Research into Use: managing achievements for impact

J.M. Lenné

Abstract: The Research into Use (RIU) programme was initiated in July 2006 as part of the Department for International Development (DFID)’s Strategy for Research on Sustainable Agriculture 2006–2016. This new programme is founded on the substantial achievements and lessons learned from the previous DFID Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy implemented from 1995–2006. The main objective of this paper is to capture the strategic and innovative thinking that enabled the smooth transition to the RIU approach. It is hoped that wider understanding of this process will benefit international and national natural resources research and development programmes as well as donors. Widespread use of the best approaches to get research into use is a desired legacy of the RIU programme with potential for a far-reaching impact on reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth.

Keywords: research into use; innovations systems; infomediaries; information markets; demand-pull and supply-push; impact assessment

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Research to generate, develop and improve technology and knowledge in agriculture and natural resources management is the essential foundation of food security, poverty reduction and ecosystem management. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRRS) was established in 1995 to conduct research ‘to remove researchable constraints to economically and environmentally sustainable renewable natural resource development and management, with demonstrable impact on productivity, productive potential and production’ (ODA, 1994). This past strategy and research effort was implemented through 10 discipline-based/commodity research programmes managed by six independent UK-based organizations, rather than by DFID itself (Table 1). The programmes evolved during the lifetime of the RNRRS in response to improvements in DFID natural resources research strategy. From 1995–2006, DFID invested over £200 million in the RNRRS, funding over 1,600 projects throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (56%), South Asia (32%) and Latin America (12%).

In 2005, an independent evaluation found that the 10 programmes had been managed effectively and efficiently and the high quality of research had made significant contributions to scientific knowledge (Spencer et al, 2005). There was also clear evidence of positive local impacts on the livelihoods of the poor in target developing countries, as well as good potential for a wider impact on poverty in future. The evaluation team recommended that DFID should continue to support natural resources research with enhanced flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness. These recommendations informed the development of the new DFID Strategy for Research on Sustainable Agriculture (SRSA) 2006–2016 as well as the design of new DFID programmes (see www.dfid.gov.uk/research/srsa). The SRSA is founded on the belief that in order to achieve impact, it is necessary to understand how research can best be managed to achieve pro-poor innovation. It has highlighted the following elements as necessary to attaining pro-poor agricultural innovation: participation and voice; rights and equity; improved ownership; and capacity building.
One of the new DFID programmes is the recently initiated Research into Use (RIU) programme (see www.researchintouse.com for more information). The main objective of this paper is to capture the strategic thinking that enabled the transition from the RNRRS to the RIU programme. An understanding of this process could benefit international and national natural resources research and development programmes as well as donors. The paper first summarizes the key process achievements of the RNRRS and the lessons learned based on the evaluation report (Spencer et al, 2005), published and unpublished documents from Natural Resources International (NR International) and the DFID R4D portal (see www.dfid.gov.uk/research/R4D) as well as discussions with RIU programme managers. It then presents the development of the RIU approach. Finally, it outlines the expected outcomes of successfully managing the achievements of the RNRRS and related research outputs for significant impacts on poor people.

Key process achievements of and lessons learned from the RNRRS

Key achievements

The significant scientific achievements made by RNRRS programmes have been documented in many publications and on individual programme Websites (Table 1). In addition, the proceedings of the international conference ‘Pathways out of poverty’ held in 2005 (Harris et al, 2005) and Chapter 4 of Spencer et al (2005) feature selected achievements. Further highlights can be found at www.dfid.gov.uk/research/renewable-natural-resources.asp. This paper therefore concentrates on the key process achievements, many of which were essential to enable an effective transition from the RNRRS to the RIU approach. The Spencer et al (2005) report identified some of these issues, later reinforced by Rath and Barnett (2005) and Rothschild (2006).

Improved global awareness of natural resources research. The commitment of DFID over 11 years and the high profile of the RNRRS have contributed to enhanced global awareness of the importance and value of renewable natural resources research along the strategic–adaptive–applied agricultural research and development (R&D) continuum in contributing to food security and poverty reduction. There is a mass of evidence to support the central role that increased agricultural productivity plays in promoting pro-poor growth, especially if it involves broad-based productivity growth in a sector dominated by small-scale family farmers, and if poor consumers benefit from lower food prices of staples (Byerlee et al, 2005).

