors primarily see their role as implementing the regional visions of LNV and the general policy of the Dutch cabinet. In developing countries the accent is on the MDGs whereas elsewhere trade and nature have priorities. Within the general policy there is quite some space for regional differences and priorities from counsellors themselves. A point of attention seems the handing over between departing and arriving counsellors.

The role of Cluster International

All counsellors underscore the importance of BOCI, which is strengthening the capacity building and institutional change within the sectors of their country/countries. Various meanings exist pertaining to the role of BOCI projects in networks. Some build on strong networks to develop projects, others use projects for network development, including development of stronger private partner networks.

Formulation of projects

The explicit role of counsellors in the formulation of projects is much welcomed. All counsellors are open for interaction with the Wageningen network which they appreciate as very positive, be it at the identification or formulation phase. These contacts are seen as complementary and providing additional contacts. Counsellors feel confident that they are able to counter supply driven ideas.

As for LNV contribution at the formulation stage counsellors mention that IZ is providing the policy framework and DK administrative support with relevant remarks to improve quality of the project formulation. Individual contacts within region teams are appreciated for coordination and choosing priorities. The decision process during which project propositions are selected is seen by some as a black box.

Issues related to Development Cooperation (OS) vary across the countries but also in the way how within embassies programmes are managed. Sometimes collaboration is very close, especially when BOCI funds are used to get agriculture more explicit on the development agenda. In other cases collaboration is more difficult because of different policy priorities or working mainly through multilaterals. Also cooperation with EZ is mentioned to strengthen programs in agriculture, nature and food safety. Linkages between KNIP and BOCI are seldom made.

Familiarity with DLO

Counsellors regret that BOCI funds are limited to DLO-Wageningen. Whereas they acknowledge not to know all potential DLO contacts, it is found rather easy to find new contacts through existing contacts. For the planning of 2008 the “Expression of Interest” phase has provided a few new contacts. The wide range of expertise within DLO is well appreciated, but limited availability in some fields of expertise of senior staff is mentioned as a risk. The involvement of WU staff in a few cases where no DLO staff is available is welcomed and serves as a fall-back option. All counsellors are very well

informed about DLO and Resource and Kennis on Line are frequently consulted. DLO staff is explicitly requested to visit counsellors whenever they are in the country.

Involvement of local and other Dutch partners

Sometimes other (non-DLO) partners are found through other funding sources, but the practical implementation trajectory often encounters problems and BOCI funds are not available for these other partners. Counsellors would much welcome access to additional funding (like “open programmeringsgelden”) to allow them to develop project portfolios with a wider range of partners.

Types of project

No clear response was given as for the preferred timeframe of projects (one year or more years) or the portfolio mixture of one year projects combined with longer term projects. In general counsellors agree that long term (> 1 year) projects should be possible, but monitoring and options for changes should be possible during the project period. This type of project would ideally receive a multi-annual commitment, combined with annual work plans and budgets. In addition BOCI funds are used as seed money to initiate or put on the agenda specific topics, with the intention that other funds will be found for a full project. However, these opportunities vary across regions. Short projects often have the biggest results in terms of network improvement but also need high investment costs. A similar reflection is given on budgets: some say that only a few larger projects would be preferable whereas others prefer a wide range of smaller projects.

When is a project regarded as a success?

The general idea is that success is measured in terms of changes the project resulted in. Practical applications of outputs, institutional embedding and scientific quality are seen as supportive to these changes, not as impact. Various different roles are mentioned of projects within the chain starting in problem identification, putting on the agenda and changes eventually reached. An indicator for success of an agenda setting project is the level of involvement of partners in the actual implementation phase. The combination of research and capacity building that is offered in BOCI is seen as essential. Meanwhile, it is not always clear when a research project shifts into a capacity building project and counsellors are not yet very experienced in these transitions. Their role in monitoring is seen as essential to assure the success of a project. Regular fine-tuning and instruments for adjustments are mentioned, but counsellors differ in opinion how active they should be.

Examples of successful projects

Argentina¹²: logistics of vegetables export was not economically feasible due to expensive airfreight. Opportunities were available in the sense of good infrastructure and producing in the counter-season. A project on conservation technology allowed for a new type of transport by shipping, which is providing an enormous potential.

Ethiopia: The Netherlands - Ethiopia Horticulture Partnership was a focused initiative where public-private partnership was build with concrete outputs resulting in a follow-up project of 3 million €.

¹² More details on successful projects are provided by a new LNV BOCI brochure which will be available by March 2008

Indonesia: A food security project supported the organizational strengthening of the Indonesian Food Authority, resulting in an increased export potential from Indonesia to the EU. Follow up was co-financed by EZ.

South Africa. Research on ecotourism resulted in a stronger ecotourism structure at the Kruger Park.

Turkey. The Green Knowledge Network project provided a sound basis for biodiversity partnership in Turkey but also was further orienting the LNV policy for Turkey.

Synergy and options for improvement within Cluster International
Learning across regions is seen as not yet of high potential, as the context varies considerably. The Multi-lateral part of BOCI is not very visible for counsellors and seems an area for improvement. Counsellors underscore the importance of using a multi-annual timeframe, which may include short term initiatives, but still within clear long term visions. Projects which cover various years should have a clear additional value for the country, building on Dutch expertise and resulting in new capacities which are not yet available.

Other suggestions?

- Identify a proposal for a typical portfolio in terms of initial and ongoing projects, like 1/3 – 2/3 of the budget;
- The French are one of the few EU colleagues who seem to have a similar type of Programme. This might give an opportunity for common EU programmes.

ANNEX 3: Combined results 5 interviews DLO representatives

Roles of actors during the BOCI process steps 1 - 6

Dutch business sector		Come up with ideas				
Advisory Commission ¹³						
WUR partners/network in project country						
WUR		Informally influences	Informally involved			Reformulation ¹⁴ towards LNV policy needs, but often just with WUR partners
LNV Directorates		Influence		Selection on relevance		Sometimes Assisting reformulation
Agricultural Council			Formally submits			
	1 agenda setting	2 problem identification	3 Question formulation	4 Question assessment	5 Call for proposals	6 Proposal development

Roles of actors during the BOCI process steps 7 – 12

Dutch business sector						
Advisory Commission		Advice for reformulation				
WUR partners/network in project country			Involved as partners, but there is no budget for them			
WUR			responsible			
LNV Directorates	Granting the projects (requirements + budget)					
Agricultural Council			Involved for matching his needs			
	7 Assessment proposals	8 Adaptation proposals	9 Project implementation	10 Monitoring	11 Evaluation	12 Use of results & impact

Where do things go well?

¹³ In Dutch 'Begeleidingscommissie'

¹⁴ With reformulation we mean 'widening' (verbreden)

Good contact between the researcher and the Agricultural Council and good contact between the researcher and responsible person from LNV turns out to be very important for a good demand articulation. This way knowledge questions can be reformulated by the researchers, adapting them to policy needs from LNV. Through this contact a question that is considered by LNV to be “irrelevant”, can turn into a project that is considered to be very important, and might get real support, for example from an Advisory Commission (at Dutch level).

The roles of several actors in BOCI are positively changing over time. BOCI has generally resulted in improved contacts between researchers, agricultural counsellors and LNV. Building up these contacts also improved the demand articulation, because good communication was existing.

Policy Support Cluster International Cooperation set out an open tender within WUR in 2007, which was really appreciated. There was just not enough time to make the process really open and transparent. The process should be as open and transparent as possible. Selection should be done on 1. expertise and 2. experience with BOCI processes.

All BOCI-projects are 1-year projects, and if not being attentive, you risk missing out a year. For continuity of these 1-year projects, a very active and alert Agricultural Counsellor and local WUR office/network are needed.

What can be improved?

1 agenda setting	2 problem identification	3 Question formulation	4 Question assessment	5 Call for proposals	6 Proposal development
Communication of region visions & year plans of Counsellors	Agricultural Counsellors often do not know that there is money for research, that research can be very useful for them and do not know what WUR has to offer, so a forum for better contact between researchers and agricultural counsellors is needed	Better formulation of research questions by agricultural counsellors		The focus of selection within WUR should be on selecting the right people for the job. The “learning” element should be properly formulated	Better reflection towards LNV Policy; research should have a research programme instead of working through ad hoc projects; There is too little time (1 month); For impact the project should search for lessons learnt

7 Assessment proposals	8 Adaptation proposals	9 Project implementation	10 Monitoring	11 Evaluation	12 Use of results & impact
Too little reflection of how and why towards WUR/DLO		No budget for participation of local researchers; clarity is needed between research-agricultural council-LNV	Often very weakly formulated; Focus on learning: sit around table during process with LNV, counsellor, researcher and implementing partners	Project should produce lessons learnt, useful for local partners and LNV	Results, outcomes & impact should be better communicated and spread, especially for learning; Counsellors need outputs that they can use/show

In general to improve:

The demand articulation process is not very transparent, and it should be. Access to Region Visions and Year Plans might be a good start.

WUR should be formally and actively involved in the demand articulation process. The demand articulation process is a way of building up a (sustainable) relationship between policy makers and researchers.

There is need for better contact between LNV-Den Haag and researchers, who often do not understand each other, both during proposal development and implementation.

It might be helpful to have more persons within LNV who understand research and researchers. These persons can link with WUR researchers. There is need for more ‘academic thinking’ within LNV. But there is also need for more reflection on relevance for LNV Policy during the proposal development and implementation, through better communication between LNV and researchers, which is almost impossible because there is so little time for proposal development.

Continuity is lacking. The projects are often ‘ad hoc’ (based on ad hoc policy issues) and research should be more programmatic. Research should be adjusted / linked to policy, but it should not be forgotten that research can also be an input for policy. An example of problems arising from the wish to totally match the research agenda with an existing policy agenda is the bio fuel research. The bio fuel research was initially directed with the idea that the EU bio fuel policy would not be accepted. But the EU bio fuel policy was accepted (which is opposite from the then existing Dutch policy), so now it is difficult to implement the planned research. So the topic (bio fuel) is still on the agenda, but the focus has changed.

ANNEX 4: Results interview with Directorate Knowledge (DK)

DK is responsible for the quality of the links between Policy-Research-Practice. Their objective is to give knowledge a function in policy development. DK is the facilitator of the process with respect to the content. It operates at the several levels of the bilateral programme: at the Dutch level with the Policy Directorates and with DLO/WUR, and at country level with the Agricultural Counsellors.

