

AusAID

REVIEW REPORT

**REVIEW OF LONG-TERM RESEARCH MODELS: BEST
PRACTICE OPTIONS**

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Executive Summary

AusAID commissioned a review of long-term research with the review operating between November 2001 and February 2002. The review involved examination of twelve long-term research projects supported by the agency. The review objectives included drawing out the best features and lessons learned from examination of these projects; identifying the development, policy and/or program benefits that can be provided by long-term research; and developing a framework to guide future AusAID initiatives in the area.

The context of the review included the finalisation of AusAID's Strategic Plan (December, 2001) that foreshadowed an enhanced focus on development research activities in support of strategic aid delivery. In addition, there have been other significant recent changes within AusAID that have reinforced a shift towards a more strategic use of research, and have further highlighted the importance of the review. These include the Corporate Policy Branch's commencement of a corporate research oversight role (2000), and the Executive's endorsement of recommendations (November, 2001) for improving development research, including ensuring that research contributes to increased aid and effectiveness, an improvement in AusAID's ability to contribute to whole-of-government policy formulation, and/or maximising Australian influence on the international development agenda.

Long-term research in the agency was identified by its relatively long duration (usually 12 months or more), its significant scope in terms of its interest to AusAID and the broader development community, and its broad implications and/or applicability to development policy, programming and/or practice.

Below is a summary of the key findings which have emerged from the study. Firstly, there is a brief overview of the literature survey which was undertaken to inform the study. This is followed by examination of the context of research in AusAID, and as a point of comparison, the use of long-term research by other Australian government agencies. The subsequent material identifies the major achievements of long-term research together with an analysis of key issues. This overview and analysis leads to the development of a framework to guide future long-term research efforts in AusAID. It is hoped that the framework will be of use to both AusAID and to researchers in their efforts and vital contributions in the development field. The development of a framework is an iterative process and it is hoped that this review provides a foundation for ongoing development and improvement in the field.

1. Findings from the Literature Review

Internationally, increased attention is being given to the role of research in development assistance. This attention is inspired by recognition that knowledge and its application has an important, current and future role to play in addressing development challenges; that research can make a vital input into the process of policy development and thereby enhance aid effectiveness; and that there is a need to build capacity, particularly in developing countries to research both current and future development problems. Partnerships are viewed as significant means to build such capacity.

An assessment of the performance of development research in many international contexts reveals that it has made a strong contribution to understanding development issues, but that there are many remaining challenges involved applying research to real development problems. There are challenges in ensuring that research is utilised through being pertinent, accessible and comprehensible; and that it is designed with application to policy and program contexts in mind. Improving dissemination of research findings is a further challenge. This involves ensuring that it is conveyed to policy makers and other stakeholders in ways that increase research utilisation, and promote a two-way interchange between policy makers and researchers to enhance mutual understanding. Forging new kinds of partnerships with researchers and other stakeholders in developing countries in order to build local research capacity and enhance accountability is an additional challenge.

2. Long-Term Research in AusAID and Selected Australian Government Agencies

Research in AusAID

Research in AusAID covers a broad spectrum of analytical activities undertaken by the agency - from country-specific desk studies that directly inform short-term program priorities, through to academic research on core development-related issues. There has been a progressive shift in emphasis toward linking research efforts more directly to AusAID's program and policy requirements. AusAID operates a corporate level research program, the AusAID Development Research Program (ADRP) that has supports some long-term research initiatives. However, at the time of the review, the majority of long-term projects were supported by regional and country desks of the agency.

Long-Term Research in Selected Australian Government Agencies

The review identified a set of issues in long-term research supported by other Australian government agencies that were pertinent to AusAID. These included common challenges with linking research to policy development, the importance of incorporating monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into projects, advantages of close staff involvement in research management, and the benefits of involving a wide range of stakeholders including overseas partners in determination of research agendas, design and monitoring and evaluation roles.

3. Findings of Review of Long-Term Research Projects Supported by AusAID

The range of projects was distinguished by its breadth and scope. The projects did not form part of a corporate long-term research agenda, but were mounted individually usually in response to a direct submission to the relevant program area. In several cases, AusAID had more proactively funded pre-existing initiatives. Three quarters of the projects were based in Australia and managed by Australian organisations. A half of the projects were managed by Australian National University (ANU). Most AusAID supported long-term research 'projects' were not individual research activities mounted over long periods. Rather the 'project' was a structure within which short-term, but theme-related research activities were mounted. Nearly half of the research projects were geared to the production of serials or books.

Achievements

Major achievements included increased awareness and understanding of regional and country contexts, particularly from a broad economic perspective; increased availability and access to information sources on regional and country contexts; increased dialogue on policy issues, enhanced academic scholarship and promotion of increased research attention, and enhanced linkages between Australian research organisations and overseas researchers and research organisations, particularly through research publications. Subsidiary achievements included production of policy relevant research on economic and social issues within an in-country context; and production of highly topical, applied research on, for example, poverty and peace-building.

Key Issues

Research Focus: The production of regional or country studies from an economic perspective, usually linked to educational objectives predominated. Many projects also had policy-related objectives, but these were often subsidiary. Where policy matters were the key focus of a project, these were issues relating to the policy-environment in partner countries and not related to aid policy itself.

Contributing to Aid Effectiveness: Most of the projects did not explicitly aim to contribute to aid effectiveness in either the policy or program dimensions. Moreover, project objectives contained no explicit links to issues of poverty reduction and sustainable development in an aid context which are central priorities for AusAID.

Development Practice: Although there were several exceptions, exploring means to enhance development practice received little attention in the projects examined.

Dissemination: The projects employed a range of dissemination strategies, from publication, to those that combined publication with a range of outreach activities such as seminars, workshops, conferences and use of websites. Active and multi-faceted dissemination strategies appeared most successful. Research dissemination appeared more successful within Australia, with less clear targeting of overseas audiences, particularly government agencies. There appeared to be greater scope for AusAID to publicise research activities and products.

Utilisation of Research: Research utilisation was more apparent amongst academics, but less evident amongst policy makers, and the wider development community, particularly overseas. Most research products were not targeted at AusAID policy or programming concerns. Staff interviewed were typically aware of research products, but used them infrequently or not at all. Other identified constraints on utilisation in AusAID included time demands on staff, a low level of direct management involvement in research projects, and a limited general orientation and level of participation in research.

Institutional / Partnerships / Stakeholder Involvement: The range of institutions implementing the research projects was fairly narrow. Formal partnerships between Australian and in-country organisations in the conduct of projects were not evident.

Overseas researchers were rather involved on a personal basis, while decision making rested largely with the executing agency.

Capacity Building: Capacity building of in-country research organisations and researchers was not an explicit objective in the majority of projects. This was demonstrated through the absence of partnership arrangements, and lack of research training or other formal capacity-building mechanisms within projects.

Management: Overall, many research projects appeared to be simply formulated and not subject to the more rigorous processes usually required in AusAID. This appeared to reflect inexperience with research design requirements, absence of tailored planning frameworks for research, and some distance between donor and research cultures.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The projects examined generally lacked formal monitoring and evaluation frameworks or procedures.

4. Proposed Framework for Long-Term Research in AusAID

The framework is designed to guide long-term research efforts in AusAID and is cast in generic fashion to be applicable to either corporate-level research or that in regional or country programs. The contents are designed to respond to the following challenges:

Challenge	Response
1. Give long-term research higher priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance agency policy and analytical capacity (see AusAID Strategic Plan Section 2)
2. Integrate long-term research into the mainstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance agency policy and analytical capacity (see AusAID Strategic Plan Section 2)
3. Give long-term research greater focus and clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop long-term research strategy and guidelines Link to aid program, corporate, and research program objectives; and principles
4. Make long-term research more accountable to its stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote stakeholder participation
5. Strengthen the link between long-term research and capacity building in developing countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote research partnerships Build research capacity
6. Make long-term research of more use to policy makers and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve dissemination strategies Choose appropriate dissemination tools Improve knowledge management
7. Improve the design and management of long-term research projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to AusGUIDE Enhance design Incorporate monitoring and evaluation measures Improve management arrangements

The framework, as summarised above, is complementary and subsidiary to the AusAID Strategic Plan (December, 2001) that has already set out broad arrangements for boosting the strategic application of research in the agency. Critical components of the framework involve a set of measures focused on developing international

research partnerships as a means to research capacity building in partner countries; and other measures aimed specifically to better link the outcomes of long-term research to policy development.

Recommendations

Recommendations from the Report

Research Focus

1. *That AusAID consider undertaking a periodic analysis of its corporate research needs (possibly every three years) identifying priority needs, objectives, strategies, and themes and issues.*
2. *That AusAID promote the incorporation of aspects relating to long-term research as part of strategy development within its regional and country programs.*
3. *In developing a long-term research agenda, AusAID consider undertaking wide consultations to ensure input from an appropriate balance of AusAID, academic, and broader development community interests, both in Australia and overseas.*
4. *That AusAID expand the relative emphasis given to long-term research with a thematic focus (including research on specific issues and forces affecting development conditions) as opposed to research focusing on countries and regions.*

Disciplinary Perspectives

5. *That AusAID seek to ensure that the disciplinary focus of its long-term research efforts is selected to match and best promote the realisation of its identified research priorities.*

Contributing to Aid Effectiveness

6. *That AusAID seek to ensure that all future long-term research endeavours are linked to and support AusAID's strategic objective of poverty reduction and promoting sustainable development.*
7. *That AusAID strengthen links between long-term research projects and their contribution to aid effectiveness, and specifically to AusAID policy development and programming.*

Development Practice

8. *That AusAID consider giving greater priority to long-term research projects that focus explicitly on the enhancement of development practice.*

Dissemination

9. *That AusAID encourage multi-faceted dissemination strategies within its long-term research projects including a greater focus on partner country audiences, and methods by which the agency may publicise research activities and products through its own publications, newsletters and website.*

Utilisation of Research

10. *That AusAID consider incorporating strategies to promote the utilisation of research as part of the design process of long-term projects, with specific attention to the information needs of different stakeholders (including AusAID), and means to promote interaction between researchers and these stakeholder groups.*

11. *That AusAID adopt strategies for enhancing the utilisation of research within the agency through means such as staff development, seminars and forums and dissemination of material in a user-friendly manner.*

Institutional / Partnerships / Stakeholder Involvement

12. *That AusAID consider diversifying the range of organisations that it engages to undertake long-term research to ensure access to a wider range of skills, personnel and perspectives.*