Creative and enlightened use of multiple knowledge sources. All RNRRS programmes used and adapted existing stocks of knowledge creatively to remove important constraints facing natural resource-dependent poor such as small-scale farmers and fisherfolk. This enabled many problems to be solved rapidly. Furthermore, where the required knowledge and/or technology was not available, the necessary new knowledge was created and often integrated with existing knowledge to address natural resources research problems (see Lenné and Thomas, 2006 for examples of integration of multiple knowledge sources in crop–livestock systems). The programmes emphasized that more research was not always needed, and researchers responded positively. Technology spillovers have been a pervasive feature of the history of agricultural R&D (CGIAR Science Council, 2005).

Transition to a demand-informed approach. During the lifetime of the RNRRS, the programmes evolved from a largely ‘research-driven’ mode of operation to a ‘demand-informed’ one. Increasingly, emphasis was given to participatory processes that enabled all stakeholders to provide inputs into prioritizing research needs. Agendas were progressively informed by the needs of the poor, with active participation of intended beneficiaries in project design and implementation. The value of a demand-informed approach to the RIU programme is discussed below with regard to the experience of the Innova project in Bolivia (Bentley et al, 2004; Innova, 2005).

Enhanced linkages between projects. Most RNRRS programmes evolved towards project clustering or strategic linkages between projects targeting different problems with the same commodity, especially in the same region. This facilitated continuity between strategic, applied and adaptive research projects over the lifetime of

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### Table 1. List of RNRRS programmes, management organizations and Websites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Management organization</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Health</td>
<td>Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine, University of Edinburgh</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dfid-ahp.org.uk">www.dfid-ahp.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture and Fish Genetics Research</td>
<td>Institute of Aquaculture, University of Stirling</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dfid-stir.ac.uk/Afgrp">www.dfid-stir.ac.uk/Afgrp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop Post-Harvest</td>
<td>Natural Resources International</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cphp.uk.com">www.cphp.uk.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop Protection</td>
<td>Natural Resources International</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cpp.uk.com">www.cpp.uk.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Management Science</td>
<td>Marine Resources Assessment Group</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fmsp.org.uk">www.fmsp.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Post-Harvest</td>
<td>Natural Resources International</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fphp.uk.com">www.fphp.uk.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Research</td>
<td>Natural Resources International</td>
<td><a href="http://www.frp.uk.com">www.frp.uk.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock Production</td>
<td>Natural Resources International</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lpp.uk.com">www.lpp.uk.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources Systems</td>
<td>Huntings Technical Services</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nrsp.org">www.nrsp.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Sciences Research</td>
<td>CAZS Natural Resources, University of Bangor</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dfid-psp.org">www.dfid-psp.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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programmes and helped to enhance spillover effects. The longer time frames enabled significant advances to be made with regard to difficult problems facing the natural resource-dependent poor. Clustering was a critical step in the evolution of programmes for appreciating and implementing innovation systems approaches.

**Increased integration of social science.** The growing recognition of the policy, institutional, social and economic dimensions of RNRRS programmes resulted in enhanced involvement and integration of social scientists in all discipline-based or commodity programmes. There was also a realization that failure to integrate social science could impinge on the uptake of research outputs, ie getting research into use. Where technical and social sciences were well integrated into programmes, this enabled the outputs from natural resources research to feed more smoothly into development policy and practice.

**Increased ownership and equity.** During the lifetime of the RNRRS, there was a significant increase in the participation of ‘Southern partners’ and the proportion of projects led and owned by them. All programmes shifted to organizing activities around beneficiary groups. In-country project expenditure increased to 50% towards the end of the RNRRS.

**Robust and sustained partnerships.** Among the most distinctive hallmarks of the RNRRS programmes are the long-term partnerships, as well as active networks, which have been established between Southern and Northern partners. These have included international organizations, especially the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), farmer associations, NGOs, public sector agencies, higher education bodies, small and large private sector enterprises and, increasingly, policy makers. Over time, all partners were involved in the design and implementation of projects, resulting in greater ownership of outputs and enhanced effectiveness of their promotion. Post-RNRRS, many of these partnerships are still active: for example, the finger millet coalition (Lenné et al, 2007) and the Dairy Goat Breeders Associations (see http://www.lpp.uk.com/) in Bangladesh.

**Increased capacity building and mentoring.** Despite some significant achievements, most RNRRS programmes found that poorly resourced research and extension services in partner countries continued to be a major constraint in delivering research outcomes (Rothschild, 2006). Crucially, capacity building and mentoring became important activities in RNRRS projects, even though these did not constitute an explicit requirement of the RNRRS. Sustained partnerships provided opportunities and the long-term commitment for capacity building and mentoring of individuals and institutions by all RNRRS programmes. National or local project leadership supported by mentoring, technical knowledge and capacity building from international and/or UK-based partners has led to acquisition of skills, sustainability of research effort and continued local promotion since projects ended.