A. Definition steps BOCI process (horizontal line in schematic overview))

1. Research themes on the agenda based on region visions and year plans of the agricultural councils
2. Origination of the QUESTION. Problem identification.
3. Formulation of the question on main lines
4. Assessment of the question on main lines
5. Call for proposals
6. Development of project proposals
7. Assessment of project proposals (rejection, approval, conditional approval)
8. Possible adaptation of the project proposal
9. Implementation proposal
10. Monitoring (Half way the project report to account for time and budget)
- 11a. Evaluation (Yearly report with the “answer” (output))
- 11b. “go” of “no go” for projects of several years¹⁵
12. Use of results, outcomes and the impact

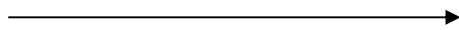
B. Brainstorm on actors involved (vertical line in schematic overview)

- I. Local government (meaning: government of country of subject)
- II. Local NGOs
- III. Local business
- IV. Multi-lateral organizations
- V. Dutch business
- VI. LNV executing agencies
- VII. Wageningen University and research centre (researchers)
- VIII. Other Dutch Ministries (Development Cooperation, Economic Affairs, etc)
- IX. LNV Policy Directorates (DK, IZ, DL, DN, VD, DP, D-VIS, I&H)
- X. LNV Agricultural Council

¹⁵ Although BOCI provides financing for 1 year, projects can be multi year but financing has to be requested every year.

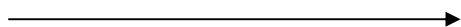
Roles of actors during the BOCI process steps 1 - 6

X LNV Agricultural Council	1-X Year plan, region vision	2-X Involvement	3-X Writes			
IX LNV Policy Directorates	1-IX Knowledge agenda		3-IX helps	4-IX assessment of Policy & knowledge relevance		
VIII Other Dutch ministries						
VII WUR		2-VII Involvement	3-VII Writes or helps writing			
VI LNV executing agencies						
V Dutch business						
IV Multi-lateral organizations						
III Local Business						
II Local NGOs						
I Local Government		2-I Involvement				
	1 agenda setting	2 problem identification	3 Question formulation	4 Question assessment	5 Call for proposals	6 Proposal development

Time 

Roles of actors during the BOCI process steps 7 - 12

X LNV Agricultural council				10-X Assessment	11-X Assessment	
IX LNV Policy Directorates				10-IX CB monitors quart expenditure		
VIII Other Dutch ministries						
VII WUR				10-VII half yearly report		
VI LNV executing agencies						
V Dutch business						
IV Multi-lateral organizations						
III Local Business						
II Local NGOs						
I Local Government						
	7 Assessment proposals	8 Adaptation proposals	9 Project implementation	10 Monitoring	11 Evaluation	12 Use of results & impact

Time 

Detailed explanation of roles

- 1-X: based on the Region Vision counsellors prepare a year plan. This plan has no knowledge agenda.
- 1-IX: Decision making. “Dossierstaf” (directors of the Policy Directorates) under the direction of the Directorate General
Region Teams develop Region Visions (since 2006, without a knowledge agenda, come together twice a year)
DK and IZ decide upon the knowledge agenda
- 2-I: Agricultural Counsellors involve local government in identifying problems / generating questions
- 2-VII: WUR researchers might have ideas and communicate with the counsellors
- 2-X: Counsellors are involved in the identification of the problem, together with others
- 3-VII: WUR researchers sometimes write (or help writing)
- 3-IX: DK sometimes helps writing (also with people from other policy directorates (being internal policy)) and provides a format (1 A4) with a structure and helping questions
- 3-X: Agricultural Council writes, is the owner of the question.
- 4-IX: IZ sends DK-form to Agricultural Counsellor to guide formulation of question
Question of Agricultural Counsellor sent to IZ (with cc to DK)
Assessment on Policy (format) coordinated by IZ, assessment on knowledge by DK (format) by DK. Multiyear projects can be proposed (2-3 years) and will be assessed by DK. However DK can only commit yearly (1-year) budgets.
Secretariat Cluster International joins results and decides: policy assessment negative means “no go”, knowledge assessment negative might result in reformulation
- 10-VII The researcher has to submit a report on status of implementation (focusing on time / budget used)
- 10-IX Cluster International monitors whether quarterly expenditure is according to planning (outputting).
- 10-X: Agricultural Counsellor assesses if project results are as expected and reports during Region Team meeting.
- 11-X: Agricultural Counsellor assesses if project results are as expected and reports during Region Team meeting.

D. Where do things go well and why?

Step 2: In some cases the identification of the problem seems to be properly done and the counsellor is clearly the owner of the question. Why is not clear.

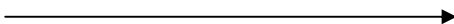
Between formulation and assessment of question (3 and 4) exist several feedback loops towards the “owner” of the question. This should be stimulated.

Step 3: The development of a good relationship between DK and agricultural counsellor, and an active role of DK staff is important. In some cases the co-operation between the

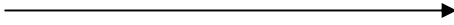
agricultural Counsellor and DK formulating the questions is very active and fruitful. A pro-active attitude from DK is crucial in this. The loops of reflection with the question owner should be stimulated.

Where can things go better and how?

1 agenda setting	2 problem identification	3 Question formulation	4 Question assessment	5 Call for proposals	6 Proposal development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge agenda in Region Visions & year Plans • Regular updating of knowledge agenda 	A more active relationship between counsellors and DK	Guiding and advising by DK should be structurally in place	Application of assessment form		More attention for communication and monitoring

Steps in time 

7 Assessment proposals	8 Adaptation proposals	9 Project implementation	10 Monitoring	11 Evaluation	12 Use of results & impact
		Black box. Need for more interaction researcher-policy worker	Reporting lacks on outcomes and impact	Reporting lacks on outcomes and impact	No idea about the use of results

Steps in time 

Step 1: Region Visions do not have a knowledge agenda. Region Teams are still in a process of developing/finding their role. Region visions should be dynamic, under a ongoing process of updating. The question is: how to keep them actual? Year plans of the counsellors do not have a knowledge agenda, but are flexible. They are written in Dutch. Why? The year plans should have a chapter on the knowledge agenda (bi and multi, sub-chapter BOCI ongoing and foreseen projects with a vision for the coming 4 years).

Recommendation: knowledge agenda in Region Visions and Year Plans should be put on the agenda.

Improving relationships DK and Region teams. Year plans on the intranet.

Step 2: Quality of problem identification varies between agricultural counsellors.

A more active relationship between counsellors and DK might improve this.

Step 3: Agricultural Counsel has to be the owner of the question. DK, guiding and advising the formulation process, should always be in place, but is not (probably because this new both for DK and for Counsellors?) The co-operation between DK and the Agricultural Counsels is very young and needs to be actively built. Pro-activity from DK is very much appreciated by counsellors.

Recommendation: The format used to formulate the question should have an item in which the counsellor has to identify the origin of the problem and the question.

Step 4: Application of the form for assessment is a bottleneck.

Step 6: (see also step 9) *Should the proposal have a chapter with a communication and monitoring strategy?*

Step 9: Implementation is a black box. How is the contact between interested parties, the counsellor and the researchers? There is no mechanism to assure that researchers answer the questions. Implementers should focus more on the effect of the project. There should be more interaction between policy workers and researchers

Recommendation: this can be facilitated by DK by providing a useful structure and format (including monitoring and evaluation)

Step 10: All reporting is based on outputs and lacks assessment on outcomes. An impact assessment is not done. BOCI provides seed-money, but there is no assessment of long-term effects of a project. Both the owner of the question and the implementers should take this into consideration.

Recommendation: format reporting needs to include monitoring

Step 11: A project does not always provides the “answer” to the “question”. The yearly (final) reports lack the analysis of the outcomes and the impact of a project. *(see recommendation step 9)*

Step 12: There is no idea about the use of results.

Recommendation: DK could set-up a list with all BOCO projects and check, in cooperation with the agricultural counsellors, once in a while what has been done with the results.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Results of this study should be presented by DK during an informal meeting with a drink (borrel) beginning of March. DLO and WUR could organize this together. Approval of Cluster Management is needed. Patricia and Hans will take responsibility.

ANNEX 5: results interview Cluster Board International (CBI)

Schematic overview of stakeholders and their roles during BOCI process steps 1 - 6

XII CLUSTER INTERNATIONAL	1-XII Budget allocation			4-XII final decision	5-XII Request for proposals	
XI LNV POLICY DIRECTORATES	1-XI Final decision	2-XI relevant policy questions		4-XI assessment policy		6-XI Feed back
X DK	1-X Knowledge agenda		3-X assists	4-X assessment knowledge and Write “gunningsbrief”		6-X Feed back
IX LNV EXECUTING AGENCIES						
VIII WUR		2-VIII involvement	3-VIII assists		5-VIII Expression of interest	6-VIII Writes
VII OTHER DUTCH MINISTRIES/ SERVICES						
VI DUTCH BUSINESS/NGOS		2-VI involvement				
V INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS						
IV LOCAL NGOS		2-IV involvement				6-IV Partner
III LOCAL BUSINESS		2-III involvement				6-III Partner
II LOCAL GOVERNMENT		2-II involvement				6-II Partner
I AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL	1-I Feed back	2-I coordination	3-I Writing and submitting			6-I Feedback
ACTORS	1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATIO N	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Steps in process →

Schematic overview of stakeholders and their roles during BOCI process steps 7 - 12

XII CLUSTER INTERNATIONAL	7-XII Final decision		9-XII Responsible		11-XII Final advice	
XI LNV POLICY DIRECTORATES	7-XI Advice		9-XI Responsible		11-XI Advice	13-XI Use
X DK	7-X Letter of assignment		9-X Responsible budget		11-X Advice	
IX LNV EXECUTING AGENCIES			9-IX Partner			13-X use
VIII WUR		8-VIII Rewriting	9-VIII Responsible	10-VIII Writes mid-term report	11-VIII Writes final report	13-VIII Use
VII OTHER DUTCH MINISTRIES/ SERVICES			9-VII Partner			13-VII Use
VI DUTCH BUSINESS/NGOS			9-VI Partner			13-VI Use
V INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS			9-V Partner			13-V Use
IV LOCAL NGOS			9-IV Partner			13-IV use
III LOCAL BUSINESS			9-III Partner			13-III use
II LOCAL GOVERNMENT			9-II Partner			13-II Use
I AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL	7-I Pre-advice		9-I Responsible	10-I Coordination	11-I Check final report	13-I Use
ACTORS	7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	(8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS)	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. MONITORING	11. EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT

Steps in process →

1. AGENDA SETTING

- 1-I: Agricultural Council (AC) participates in the development of the Regional Vision and prepares a Year Plan. She/he also gives feed back to the Cluster International when themes are proposed.
- 1-X: DK decides upon the Knowledge Agenda together with IZ
- 1-XI: LNV Policy Directorates do the final decision making. “Dossierstaf” (directors of the Policy Directorates) under the direction of the Directorate General and participate in Region Teams which develop Regional Visions.
- 1-XII: Cluster International develops and updates Knowledge Agenda and allocates the budgets. Agenda setting also includes indication of budget. In March, the Cluster Board decides about rough division BOCI budget across themes.