13. *That AusAID examine the possibility of establishing collaborative research funding arrangements with the Australian Research Council and Australian universities as a means to stimulate development research in priority areas that it has identified.*

14. *That AusAID incorporate a greater emphasis on partnerships, particularly between Australian and in-country research organisations, within its long-term research program.*

Capacity Building

15. *That AusAID place a greater emphasis on capacity building of in-country researchers and research organisations within its long-term research program using partnerships and associated joint projects, research training and institutional development support for this purpose.*

Management

16. *That AusAID give priority to management of the activity cycle within its long-term research projects, and particularly to comprehensive design processes.*

17. *That AusAID consider producing a specialist guideline or manual on long-term research as a complement to the processes already detailed in AusGUIDE.*

18. *That AusAID consider developing a specialist period contract category to provide access to research expertise particularly to assist in AusAID research program development.*

Monitoring and Evaluation

19. *That AusAID give priority to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the design and implementation of long-term research projects.*

20. *That AusAID consider constructing peer review and expert panels to referee research undertaken, and a possible advisory group to guide long-term research program development.*

Summary and Priority Recommendations

Based on the above, the following are considered to be priority recommendations for implementation by AusAID:

1. *That AusAID give priority to making outcomes from long-term research more applicable to policy and program development as a means to enhance aid effectiveness.*
2. *That AusAID give priority in long-term research efforts to building research partnerships between Australian and partner country researchers as a means to capacity building.*
3. *That AusAID give priority to the development and refinement of long-term research program strategy and guidelines as a means to focus and consolidate the overall research effort.*

Performance checks and indicators have been developed for use by AusAID to monitor performance against all the above recommendations. These are detailed in Annex 1.

Introduction

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this study was to review long-term research projects supported by AusAID. These long-term research projects comprise part of a broader spectrum of analytical activities undertaken by the agency. Most AusAID commissioned research usually takes the form of one-off activities linked directly to program and policy requirements. In recent years, however, a range of longer-term research ‘projects’ has emerged, funded through bilateral programs.

Feedback from staff and other stakeholders suggested that although not without problems these long-term research projects had a range of real and potential benefits, including providing information to enhance policy formation, and specific advice. A desire to enhance such benefits, and also to complement broader planning in the agency that foreshadowed an enhanced focus on development research activities in support of strategic aid delivery, prompted the review. The objectives of the study were to:

- Draw out best features and lessons learned with a view to improving the effectiveness of future long-term research projects in AusAID;
- Increase staff understanding of the development, policy and/or program benefits that can be provided by different long-term research models;
- Identify long-term models that can be used by AusAID to conduct research on key thematic issues.

The focus of the review was on the structure and conduct of research; it was not concerned with assessing which research topics should be investigated. The review’s terms of reference can be found at Annex 2. Details of each long-term research project supported by AusAID at the time of the review appear at Annex 3.

Personnel involved in the conduct of review were Dr Ian Patrick (Team Leader / Academic and Development Cooperation Specialist), Ms Helen Bauer (Policy Development and Public Sector Specialist) and Ms Zoe Mander-Jones (AusAID Corporate Policy Branch). The Corporate Policy Branch was responsible for commissioning and managing the review.

Approach and Methodology

The approach adopted for the review took account of the need to:

- (a) Place AusAID supported research in the context of international trends and issues in development research.
- (b) Encompass the viewpoints of the broad range of stakeholders involved with the long-term research projects supported by the agency and operating at the time of the review. This reflected operational arrangements where the projects were implemented by universities and other agencies external to AusAID, and

commissioned and managed by AusAID staff who were based on regional or country desks of the agency.

(c) Ascertain a range of viewpoints of other stakeholders, both in Australia and overseas, with an interest in research. A key intention here was to identify possible models not yet considered or activated within current AusAID research efforts.

The methodology subsequently adopted is outlined at Annex 4. A list of interviewees/contributors to the review appears at Annex 5 while the questions asked of different stakeholder groups is contained in Annex 6.

Structure of the Report

The report is divided into four main sections. The first is a literature review which examines the role of research and development in an international context. This is followed by a profile of the role of research and particularly long-term research in AusAID and other selected Australian government agencies. The third section of the report profiles and assesses the long-term research projects supported by AusAID, while the final main section, on the basis of the previous analysis, details a suggested framework for future long-term research support by AusAID including objectives and principles, and considerations in project design and management.

1. Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review describes and delineates key dimensions of research in the field of development. It is particularly focused on issues of policy development, linking research to capacity building in developing countries and enhancing aid effectiveness.

Research is one of a number of activities which build knowledge and contribute to learning and new approaches to program implementation. Correlated activities to research include internal program review and externally managed program evaluation. While both research and evaluation rely on similar processes and methodologies, research has a distinct epistemological base.

Research is primarily concerned with the development of new knowledge which explains or advances the frontiers in a particular discipline or field. It is the aim of research to arrive at findings which may be generalised to other contexts, thus informing the field. Research is characterised by different approaches ranging from the positivist to the interpretive, with methodologies which are either or both quantitative or qualitative in nature. The common endeavour is to discover explanations, arrive at findings, advance knowledge and solve problems. In the field of development, given immediate and pressing problems of poverty and other challenges, expectations are strong that research will inform policy development and ultimately be applicable to real problems. There is considerable sensitivity about research that is considered to be too abstract or 'academic' and therefore non-applicable (DGIS, 2001; Stone et al., 2001).

While the availability of appropriate knowledge is a precondition to the solution of development problems, it does not always need to be new knowledge. Studies of innovation suggest that historically, many advances have occurred through a process of 'creative imitation' underlining the need for local skills to adapt and apply knowledge appropriately (Arnold and Bell, 2001). Moreover the existence of knowledge alone does not guarantee solutions or innovation. There is a complex inter-relationship between research, education, legal regulations, standards and the institutions tasked with applying new and existing knowledge (DANIDA, 2001:4). Such inter-relationships suggest that it is important not to view development knowledge and research in isolation, and to consider whether other related constraints to innovation also need to be addressed. Research therefore does not, and can not be expected to provide all the answers to development challenges.

The material which follows first outlines the place and rationale for research in development assistance. In doing so it makes reference to theoretical currents that underpin current debates in this area, and identifies critical issues. The discussion then moves on to examine key areas where donors are attempting to enhance research efforts with the ultimate aim of improving aid effectiveness and development outcomes.

1.1 Rationale for Development Research

Internationally, increased attention is being given to the role of research in development assistance. The policy statements and strategy plans of a range of donors reflect this enhanced priority (e.g. SDC&SAS, 1996; EC/DG, 1999; World Bank, 1999(a); DFID, 2000; DANIDA, 2001). Although specific donor perspectives may differ, a number of common themes can be identified:

- Recognition that knowledge and its application has an important, current and future role to play in addressing development challenges
- Recognition that research and its products should provide vital inputs into the process of policy development, and that coherent policy is essential both for donors and for partner countries in order for aid to be effective
- Recognition that there is a need to build capacity, particularly in developing countries to research both current and future development problems. Partnerships are viewed as significant means to build such capacity

The themes reflect broader and related currents in development thinking that have had a major impact on shifting development strategies in recent years. Each of the themes identified above will now be discussed in more detail.

1.1.1 Knowledge and its Application to Development Challenges

Creating, disseminating and using knowledge is increasingly seen as an important key to overcoming development challenges. From this perspective, the ability to fill knowledge gaps and overcome related information problems is viewed as both an attribute of and means for development. Such a view is reflected in the influential 'Knowledge for Development' report (World Bank, 1999(a)) where lack of knowledge is strongly identified as an attribute of poverty and poor countries.

The Green Revolution is often cited as an example of where new knowledge derived from research, and associated information provision to farmers led to tangible improvements for developing countries (World Bank, 1999(a)). While this example is derived from physical science, and reflects an emphasis in the literature on science led research in areas such as agriculture, health and information technology, it may equally be argued that knowledge derived from advances in social science are critical to development (UNRISD, 2001). New insights into, for example, conflict resolution or governance provide answers to critical contemporary development challenges (UNRISD, 2001:2; ZEF, 2000:5-8).

Knowledge and knowledge management skills will remain important, or will become increasingly so in addressing pressing new development challenges such as urbanisation, migration and population increase. Unfortunately, knowledge is often expensive to create, while applying knowledge requires expertise and training. Unsurprisingly, knowledge, and the wealth that derives from it is currently concentrated in industrialised countries.

Although knowledge is expanding exponentially, there is a risk, given trends towards privatisation and commoditisation of research and research products that knowledge will not be available to those who can not afford it. In this context, new knowledge

may be associated with an increase in world inequality or even a deepening of poverty (DANIDA, 2001:2). There is considerable critique, for example of scientific research focusing on developing countries that is predominantly geared at identifying new, commercially exploitable resources (KFPE, 2001).

It is widely acknowledged that the market, if left to itself, will under-invest in research that is related to public welfare. As DFID states, 'Research that benefits the poor is an example of a global public good which is underfunded' (DFID, 2000:43). Such a situation underlines the responsibility of the public sector to guide, direct, inform and fund the production and use of new knowledge, and in some cases create new knowledge itself (World Bank, 1999(a):6; DANIDA, 2001:3). There is also a compelling case for support to address development problems that cross national borders such as issues of peace and conflict, and the environment. In this case, supranational public investment by international organisations is vital (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000:43).

1.1.2 Research and Policy Development

The relationship between research and policy formation has received considerable attention in the development literature (e.g. Porter, 1998; Sutton, 1999; Scott, 2000; Young, 2001; Stone et al., 2001). Interest in this relationship reflects both a view that research can have a beneficial influence on policy (and should do so more often), and recognition that coherent and well-coordinated policy frameworks are vital to development. The latter point applies both to donors and developing countries where, ideally, appropriate and effective policies on development assistance overlap and reinforce the policy settings of the target country (Bijker, 2001).

Reflecting this perspective, the World Bank in its major review of what makes successful aid (World Bank, 1998) identifies the overall quality of policies in developing countries as being critical to poverty reduction efforts. Appropriate policies are a key to securing an appropriate return on development assistance. A good policy environment is seen to facilitate faster growth, poverty reduction and improvements in social indicators (World Bank, 1998:2). The 'knowledge dimension' of aid involving ideas and training has a critical effect on the quality of policies, institutions and service delivery. This contrasts with the simple expansion of services brought about by application of finance alone.