**Innovative communication channels.** The RNRRS explored and researched innovative communication channels. Successful methods were developed and established. Most RNRRS projects produced multiple methods and materials. Communication outputs were customized into many products aimed at different stakeholder groups. These included journal articles and books for researchers; electronic and paper-based baskets/toolkits of information for extensionists; electronic and popular media for farmers, including radio and TV soap operas; rural community-based activities such as drama; farmer field schools and information centres/kiosks; cartoon calendars for agricultural input suppliers and farmers; comic books for schoolchildren; new textbooks for university and college students; and technology fairs (see programme Websites given in Table 1 for more information). There is no doubt that the success of these activities informed the development of the DFID SRSA, as researching communication issues is explicitly mentioned. DFID is now funding significant communications research across all sectors.

**Proactive dissemination.** Often the bottleneck to use of research outputs is the lack of a delivery system or a weak existing pathway. During the last three years of the RNRRS, considerable emphasis was given to the dissemination of research outputs through development or strengthening of delivery systems and establishing mechanisms for scaling-up to ensure that uptake continued after projects ended. All programmes generated impressive examples of local impacts (see programme Websites given in Table 1) and project partners gained new skills for the future. This experience was critical to the effective transition from the RNRRS to the RIU programme.

**Engagement with the private sector.** It is generally recognized that greater engagement with the private sector is essential to sustain commercial smallholder agriculture in developing countries. Several programmes actively sought increased links with private sector stakeholders as partners and research users during the dissemination phase (see Harris et al, 2005 for several examples). It has been noted that there is a need for a variety of institutional innovations and incentives to get private markets to work and to improve coordination in the value chain (Byerlee et al, 2005). Successful RNRRS projects showed that incentives such as improved supply of higher-quality raw materials and/or improved connectivity in the supply chain were sufficient to stimulate active engagement of private sector companies in successful and sustainable partnerships to the benefit of all stakeholders.

**Key lessons learned**

Several key lessons were learned during the implementation of the RNRRS programmes that have also informed the development of the Research into Use strategy. The Spencer et al (2005) report identified some of these lessons, later reinforced by Rath and Barnett (2005).

**Increased attention to impact assessment.** One key deficiency of the RNRRS programmes (and indeed many agricultural R&D initiatives implemented in the past – see
Raitzer, 2003) was poor monitoring, evaluation and learning. In most projects, insufficient baseline data were taken and/or appropriate indicators of progress and impact were not identified early on in the research process. Without measurable indicators of impact on the poor or other intended beneficiaries, it is difficult to assess the impacts on livelihoods, poverty and economic growth. Yet despite this deficiency, evaluation of developmental impact in some projects was attempted by all RNRRS programmes. Notable examples of local impacts have been demonstrated (see programme Websites given in Table 1).

These examples notwithstanding, it is widely recognized that the impact of RNR research on poverty is influenced by many social, economic and political as well as technical issues. Impact is often only measurable after many years, and impacts in agricultural R&D are diffuse, cumulative and difficult to attribute to particular research outputs alone (Raitzer, 2003). However, the process can be enhanced if research outcomes are fully integrated into mainstream development activities (Rothschild, 2006). Only in this way can appropriate resources be mobilized for piloting and scaling up. This important lesson has informed the RIU approach.

Value of multidisciplinary approaches. Although the RNRRS programmes effectively integrated social science into their projects and clustered projects within programmes, in general, poor cross-programme coordination and communication reduced multidisciplinary opportunities and, possibly, impact at systems level. One notable exception was the cross-cutting promotional project Innova in Bolivia (Innova, 2005; Bentley et al., 2007). Over five years, this project developed a comprehensive approach for matching technology supply with demand; adapted and applied the participatory market chain approach; provided a model for dynamic information management to support technology adoption; began effecting change in national policy towards agricultural R&D in Bolivia; and improved the livelihoods of poor farmers in three agro-ecological regions in Bolivia. The value of multidisciplinary approaches to address complex problems, as well as the potential of cross-sectoral approaches (eg links with health, education and community development policy), has strongly informed the RIU approach.