2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- 2-I: AC coordinates de problem identification, An Agricultural Counsellor is often an intermediary between national partner organizations and between national organizations and WUR. Ideally, the Agricultural Counsellor is a “botshafter”, guided by policy “the Hague” and local institutions / government.
- 2-II: Local Government might bring in ideas
- 2-III: Local business might bring in ideas
- 2-IV: Local NGOs might bring in ideas
- 2-VI: Dutch business/NGOs might bring in ideas (or other NL services like Nuffic)
- 2-VIII: WUR might bring in ideas
- 2-XI: LNV Policy Directorates bring in relevant policy questions. Most members of CB are part of one of the policy directorates. Members of CB are responsible for linking with Councils. He/she can remind a counsellor about the existence of BOCI funds and possible topics for BOCI research. The policy directorates asses the proposals based on policy priorities (and also including regional vision and year plan counsellor), so an Agricultural Counsellor should know (as early as possible) what the policy directorate wants. Policy directorates have contacts with Agricultural Councils when it is relevant for policy: for instance now more contact with African Councils because of emerging diseases (veterinary).

Identified problems can originate from various sources or a combination of sources. Problem identification often is a collaborative process between the Agricultural Council and local stakeholders

3. QUESTION FORMULATION

- 3-I: AC submits the question (in a format as provided by DK) to IZ (CC. to DK)
- 3-VIII: WUR can assist the AC with the formulation (or sometimes even writes). Sometimes WUR formulates question together with local institutions and submits request through Agricultural Council;
- 3-X: DK helps the AC with the formulation (sometimes)

4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT

4-X: Assessment of question on knowledge by DK

4-XI: Assessment of question on policies, coordinated by IZ

4-XII: sometimes the assessment leads to a request to reformulate the question. Cluster International gives final decision, “go” or “no-go” for all submitted (and possibly reformulated) projects.

4-X: based on decision “go” or “no-go” DK writes invitation for tender (*gunningsbrief*) to WUR

Notes:

- If the proposed BOCI research does not fit in the thematic priority areas, the Agricultural Counsellor has to explain why it is an important topic to consider for BOCI funding.
- Also the thematic area under which the proposed “questions” for research can be located is used in a flexible way, for instance some biodiversity research can be funded under the thematic area water (and not the thematic area biodiversity).

5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS

5-VIII: WUR writes an expression of interest (internal parties can express interest in projects requested by Cluster International (*offerteverzoek*))

5-XII: Cluster International brings out the official request for proposals (*offerteverzoek*)

6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

6-I: AC gives feedback to WUR during the proposal writing process

6-II: Local government might be involved as project partner

6-III: Local business might be involved as project partner

6-IV: Local NGOs might be involved as project partner

6-VIII: WUR writes the proposal

6-X: DK has contact with WUR during writing. This is non-structural, informal and not always

6-XI: LNV Policy Directorates have contact with WUR during writing. This is non-structural, informal and not always

7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS

7-I: AC gives pre-advice (based on relevance and policies)

7-X: DK gives pre-advice to CB (knowledge perspective) and writes, based decision Cluster Board the letter of assignment (*gunningsbrief*)

7-XI: The Directorates give pre-advice. (based on relevance and policies)

7-XII: Cluster International (Board) assesses advices DK, AC and Directorates, and makes the final decision about the distribution of assignments, asks DK to write letter of assignment (*gunningsbrief*)

8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS

8-VIII: WUR rewrites (with other partners?)

9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

9-I: AC is responsible for the process of implementation

- 9-II: Local government might be partner
- 9-III: Local business might be partner
- 9-IV: Local NGOs might be partner
- 9-V: International organizations might be partner/co-financing
- 9-VI: Dutch business/NGOs might be partner/co-financing
- 9-VII: Other Dutch ministries/services might be partner/co-financing
- 9-VIII: WUR has to “deliver”
- 9-IX: LNV executing agencies might be partner
- 9-X: DK is responsible for the budget
- 9-XI: Directorates are responsible
- 9-XII: Cluster International has the final responsibility on how the project went

10. MONITORING

- 10-I: AC coordinates the process and briefs the Region Teams on the process
- 10-VIII: WUR is responsible for proper expenditure and for mid-term report on results.

11. EVALUATION

- 11-I: AC checks the final report with guiding format provided by DK. The reporting format (UR) and guiding format (DK) are similar (coordinated between WUR cluster manager and DK).
- 11-VIII: WUR writes the final report with guiding format as provided by DK
- 11-X: DK gives advice. In case of the continuation of a multiyear project, the Knowledge Directorate prepares a pre-advice. This pre-advice is sent to CB and Agricultural Counsellor.
- 11-XI: Directorates give advice
- 11-XII: Cluster International gives the final advice (for continuation of a multi-year project)

12. USE OF RESULTS & IMPACT

- 9-I: AC uses the results
- 9-II: Local government, if a partner, might use the results
- 9-III: Local business, if a partner, might use the results
- 9-IV: Local NGOs, if a partner, might use the results
- 9-V: International organizations, if a partner, might use the results
- 9-VI: Dutch business/NGOs, if a partner, might use the results
- 9-VII: Other Dutch ministries/services, if a partner, might use the results
- 9-VIII: WUR uses the results
- 9-IX: LNV executing agencies, if a partner, might use the results
- 9-X: DK uses the results
- 9-XI: Directorates use the results (if the project is of their interest)

Weaknesses in BOCI process steps 1- 6

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT
Too broad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends a lot on what role an Agricultural Council takes • No evidence of involvement of local partners • Involvement of stakeholders depends on the nature of the project • what the role of the partners (actual situation and future situation) is / should be. (ACTUAL – FUTURE) in problem identification 	involvement of local actors in question formulation (in the question formulation format it is only stated who is involved, but that still is no proof)			<p>Development with local partners should be a requirement¹⁶</p> <p>Researcher often does not understand policy context</p>

¹⁶ LNV does not formally oblige WUR to involve local stakeholders in developing the proposal, but in contacts with the Agricultural Counsellors LNV stresses the importance of local stakeholders being involved in proposal writing. Also in evaluation, the involvement of local stakeholders (in what phase?MS) has to be described. Demanding too much (too many obligations in proposal development) should be avoided, otherwise creativity might suffer.

Weaknesses in BOCI process steps 7- 12

7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	(8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS)	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. MONITORING ¹⁷	11. EVALUATION	12. USE OF RESULTS & IMPACT
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not clear who “owns” the question • Responsibility is not clear • High variety of projects • In some cases no contact between researchers, Directorates and ACs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation of project often not strict, which makes monitoring difficult • Multi-partner projects cause difficulties with monitoring • guiding commission”(begeleidingscommissie) including researchers and policy makers from the Policy Directorates rarely exist in BOCI • system of advancing budget could be reconsidered¹⁸ • AC has no formal role but is evaluated on overall performance (thus has certain responsibility) • Clear need for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment of partners • Involvement of local partners? • No impact assessment is done • Clear need for improvement 	

¹⁷ Monitoring: The “intensity” of monitoring should relate to the total budget of the project, otherwise the transaction costs will be too high. (budgets vary between 10K-500K)

¹⁸ now 100% of the total budget is given to the WUR in advance

Weakness: no clarity on “ownership” of project

“Owner” of project – re implementation – monitoring – evaluation. Who is “owner” of project, and who will be held accountable in case of problems? Participants in group meeting do not seem to agree / it is not very clear.

The following came out of the discussion:

- DK has given the “eindfiatering” (written letter of assignment), so DK can be held accountable for budget (budget responsibility)
- If objectives of project are not achieved, agricultural counsellor is held accountable (not formally, but informally), he has been defining the question and requested the BOCI research project. But formally, the Council cannot be held accountable (he/she also does not have a formal role in monitoring).
- On the other hand, BOCI projects are often not formulated properly (compared to for instance EU projects where there is explicit mention of results / outputs and monitoring indicators), so it is difficult for Agricultural Councils and Policy Directorates to monitor progress, and we can therefore not hold Agricultural Councils accountable.
- Within the Ministry, often the Cluster Board is held accountable for success/failure BOCI projects.
- But formally, DK has sent the “gunningsbrief” (invitation for tender), so they are also accountable.
- After tendering (accepting “gunningsbrief), WUR has a contractual agreement with the Ministry, so WUR also accountable.
(Projects > 100K have to be evaluated.)

Strengths in BOCI process

Question Formulation ideal situation (is sometimes the case)

- ideally, all actors should be involved in question formulation;
- involvement of local institutions in question formulation is prerequisite for positive impact project;
- the chances of success of a project increase when a local institute says : “we want to work on this”
- agricultural Council has (should have) central role in this process (involving local institutions);
- question has to be “grounded” in country and in Ministry Policy;
- Local stakeholder involvement: Often MoUs exist which could be referred to in question formulation format;

Implementation

In some projects, regular (3 monthly) meetings are held between researcher – policy directorates, DK. This works very well. This is done because the project is close to the policy context, and therefore the project might have to be slightly adjusted to fit with changed policy context.

Evaluation - Impact assessment?

Is not done formally / structurally. But Counsellors are being asked whether results previous projects are being used. Also, when Minister visits country, projects are often visited by Minister.

Use of results

Results of projects are on the agenda of high level meetings and in agreed minutes (local, in the host country, including national experts and government staff, the Counsellor and Dutch experts / ministry staff): landbouwerksgroep)

Use of research results in policy

Sometimes, for instance in veterinary diseases project we (LNV policy directorates) are gaining knowledge (research results) which we use in policy development.

General remarks:

Differentiate between

- Programming cyclus Cluster Board (together with DK and other directorates) : assessment projects, division budgets etc
- Project cyclus: the stages in project formulation – implementation – evaluation

Overall: “Beleidsondersteunende Kennis – Beleidsondersteunend Onderzoek”

The BO means policy supporting research, this might be a wrong wording (to narrow), because it is not just about research, it is also about knowledge sharing, knowledge development, co-creating knowledge with partners, transferring knowledge. It is all these elements that make that processes run smoother. Objective of BO is pooling knowledge and expertise to bring things further (“poolen kennis/expertise om iets verder te brengen”)

Summarizing: It is not just research, also capacity development. The name to “Beleidsondersteunende Kennis” would express better what the Ministry wants to achieve (instead of Beleidsondersteunend Onderzoek).

ANNEX 6: Results interview CBI- Marcel Vernooij

More integrated programme

MV started by explaining the context of the BOCI process. A number of years back the programme was divided into 4 different sub-programmes: capacity building, international cooperation, Eastern Europe and Hortin (horticulture, Indonesia). Now the programme is more integrated and based on regional visions and explicit knowledge agendas. The integrated programme also responds to the diverse needs of the Counsellors, who often have a combined need for knowledge, research and capacity building. The integrated programme has also led to more collaboration within the WUR in terms of research and capacity development. Capacity development is specifically relevant in the more poor countries. Often requests start with a demand for research but very quickly a need for training becomes clear.