Given the importance of policy as a guide and focal point for good development, it is important that development research interacts with, and reinforces the process of policy formation. Unfortunately, the relationship between research and policy is currently tenuous and often troubled (Maxwell, 2000). While most reviews of this relationship identify cases where research has contributed effectively to the policy process, they also identify a range of constraints in this context (Porter, 1998; Sutton, 1999; Scott, 2000; Young, 2001; Stone et al., 2001).

Firstly, not all research is designed to influence policy. Even where research is focused on policy, the results may not be delivered in a format that is accessible to policy makers. Such concerns underline how research is disseminated and thus touches on communication between the research and policy making communities, and the expectations that each group has of each other.

Analysis of the process of policy making itself suggests that research, and especially external research is typically only one form of information that policy makers use in decision making. Many forms of 'ordinary knowledge', often sourced from within organisations, are applied in the process (Lindblom and Cohen, 1979). In some cases, knowledge itself may not be the key to a solution for a particular problem, especially where it derives from conflicting interests (Scott, 2000). In such contexts, solutions have a more political dimension, or research itself may be utilised to meet political ends (Stone et al., 2001).

Part of the difficulty in understanding the nexus between research and policy is conceptualising the process of policy making itself. Traditionally, research was considered to be an early input into a rational and linear process of policy making which involves 'a logical sequence from problem definition, through analysis of alternatives, to decision, implementation and review' (Stone, et al., 2001:2). Contemporary views of policy making consider it to be a more fluid and iterative process. From this perspective, problems, solutions and political influence move independently through the policy system and at times coincide. A major influence on how and when policy solutions are determined, is the political dimension, where actors in and close to government act as advocates for particular policy positions (Porter, 1998; Scott, 2000).

A further complication arises at the policy implementation phase which may alter the impact of ideas generated by research. Policy implementers typically interact with policy makers and may adapt new policies, co-opt specific ideas, or even possibly ignore new policies altogether (Juma and Clarke, 1995).

Despite the complex and sometimes fraught nature of the relationship between research and policy, many analysts continue to identify research as a major influence on policy debates and policy formation. They see its use being less in the area of 'instrumental utilisation', that is the short term use of research information to assist in decisions about relatively low level problems. Rather, it is in the area of 'conceptual utilisation' that research is particularly influential (Caplan, 1975; Stone et al., 2001). From this perspective, research knowledge may influence policy decisions in the long run through the uptake and transfer of ideas that frame overall debates about policy alternatives. Ideas are likely to gradually (and in some cases more quickly) spread and 'sometimes become the conceptual framework of entire policy debates' (Scott, 2000:9)

1.1.3 Research and Capacity Building

While the literature reflects an overall increased priority to development research both in industrialised and developing countries, the need is viewed to be most acute in the latter context. As DFID asserts, 'Most research capacity is in industrialised countries and is orientated to their needs' (DFID, 2000:43). A two-fold thrust is evident involving a shift in research attention to the needs of the developing world, and increased attention on building up local capacities to identify and solve local problems (KFPE, 1998; IDRC, 2001; DGIS, 2001). Such a change is underlined by broader shifts in the global economy which is becoming both increasingly knowledge-based

and competitive. Developing countries need to sharpen their skills in the production and management of knowledge for their own survival (UNDP, 1999).

The focus on local capacity reflects a view that solutions to local problems may be informed by knowledge derived from elsewhere, but can not rely on that knowledge alone. Knowledge from other contexts may need to be adapted to the developing country context; in other situations new knowledge and research may be required. The most effective solution involves building and sustaining long-term research capacity including the capacity to research problems not yet on the immediate agenda (World Bank, 1999(a)). Investment in human resources in the research area is likely to be most effective and applicable to development problems where training in traditional research skills extends to policy analysis and advisory roles (World Bank, 1999(b)).

1.1.3.1 Partnerships and Research Networks

Research partnerships are considered to be an important priority and means of capacity building in the pursuit of knowledge-based development. Typical forms of partnership involve:

- Bilateral partnerships between a university or research institute, often based in an industrial country and one or more local university or research organisation. This form of twinning arrangement may support discrete research projects, or provide across-institution support (Ilsoe, 2000; DANIDA, 2001)
- Regional research networks, bringing together researchers (often from within a particular discipline) from countries sharing similar development challenges (World Bank, 1999(b))
- Global research networks such as the prominent World Bank sponsored Global Development Network, which is designed to meet the needs of developing country research institutes through networking, training, research funding, joint research activities, and access to data and other electronic resources (GDN, 2001)

Currently, the main institutional types involved in research partnerships are universities and specialist research institutes, and research networks themselves which may have a devolved form of management. Logically, there is a good case for the strong participation of universities. At least in principle, these institutions are well placed in terms of the necessary qualities for knowledge generation. Such qualities include ideological neutrality, peer review and scholarly publication, and synergies derived from housing a variety of disciplines in one institution. Moreover, the presence of a strong research university in a developing country has multiplier effects in terms of building international linkages (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000:42).

The increasing number of regional, and even global research networks, and a more decentralised form of research management have coincided with broader trends to globalisation. They have also, in part, attempted to transcend some of the historical difficulties of bilateral research partnerships. These have been characterised by the predominance of the interests of researchers from industrialised countries, and the relative marginalisation of local interests from research priority setting and control over research implementation (Ilsoe, 2000).

The above material highlights both possibilities and constraints on the contribution made to development through undertaking research and research capacity building aimed at contributing to knowledge upon which to inform policy development. Development research is ideally an adjunct to policy formation and not an isolated activity undertaken for academic purposes alone. In order to further enhance the contribution of research in this manner, fostering of more collaborative research arrangements with local researchers in developing countries will be paramount.

1.2 Making Development Research More Effective

What then are the measures that can be taken, particularly by donors to improve research efforts in order to enhance aid effectiveness? Although the following points are not intended to be exhaustive, they do provide a profile of some of the critical strategic and practical challenges facing donors in their efforts to link research to development.

1.2.1 More Pronounced Research Focus by Donors

Donors have demonstrated heightened priority to the role of knowledge and research in development in their policies, operations and corporate identities. Typically reviews by donors of their research performance identify the necessity of harnessing research efforts more directly to development needs and objectives, while exploring areas of distinct comparative advantage, and ensuring that research efforts build in-country research capacity (e.g. SDC&SDS, 1996; EC/DG, 1999; DANIDA, 2001).

Donors have also worked to integrate research into their mainstream operations. In this regard, the World Bank has had a particularly high level of visibility in its transformation into a 'knowledge-based institution' (World Bank, 1999(a); King and McGrath, 2000). It has promoted the following functions as integral to the operations of an international organisation aiming to advance knowledge based development (World Bank, 1999(a)):

- The production of knowledge
- Acting as an intermediary in the transfer of knowledge
- Managing the rapidly growing body of knowledge about development (World Bank, 1999(a):6)

This type of integrated approach aims to enhance aid effectiveness by emphasising dissemination and utilisation in addition to knowledge production. The intermediary role involves drawing together knowledge from different contexts, particularly about development solutions from a range of developing countries; while an emphasis on knowledge management involves developing and supporting systems and procedures in both industrialised and developing countries to make knowledge more accessible.

1.2.2 Making Research More Applicable

The perception that research products are often too 'academic' has led to increased calls for 'practical relevance' in supporting research and associated tightening of research guidelines (European Commission, 1997; DFID, 2000). DFID's Economic

and Social Research Strategy (2000-2003), for example, emphasises support for research that can guide future policy formulation, evaluation of a particular practice or operation, developing new research methods particularly where they can illuminate policy issues, and testing and developing new theories where those theories are considered to be of value in underpinning aid and development practice (DFID, 2000:7).

1.2.3 Refining Research Partnerships

In attempts to address the asymmetry that has characterised research partnerships, donors have explored the means by which to promote the role of research partners, and research users in policy and strategy settings, as well at the operational level (EC-DG, 1999; DANDIA, 2001). This involves developing policy and guidelines covering factors such as the nature of institutional linkages, research management, requirements for consultation and involvement of research users, and the nature of capacity building activities (DFID, 2000). Such requirements aim to move the involvement of local researchers well beyond historical roles as in-country data gatherers for powerful institutions in industrialised countries, while promoting accountability to a broad range of stakeholders.

Promoting the participation of local research users (policy makers, private sector and civil society) has been strongly encouraged by advocates of ‘demand led’ research (Granell, 2001; Bautista, 2001). As Francisco Granell, from the research division of the European Commission asserts:

...weak links with user needs and priorities result in low effectiveness of the output. This in turn results in a lack of legitimacy of research and research funding, increasing yet again the ‘distance’, the gap between research and the potential users (Granell, 2001:5).

Advocates of this kind suggest that the case for participation of NGOs and other civil society organisations is compelling given their role in working with the poor as implementers of new knowledge and techniques; as well as being advocates on behalf of intended beneficiaries (European Commission, 1997; Bijker, 2001).

1.2.4 Improving Communication and Dissemination of Research Findings

The means to promote stronger links between researchers and policy makers has been the subject of considerable reflection, with a wide consensus that both sides share a responsibility for remedial action (DANIDA, 2001; Stone et al., 2001). For researchers, there is a responsibility to develop new and active forms of dissemination. As Webber contends:

Policy makers do not generally go about seeking knowledge to assist them in understanding every decision they must make. Policy knowledge...must be expressed, communicated, channelled, explained or otherwise distributed to policy makers if it is to affect policy decisions (Webber, 1991:25).

Such a perspective highlights two increasingly supported views. Firstly, researchers are encouraged to be more active with policy makers as advocates of their research

and research product. Moreover, the nature of this interaction is ideally two-way in which 'communication involves feedback and an understanding of the research needs of research users' (Stone et al., 2001:17). Exclusive use of one way dissemination methods such as publishing, advertising and media coverage may reinforce a gap between research and research-user groups. Two way dissemination methods are interactive and promote understanding of the other party's issues and perspective (Stone et al., 2001:18).

An equal onus lies on policy makers to interact with researchers, effectively communicate their research needs and absorb appropriate research products. Promoting this end may require attention to incentive structures and work practices of policy makers (Stone et al., 2001:26).

1.3 Conclusion

Research activities have made a strong contribution to understanding of development issues. There are, however, inherent challenges in the application of research to real development problems. The first challenge is to increase the utilisation of research findings for use in policy development contexts, by ensuring that research is pertinent, accessible and comprehensible. There is a need to ensure in the planning and commissioning of research that it can be applied for use in policy and program delivery.