Suitability of the innovations systems approach. The RNRRS programmes followed different approaches in implementing projects and groups of projects on related problems. These included project clusters, networks, partnerships, and in one case, innovation platforms. Although the Crop Post-Harvest programme was the only programme explicitly to implement an innovations systems approach in later years, many of the projects organically developed innovations systems approaches, albeit in an incomplete and unsystematic manner (Rath and Barnett, 2005). A number of key elements of this approach, such as capacity building, participatory action research and greater attention to communication (see Hall et al., 2006 for more information), became standard practice due to their increasing success in achieving outputs. An analysis of the use of innovations systems approaches in the RNRRS noted that if innovation projects were to provide lessons, it would be necessary to invest in the learning processes to extract the higher-level lessons about both the process and the content, especially for wider application (Rath and Barnett, 2005). This important lesson has informed the Research into Use approach.

The RNRRS has provided a good model for development-oriented scientific research, with its partnership mode of operation, emphasis on capacity building, evolution towards innovation systems approaches, blend of high-quality technical and social sciences, and commitment to dissemination and uptake of outputs (Rothschild, 2006). It will be vital for the vast knowledge base accumulated by the RNRRS over 11 years to remain readily accessible to all users in the South and North. This is a key objective of the programme. The first step towards ensuring this has been the production of a searchable CD database of 280 research outputs (technologies, policies and processes). Furthermore, the key process achievements and lessons learned from the RNRRS experience have critically informed strategic thinking to enable a smooth transition to the RIU approach, discussed in the next section.

The Research into Use approach

The RIU programme was initiated in July 2006 to capitalize on RNRRS investment, achievements, research products, networks, partnerships and know-how (see www.researchintouse.com and RIU, 2007 for more information). It is managed in partnership by NR International, UK, Nkoola Institutional Development Associates (NIDA), Uganda, and Michael Flint and the Performance Assessment Resource Centre (PARC), UK. A high-level Programme Advisory Board (PAB) has been established, comprising leading African and Asian stakeholders. In due course, regional and/or national hubs will be established in South Asia and in West, East and Southern Africa.

The purpose of the RIU programme is:

‘to maximize the poverty-reducing impact of RNRRS and other research, and by so doing, increase understanding of how promotion and widespread use of research can contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth’.

The programme has three main objectives:

- to maximize the poverty-reducing impact of the outputs of natural resources research in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia through improved access, enhanced demand and fostering public–private sector partnerships;
- to increase significantly the understanding of how the promotion and widespread use of such research can contribute to the wider benefits of poverty reduction and economic growth through monitoring and evaluation support and synthesis and impact evaluation; and
- to enable policy processes and to influence the agenda through widespread communication of lessons generated by RIU activities for strengthening
innovations systems at regional, national and agency level.

The substantial knowledge base and technologies generated by natural resources research in past decades continue to have considerable potential to impact on poverty reduction and economic growth in developing countries for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Byerlee et al., 2005). Indeed, the RNRRS programmes overwhelmingly demonstrated the value of creatively using and adapting existing stocks of knowledge to remove important constraints facing small-scale farmers. Alston (2002) contends that up to half of the local productivity gains in agriculture over the past few decades can be attributed to the ‘spill-in’ of existing technologies developed elsewhere. The RIU programme will, therefore, make maximum use of existing knowledge, technologies and systems, and of national and regional capacity through working with existing programmes, partnerships, institutions and processes (RIU, 2007). However, despite the continuing efforts through research to generate and spill in the knowledge and technologies to help the poor ascend out of poverty, widespread adoption has been disappointing, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (Blackie and Ward, 2005). The key principle of the RIU programme to learn and disseminate lessons on how to get research into use for the benefit of poor people should contribute substantially to wider adoption of much needed RNR knowledge and technologies.

Whilst the RIU programme will draw extensively upon the knowledge gained from the past 11 years’ worth of research funded under the RNRRS, it will operate very differently. Specifically, it will link with and add value to existing national and regional processes and other initiatives by development partners (RIU, 2007). Whilst researchers will be important partners in the RIU programme, the emphasis will shift to brokers and users of research, and novel partnerships will be strongly encouraged. In focusing the RIU programme on Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, it will work in up to 15 focus countries drawn from those listed in Table 2.