Demand articulation

An important element of the LNV knowledge agenda / knowledge policy, is guiding the knowledge development by actual demand, and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in demand articulation. The focus of demand articulation for the BOCI programme is at the embassies. It is important that the demand articulation is within the boundaries of the LNV themes and the regional visions. Because of these boundaries the knowledge that will be generated will be better anchored in LNV's policy. Communication about the demand articulation is important. If this is missing proposals or projects often go wrong.

Budget

Currently the total budget is stable, although there has been a decrease from €8,5 to € 6 million, which is the absolute minimum because there is great demand and the bilateral BOCI activities are relevant for LNV policy. There has been an increase in the budget for bilateral projects (now €3,5 million).

Involvement of counsellors

Internationally a lot of key targets have been set around a range of international issues (Johannesburg, MDGs, etc) So currently the issue is not what needs to be done but how. This makes it the more logical to make the agricultural counsellors more responsible for this process. This will enhance the relevance for LNV policy and will also make it easier to identify with. Previously researchers would come up with research questions but these were often not in line with LNV policy and the involvement of counsellors was low. This has completely changed now. This ownership and involvement of counsellors is crucial: the counsellors are key in formulating bilateral BOCI requests.

Issues

1. Synchronising the different cycles/agendas.

It would be useful for WUR to receive the different research questions well ahead of time, (some 1,5 years ahead for training courses) as currently the process to respond to the different requests is really short (only one month). The aim is to follow the year plan cycle of the counsellors so that the knowledge programme can be discussed in the region-teams together with the annual plans: we will ask the counsellors to include what knowledge related activities they plan to do next year. Ideal would be to

also synchronise the year plan cycle of the counsellors with the requests by I&H, DN & VD. After aggregating and combining the different proposals, a choice can be made on which instrument to use to achieve which demand (for instance whether DK bilateral BOCI funds would be the best response to meet the demands or whether other funds would be more appropriate).

2. The review of research questions by DK – this process is carefully done, however the communication about this review is not done adequately. It would be good to inform all applicants about the reasons for accepting / rejecting their request for BOCI funds.
3. The knowledge agenda is not really integrated in the year plans. The instrument (knowledge agenda) is not good as it is taken out of the directorates. Knowledge is really a means to achieve the aims of LNV. Better would be to develop year plans and specify the knowledge needs in the year plan.
4. High administrative work load DK in reviewing the research questions. Therefore, the start up costs of small projects is relatively high. However, MV would still stimulate small projects, even though the DK work load is relatively higher. They could be used as seed money for (bigger) follow-up projects. MV would not advise LNV to decide to only focus on large projects. Shifting to big projects would mean a shift to a donor role. However, LNV can contribute to such larger projects in co-financing arrangements.
5. Another issue is the seniority / experience of WUR researchers as this also influences the costs for start up.
6. Also, the start up costs depend on the existence of (local) networks around issues related to the research questions. Start up costs for small projects can be relatively small when WUR researchers are already involved in this network.
7. Financing one year or more? MV is not necessarily positive about projects of more than 1 year, as this could lead to less involvement of the counsellors (counsellors will probably feel less responsible for the quality of the project after 3 years compared to a 1 year project) and a reduction of the freedom of the counsellor to make changes in the focus on other knowledge needs . Also multi-year projects mean that a bigger chunk of the budget is committed, and there is less budget to allocate for shorter projects. It is possible to request for a multi-year project by motivating the need in the initial request. However, budget allocation will be only per year, and continuation for each consequent year has to be motivated. The 1-year duration of projects is more problematic for researches than for counsellors.
8. Responsibility: counsellor is responsible for project progress. Progress of the counsellor's previous projects is a criterion for the assessment of new requests by him/her. The final financial responsibility is a grey area. It is now with the Cluster Board. Combining all commissioning of activities to WUR/DLO is most efficient. LNV has considered allocating the bilateral BOCI budget to the counsellors and have them decide for what WUR support they want to use it. However, the criteria for allocating the budget to the “posten” are difficult to decide. Also, if these activities

are commissioned by the counsellors (so without DK being involved in reviewing the requests) it will be more risky, as it will be more difficult for “the Hague” to steer / monitor whether all policy priorities are covered in the bilateral BOCI. It will be more efficient to keep the budget in The Hague rather than to spread it but this has the risk of reduced feeling of responsibility with the counsellor

9. Use of BOCI money: counsellors seem to often use the BOCI money as seed money and to strengthen their network which can assist in shaping the policy agenda or reaching LNV's policy objectives. There are also opportunities to assist the local country in developing their policy agenda. Good example of shaping a policy agenda is Egypt. LEI conducted a BOCI funded research into the possibilities to economically support farmers through income support instead of production subsidy (EU GLB model). Following this research, a workshop has been conducted and now a high Egyptian delegation will be visiting Europe. The process to implement is getting support from EU and Japan. MV is happy when there are a few of these ‘pearls’ that make the BOCI funding really worth it.
10. Impact assessment: this is according to MV not necessary at project level but more at general level, once every so often across projects.
11. Monitoring and evaluation: When a new counsellor takes over some transfer of learning takes place in the hand-over. Also, regional teams meet twice a year. However, learning is not systematic. There is a need to bring together relevant projects / processes and support horizontal learning. Also, learning across bilateral and multilateral projects should be improved, this learning can not be focused in regional teams: WUR should have a role in this learning across bi-multilateral projects.
12. Financing: MV expects the division of bilateral versus multi-lateral to shift from 60%-40% (currently) to 75%-25% in about 5 years. Also there might be more collaboration with OS and other funding sources (e.g. DFID, CIRAD, IDRC, ERA-ARD etc). There is a need to for more collaboration and streamlining. Maybe the budget would be raised from €3,5 to €5 million.
13. Streamlining service delivery. There is a need to train the counsellors to assess the quality of articulated questions / project descriptions and its proposed budget. The Cluster Board / DK could develop / commission a manual (including the implicit DK knowledge about realistic budgets and quality / experience of researchers). DK has a lot of implicit knowledge about what are realistic budgets for activities (e.g. workshops), although that may vary per country. It is important to streamline the service delivery. PW indicated that DK can focus more on knowledge whilst the policy directorates can focus more on policies. Now there is overlap between the two.
14. Involve other partners than WUR in a knowledge project: counsellors often raise the question about the possibility to include other partners than WUR in knowledge projects. BOCI is earmarked for implementation by WUR/DLO, but it is possible to combine BOCI funding with “open programming” (another LNV knowledge project funding modality) and include budget allocations for material costs and for

other partners (local researchers / partners) than WUR/DLO in the project. There have been suggestions to top up the WUR/DLO earmarked BOCI funds with some money to allow inclusion of local partners in the project proposal/budget (on top of the 3,5 million around 200.000 extra).

15. Countries without OS: China, Brazil, India, Russia. The problem here is that DLO budget is minimal and there are no alternatives as OS is lacking in these countries. Maybe open programming can assist here.
16. Streamlining procedures: there is a need to optimize/streamline the current procedure (specifically for demand articulation): have realistic project budgets early in the process, a 'smooth' assessment of the project proposals. DK can play an important role in further optimizing the procedure (a lot has been done by DK already the past few years)
17. Communication / PR of BOCI programme: more effort should be put in communicating the existence, relevance and results of the BOCI programme to the outside world and within the ministry. For instance, by including BOCI project results in the reports to parliament, by circulating summaries about project results within LNV, by informing people about / linking to the website kennisonline (with all BO projects), and by stimulating counsellors to communicate about BOCI projects.
18. Role counsellor: ensure that the counsellors have more tools available so that they can learn from each other, to improve continuity (handing over to the next counsellor) and for dealing with the budget. Also there should be an active engagement of the counsellor with the local stakeholders.
19. Demand articulation: the application forms for submitting proposals should be more service oriented rather than control-oriented. The forms should also be available digitally, on a website. Application forms should be on a website, and it should be possible to submit proposals all year round (like KNIP projects, proposals can be submitted electronically). All (including research requests) should be accessible for counsellors, LNV and the cluster board, not for the WUR.

Challenges BOCI process steps 1 - 6

1. AGENDA SETTING	2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	3. QUESTION FORMULATION	4. QUESTION ASSESSMENT	5. CALL FOR PROPOSALS	6. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT
Boundaries are important: regional vision, knowledge agenda, themes.		The questions should be easily identifiable and should be well communicated.	Need for synchronisation of processes (around year plans); Lack of communication on the results of the review process Streamline		

			procedure. Enhance role DK		
--	--	--	----------------------------------	--	--

Challenges BOCI process steps 7 - 12

7. ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS	(8. ADAPTATION PROPOSALS)	9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	10. MONITORING	11. EVALUATION	12. RESULTS & IMPACT
			Not systematically focused on learning – task for cluster board	Not systematically focused on learning – task for cluster board to bring together relevant projects	Recommended to carry out impact assessment at level every so often, not at project level.

Other issues:

- Marcel Vernooij suggested to write an article for popular scientific sources on the findings of this survey, particularly as there is still little written from the side of policy makers and it is important to also understand what we mean by ‘policy makers’ and the difficulties they face in implementing their duties.

ANNEX 7: Literature references and excerpts/citations from selected publications

References:

Ahmed, M. (2004). Bridging research and policy. *Journal of International Development*, Volume 17, Issue 6, (p 765-773)

Carden, F. (2005). From demand to Disinterest: Contexts for Policy Influence. A transcript for a talk at ODI, Impact and Insight meeting. 17th October 2005.

Carden, F. (2004). Issues in assessing the policy influence of research. UNESCO 2004

Court, J. & S. Maxwell (2005). Policy entrepreneurship for poverty reduction: bridging research and policy in international development. *Journal of International Development*, Volume 17, Issue 6: 713-725.

Court, J. and J. Young (2003). Bridging Research and Policy: Insights from 50 case Studies. ODI working paper 213, pp 46.

DFID Research Policy Study Team (2002). Research for poverty reduction: DFID research policy paper. November 2002.

Davies, P. (2005). [What is Needed From Research Synthesis From a Policy Making Perspective?](#) : paper offering insight into what policy makers want from research synthesis based on the work of the Government Chief Social Researcher's Office to increase the use of systematic reviews in policy making.

Davies, P. (2005). Evidence-based policy at the Cabinet Office. Transcript of a talk at ODI Impact and Insight meeting, October 2005.

Davies P. (2004) .Is Evidence-based Government Possible? Jerry Lee Lecture, presented at the 4th Annual Campbell Collaboration Colloquium, Washington DC.

Defra website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/how/evidence.htm>

Gold, I. (2006). Beyond Production: applying the principles of knowledge transfer and exchange to maximize impact. Presentation for the 6th Annual Information Management Conference, Government of Canada, Director, Knowledge Transfer and Exchange October 3, 2006

Knowledge Agenda team, Knowledge Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, the Netherlands. (No date). Tips voor het maken van een kennisagenda.

ODI (2006). Module 1: effective research for development policy. Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences Progressive Policy makers Workshop, June 2006, Toronto, Canada (<http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Events/Congress/module1.html>)

Perkin, E. and J. Court (2005). Networks and policy processes in international development: a literature review. ODI Working Paper 252, pp 36.