A second and related challenge involves the dissemination and application of research findings. Research findings need to be conveyed to policy makers and other stakeholders in ways that increase their utilisation. This involves a twofold responsibility. Researchers need to share their findings and also interact with policy makers to apprehend their expectations and responses. Policy makers have a reciprocal obligation to seek out, respond to and apply quality research products. Two way interchange between both parties is intended to enhance mutual understanding and more broadly improve research quality, particularly its saliency and credibility.

A final, but by no means unimportant challenge is to forge new kinds of partnerships with researchers and other stakeholders in developing countries in order to build local research capacity and enhance accountability. Enhancing local research skills and increasing levels of local input and control over the process is aimed at ultimately improving local capacities to identify and resolve local problems. Maximising the involvement of local stakeholders including research users will promote research endeavours for which there is a real demand. The degree to which donors should aim for local control and management over research versus involvement and participation in research projects managed by others is an issue for debate. Certainly an overall trend in the delivery of development assistance is towards devolved, participatory forms of management. At a minimum, it is important that research agendas are developed through consultative processes where key stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute.

2. Long-Term Research in AusAID and Selected Australian Government Agencies

The following material covers the context for the review including a brief overview of policies and programs relating to research in AusAID, and the use of long-term research and associated issues in other Australian government agencies. Together, these highlight a range of trends and issues that illuminate more specific analysis of AusAID supported long-term research in Section 3.

2.1 Research in AusAID

Research in AusAID covers a broad spectrum of analytical activities undertaken by the agency - from country-specific desk studies that directly inform short-term program priorities, through to academic research on core development-related issues. Research may be internal and external to AusAID depending on whether staff or external contractors are involved.

In general, AusAID supported research contributes to a range of functions:

- Improved policy and program development in AusAID
- Improved policy development and development responses in partner countries
- Enhanced understanding of, and engagement with, development issues (particularly by those outside the policy community)
- Enhanced capacity to research development issues by universities and other research organisations (both in Australia and in partner countries)
- Increased visibility and awareness of Australia, Australian interests and Australian researchers.

Although an individual research activity has often supported more than one of the above functions, there has been a progressive shift in emphasis toward linking research efforts directly to AusAID's program and policy requirements. This more pragmatic approach to development research reflects the recommendation of the Simons Review (April 1997). Correspondingly, and more recently, AusAID has emphasised greater coordination of an agency-wide research effort.

2.2 Definition of Long-term Research

The notion of 'long-term research' had not been formally defined by AusAID at the time of the review. However, on the basis of examination of the individual projects, and AusAID's policy and planning documentation, it is possible to suggest a definition. The purpose of the definition is to serve as a reference point in relation to this review, and also for possible future application in determining research guidelines.

For AusAID, long-term research may be considered as having three minimum characteristics in terms of duration, scope and implications/applicability which are encapsulated in the following:

Research that is usually of an extended duration of one year or more, that has significant scope in terms of its interest to AusAID and the broader development community, and has broad implications and/or applicability to development policy, programming and/or practice.

The definition as posited represents a slightly idealised view of long-term research when compared with current research practice. It is considered as potentially useful, however, in providing a focal point and standard for the development of future long-term research schemes.

2.3 Research Policy and Management in AusAID

AusAID's corporate research programs have been as follows:

- Support for the National Centre for Development Studies (NCDS): AusAID provided core funding to the NCDS (ANU) from 1985–2000/01. There has been a gradual phasing out of core funding in line with Simons Review recommendations.
- AusAID Initiated Research Program (AIRP): AIRP operated from 1994 to 1998 and provided grants for research projects on a competitive basis to Australian universities to undertake specific development research activities. The objectives of the scheme included: broadening the sources of research-based policy advice; and strengthening the institutional capacity of Australian universities in the development related research field.
- AusAID Development Research Program (ADRP): ADRP replaced AIRP following the Simons Review. The objective of the ADRP is to ensure that Australia has an effective and forward looking aid program by providing access to relevant, well-focused, practical and high quality research through open competition for research providers. Funding is available to program and policy areas on a first-come first-served basis for research that is directly linked to program or policy requirements.

Recent changes in research policy and management in AusAID include:

- In 2000, the Corporate Policy Branch was given a research oversight role matching its responsibilities in identifying and analysing emerging development issues for the agency.
- In November 2001, the Executive endorsed a number of recommendations for improving development research at AusAID (Annex 7). Importantly, the Executive determined that an effective development research effort should achieve the following three primary objectives:
 - Increase aid effectiveness
 - Improve our ability to contribute to whole-of-government policy formulation, and

- Maximise Australian influence on the international development agenda.
- AusAID's Strategic Plan (December, 2001), a product of a review process that began with the Work Practices Review (January, 2001), emphasised enhanced development research activities in line with expanding the agency's analytical capacity in support of strategic aid delivery. As the Strategic Plan (section 2.1.3) states:

Our capacity to conduct research in support of policy and program priorities will be strengthened through:

- *Greater analytical focus in program strategies in key countries, including poverty analyses utilizing original research*
- *More strategic sectoral engagement in key countries underpinned by original sectoral analysis*
- *Identification of program research priorities in branch business plans*
- *The establishment of branch policy coordination capacity, accountable for commissioning research on priority issues*
- *The establishment of a principal advisory function with the capacity to initiate priority research in their areas of expertise*
- *The strengthening of the development research function in the corporate area, including a coordinating role for corporate-wide research activities.*

Overall, the above initiatives represent a context for an enhanced, more focused AusAID research effort particularly linked to agency analytical functions, and strategy and policy development. It is within this context that future long-term research efforts will be mounted. It is also within this context that this review of long-term research activities has taken place.

2.4 Long-Term Research in Selected Australian Government Agencies

The Review identified broad issues associated with long-term research conducted by selected government agencies in order to inform AusAID's long-term research practices. A total of 7 agencies were consulted (see Annex 5). Due to time constraints, the Review did not explicitly focus on the history and content of each program. Overall, the following issues were considered most relevant.

Research Modes

A range of research modes were funded. These ranged from externally-commissioned longitudinal surveys and administration of grants programs, through to in-house projects where virtually entire projects were completed by staff members.

Linkages with Research Communities

Some agencies, by statute or choice, were actively engaged in pursuing formal linkages with centres of excellence, academic and other research institutions, and relevant professional bodies. This applied both in Australia and internationally.

Mechanisms used included cooperative research centres, joint ventures and strategic alliances. These partner agencies were mostly specifically funded as research organisations and able to commit a critical mass of internal research experience and funds to support such initiatives. Less formal collaborative mechanisms included involving international and Australian based expertise in peer reviews, and supporting conferences, workshops and special interest groups.

Consultation

Generally, each agency initiated consultation with external stakeholders in determination of their research strategy and programs. Similarly, they mostly consulted widely on the selection of specific research topics and involved stakeholders in project design, monitoring and evaluation.

Partner Country Participation

Most of the agencies consulted did not have explicit developmental objectives relating to overseas countries. Nevertheless, some agencies consciously sought to include overseas partners in the determination of long-term research strategies and priorities, as well as in project selection. Such agencies also emphasised capacity building approaches in long-term research project design but did not claim any particular success or insight into effective mechanisms.

Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation

All agencies considered staff involvement in the management of long-term research to be essential, although this did not necessarily extend to the conduct of research itself. Their principal motivations in this area were first to increase the likelihood of the research products being timely and of a high quality. Equally importantly, such participation was considered necessary to enable staff to keep abreast of the policy context pertaining to the long-term research project, understand and deal with external impacts on the project, and promote appropriate exchanges of information at critical times. Agencies used a variety of techniques in on-going monitoring and evaluation of long-term research projects including annual management reviews, triennial international expert reviews, other regular/programmed external reviews (often involving Australian professional bodies), agency staff conducted reviews, and impact assessment studies. Only one agency consulted did not undertake on-going monitoring and evaluation of its long-term research projects.

Relationship to Policy Making and Programming

A common observation amongst agencies consulted was that finding effective means of linking policy makers to the products of research was a major challenge. None was able to articulate a close and immediate link between the agency's long-term research work and impact on policy although each thought that there were indirect benefits such as broader influence on the agency policy environment. A closer connection was evident in respect of more applied long-term agricultural research where, for example, the results of particular studies on wheat, rice and sheep led to the adoption of new policies and practices in different locations and countries.

Dissemination Strategies

Generally, agencies emphasised the need to identify dissemination strategies at the outset, ensuring that such issues were addressed in the terms of reference covering the design of long-term research projects.

2.5 Conclusion

The envisaged strengthening of the research function within AusAID to make research more aligned with strategic aid delivery has come about progressively, and particularly as a consequence of external review of the aid program, and internal agency-level strategic planning. In line with these broad trends, the definition of long-term research put forward in this section places the notion of research contributing to aid policy, programming and/or practice as a central characteristic of long-term research itself. In reviewing and enhancing its research efforts, AusAID may draw on the experience of other Australian government agencies that utilise long-term research. This experience confirms the observation that managing long-term research, and seeking to maximise its impact is challenging and multi-faceted, but also potentially rewarding.

3. Findings of Review of Long-Term Research Projects Supported by AusAID

The following material presents the findings of the review together with the recommendations that have emerged, for AusAID to consider. The material begins with identifying the key features of the 12 long-term research projects supported by AusAID at the time of the study. The projects are identified in the following list together with the implementing contractor, and categorised according to whether the specific project has a bilateral, regional or global focus. Each of the projects is described in more detail in Annex 3.

Bilateral

- Indonesia Project (*ANU*)
- PNG Economy Report (*various contractors*)
- Social Monitoring and Early Response Research Institute (SMERU) (Indonesia) (*SMERU*)
- The Philippine Economy Project (*ANU*)

Regional

- APEL (Asia Pacific Economic Literature) Journal (*ANU*)
- Asia Recovery Information Centre (*ADB*)
- Economic Analysis of Pacific Island Countries (*ADB*)
- Regional Economic Policy Support Facility ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program (*Melbourne Enterprises International*)
- State Society and Governance in Melanesia (*ANU*)
- Serial Publication and Outreach for PNG and the Pacific Region (*ANU*)

Global

- Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) (research elements) (*ANU*)
- Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (*The Collaborative for Development Action, US; and the Life and Peace Institute, Sweden*)

3.1 Key Features

The range of projects at the time of the study was distinguished by its breadth and scope. The projects did not form part of a corporate long-term research agenda. Rather, they were mounted individually usually in response to a direct submission to the relevant program area, although in some cases AusAID more proactively funded or augmented pre-existing initiatives such as in the case of the SMERU project in Indonesia. The diversity of projects places constraints on generalisations made about common features. Nevertheless, the following points are made:

Origin, Duration and Budget

AusAID's involvement with most of the projects was relatively recent, with the majority of the projects being developed since 1999. The fact that many of the projects had only recently emerged was a significant impetus for this review of the long-term research effort in general. Several individual projects had been externally reviewed and funded for additional phases. Most had operated on 2-3 year contracts.