Working effectively with national, regional and international partners in these countries and regions will be critical to promoting lessons to the key bodies that develop and implement pro-poor policies. In Sub-Saharan Africa, these include the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and the Forum for African Agricultural Productivity Program (FAAP) managed by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

To achieve the above interlinked objectives, the RIU programme has adopted an innovations systems approach based on Arnold and Bell (2001) and Hall et al. (2006). The approach comprises five strategic, interdependent building blocks supporting any intervention. These include:

- **support to innovation platforms** to stimulate new approaches to up- and out-scaling among stakeholders to transform research knowledge into goods and services for the poor;

### Table 2. Research into Use programme focus regions and countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Potential countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Africa</td>
<td>Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>DR Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Countries in bold type are already involved in the first phase of the RIUP.

### Table 3. Research into Use outputs and intervention components.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Intervention components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant use of RNRRS and other research outputs</td>
<td>Improved access to research outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-into-use evidence</td>
<td>Enhanced demand for research outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-into-use policies and practices</td>
<td>Enterprises using research outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation support and synthesis Impact evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influencing the agenda Communications with global community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* See RIU (2007).

- **policy advocacy and partnership development** to link research to the policy environment to encourage harmonization of national, regional and global initiatives and to develop synergies between these and the RIU programme;
- **communication and information markets** to strengthen access to appropriate knowledge, to facilitate stakeholder learning and information management, and to strengthen national and regional processes for information exchange;
- **capacity strengthening and mentoring** to improve stakeholder participation, to strengthen capacity to transform information into knowledge, and to improve the sustainability of interactions beyond the RIU programme; and
- **monitoring and learning** to assess what has been achieved and how lessons can be shared with wider stakeholders.

These strategic building blocks have been packaged into three major outputs for efficient implementation (Table 3; see also RIU, 2007).

This approach aims to integrate the supply and demand elements of national and regional innovations systems more effectively, improving the flow of information between the two, and strengthening the capacity of partners in the research community, government, private sector and civil society to work together in vibrant, productive relationships. The RIU
approach will therefore concentrate on interventions that emphasize participation in as well as trust and ownership of both the knowledge being promoted and the process used by the stakeholders. Once trust and ownership have been built, research users will be empowered to source appropriate research information (Figure 1). Emphasis will be given to working with a diversity of information intermediaries or ‘infomediaries’ – knowledgeable individuals or organizations that directly or indirectly convey quality and relevant information from a knowledge provider to large numbers of knowledge users. It is likely that infomediaries will include school-teachers, church officials and agricultural and veterinary product suppliers who have regular contact with large numbers of information seekers in a community.

Information will be packaged in different ways to reach different groups based on successful methods from RNRRS projects. Radio and TV soaps such as Pilika pilika in Tanzania and Makutamo Junction in Kenya (see www.mediae.org/Current%20Video.htm for more information) will be given high priority due to the large audiences they attract.

In addition, the RIU programme will foster ‘information markets’ where information suppliers and users are brought together to facilitate stakeholder learning and information management and to strengthen information exchange with both groups benefiting. Technology fairs, for example, have been shown to reach a wide range of stakeholders (Bentley et al, 2004; Van Mele et al, 2005) and are already being held in some RIU programme focus countries. It will also give high priority to capacity strengthening and mentoring to ensure that knowledge promotion is sustained, thus focusing on the key elements that DFID has highlighted as necessary for attaining pro-poor agricultural innovation.

Practical issues concerning institutions and peoples’ vision should not be overlooked in the development of a strategy to get research into use. Figure 2 demonstrates the broad research-user environment. Most organizations give emphasis to the two upper quadrants in which effective demand is high. However, the RIU approach will unpack demand: is demand being expressed from a position of knowledge of opportunities and risks; are the demands of poor people being heard; are others manipulating demand for their own interests? The private sector provides useful insights on this issue through marketing both demand-driven and supply-led products. Using national coalitions for innovation and partnerships with organizations already undertaking RIU activities, the programme will either work in the top right quadrant or work with partners towards that goal. Critical attention will be given to achieving a balance between the two approaches to promoting ‘best bets’ for rapid and certain impact, and building partnerships and strengthening institutional capacity to promote and use ‘best bets’ for future impact. Through the innovations systems approach, institutions and institutional relationships will be strengthened.