Policy Support Cluster International Cooperation (2007). Report 2006-2007. (<http://www.boci.wur.nl/UK/06-07/>)

Roosjen, M. and F. Stavast (no date). Werkwijze ontsluiten van bestaande kennis door State-of-the-Art en Quick Scan. Knowledge Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, the Netherlands.

Stone, D. (2001). Getting research into policy? Paper presented to the third Annual Global Development Network Conference on 'Blending Local and Global Knowledge', Rio De Janeiro, 10th December 2001.

Sutcliffe, S. and J. Court (2006). A Toolkit for Progressive Policy makers in Developing Countries. ODI. (<http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Tools/Toolkits/EBP/Index.html>)

Vibe, M. de, I. Hovland, Young, J. (2002). Bridging Research and Policy: An Annotated Bibliography. ODI working paper 174, pp 76.

Winder, D. (2006). Evidence-based policy: myth or reality? A presentation at the ODI/INASP Research-Policy Symposium, Oxford, November 2006.

Young, J. (2005). Research, policy and practice: developing countries are different. Journal of International Development, issue 17: 727-734.

Young, J. & L. Shaxson (2006). Making the Policy-research Connection for Development: using research-based evidence to improve policy, programs and practise. Workshop for CIDA Policy Analysts, June 2006, Ottawa, Canada.

Excerpts/citations from selected publications

Key agencies working on Policy-research-practice links:

International Development Research Centre (IDRC): In the early years of 2000, many agencies conducted research into the influence of research in (public) policy and the use of research in the policy making process. IDRC for instance started its evaluation of the influence of research in policy making processes in 2001 (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26606-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

Overseas Development Institute (ODI): A major source of information and expertise on the link between research and policy in development policy is RAPID: ODI's Research and Policy in Development programme. RAPID aims to improve the use of research and evidence in development policy and practice through research, advice and debate. (<http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Index.html>)

RAPID is working on three issues:

1. how policy-makers can best use research, for evidence-based policy-making;
2. how researchers can best use their findings in order to influence policy;
3. how to improve the interaction between researchers and policy-makers.

The programme works on four main themes:

- The role of evidence in policy processes;
- Improved communication and information systems for policy and practice;
- Better knowledge management and learning for development agencies;
- Approaches to institutional development for evidence-based policy.

RAPID developed the CEL model (Context, Evidence, Links).

Global Development Network (GDN): Since 2001 GDN is implementing a knowledge development project on Bridging Research and Policy. The aim of this project, which was launched in January 2002, is to synthesize approaches to closing the gap between ideas and their implementation. The project involves a survey of the experiences of researchers and policy makers and fifty case studies in which research has or has not influenced policies. (<http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=175>)

Stone, D. (2001). **Getting research into policy?** Paper presented to the third Annual Global Development Network Conference on 'Blending Local and Global Knowledge', Rio De Janeiro, 10th December 2001.

<http://www.gdnet.org/rapnet/pdf/Beyond%20Economics%20Stone.pdf>

Twelve Ways of Conceiving Research-Policy Dynamics

There are a number of different perspectives and explanations as to why research is or is not utilised in policy making. These perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Taken together they provide a multi-faceted picture of the research-policy nexus indicating that there are many possible routes to 'bridging' research and policy. This is because the starting point, or guiding assumptions, about the nature of the problem differ dramatically.

1. The problem can be defined as **a public goods problem**, where there is an inadequate supply of policy relevant research (Squire 2000). One solution is intervention with capacity building programmes and public support for the creation of policy relevant research. This approach is grounded in the belief that there is currently insufficient information for policy planning. The incorporation of research into policy deliberations once it is generated tends to be assumed. In other words an increase in supply will generate its own demand.
2. Rather than a lack of research, the problem can be portrayed as one of a **lack of access** to research, data and analysis for both researchers and policy makers. This view considers that there is wealth of research and analysis available but recognises that there is differential or inequitable access to knowledge. Recommendations to improve both access to and the diffusion of knowledge Follow.... (KFPE, 1998).
3. The problem can be defined as **the poor policy comprehension of researchers** towards both the policy process and how research might be relevant to this process. Research recommendations can be impossible to implement because political realities (such as cost-effectiveness) are not addressed. The problem is located in the quality of supply. Overcoming this lack of understanding requires researchers to study the policy process, to find approaches to demonstrate the relevance of research, and to build methodologies for evaluating research relevance. Methodologies include case studies, examples of 'best practice', and targeting research at different points in the policy process. From the demand side, recognition of the disincentives and disinclination of researchers to draw out the policy implications of their research can be found with social science funding regimes attaching conditions to grants requiring researchers to interact with 'user groups' in industry or government. However, this kind of analysis and practice has been stronger identifying problems on the supply side rather than addressing the kinds of institutional and professional changes that need to take place within government.
4. The problem can be represented as **ineffective communication by researchers** of their work. Researchers usually cannot and often do not want to provide the unequivocal answers or solutions which policy-makers demand. Again, the problem is located in the quality of supply but where the emphasis is on style of presentation and the development of 'narratives' that help sell research. Improved communications strategies are consequently encouraged...

5. The problem can be identified as the **ignorance of politicians** or over-stretched bureaucrats about the existence of policy relevant research. Decision-makers have limited time and resources. Consequently, they employ information from trusted sources – usually in-house or close to the centre of power – to help generate simple and understandable recommendations about complex problems. They may be unaware of cutting-edge research. One solution – ‘building bridges’ or constructing ‘conveyor belts’ – takes form in, for example, conferences and workshops, or the appointment of specialists to government committees. However, this is primarily a one-way process of feeding research into policy assuming decision-makers will be receptive to the best available information.
6. There is a tendency for **anti-intellectualism in government** that mitigates against the use of research in policy-making, while the policy process itself is riddled with a fear of the critical power of ideas (ESRC/DfEE 2000: 16). ...
7. The problem can be conceived in terms of policy makers and leaders being dismissive, unresponsive or incapable of using research. Research is a lengthy process, whereas political problems usually require immediate attention. Politicians are driven by immediate political concerns in “a ‘pressure cooker’ environment”. In this scenario, the character of demand is flawed. This problem requires **improvement in governmental capacity** to absorb research, as well as in the capacities, personnel and resources of the state structure more generally. This necessitates training programmes to help make bureaucrats or political leaders ‘intelligent customers’ of research. Changes in political culture may also be needed. More extreme conditions (such as the censorship and oppression of researchers) are not uncommon in some developing and/or undemocratic states. Solutions to this – freedom of information/speech – are problematically dependent on the significant strengthening of democratic institutions.
8. The problem can be located in the **politicisation of research**. The rhetoric of research is often one that claims to be ‘neutral’, ‘objective’ or at least dispassionate. Research findings are easy to abuse, either through selective use, de-contextualisation, or misquotation. Decision-makers might do this in order to reinforce existing policy preferences or prejudices. Alternatively, they gather and utilise information to support their policy positions during the discussion of specific solutions as well as to legitimise decision outcomes once they are made. Research often produces information that is unintelligible, irrelevant, inassimilable or strongly discrepant – and will be either discarded by decision makers or construed by them in ways that are consistent with their preconceptions. Moreover, multiple sources of policy advice compete for the attention of policy-makers.
9. The problem can be defined as **societal disconnection** of both researchers and decision-makers from each other and from those who the research is about or intended for, to the extent that effective implementation is undermined. First, decision-makers are more likely to use internal sources of information. External sources of research are likely to be discounted. In some scenarios, ‘group think’ may result. Second, where there is a constructive dialogue between decision makers and experts, there may be joint technocratic distance from the general public. The recommendations lead to a focus on, for example, ‘participatory rural analysis’, ‘street-level bureaucracy’ and encouraging ‘public understanding of science’.
10. The problem can be conceived of as not simply a question of research having a direct policy impact, but one of broader patterns of socio-political, economic and cultural

influence over the long term. For instance, an organisation or group of researchers may have huge impact on the media but little or no input into policy development. This leads to questioning of the **domains of research relevance**, impact and influence. In this perspective, the relationship and status of ‘science’ in relation to society is constantly evolving where in OECD countries, public deference to expert knowledge is less apparent (Nowotony, et al, 2000). Furthermore, research may take a generation to reveal its influence. The ‘enlightenment model’ falls into this category and is discussed in greater detail below.

11. The problem can be defined as one of power relations. This generates concerns about **the contested validity of knowledge(s)**, issues of censorship and control, and the question of ideology. The social and political context is important to understanding up take of research. Institutional arrangements, the nature of regime in power, the culture of public debate (or lack of it) and prevailing idea of truth or hegemony, structure what is considered ‘relevant’ or ‘useful’ knowledge. This is a fertile area of scholarship where theoretical developments in social theory, anthropology, development methodologies and economics have all pointed to the close relation that exists between knowledge and power (Baumann 1999).

12. The problem can be viewed as one of the validity of research, and problems relating to the question: what is knowable? Attention is then focused on different epistemologies and ‘ways of knowing’. The most common distinction is drawn between indigenous understandings of the world, and Western rationalist (scientific) approaches. This perspective prompts more participatory approaches to research, and emphasises multiple domains and types of knowledge, with differing logics and epistemologies.

Review of the Department for International Development’s role in the International Research Effort

Suja Sivadasan, Mirjam van het Loo, Caroline Wagner, James P Kahan and Jonathan Grant, RAND Europe, August 2003

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/research-national-study-1.pdf>

Summary of research prioritisation methods

Agency	Research prioritisation methods
CGIAR	A new structured consultative process ²⁶ has been developed to define research priorities, following the World Bank’s evaluation ²³ . The phased consultation process consists of: (i) selected experts; (ii) open to all stakeholders; and (iii) open consultations on the web.
Ford Foundation – Community and Resource Development Unit, Economic Development Unit	Local offices use local knowledge and undertake various focus groups, local consultations with clients, experts and other donors to prioritise research. ‘Affinity groups’, bring together local officers to discuss priorities. Appropriateness of funding is evaluated by the extent to which it: (i) strengthens local communities to do research themselves; (ii) strengthens research such that it is driven by local client communities; (iii) affects policy implications regionally and nationally beyond the particular local issue; and (iv) shapes and informs the field internationally.
Gates Foundation – Global Health Program	No formal research prioritisation methods exist, but external expert consultation workshops are used sometimes to set priorities. Criteria to fund research includes: (i) potential large impact; (ii) relatively risky investments; (iii) issues that are neglected by other donors; and (iv) focus on tools and technologies.
IDRC – Policy and Planning Group	A formal prioritisation process of widespread consultations with policy makers and researchers in developing countries and Canada through workshops, staff meetings, and electronic discussions. Criteria for setting specific research priorities include: (i) priorities and expertise in developing countries; (ii) IDRC-assets (e.g. people in the region); and (iii) CIDA’s foreign policy and development aid policy.