Individual project budgets varied widely with nearly all over \$100,000 p.a., and a mean of around \$350,000 p.a.. The largest (regional) project was around \$900,000 p.a..

Geographical Focus

The geographical focus of the projects generally matched AusAID's broader concerns with Asia and the Pacific region, with some having an individual country focus within these parameters. Several had a broader global reach, encompassing cross-cutting issues of governance and peace.

Location / Institutional / Stakeholder Involvement

Three quarters of the projects were based in Australia and managed by Australian organisations. A half of the projects were managed by ANU.

Research Modes / Products

Most AusAID-supported long-term research 'projects' were not individual research activities mounted over long periods. Rather the 'project' was a structure, combined with a set of relationships within which short-term, but theme-related research activities were mounted. The periodic publication of serials and mounting of country issue seminars are examples.

Nearly half of the research projects were geared to the production of serials or books. Others retained a significant focus on such written outputs, but combined this with outreach activities such as seminars. Other projects had a broader range of operation and combined a variety of modes and products.

3.2 Achievements

The following comments identify the broad achievements of the projects, using the objectives of the individual projects as a point of reference. Broader assessment of achievement is limited by the absence of overall research scheme guidelines, although the following sections identify underlying issues and constraints affecting the research effort as a whole.

The main achievements may be summarised as follows:

Major

- Increased awareness and understanding of regional and country contexts, particularly from a broad economic perspective. This was mostly achieved through publication, and associated outreach and applied to academics in Australia and overseas, policy makers in Australia, and to a lesser extent to policy makers overseas and the broader Australian community
- Increased availability and access to information sources on regional and country contexts
- Increased dialogue on policy issues, particularly through seminars and conferences connected with the broad investigations detailed above
- Enhanced academic scholarship and promotion of increased research attention, particularly in economics, through academic publishing

- Enhanced linkages between Australian research organisations and overseas researchers and research organisations, particularly through contribution to research publications

Subsidiary

- Production of policy relevant research on economic and social issues within an in-country context
- Highly topical or specialised research on, for example, peace-making or governance, usually conducted within an applied research framework

3.3 Key Issues

Research Focus

The overall research effort involved a high concentration of particular kinds of research, while others were not present. The production of regional or country studies from an economic perspective, usually linked to educational/public awareness raising objectives (such as creating a high level of interest, knowledge, information dissemination and/or scholarship) predominated. While many of these projects also had policy-related objectives, these were often subsidiary, typically involving the promotion of policy debate and dialogue rather than specialised or focused policy analysis.

Where policy matters were the key focus of a project, these were issues relating to the policy-environment in partner countries and not related to aid policy itself. Pure research endeavours involving explorations of key conceptual or theoretical issues relating to aid or other subjects were not present.

Rather than involving a predominant research focus on regions and countries, it is possible that in future other types of areas may receive greater attention including a range of issues, dynamics and forces shaping development conditions. It would appear that a balanced long-term research focus would reflect AusAID, academic and the wider development community interests. At the time of the review, however, academic interests were particularly influential in shaping the research agenda. A key gap in determining the appropriateness and relevance of research activities was the absence of AusAID's own analysis of its own research needs.

Recommendations:

1. *That AusAID consider undertaking a periodic analysis of its corporate research needs (possibly every three years) identifying priority needs, objectives, strategies, and themes and issues.*
2. *That AusAID promote the incorporation of aspects relating to long-term research as part of strategy development within its regional and country programs.*
3. *In developing a long-term research agenda, AusAID consider undertaking wide consultations to ensure input from an appropriate balance of AusAID, academic, and broader development community interests, both in Australia and overseas.*

4. *That AusAID expand the relative emphasis given to long-term research with a thematic focus (including research on specific issues and forces affecting development conditions) as opposed to research focusing on countries and regions.*

Disciplinary Perspectives

Economic analysis was the primary focus of the research projects. This appeared to reflect an area of interest and comparative advantage of the Australian aid program, particularly within an Asia-Pacific context. The focus was reinforced by the interests and proximity of Canberra-based academics. Some research projects had a more social or political science orientation, or involved a multi-disciplinary approach. The best mix of disciplinary perspectives for future research can be determined following clarification of AusAID's future research needs.

Recommendation:

5. *That AusAID seek to ensure that the disciplinary focus of its long-term research efforts is selected to match and best promote the realisation of its identified research priorities.*

Contributing to Aid Effectiveness

Most of the projects did not explicitly aim to contribute to aid effectiveness in either the policy or program dimensions. Only one project included an explicit objective of contributing to AusAID policy development. Moreover, project objectives contained no explicit links to issues of poverty reduction and sustainable development in an aid context which are central priorities for AusAID.

Where projects appeared to have some influence on shaping the nature of the aid program itself, this often stemmed from activities such as involvement in training seminars with AusAID personnel that were ancillary to core project functions. In a few cases, researchers were engaged in additional short-term consulting roles to provide policy advice. In order to increase such involvement, AusAID had introduced mechanisms (such as exchange of letters) within several research project contracts to allow the flexible engagement of researchers.

Recommendations:

6. *That AusAID seek to ensure that all future long-term research endeavours are linked to and support AusAID's strategic objective of poverty reduction and promoting sustainable development.*

7. *That AusAID strengthen links between long-term research projects and their contribution to aid effectiveness, and specifically to AusAID policy development and programming.*

Development Practice

Across the projects, which tended to focus on broad economic and/or social themes, exploring means to enhance development practice received little attention. The two exceptions were the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project that had explicit objectives of improving peace-building practice, and the Centre of Democratic Institutions that undertook research on applied democratic governance.

Recommendation:

8. *That AusAID consider giving greater priority to long-term research projects that focus explicitly on the enhancement of development practice.*

Dissemination

The projects revealed a range of dissemination strategies ranging from those relying purely on publication, to those that combined publication with a range of outreach activities such as seminars, workshops, conferences and use of websites. Active and multi-faceted dissemination strategies appeared most successful in promoting links with the policy community, particularly where products were appropriately packaged and outreach events were mounted regularly with specific targeting of policy makers at a range of levels. Without such outreach, many research products did not necessarily move beyond the academic domain. Research dissemination appeared more successful within Australia, with less clear targeting and focus regarding overseas audiences, particularly in government agencies. There appeared to be greater scope for AusAID to reinforce its investment in research by publicising research activities and products through its own publications, newsletters and website.

Recommendation:

9. *That AusAID encourage multi-faceted dissemination strategies within its long-term research projects including a greater focus on partner country audiences, and methods by which the agency may publicise research activities and products through its own publications, newsletters and website.*

Utilisation of Research

Overall, utilisation of research was difficult to assess given little attention to evaluation within AusAID supported research projects. Research utilisation was easier to identify amongst academics in, for example, access to, and citing of serials, but far more impressionistic in relation to policy makers, and the wider development community, particularly overseas. This partially reflected the broad, discursive and academic nature of many of the research products. Utilisation was easier to identify in high-visibility projects with an applied focus operating in-country. Given the relatively few applied projects present, it follows that overall, development practitioners, NGOs and others involved in practical implementation of new knowledge were probably not well represented amongst research users.

Assessment of research use within AusAID was also difficult to gauge. Clearly, most research products were not targeted at AusAID policy or programming concerns, and therefore mostly had only a general educative function. Staff interviewed were typically aware of research products, but used them infrequently or not at all. Some staff reported benefits from interpersonal contact with researchers in terms of keeping abreast of issues, and discussing broad priorities. Aside from the scope and focus of research, other issues were apparent which influenced AusAID staff research use. These included existing time demands from program management functions, and a relatively low level of direct management involvement in the research projects themselves. More broadly, staff roles across the agency typically involved only a

limited orientation and level of participation in research, particularly compared to some other agencies such as the World Bank.

Recommendations:

10. *That AusAID consider incorporating strategies to promote the utilisation of research as part of the design process of long-term projects, with specific attention to the information needs of different stakeholders (including AusAID), and means to promote interaction between researchers and these stakeholder groups.*

11. *That AusAID adopt strategies for enhancing the utilisation of research within the agency through means such as staff development, seminars and forums and dissemination of material in a user-friendly manner.*

Institutional / Partnerships / Stakeholder Involvement

The range of institutions implementing the research projects was fairly narrow, particularly in the use of only one university (ANU) to implement half of the projects. Decisions regarding the choice of implementing organisation(s) need to ensure access to the range of skills, perspectives and personnel required for the specific project, and to avoid the risk of conservatism in the views expressed through over-concentration with one agency.

In this regard, there may be possibilities for projects with other Australian and overseas universities, and for research partnerships between these organisations. The other types of organisations involved in research implementation including independent overseas research organisations, a multilateral organisation (ADB) and an Australian consultancy organisation suggest other viable models. In addition, other types of agencies not currently engaged including NGOs, ACFOA, and private sector agencies are likely to add fresh and important perspectives either through independent research, or in collaboration with others.

One means to stimulate a greater range of Australian universities involved in long-term research, and in development research in general, would be to explore possible collaborative funding arrangements with the Australian Research Council and the universities. In this case, both AusAID and ARC may make a funding contribution to the research project, while the university may make a cash and/or in-kind contribution. Project applications would need to meet AusAID's priorities, and also satisfy a peer review process similar to that already operated by ARC.

The projects examined by the review did not involve formal partnerships with other research organisations, or research networks. They either operated through affiliations with in-country stakeholders, or in the minority of cases were based off-shore with a local executing agency. As such, the locus of control and decision-making for most projects regarding research content and processes remained in Australia.

Recommendations:

12. *That AusAID consider diversifying the range of organisations that it engages to undertake long-term research to ensure access to a wider range of skills, personnel and perspectives.*

13. *That AusAID examine the possibility of establishing collaborative research funding arrangements with the Australian Research Council and Australian universities as a means to stimulate development research in priority areas that it has identified.*

14. *That AusAID incorporate a greater emphasis on partnerships, particularly between Australian and in-country research organisations, within its long-term research program.*

Capacity Building

Capacity building of in-country research organisations and researchers was not an explicit objective in the majority of projects. This was demonstrated through the absence of partnership arrangements, and lack of research training or other formal capacity-building mechanisms within projects. The minority of projects based off-shore were an exception to the above, which apart from being implemented by locally based organisations, also involved long-term Australian research experts in several cases. Informal contact between Australian and overseas researchers within other projects is likely to have resulted in some capacity building, but the overall achievement was limited.