From the experience of the RNRRS and the Innova project (Bentley et al, 2004, 2007; Innova, 2005), it is recognized that getting research into use requires investment in a mix of demand-pull and supply-push of information and technologies and an effective interface between demand and supply. Smallholder farmers do make explicit demands for knowledge and technologies (Bentley et al, 2004). However, it is sometimes difficult for poor farmers to define all of the technology they need before they have seen it, either because they do not perfectly understand the agricultural problem or because they cannot imagine all possible solutions. The demand for such technology is ‘implicit’. Adequately capturing demand requires a combination of methods during ongoing interactive dialogue and process. The demand for and supply of farm technology are like two sides of an unfolding conversation (Bentley et al, 2007). Many so-called ‘supply-driven’ technologies have been shown to respond to farmers’ demands, the best agricultural example being the short-straw rice and wheat varieties that led to the green revolution. The RIU programme will follow a ‘demand-informed’ approach, an approach used successfully in the later stages of the RNRRS.

Monitoring and learning activities will not only address the need to measure impacts of the uptake of knowledge and technologies through the use of relevant baseline data sets and appropriate indicators, but will also draw upon case studies of successful research into use activities from elsewhere in order to inform evolving RIU strategy. Participatory monitoring and evaluation and self-reflection and learning will constitute a key requirement of all RIU stakeholders, including RIU management. Lessons gained from this will be shared with wider groups of stakeholders to help foster institutional change. Moreover, the RIU programme recognizes the need for an M&E management tool that will create an emphasis on results and learning throughout a complex and geographically diverse
programme. This is likely to require considerable mentoring and capacity strengthening. Impact evaluation activities will produce and maintain evolving research into use evidence-based outputs on RIU and other evaluations.

The RIU programme will also give emphasis to communication and advocacy activities by exchanging lessons generated by RIU activities with other donor and development agencies, policy makers and shapers, private businesses and research organizations in order to advance understanding and facilitation of innovation systems that can improve poor people’s livelihoods. Engagement with policy makers and shapers is a relatively new endeavour. In particular, the RIU programme will focus on capturing their attention to effect policy changes in the light of evidence of the contribution of RNR to economic growth and poverty reduction.

**Managing achievements for impact: expected outcomes**

Agriculture has played an important and often lead role in the early stages of pro-poor growth due to the concentration of poor in the sector, its growth linkages to other sectors, and the positive externalities from assuring food security and reducing prices (Byerlee *et al.*, 2005). It still has much to contribute in Africa. Even in economies in Asia that are moving towards middle-income status, agriculture continues to ‘pull beyond its weight’ as measured by its contribution to GDP.

The RIU approach and strategy are clearly well founded on the key elements identified by DFID as necessary for pro-poor growth: participation and voice, rights and equity, improved ownership and capacity building.

Through the combination of successful processes developed under the RNRRS with improved practices based on lessons learnt, it is likely that the RIU programme will capitalize on the past investment by DFID in the RNRRS as well as other relevant RNR research investments. It is an exciting initiative to break down the artificial barriers that too often compartmentalize ‘research’ and ‘development’. Nevertheless, the RIU programme realizes that the initial implementation phase will not be easy. It will have to facilitate new ways of working with partners, who will need to be encouraged and mentored to take on new roles and responsibilities. Champions who will promote RIU principles and practices will need to be identified early on in the process. Pro-poor and novel coalitions may be slow to respond to RIU engagement, and incentives may be necessary. Moreover, it is possible that the programme may be too complex and geographically diverse to generate generalizable lessons for wider application. In this context, monitoring and evaluation will be designed specifically to extract generic results and lessons.

By 2011, the RIU programme anticipates that there will be substantially increased numbers of RNR-dependent poor people directly using RIU-promoted research outputs in focus countries. Moreover, robust evidence will have been gathered on the effectiveness of innovation systems approaches to agricultural research into use in

![Figure 2. Determining appropriate intervention types for scaling up based on supply of and demand for research outputs.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective demand for information, products and services</th>
<th>Supply of relevant information products and services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(New research)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promote ‘best-bet’ technologies and processes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen capacity to supply</td>
<td>Develop information markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership building and policy influence</td>
<td>Strength capacity to demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(New research)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Partnership building and policy insurance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen capacity to demand and supply</td>
<td>Strengthen capacity to supply</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Supply of relevant information products and services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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different contexts and for different groups of poor people. Potentially, models may be identified for further scaling up leading to wider benefits to poverty reduction and economic growth in focus countries. In addition, relevant, accessible and timely information on lessons generated by RIU activities for strengthening innovation systems should be under serious consideration by targeted policy makers and shapers at regional, national and agency level. Widespread use of the best approaches to get research into use strongly supported by policy makers is a desired legacy of the RIU programme with the potential for far-reaching impacts on reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth. But will five years be enough to influence much needed change in the international research and development community to the benefit of poor people?

Acknowledgments

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