Rockefeller Foundation – Food Security Program	The Foundation sometimes involves consultants or advisors from the US or Europe to set priorities. Research priorities are set with regard to (i) building capacity first (identified based on previous experiences), and then conducting research; and (ii) funding in developing countries.
Special Programme for Research and Training in Topical Diseases (TDR)	Mechanisms to set priorities include expert steering committees, joint coordinating board (of donors) and working groups. Research priorities are set to find a balance between: (i) need; (ii) available funding; (iii) socio-economic issues; and (iv) opportunity.
SIDA – Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC)	Research priorities are set in the context of the type of research funded. For example, in the case of regional research programs, research that benefits the least-developed countries is given priority.
USAID – Global Development Alliances	Sector priorities are set by academics in both developing countries and the US, with a tendency is to set research priorities top-down. Factors that play a role in setting priorities include country presence and US-interests.
Welcome Trust – International Programmes	Research priorities are influenced by internal scientific objectives (supply driven) and by opportunistic responses to requests (demand driven). Research priorities are set by various processes including: (i) ad-hoc responses to suggestions from staff, governors and the scientific community (reviewed and approved by Committee); and (ii) formal identification of priority areas by an internal strategy team consisting of a cross-Trust team and taking advice from external scientists and broader consultations.
World Bank – Development Research Group	Long-term prioritisation of research is set by the thematic structure of the Group’s research programmes. These themes are arrived at through: (i) internal meetings and feedback from the Bank at Board and Director levels; (ii) meetings with representatives of the Banks of borrowing countries; (iii) other less formal mechanisms; and (iv) annual reviews of work programmes. Short-term prioritisation of research is reflected by the projects within the themes, which are increasingly decided with feedback from partners.

Court and Maxwell provide a summary of the articles in the special issue of the International Development on Bridging Research and Policy in International Development.

Summary of presentations

There is an encouraging consistency to these presentations, which deal with very different contexts and cover many different policies. All confirm that researchers cannot expect to be influential unless they set out deliberately to change policy—intent matters. So does engagement: researchers need to work with policy-makers, investing in good networks and good presentation, and shaping their research agendas in such a way as to help answer policy problems. Perhaps the biggest surprise is to see all the contributors emphasizing the importance of researchers forming alliances with civil society movements—not becoming advocates themselves, but rather supplying the research to unofficial as well as official clients.

The discussion in all the sessions was rich, and explored these propositions. We have reproduced it here with little editing, so that readers can understand why certain points were put. Key issues include:

- the potential for bureaucratic processes to distort research concepts and findings, and the consequent need for researchers to remain engaged on a long-term basis;
- the need to understand who is powerful in a bureaucracy and who most needs to be targeted; the value of people moving between the research and policy communities, carrying embedded knowledge and ways of working with them;
- the important role of international research funders in non-democratic states, helping to protect researchers and help them continue working; and

- the over-riding importance in this whole exercise of protecting research quality.

Court and Maxwell also summarize other authors.

Bridging research and policy in India

Naresh C. Saxena , Journal of International Development, Volume 17, Issue 6, (p 737-746)

There are six key lessons for researchers.

- They need to be committed to policy.
- They need to address policy agendas directly.
- They need to move beyond the project level, to address high level policy.
- Research should be comparative, drawing on lessons in more than one country.
- Good communication is vital.
- Reports need to be short.

Civil society, in Saxena's account, is crucial. Change, as he notes, 'requires constant lobbying, advocacy and pressure'. Some of the best examples of success have arisen where researchers and civil society organizations have worked well together: implementing the right to information is one example, the reform of forest law another.

Bridging research and policy: a UK perspective

Matthew Taylor, Journal of International Development, Volume 17, Issue 6. (p 747-757)

In his presentation, Taylor introduced five rules for successful policy entrepreneurship by researchers.

- First: win the argument about what the problem is before trying to win the argument about what the solution is.
- Second: understand the vital importance of political context and look for political opportunities.
- Third: balance persistence and opportunism, by sticking to an issue for long enough to make a difference, but also being prepared to present it in new ways.
- Fourth: focus on application and implementation.
- Fifth: always be strategic, thinking about who might support and oppose a particular change.

What determines the influence that research has on policy-making? (p 761-764)

Maureen O'Neil , Journal of International Development, Volume 17, Issue 6

Building on the

- long experience of the Canadian International Development Research Centre, she proposes not three rules. First: intent, that is researchers should be focused on policy change.
- Second: engagement, which is about researchers building personal relationships with policy-makers.
- Third: public participation, which is about building structures by which civil society voices can be brought to bear.

ODI

A Toolkit for Progressive Policy makers in Developing Countries

Sophie Sutcliffe and Julius Court, ODI, 2006

http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/EBP_toolkit.pdf

The aim of this toolkit is to identify lessons and approaches from EBP in the UK which may be valuable for developing countries. The approaches and tools presented are based on the assumption that the reader is a progressive policymaker in a developing country, and one who is interested in utilising EBP. The intended audience is made up of policy makers and policy advisers in the public sector, rather than those working within the private sector or civil society.

This handbook presents work in progress on lessons and approaches from evidence-based policy in the UK which may be valuable for developing countries and covers the following specific tools used by the UK Government. Tools are clustered in 6 sections: Overview and Checklist:

- Impact Assessment and Appraisal: Guidance Checklist for Policy makers

Strategy and Policy Evaluation

- Strategy Survival Guide
- Magenta Book: Guidance Notes on Policy Evaluation
- Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government
- Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

Ensuring Key Perspectives are Included

- Incorporating Regional Perspectives into Policymaking Toolkit (Sub-national)
- International Comparisons in Policymaking Toolkit
- Gender Impact Assessment: Framework for Gender Mainstreaming
- Managing Risks to the Public: Appraisal Guidance

Testing Policy Ideas

- Policy Pilots

Public-oriented Tools

- Concern Assessment Tool
- Community Engagement: How to Guide
- Connecting with Users and Citizens

Getting Better Advice and Evidence

- Expert Advisory Bodies for Policy makers
- Improving Standards of Qualitative Research

Making a difference: M&E of policy research

Ingie Hovland , ODO, July 1999

<http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/WP281.pdf>

This paper aims to advance understanding on how to monitor and evaluate policy research, i.e. research that is undertaken in order to inform and influence public policy. Policy is defined very broadly to encompass both policy decisions and processes, including implementation.

Conventional academic research is usually evaluated using two approaches: academic peer review, and number of citations in peer-reviewed publications. For policy research programmes, these evaluation tools have proven too limited. They are not well suited to

capture some of the broader aims of policy research, such as policy impact, changes in behaviour, or building of relationships. In short, policy research programmes need new monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches in order to know whether they are making a difference, not only in the academic world but also in the world outside academia.

The paper is written with research programmes and institutions in mind, rather than individual researchers. It presents examples and approaches on how to do M&E of policy research from the current experience of a range of research institutes, think tanks and funding bodies. The approaches have been divided into the following five key performance areas: (i) Strategy and direction; (ii) Management; (iii) Outputs; (iv) Uptake; and (v) Outcomes and impacts. Research programmes or institutes may wish to focus on only one of these areas, or may combine approaches across the areas to form a more comprehensive M&E plan.

This paper has five sections. Section 1 is a short introduction. Section 2 provides a survey of a range of possible new M&E approaches taken from the current experience of policy research projects, programmes and institutions. These are:

- **Performance Area I - Evaluating strategy and direction:** Log frames; Social Network Analysis; Impact Pathways; Modular Matrices
- **Performance Area II - Evaluating management:** 'Fit for Purpose' Reviews; 'Lighter Touch' Quality Audits; Horizontal Evaluation; Appreciative Inquiry
- **Performance Area III - Evaluating outputs:** Evaluating academic articles and research reports; Evaluating policy and briefing papers; Evaluating websites; Evaluating networks; After Action Reviews
- **Performance Area IV - Evaluating uptake:** Impact Logs; New Areas for Citation Analysis; User Surveys
- **Performance Area V - Evaluating outcomes and impacts:** Outcome Mapping; RAPID Outcome Assessment; Most Significant Change; Innovation Histories; Episode Studies

Section 2 also presents notes on institutions that have begun developing new models in the area of M&E of policy research. These are CGIAR (including SPIA, ILAC, LTI, CIAT, IFPRI and ACIAR), DFID, ECDPM, IDRC and ODI. Further details on institutional evaluations are given in Appendix 1.

Section 3 then highlights a few additional concerns to bear in mind when evaluating entire institutions (rather than individual projects or programmes), and Section 4 concludes by presenting best practice checklists on how to design an M&E approach for a policy research project, programme, or institution.

RAPID Context, Evidence Links (CEL) framework

http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Tools/Toolkits/Policy_Impact/Framework_qus.html

<http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Tools/Framework.html>

http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Tools/Toolkits/CEL_Presentation/Presentation.html

Detailed outline of the process

This is a very flexible tool. The questions provided are only intended to guide the user in the process. It is the user who must assess whether the answers to these questions paint the whole picture or if other important questions remain unanswered.

Context

1. Who are the key policy actors (including policy makers)?
2. Is there a demand for research and new ideas among policy makers?
3. What are the sources of resistance to evidence-based policymaking?
4. What is the policy environment?
 - a. What are the policymaking structures?
 - b. What are the policymaking processes?
 - c. What is the relevant legal/policy framework?
 - d. What are the opportunities and timing for input into formal processes?
5. How do global, national and community-level political, social and economic structures and interests affect the room for manoeuvre of policy makers?
6. Who shapes the aims and outputs of policies?
7. How do assumptions and prevailing narratives (which ones?) influence policymaking; to what extent are decisions routine, incremental, fundamental or emergent, and who supports or resists change?

Evidence

1. What is the current theory or prevailing narratives?
2. Is there enough evidence (research based, experience and statistics)?
 - a. How divergent is the evidence?
3. What type of evidence exists?
 - a. What type convinces policy makers?
 - b. How is evidence presented?
4. Is the evidence relevant? Is it accurate, material and applicable?
5. How was the information gathered and by whom?
6. Are the evidence and the source perceived as credible and trustworthy by policy actors?
7. Has any information or research been ignored and why?

Links

1. Who are the key stakeholders?
2. Who are the experts?
3. What links and networks exist between them?
4. What roles do they play? Are they intermediaries between research and policy?
5. Whose evidence and research do they communicate?
6. Which individuals or institutions have significant power to influence policy?
7. Are these policy actors and networks legitimate? Do they have a constituency among the poor?

External Environment

1. Who are main international actors in the policy process?
2. What influence do they have? Who influences them?
3. What are their aid priorities and policy agendas?
4. What are their research priorities and mechanisms?
5. How do social structures and customs affect the policy process?
6. Are there any overarching economic, political or social processes and trends?
7. Are there exogenous shocks and trends that affect the policy process?