Recommendation:

15. *That AusAID place a greater emphasis on capacity building of in-country researchers and research organisations within its long-term research program using partnerships and associated joint projects, research training and institutional development support for this purpose.*

Management

Overall, the objectives of many research projects appeared to be simply formulated and not subject to the more rigorous planning and analysis required in the design of other AusAID projects of comparable size that may use, for example, logframe or even a simplified logframe analysis. From an agency perspective, this appears to reflect inexperience with research design requirements, and absence of tailored planning frameworks for research, and some distance between donor and research cultures. More specifically, there appears to be a hesitancy to closely manage research projects carried out by research organisations due to a perception that such organisations require academic independence. This perception is counterproductive where it contributes to gaps between researchers and policy makers, and to research products with limited utility to the client.

Measures to address the above issues include the adoption of formal guidelines and a possible manual to guide AusAID supported research, the delineation of specific management, reporting and contract arrangements for engagement of researchers as appropriate, possible arrangements for pre-selection and qualification of a range of

researchers, and establishment of a specialist category of period contract to allow access to research expertise to assist with AusAID research program development.

Recommendations:

16. *That AusAID give priority to management of the activity cycle within its long-term research projects, and particularly to comprehensive design processes.*

17. *That AusAID consider producing a specialist guideline or manual on long-term research as a complement to the processes already detailed in AusGUIDE.*

18. *That AusAID consider developing a specialist period contract category to provide access to research expertise particularly to assist in AusAID research program development.*

Monitoring and Evaluation

As indicated above, monitoring and evaluation received only limited attention in AusAID supported research projects. Although periodic reports were received from project implementing agencies, projects generally lacked their own formal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms such as systematic assessment of research dissemination and usage, feedback mechanisms from research users, or evaluation by consultants. The point of contrast was AusAID conducted external reviews for larger projects prior to decisions regarding continuation of funding. The implementation of more effective monitoring and evaluation systems would require attention in project design, and research program guidelines, identification of appropriate indicators for achievement, and could possibly incorporate greater use of external research expertise such as peer review, and expert panels.

Recommendations:

19. *That AusAID give priority to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the design and implementation of long-term research projects.*

20. *That AusAID consider constructing peer review and expert panels to referee research undertaken, and a possible advisory group to guide long-term research program development.*

3.4 Lessons Learned

Amongst donors, AusAID is not alone in reviewing its orientation to research, and assessing the scope and effectiveness of research activities. Like other agencies, it faces challenges of promoting improved linkages between research and policy making and programming, and also furthering fundamental principles such as poverty reduction and sustainability through making research more applicable and building in-country research capacity.

Assessment of AusAID supported long-term research activities reveals a range of achievements. However, overall AusAID's orientation to, and utilisation of long-term research is not strong. The research effort will benefit considerably from the agency taking a more proactive and dynamic approach to research - as an initiator of new

research activities, research manager and research user. This would involve bringing together a wider range of organisations and individuals to undertake research. Agencies involved are likely to remain primarily external to AusAID, but with an anticipated greater emphasis on research, AusAID may also consider direct research partnerships or in-house long-term research depending on the context.

An essential element to give direction to AusAID supported long-term research efforts, and aid in their evaluation is the identification of research priorities and a set of guidelines. The review of long-term research projects reflects the ‘organic’ way in which the research effort has developed. This had led to a possible over-representation of educationally or academically orientated research. While educational objectives may have intrinsic worth, they are likely to be most beneficial where they serve as an adjunct of policy development in order to ensure that knowledge is applied to real problems. Different kinds of future research, likely to stem from wider agency review and strategic planning, may involve greater emphasis on themes and issues, and applied problems than current explorations of countries and regions.

Overall, the research effort reveals that opportunities for partnership and capacity building have been under-explored. The area remains an important area of challenge and opportunity to ensure that the human resource and institutional development benefits of research are more focused on overseas countries.

Based on the findings and recommendations presented above, Section 4 which follows contains a comprehensive framework to guide future action. The framework replicates a small amount of the material presented in this section and in the literature review. Such an approach is intentional to allow a fuller treatment of critical issues and to give the framework a ‘stand-alone’ status.

4. Proposed Framework for Long-Term Research in AusAID

This section details the elements of a framework to guide long-term research efforts in AusAID. The framework is developed as a response to a set of challenges facing the use of long-term research identified on the basis of the analysis presented in previous sections, and also consistent with the experience of many other donors.

4.1 Scope and Applicability of Framework

As a starting point, it is worthwhile considering the scope and applicability of the framework within AusAID. At the time of the review, AusAID commissioned and managed long-term research in two different contexts:

- Country and Regional Programs – managed through AusAID branches
- Centrally - through the Australian Development Research Program (ADRP) managed by the Corporate Policy Branch

There is some overlap between the above two contexts as ADRP funds may be sourced by a range of applicants including country and regional programs. Overall, the AusAID Strategic Plan (December, 2001) specifies further strengthening of research capacity in both contexts with an emphasis on development of research strategy and coordination of research functions within branches and across the agency.

Given the above, it was considered most appropriate to cast the framework in a generic manner and thereby enhance its applicability. It is envisaged that the framework may be applied, and adapted to enhance strategy, guidelines and other arrangements for long-term research in the following situations:

- ADRP – representing centrally funded research which may, in future, particularly focus on cross-agency themes and issues such as conflict and poverty reduction strategies.
- Country and regional sections of AusAID – plans for long-term research will be developed in the context of regional and country program strategies negotiated with partner countries and will reflect the priorities of both AusAID and specific partners involved.
- Central, across-agency research coordination – guidance may be provided by AusAID's Corporate Policy Branch to promote coordination, cooperation, and high standards in long-term research across the agency. Such a trend would be consistent with the new role in research coordination given to the Corporate Policy Branch by the AusAID Executive in late 2001.

It is anticipated that lessons learned from one of these contexts may be applied in another. Given the specific research focus of ADRP, it is likely that that new arrangements may first be trialled in this program and then applied to other contexts.

4.2 Elements of the Framework

The following table summarises the elements of the framework comprising the main challenges facing AusAID in enhancing the use of long-term research, together with the nature of response needed.

Table 1: Framework for Long-Term Research: Areas of Challenge and Response

Challenge	Response
1. Give long-term research higher priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance agency policy and analytical capacity (see AusAID Strategic Plan Section 2)
2. Integrate long-term research into the mainstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance agency policy and analytical capacity (see AusAID Strategic Plan Section 2)
3. Give long-term research greater focus and clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop long-term research strategy and guidelines Link to aid program, corporate, and research program objectives; and principles
4. Make long-term research more accountable to its stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote stakeholder participation
5. Strengthen the link between long-term research and capacity building in developing countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote research partnerships Build research capacity
6. Make long-term research of more use to policy makers and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve dissemination strategies Choose appropriate research products Improve knowledge management
7. Improve the design and management of long-term research projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to AusGUIDE Enhance design Incorporate monitoring and evaluation measures Improve management arrangements

The presentation of the framework recognises that the first two broad organisational challenges above have already been identified within AusAID's Strategic Plan (December, 2001) within the context of enhancing the agency's overall use of research. The material below therefore concentrates on the remaining challenges which are more specific issues relating to long-term research.

4.3 Giving Long-Term Research Greater Focus and Clarity

Responses to this challenge involve developing long-term research strategy and guidelines; and linking long-term research to aid program, corporate, and research program objectives; and also to principles.

4.3.1 Research Strategy

The development of strategy to guide long-term research is a necessary part of refining and augmenting the research function in the agency. As indicated above, this

needs to occur as part of broader country and regional program strategies, and also the corporate research program which principally involves ADRP.

A **Corporate Long-Term Research Strategy** needs to be developed, and then reviewed every three years, to identify priorities in cross-agency long-term research. It will take into account the need for new or refined knowledge to guide the aid program, and related corporate priorities for policy, program initiatives and enhanced development practice.

Country and Regional Strategies need to give increasing emphasis to long-term research as an important component of a broader and mutually-reinforcing range of initiatives. Knowledge derived from long-term research will increasingly support and advance policy and program initiatives in these contexts.

A key to the development of these strategies, and fulfilling the principle of partnership that underpins the aid program, will be wide consultation and input from a range of stakeholders. This will include stakeholders both internal and external to AusAID. Through this approach, the strategy produced is most likely to reflect and accommodate differing views. Importantly, ensuring representation of the views of stakeholders from partner countries is critical so that research and its products reflect and addresses local priorities.

Stakeholders who are likely to contribute to strategy are as follows:

- Minister
- Aid Advisory Council
- AusAID staff: at Executive, Desk and Post
- DFAT
- Other Australian government agencies
- Partner governments and agencies
- Academic and research institutions (in Australia and overseas)
- Other Australian and international specialists
- ACFOA
- NGOs
- Australian Managing Contractors (AMCs)

Periodic review of long-term research strategy, in conjunction with the above stakeholders, will need to address the following questions amongst others:

- What lessons can be learned from the research activities undertaken to date
- Whether long-term research is meeting its objectives, including the needs of AusAID and partner countries
- Whether long-term research is filling the perceived gaps that it was intended to fill
- Whether long-term research has contributed to in-country capacity building
- What lessons can be learned from the way long-term research has been managed
- What use has been made of the long-term research products generated

- Whether the dissemination of long-term research has been effective, or needs to be improved

4.3.2 Objectives

The framework is based on the notion that research efforts supported by AusAID need to be guided by a hierarchical set of objectives. These range from that which governs the aid program as a whole, through to internal research project objectives that are consistent with objectives at broader levels. Specifically, the different levels of objectives are as follows:

- Aid Program Objective
- Corporate Objectives
- Research Program Objectives
- Individual Research Project Objectives

The review has identified weaknesses in terms of the long-term research projects examined and their linkages at all of the above levels including lack of explicit linkages with aid program and corporate objectives, absence of detailed research program guidelines, and poor or inadequate design of individual projects. The following expands on each area where objectives for long-term research are required:

- Aid Program Objective

Explicit linking of long-term research strategy, guidelines and individual designs in terms of their contribution to the one objective of ‘advancing Australia’s national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development’.

- Corporate Objectives

Explicit linking of long-term research strategy, guidelines and individual designs in terms of their contribution to relevant corporate objectives. For the research area, the recent moves in AusAID emphasising an enhancement of the agency’s analytical capacity are most pertinent. This is reflected in the intent of AusAID’s Strategic Plan (December, 2001) ‘to improve the aid program’s policy and programmatic impact and effectiveness through strengthening its analytical capacity and focusing its efforts more strategically’.

- Research Program Objectives

Explicit delineation of the connection between long-term research strategy and guidelines, and research program objectives. Consistent with the intent of using research more strategically across the agency, in December 2001 the AusAID Executive endorsed the following as broad objectives to guide all research efforts across the agency:

- To increase aid effectiveness
- To improve AusAID’s ability to contribute to whole-of-government policy formulation

- To maximise Australian influence on the international development agenda

Taking these as the starting point at the meta-level, it is possible to delineate a set of subsidiary objectives for a long-term research program. These may include the following:

Policy and Program Development

- To contribute to policy dialogue, policy development and agenda setting in relation to the aid program and partner country settings
- To contribute to AusAID's program formulation and refinement
- To provide a means through which AusAID may access appropriate expertise to meet needs for research and analysis

Development Practice

- To contribute to the refinement of development practice through the identification of new knowledge, approaches and techniques

Capacity Building

- To build indigenous research capacity and a related capacity to identify and solve local problems
- To strengthen in-country research institutions

Relationship Building and Linkages

- To build relationships and inter-institutional linkages between AusAID, donors, researchers, policy makers and the broader development community involved in development research and its application, both in Australia and internationally

Education and Awareness-Raising

- To raise interest, awareness and educate regarding specific development issues

Building of Research Expertise

- To build research expertise and involvement in areas which are of interest to AusAID
- Individual Research Project Objectives

Detailed objectives which are internally consistent, and externally linked to and consistent with research program, corporate and aid program objectives, and with research strategy and guideline documentation.

4.3.3 Principles

A set of principles is proposed to underpin AusAID's long-term research. These are related and subsidiary to the broader principles that guide the aid program as a whole, as developed in response to the Simons Review. In terms of these broader principles, the following are important emphases to guide research initiatives:

- Being open to new ideas and approaches derived from Australia and overseas

- Concentrating on practical efforts to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development
- Being responsive to urgent needs and development trends
- Focusing on partnerships
- Developing greater definition and targeting in aid delivery

Specifically, the following principles are advanced to guide long-term research:

Principle 1

AusAID should be proactive in supporting long-term research acknowledging the importance of well-directed and strategic donor funded research to produce new knowledge that will benefit the poor.

Principle 2

Long-term research should explicitly support AusAID’s objective of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Principle 3

Long-term research should enhance the ability of aid to respond to urgent needs and development trends.

Principle 4

Long-term research should have a direct and tangible link with aid policy, program development and/or development practice in order to enhance aid effectiveness.

Principle 5

Long-term research should be determined and implemented on the basis of partnership reflecting shared visions and objectives, and reciprocal obligations about the purpose, nature, conduct and application of the research.

Principle 6

Long-term research should promote capacity building in partner countries, and particularly the capacity of local researchers to identify and solve local problems.

Principle 7

Long-term research should include strategies for improving dissemination of long-term research products and for increasing utilisation of research outcomes among stakeholders.

Principle 8

The design of each long-term research project should provide for on-going and close collaboration between AusAID and the researchers.

Principle 9

Each long-term research project should be a product of a rigorous design process, clearly identifying the purpose and expected outcomes of the project and incorporating ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

4.3.4 Research Guidelines

Detailed research guidelines are required to delineate further expectations regarding the scope, budget, geographical focus, type, mode and conduct of research. They will additionally incorporate or refer to the strategy documents, objectives, and principles detailed above. Such guidelines are most necessary for a research fund such as ADRP which involves both internal and/or external applicants.

In this regard, the guidelines developed by DFID for its Economic and Social Research Strategy (2000-2003) are instructive. Overall, these guidelines emphasise the support of research with practical relevance to poor people in developing and transitional countries. Within this focus, the guidelines state that the following types of research will be supported:

- Analytical research into causal relations in an area of current development policy
- Illumination of emerging policy issues
- Evaluation of a particular practice or operation
- Test and develop new theory to strengthen the theoretical underpinnings of current aid and development practice
- Develop new research methods for analysing and evaluating development policy questions

The above represents some, but certainly not all pertinent types of research. The refinement of such a list should occur in the first instance in elaborating detailed guidelines for ADRP, and then by extension to other parts of the agency by the Corporate Policy Branch in its research coordination role.

4.4 Making Long-Term Research More Accountable to its Stakeholders

A major challenge is involved in overcoming the historical legacy of research agendas being controlled by powerful donor and research institutions in industrialised countries. The solution involves:

- Placing greater emphasis on involving a range of stakeholders in partner countries in research
- Ensuring greater input and control over agenda setting, implementation and evaluation by those stakeholders

The range of stakeholders in partner countries includes:

- Formal research partners
- Other researchers less directly involved
- Policy makers
- Research end users such as the NGOs and community representatives, and the private sector

While involvement of formal research partners is an important step, local researchers can not be expected to provide or sustain access to the other stakeholder groups.

Broad involvement relies on inclusive processes in agenda setting, design, implementation and review, and also an inclusive approach to management of research. With regard to management, key factors that influence the involvement of stakeholders include:

- Siting of project as part of a host institution (that may support, but also impose its agendas on a project) or as an independent body but associated with a host institution (providing more independence, but less resources and creating issues relating to sustainability).
- Composition of project steering committees
- Independence of project steering committees including donor representation

4.5 Strengthening the Link between Long-Term Research and Capacity Building in Developing Countries

4.5.1 Promoting Research Partnerships

Partnerships are a significant means to building local research capacity, while at the same time promoting and formalising local participation¹. The notion of partnership has been increasingly supported as outmoded ideas of ‘technology transfer’ have been discredited in development cooperation. Such notions involved the replication of knowledge from industrialised countries and derivative institutional structures. In contrast, research cooperation based on a capacity-building approach aims at increasing the abilities of individual researchers, research organisations, and their broader societies to set and implement research agendas on a sustainable basis.

Research partnerships are developed in the context of, and in response to a range of cultural, economic and institutional constraints affecting research in developing and industrialised country contexts including:

Developing country

- Lack of funds and resources for research
- Limited institutional structures for research and training including weak management, frequent institutional changes and political dependency
- Low status accorded to research, research products and researchers in general
- Lack of clear national and institutional research policies

Industrialised country

- Tendency to control agenda setting and implicit ownership of processes and products
- Changing donor priorities and programs regarding research cooperation creating uncertainty, and appearing fragmented and unreliable to recipients

In addressing such constraints, successful research partnerships offer a range of advantages including:

¹ This section draws on KPFE (1998) & (2001); DGIS (2001); World Bank (1999(b)) and Ilsoe (2000).

- Enabling exchange and mutual learning on the basis of complementary skills and knowledge
- Promoting increased quality of research in both developing and industrialised countries through engagement, mutual commitment and trust
- Connecting local researchers to outside researchers and research networks
- Enhancing transfer of results to stakeholders at multiple levels including in partner countries and to international research community
- Increasing relevance and recognition of research in partner countries through engagement with local researchers and other stakeholders

4.5.2 Types of Partnerships

Although many possible varieties of donor-supported research partnership are possible, three main types predominate:

- Twinning arrangements between research institutions in partner country and industrialised countries
- Partnerships between donors and autonomously operating research organisations in partner countries, possibly with support from advisors
- International or regional networks focusing on specific issues or themes sometimes coordinated and supported by a donor

Most of the following comments relate to the first two contexts above.

4.5.3 Elements of a Partnership – Approaches to Capacity Building

Partnerships typically revolve around a research project such as in health, social science or environment. The partnership is designed to address particular research questions and produce particular research products; and also address individual researcher and institutional capacity building needs.

The scope of the partnership needs to be tailored to its specific context and will be influenced by:

- Strengths and constraints of individual researchers and the institution
- Needs for training in academic and/or applied research
- Size of the budget and duration of program
- Possible connections with other donor funded programs that may complement the initiative and/or provide a conduit for application of research skills

With smaller research programs it may be difficult to address wider institutional capacity building needs. These programs can be ideal, however, as catalysts when capacities are weak, and have benefits in easily promoting ownership and commitment. Broader institutional development programs are sometimes initiated after researchers and their institution have achieved a level of competence.

Research partnerships may contain some of the following elements:

Enhancement of Training and Research Skills – involving a mixture of formal and informal training. The skills gained are applied in concrete projects while exposure to research networks and opportunities for dissemination further enhance research experience and knowledge. Specifically this may include:

- Cooperation on planning, implementation and review of local-focused research activities
- Training in research techniques and approaches, formally and/or within an applied context. Fellowships, and academic/student exchanges may be involved
- Higher education of researchers in partner organisations – often involving completion of Masters or PhD programs, sometimes partially while based at the donor country partner institution
- Promotion of involvement of local researchers in national, regional and international research networks
- Support for participation in international conferences, workshops and seminars
- Dissemination of research results locally and internationally

Improving Research Resources and Infrastructure – this can involve improving and maintaining research facilities, but increasingly emphasises information technology and knowledge management as a means to promote access to information, and exchange through electronic networks. Specifically this may include:

- Provision of physical resources such as laboratory and field research equipment
- Improvement in communications including computers, internet access and related training
- Provision of literature, library and other data resources

Promoting Institutional Development: strengthening the institutional base of research organisation including:

- Management and leadership training
- Organisational planning and development
- Financial management and sustainability
- Human resource planning
- Organisational monitoring and evaluation systems

Research Policy Development: at an institutional and national level including linking of research priorities to national development goals to provide focus for research efforts and enhance government participation and commitment.

4.5.4 Successful Partnerships

A successful partnership critically relies on the resources, commitment, enthusiasm and preparation of both (all) parties involved. Specific factors are as follows:

Adequate Initial Capacity and Potential - sufficient numbers of qualified, committed and enthusiastic researchers on both sides of the partnership to provide momentum; presence of sufficiently qualified candidates to recruit as new researchers. Relying on

one or two individuals to carry the partnership presents significant risks in terms of sustainability.

Adequate Preparation - sufficient attention to preparatory processes including meetings of researchers and managers from collaborating organisations to clarify scope, objectives and processes.

Mutual Respect and Trust between Collaborating Researchers – key pre-requisites underpinning successful engagement.

Organisational Involvement – support and commitment of both institutions.