Further to the CEL Framework elements, <http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Tools/Framework.html> elaborates on the (overlapping) areas of the Framework: the political and institutional context, research characteristics, links between researchers and policy makers, and the influence of external agencies.

Context: Politics and Institutions

The political, institutional, cultural and structural dimensions within which policy-makers work exert a strong influence on how research can contribute to policy. Factors within this area seem to fall into four groups:

Factors influencing policy formulation:

Policy makers and researchers are not only limited by macro political and economic structures (relating for example to issues regarding the nature of the political system, cultural attitudes and ‘national systems of innovation’) but also the assumptions underlying them. They are also affected by the various institutional pressures limiting and enabling them (the ideology of policy makers, policy narratives and, most importantly perhaps, the existence and nature of vested interests).

Factors influencing policy implementation:

The complexity and diversity of contexts intensifies even further when considering how policy is adapted, developed or distorted during implementation and practice. What influences policy practices varies according to the priorities of, and pressures on, bureaucrats, institutional incentives, ‘room for manoeuvre’, local history, and power relations.

Decisive moments in the policy process:

Whether by design or by accident, there are often key moments in policy processes; timing can be critical. There are different types of processes – fundamental, emergent, routine or incremental – which have different dynamics. Policy windows can be triggered, but more often they occur by chance or due to an external crisis.

Exogenous factors:

Work so far suggests that external influences play a large role in research-policy links in developing countries. These include effect of International politics, agreements and policy for example, the World Trade Organization (WTO) now represents a new set of international rules that is likely to have an impact on research policy links in countries already within the WTO as well as those trying to join. Donors are also important research funders in developing countries, and their funding priorities can significantly affect the focus, sources and dissemination of research. Donor policies can also exert a strong influence for example many bilateral and multilateral donors give an emphasis to issues of democracy, human rights and good governance. This has often resulted in moves to representative forms of governance and media freedom that have an impact on the context for bridging research and policy.

Research Characteristics: Relevance, Credibility and Communication

The quality of the evidence is clearly a key factor influencing research uptake by policy makers. The first phase identified two aspects of this which seem to be particularly important:

Relevance and credibility:

The relevance of research to policy, not only in terms of substance, but also its

operational use for policy makers, is often critical. The credibility of individual research findings are affected not only by the research approach and methodologies used, but also by the personalities and reputations of the researchers. High consensus in a research community can enhance credibility, but conflicting views can enhance visibility. Indigenous versus exogenous knowledge and local involvement are also important factors.

Communication:

There is no shortage of ideas about why some information makes a mark. The sources and conveyors of information may be as influential as the content; people accept information more readily from sources they trust. There is increasing emphasis placed on interactive models of communication, rather than traditional linear approaches. Phase one evidence supports two key issues: providing solutions as a way to increase interest; and, the importance of packaging and targeting messages. Often, there needs to be substantial pressure to challenge the ‘framework of possible thought’ of policy makers.

Links: Networks, Civil Society and Trust

The nature of the relationship between researchers and policy makers shapes how much influence they have over each other. This arena is informed by literature on policy processes, networks, campaigning, social epidemics, democracy and governance, and by the results of the surveys and case studies, but the conclusions so far are less clear. Three sets of issues however are clearly important:

Networks and influence:

There is much debate about the roles of different various types of communities and networks, such as epistemic communities, policy communities, advocacy coalitions (or communities of practice), and informal shadow networks in the policy process. Various types of networks and communities were clearly important in most of the case studies. It is clear that networks can provide an efficient means of sharing and enhancing coordination and cooperation, though it is less clear about which kind of network works best in particular circumstances. How researchers engage with policy networks and advocacy coalitions as well as utilize informal networks (the ‘shadow system’) clearly merits further study.

Legitimacy:

In addition to ‘upward’ links to various policy networks and decision-makers, the framework highlights the importance of ‘downward’ links to the populations and communities. This can help improve the legitimacy of organizations. A system of downward links and accountability should also enhance the credibility of the evidence and make it more difficult for policy makers to ignore. Such processes may be particularly important for the sustainability of policy change.

Trust:

The issue of trust is one that cuts across these two; the likelihood of research being used increases if there is a high level of mutual trust between researchers and policy-makers. Such relations contribute to the legitimacy of researchers in policy dynamics.

Bridging Research and Policy in International Development: An Analytical and Practical Framework. RAPID Briefing Paper, October 2004, Julius Court and John Young

http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/rapid_bp1_web.pdf

Table: How to influence policy and practice

What researchers need to know	What researchers need to do	How to do it
<p>Political Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the policy makers? • Is there policymaker demand for new ideas? • What are the sources / strengths of resistance? • What is the policymaking process? • What are the opportunities and timing for input into formal processes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know the policy makers, their agendas and their constraints. • Identify potential supporters and opponents. • Keep an eye on the horizon and prepare for opportunities in regular policy processes. • Look out for – and react to – unexpected policy windows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the policy makers. • Seek commissions. • Line up research programmes with high-profile policy events. • Reserve resources to be able to move quickly to respond to policy windows. • Allow sufficient time and resources.
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current theory? • What are the prevailing narratives? • How divergent is the new evidence? • What sort of evidence will convince policy makers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish credibility over the long term. • Provide practical solutions to problems. • Establish legitimacy. • Build a convincing case and present clear policy options. • Package new ideas in familiar theory or narratives. • Communicate effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up programmes of high-quality work. • Action-research and Pilot projects to demonstrate benefits of new approaches. • Use participatory approaches to help with legitimacy and implementation. • Clear strategy for communication from the start. • Face-to-face communication.
<p>Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the key stakeholders? • What links and networks exist between them? • Who are the intermediaries, and do they have influence? • Whose side are they on? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know the other stakeholders. • Establish a presence in existing networks. • Build coalitions with like-minded stakeholders. • Build new policy networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships between researchers, policy makers and policy end-users. • Identify key networkers and salesmen. • Use informal contacts.
<p>External Influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are main international actors in the policy process? • What influence do they have? • What are their aid priorities? • What are their research priorities and mechanisms? • What are the policies of the donors funding the research? 	<p>Get to know the donors, their priorities and constraints. Identify potential supporters, key individuals and networks. Establish credibility. Keep an eye on donor policy and look out for policy windows.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop extensive background on donor policies. • Orient communications to suit donor priorities and language. • Cooperate with donors and seek commissions. • Contact (regularly) key individuals.

Key issues surrounding EBP

What issues should governments consider when trying to identify what evidence is useful? Recent work (Court, Hovland, and Young, 2005; Shaxson, 2005) suggests that governments should consider:

- **Accuracy:** Is the evidence correctly describing what it purports to do?
- **Objectivity:** The quality of the approach taken to generate evidence and the objectiveness of the source, as well as the extent of contestation regarding evidence.
- **Credibility:** This relates to the reliability of the evidence and therefore whether we can depend on it for monitoring, evaluation or impact assessments.
- **Generalisability:** Is there extensive information or are there just selective cases or pilots?
- **Relevance:** Whether evidence is timely, topical and has policy implications.
- **Availability:** The existence of (good) evidence.
- **Rootedness:** Is evidence grounded in reality?

- **Practicalities:** Whether policy makers have access to the evidence in a useful form and whether the policy implications of the research are feasible and affordable.

Translation of EBP to developing country contexts

Increasing the use of evidence-based policy approaches in developing countries undoubtedly introduces new challenges. It is important to note that there is considerable diversity in terms of cultural, economic and political contexts, which makes it difficult to make valid generalizations here. Below, however, we try to highlight a few of the key differences that exist across the developing world and that would affect the effective use of EBP approaches (as based on Court, 2005).

- A few of the issues that may matter in some countries include:
- Weaker economic conditions: resources for research and policy are scarcer.
 - Difficult political environments: there are many places where political freedoms are limited and public accountability systems are weak, even in countries where elections occur (Hyden, Court and Mease, 2004). Political volatility tends to have a negative impact on the use of evidence in policy processes.
 - It is often in the implementation component of policy processes that barriers to evidence use are largest. Many commentators note problems with accountability, participation, corruption and lack of incentives/capacity to draw in evidence in policy implementation.
 - Academic freedom, media freedom and civil society strength matter for effective EBP. This is also a key factor in communicating ideas into policy and practice.
 - Capacity is more limited with regards to generating rigorous evidence and formulating policy.
 - Conditions of conflict: civil wars or low intensity conflicts limit the application of evidence-based policy.

Summary of main points

We have identified some important considerations. It is clear from the literature that:

- Evidence use does matter: better use of evidence in policy and practice can help reduce poverty and improve economic performance in developing countries.
- Policy should be informed by a wide breadth of evidence, not just empirical data. Key issues include the quality, credibility, relevance and cost of the policy.
- Evidence is needed in all the different components of policy processes – and in different ways in each component.
- Various constraints (time, capacity, cost) will affect the mechanisms available for mobilizing evidence for policy in developing countries.
- Policy processes are inherently political: although some developing countries have troubled contexts, an increasing number should explore EBP approaches.

Other relevant literature

Bridging the policy / research divide: Reflections and Lessons from the UK
Sandra Nutley. Keynote paper presented at “Facing the Future: Engaging stakeholders and citizens in developing public policy”. National Institute of Governance Conference,

Conclusions

It is time to return to the bridge building analogy. The outline survey of the lie of the land is complete and some of the mechanisms for spanning the gap between the implications and conclusions from this overview are grouped under four main themes.

First, bridging mechanisms need to be based on a realistic assessment of the ‘landfall’ on either side: the research and policy fields. It would be foolhardy to build on the assumption that research can provide definitive answers to policy questions and that policy processes can and should be based on a rational model of decision making. However, it would be equally remiss to assume that there is no basis for bridging the policy/ research divide; neither definitive evidence nor rational decision making are essential requirements for this task.

Second, while it is important to recognise some of the fundamental limitations about what research can and cannot tell us, the state of the **research evidence base in most policy areas can be improved in at least four ways:**

- Research priority setting exercises play an important role in identifying and plugging important gaps in research knowledge. However, these need to ensure that there is still a place for curiosity-driven, “blue skies” research, as new insights and innovations often depend upon this.
- Research and development strategies also need to address research capacity building. Recent increases in the funding of social research in the UK have exposed shortages of suitably qualified researchers.
- The development of broad agreement about what constitutes robust evidence, in what context, for addressing different types of policy/practice questions would be helpful. This will involve being more explicit about the role of research vis-à-vis other sources of information, as well as a greater clarity about the relative strengths and weaknesses of different methodological stances. Such development needs to emphasise methodological pluralism, seeking complementary contributions from different research designs, rather than epistemological competition.
- Systematic reviews have the potential to increase access to robust bodies of knowledge but to capitalise on this potential there needs to be further methodological development in this area and appropriate levels of funding for review activity.

Third, there may be some benefits from initiatives which seek to introduce more instrumental rationality into the policy making process but there is even **more to be gained from opening up policy making processes: enabling participation by a wide range of stakeholders and citizens**. Policy making is an inherently political and often messy process where research gets used in a variety of ways, including the use of research as ammunition in an adversarial system of policy making. This is not a bad thing, particularly if useful knowledge (including research knowledge) is distributed more widely among members of policy and practice communities than is presently the case. An “active” or “self-guiding” society (Etzioni 1968, 1993; Lindblom 1990) offers an inclusive vision of what an evidence-informed policy making might be like.

Fourth, the conclusions thus far indicate that **a grand policy/ research bridge designs preferable to a few uni-directional motorways**. Research (and researchers)

needs to travel in many directions and research often has greatest impact when delivered personally. If more permanent bridges are deemed necessary for specific policy areas, because of their centrality within the overall social policy agenda, then it may be

helpful to think in terms of those suspension bridges which rely on a central, intermediate pillar to support a wider bridging structure. This could be the role of intermediary bodies, such as the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the National Treatment Agency, referred to above. However, bridges *per se* may not be the most appropriate analogy. They assume an ongoing gap or obstruction that needs to be spanned. An alternative is to think about how the research and policy (and practice) fields can be brought closer together so that they naturally come into contact with one another at key points. This is the aim of various partnership approaches to improving research utilisation.

Overall, the key theme that emerges from this overview is that simple models of the policy/ research relationship – where evidence is created by research experts and drawn on as necessary by policy makers – fail as either accurate descriptions or effective prescriptions. The relationships between research, knowledge, policy and practice are always likely to remain loose, shifting and contingent. Initiatives to improve the linkages between policy and research need to be designed with this in mind.

Mobilizing knowledge to achieve the Millennium Development Goals: advisory report on the Dutch knowledge infrastructure in the field of international development, RAWOO 2005

<http://www.rawoo.nl/pdf/Rawoo27.pdf>

The research for development landscape in the Netherlands

Development-related research in the Netherlands covers a wide array of institutions, research domains and topics. The diversity of the research landscape is a strength – a source of richness and creativity – that should be nurtured and used. But the other side of the coin is a lack of focus and of critical mass resulting from the fact that the human and financial resources are too thinly spread over too many institutions and themes. Greater cooperation among institutions and disciplines around key MDG-related research areas may help to create a sharper focus and a greater critical mass. There are a number of fields in which Dutch development-related research has much to offer in relation to the MDGs. In addition, potential new players outside the traditional domain of the development sciences should be mobilized to bring their knowledge and expertise to bear on MDG-related needs.

The MDG-related knowledge agenda extends beyond the domain of the Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BuZa) and touches on the responsibilities of other government ministries as well as private actors. There is therefore a need to look into the possibilities for linking up the domestic knowledge and innovation agenda with the international development agenda. The government's policy for development research lacks a research strategy framework and is weak on steering, management and coordination. DGIS is not adequately staffed with in house research expertise and it has paid little systematic attention to the results, effectiveness and impact of its research policy.

Need for linking pin

The Netherlands does not have a knowledge institute similar to, for example, ODI and IDS in the UK, to act as a linking pin between research, policy and practice and to absorb, process and synthesize the results of research for policy-making, interventions and action. Such a bridging mechanism plays an important role in translating knowledge into policy options and in using existing knowledge more effectively for innovation in policy and practice.

Werkwijze ontsluiten van bestaande kennis door State-of-the-Art en Quick Scan
by Marc Roosjen en Frank Stavast, Knowledge Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, the Netherlands. No date.

The State-of-the-Art is based on a specific question and provides an overview of all available information around a certain topic. It includes an extensive literature search, and the report includes an extensive bibliography. It usually takes 2-3 months to complete a Quick Scan. A Quick Scan is a short and quick version of a State-of-the-Art. In a Quick Scan, easily accessible information is scanned for relevant information answering the search question. A Quick Scan can be completed in 1 month. Both Quick Scan and State-of-the-Art are a result of teamwork. The team usually involves an information specialist and a subject matter specialist. The content matter specialist specifies the research question and defines, in close collaboration with the information specialist, the criteria for selection of sources. The information specialist conducts the search, and aggregates bibliographic data (including summary) of the identified information sources. In a Quick Scan, the summaries are guiding to draw a quick picture of available information. For a State-of-the-Art, the identified key documents are reviewed and the search strategy might be further refined.

“Tips for articulating a knowledge agenda” from the Knowledge Agenda team of Knowledge Directorate (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands)

In the do's and don't section it is suggested to

Do:

- Create a knowledge team around an issue, involving key persons from the focal policy directorate, other policy directorates and the knowledge directorate);
- Start from a societal issue or policy objective and use a holistic approach;
- Make the focal policy directorate feel responsible for the knowledge agenda;
- Regularly update the knowledge agenda;
- Make use of the knowledge agenda team of the knowledge directorate.

Don't

- Make a knowledge agenda before having conducted a State-of-the-Art or Quick Scan;
- Formulate knowledge agenda without involving external stakeholders (in society);
- Make a list of knowledge questions without prioritizing them;
- Create a knowledge agenda without a clear mandate to develop it.

Questions to answer when generating a knowledge agenda include (not necessarily in chronological order):

Positioning: in which policy theme, policy directorate will the knowledge agenda be located? Who is responsible, and are other policy directorates / Ministries linked to the knowledge agenda (if yes, they should be involved in articulating the agenda)

Societal problem: what is the problem to be addressed by generating a knowledge agenda?

Policy: What is the Ministries policy (mid-term / long term) in relation to this societal problem.

Future developments / scenario studies: include predictions of future developments in articulating the knowledge agenda (if this is not done, the knowledge agenda will only be based on the current situation).

Stakeholder analysis: analyze the stakeholders and the future users of the (knowledge) results.

Involve / consult external stakeholders: it is important to consult / involve external stakeholders in the articulation process. This could be done inviting key societal stakeholders to contribute during “knowledge days”.

Policy-cycle stage: link the knowledge agenda to the policy cycle. Phases of the policy cycle each have a different “knowledge demand”

Link with other knowledge agendas and innovation agendas: link and coordinate between related knowledge agendas / innovation agendas.

Conduct a Knowledge Quick Scan / Stat-of-the-Art: to avoid overlapping commissioning of knowledge and to fine-tune knowledge questions.

Prioritize knowledge questions: let the subject matter specialists within the Ministry prioritize the knowledge questions using criteria on: political sensitivity; impact; responsibility Ministry to address the knowledge question; international knowledge agenda (mutually reinforcing knowledge agendas) and internal - societal support.

Identify “knowledge providers”: Identify “knowledge providers for each knowledge question.

Identify “knowledge users”: who are the users and how will they use the generated knowledge.

Document the process: document the process in view official definition of the knowledge agenda

ANNEX 8: Interview Mr. John Young

Director of Programmes for the RAPID Group -ODI's programme for Research and Policy in Development

Thursday May 15, 2008

17.00-18.00 hrs

Before the interview, the introduction and the summary of the report were sent to Mr. Young for his information. The interview started off with presenting the interviewers, explaining the objective of the interview and an introduction to the study, BOCI and the stakeholders involved. Issues that needed clarification were discussed.

1. After having read the summary of the report and this short introductory and explanatory discussion, what are your key observations so far?

Holland is one of the countries in which quite a lot of coherent thought has been given to research for international development. RAWOO for example (part of our literature study), is known for publishing a lot of good information, but they do not seem to be very active anymore

Fundamental questions are: Is this a sensible way to fund research for development? Should the Ministry of Agriculture actually be managing this programme? Has the study been looking at who else is involved in agricultural research for international development in the Netherlands? You're likely to get better quality research being done and better engagement with all the stakeholders when there is more integration with other stakeholders within the Dutch Ministries (External Affairs) with long-term experience and expertise in the field of research for international development.

Reading your report in which it is recommended to have a greater engagement of DK in the process is rather unlikely to happen. Especially looking at it from a UK perspective where the sizes of government departments decrease. DFID wants to spend twice as much money on international research with half of the people, so there is less involvement. One of the solutions to that is to give more money to the big international institutes and/or to contract it out in larger lumps through research centres.

Another issue that came to mind is the one year time scale. All the evidence suggests that you are more likely to get useful research if it is commissioned on a long term basis, also when it is commissioned rather on an outcome basis than a project delivery basis.

What is being said in the report is very sensible, that there is lack of engagement of critical stakeholders in various stages of the process. The diagrams make that nicely visible.

2. We are looking at improving research-policy interactions from the policy workers perspective. And we found that there is a lot of material available for researchers but less work has been done from the policy workers perspective. Would you agree?

Looking at research for international development, that is correct. Most work has been done on the supply side. If you look at research for domestic policy and practise there has been a lot more work done on the demand side. In Britain the New Labour evidence

based policy emphasis has resulted in a huge degree of interest on how to encourage policy makers to demand articulation and make better use of research in policy making. RAPID published a toolkit for policy workers (the toolkit is integrated in the study).

3. We really enjoyed reading all kinds of material from the RAPID programme. Looking at the CEL Framework we wanted to use it in our analysis but have not been able to do that. It turned out to be difficult to get to improvements for policy workers on the research-policy interactions/dynamics. What is your experience with working with the CEL framework from the policy workers perspective?

We have done relatively little work with policy makers, but have used the CEL framework a few times in mixed groups of researchers, policymakers and practitioners, where it seemed to work well. Louise Shaxson has done probably the most interesting work on this issue (see her work on Lines of Inquiry).

4. What are your experiences with how policy workers can improve the dynamics with researchers?

We have done far too little work on that and would like to do more on that. RAPID's knowledge on this subject would probably best be summarized in the toolkit.

5. What are your experiences with knowledge bridges/translators? Are they necessary? How does it work out?

Not sure if there is good empirical evidence or systematic evidence about what works and what doesn't, because it is a newly emerging field although in practise it has been used for thousand of years. There is a huge interest. Louise Shaxson is working on this, developing a project within Defra promoting knowledge brokering.

6. Would you have examples of organisations/ministries/countries who are struggling with these same issues?

Britain's Department of Environment, Forestry and Rural Affairs - Louise Shaxson has been doing a lot of work on mechanisms for improving the demand for research. (Innovation System/Strategy – Lines of Inquiry)

CG-Institutes have two programmes:

1. ILAC (institutional learning and change) – project coordinator: Jami Watts
2. Programme on Impact and Evaluation

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation is doing a lot work on knowledge brokering (also comes forward in the literature review for this study)

EPSRC (UK) - Sandpit: consultative mechanism for defining research projects – other ways of commissioning research which may encourage more sensible research

Science Policy Research Unit

Technopolis – Consultancy organisation based in Brighton, UK: advice on research programme design and utilization

The Policy Practise – consultancy organisation, Andrew Barnett, work on policy

processes and research and science (Innovation Systems)

Institute for Development Studies (IDS) – Knowledge Technology and Society (KNOT)
(Melissa Leach)