Realistic Expectations – of both research projects and capacity building.

Central Focus on Capacity Building – within all aspects of the partnership. It is important that academic objectives involving the publication of research results remain subsidiary to the intention of increasing research capacity at many levels. Research products are the results and proof of capacity building, but do not represent capacity or capacity building itself.

Involvement of Stakeholders – careful identification and involvement of key stakeholders including research users.

Joint Decision Making – promotes involvement, a sense of ownership and sustainability.

Positive Orientation to Evaluation and Learning from Partnership - well developed monitoring and evaluation systems to gauge success in strengthening research capacity are required.

Locally Relevant and Developmentally Orientated Research Topic – the partnership will be most effectively supported if its product has a high degree of local utility and attracts respect from other local stakeholders including local policy makers.

Joint Dissemination – involving avenues such as joint publication, attendance at conference and mutual participation in international research networks.

Progressive Engagement – partnerships can be developed and tested through progressive engagement in, for example, shifts from research training, to mutual projects and then to support for units of excellence.

Planning for Sustainability – involving progressive shifts towards more autonomy of research organisation in partner country and disengagement of other partner(s).

Donor Roles

For donor-supported research programs, the role of the donor itself has a critical bearing on success. Donor issues include:

- Appropriate knowledge of international/regional/local research organisations and donor activities in research cooperation
- Thorough institutional assessments
- Sufficient attention and possible support for preparatory phases
- Detailed project design
- Willingness to make long-term commitments in the face of often slow incremental gains in building research capacity
- Active role in program coordination while still providing flexibility and respecting institutional autonomy
- Promoting coordination and synergies with related donor-supported programs, particularly in the education sector

4.5.5 Examples of Research Partnerships

Examples of research programs based on partnership that demonstrate substantial achievements and from which major lessons can be derived include Danida's ENRECA (Enhancing Research Capacity) Program (Ilsoe, 2000) and the work of the World Bank in establishing regional economic research networks (World Bank, 1999(b)).

ENRECA - the program's main objective is to support the long-term development of research capacity of selected institutions in developing countries. The means is a twinning arrangement with Danish research organisations. Grants are normally for three years. The areas of research that are typically supported have an applied focus and include health, social science, biology and environmental research. There are standard research guidelines and an Advisory Panel for Research Assistance that assesses applications and assists in reviews. The program combines training of researchers, institutional development of developing country partner research institutions, enhancement of communications and dissemination activities. Criteria for the selection of projects include the quality of capacity building and research, the relevance of the subject to the development of the country, and cooperation with sector programs and other initiatives in a developing country context.

World Bank supported regional economic research networks – these networks allow policy researchers in one country to benefit from lessons learned in others. They create a community of researchers (for example in Sub-Saharan Africa) who critique and encourage one another's work, help train one another's students and share data and new methods. Amongst other factors, the World Bank has found that the success of the networks relies on activities being balanced between improving the quality of research and training new researchers; transparent allocation of funds; effective, independent governing bodies; rigorous peer review processes; and having members who participate in the network and also contribute to its operation.

4.6 Making Long-Term Research of More Use to Policy Makers and Other Stakeholders

The factors that promote use of research by policy makers and other stakeholders are multi-dimensional². They include:

Presence of relevant information – research is more readily used where topics and types of information are relevant to the needs of potential research users.

Political and organisational factors – there are many influences of this kind that affect whether research may be used within a specific political/organisational context. These include the presence of advocates for policy positions; timing of research in relation to organisational priorities and lifecycle; connections between potentially learning organisations and those with new knowledge; organisational flexibility, motivation, resources; and attitudes to innovation.

² This section draws on Stone et al. (2001); WEDC (2001); Maxwell (2000); Scott (2000); Garret and Islam (1998) and Porter (1998).

Appropriate dissemination strategies – means of making research accessible including reaching the target audience and being comprehensible; promoting uptake of research and receiving feedback.

The above suggests that researchers who want their research to have a strong impact, and donors wishing to support such research need to:

Be policy orientated: Appreciate the information needs of policy makers and other stakeholders.

Be inclusive: Involve policy makers and other stakeholders in establishing research agendas, and in implementing, monitoring and interpreting the research

Be 'political': understand the policy process and its organisational context, and the impact of research upon it.

Be effective disseminators and advocates: ensure accessible information and encourage uptake.

4.6.1 Dissemination Strategies and Tools

Key considerations and steps in dissemination include:

- Prepare a dissemination strategy providing a rationale for dissemination and how it relates to the research objectives. Include methods to monitor and measure the impact of dissemination
- Identify potential target audiences and assess their information needs
- Appreciate how audiences usually receive and use information and adapt the product accordingly
- Consider timing of dissemination to maximise impact – staggered release is useful
- Ensure that dissemination is not just a passive process involving the sending of information to audiences alone, but rather also includes dynamic elements that promote interaction with audiences

Dissemination is best regarded as a two-way process with researchers providing information and advice to policy-makers and other stakeholders; while also encouraging interaction and feedback from these sources. Through 'research advocacy' the researcher is in the best position to encourage uptake of research findings while at the same time refining appreciation of research user needs.

Dissemination Tools

The selection of specific dissemination tools (e.g books, seminars etc.) involves choices to maximise impact, and also accommodate and balance their relative advantages and disadvantages. In general, choice of specific tools will be guided by:

- Appreciation of needs of potential research users
- Appreciation of advantages and disadvantages of each medium
- Needs to meet diversified audiences and therefore utilise multiple tools (eg. policy makers may read reports and use the internet while academics may use books and refereed articles more readily)

- Skills of researchers to work in a specific medium e.g creation of websites, and/or access to training to build skills in this area
- Facilities available to collect and classify information in specific contexts (eg access to internet, libraries and electronic data sources in partner countries)
- Need to protect copyright and intellectual property, where applicable

The following table identifies different tools that can be used in dissemination and their relative merits³:

Table 2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Different Dissemination Tools

Tool	Advantages	Disadvantage
Formative report, working document, discussion document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets research findings to particular groups • Allows early and frequent dissemination of findings • Identifies critical issues • Well suited to action research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited audience • Necessarily limited in scope
Summative formal report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single reference point for all aspects of research • Assembles all relevant data • Includes recommendations based on total experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited audience
Refereed journal article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide impact on academic and research networks • Academic rigour in assessment of findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited audience
Professional journal article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner orientated audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks academic rigour
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorative, rigorous • Allows single or multiple author contributions • Impact on academic, research and policy networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expense • Delays in production and therefore dissemination of results
CD Roms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compendium of various information sources • Large amounts of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expense • Accessibility in partner countries
Conference, workshop, seminar, training of policy makers and other on topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction and networking • Learning • Debate/consensus building amongst professionals • Useful for promoting interaction between researchers and policy makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expense • Variable in quality • Can lack academic rigour • Variable reporting of proceedings
Training manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codifies applied knowledge • Learning tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited audience • Expense

³ Adapted from WEDC (2001)

Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach members who share common research interests • Interaction, discussion and review of findings • Useful for promoting interaction between researchers and policy makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited active participation • Strong incentives needed for participation • Time consuming to manage
Internet, email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate, convenient • Wide interest in electronic media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access in partner countries • Expense • Issues with protection of intellectual property
Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote broad exposure to issues • Can encourage uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffuse • Expense • Limited information conveyed • Open to political interpretation
Mass media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes broad exposure to issues • Can encourage uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffuse • Expense • Limited information conveyed

4.6.2 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management in a donor context complements other dissemination strategies intended to increase the use of research and its products. Donors such as AusAID have opportunities to widely disseminate research findings to a range of audiences through:

- Posting information about research projects and including research products on their own website
- Publicising research projects and including summaries in newsletters and email bulletins
- Including research projects as subjects of agency media and public relations activities

Plans should also be developed for how knowledge from each long-term research project will be made available within AusAID. Internal dissemination strategies need to be consistent with AusAID's culture and capacity to absorb new knowledge. Possible avenues include:

- Progress bulletins
- Other intranet based information including detailed research products
- Presentations at staff meetings and seminars
- Training by researchers

Involving staff in secondments to long-term research projects, research institutions and universities, and undertaking short-term research assignments (including monitoring and evaluation) are also desirable options for increasing exposure to

research, and thereby aiding the dissemination of a research culture and promoting use of research products.

4.7 Improving the Design and Management of Long-Term Research Projects

4.7.1 Research Projects and the Activity Cycle

Long-term research projects are no different to any project supported by AusAID in requiring careful preparation and management. Although long-term research projects have distinctive features, these are considered largely additional to the basic organisational and structural characteristics of other projects. AusGUIDE and its comprehensive guidelines to management of the activity cycle are therefore considered both apt and necessary for application to long-term research projects. Previously, such guidelines have not been sufficiently applied to research projects which have been regarded as a somewhat atypical project genre and therefore not subject to AusAID's usual rigorous processes.

AusGUIDE's staged formulation of the activity cycle from identification through to ex-post evaluation (where undertaken), its specification of explicit decision points and pathway choices, and analytical tools (including the logframe approach) are most appropriate to promote efficient and effective long-term research projects. As with all projects, based on complexity and project size, activity managers will need to make strategic choices regarding whether to simplify any of the processes that AusGUIDE specifies. This may apply, for example in decisions to apply a simplified log-frame format for projects under a certain size.

The unique features and challenges of long-term research projects including research related objectives, partnership arrangements, strategies to promote dissemination and utilisation of research products are dealt with separately in this framework. At times, these aspects including the specification of the research approach and methodology will represent unique challenges for AusAID staff. AusAID may wish to consider development of specialist guidelines as a complement and extension to those in AusGUIDE to assist staff to address the unique context of long-term research projects.

Beyond this, at times specialist advice may be required in preparation, appraisal and management of long-term research projects, particularly while AusAID is trialling new arrangements. The redeployment and recruitment of specialist staff with high levels of research and analytical expertise as foreshadowed in AusAID's Strategic Plan will assist in this area. In addition, AusAID may wish to consider creation of a specialist research category of period contract to provide more ready access to this kind of advice.

4.7.2 Enhancing Design

Each long-term research project should be a product of process involving identification and design which is both rigorous and participatory. The Review noted constraints in both these areas in many of the long-term research projects that it examined. Such observations suggest that design guidelines in AusGUIDE including

the need for detailed, logical and internally consistent objectives, incorporation of ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and involvement of stakeholders need to be applied.

Calls for enhancement of design processes are not unique to long-term research projects, however. Plans for an agency wide effort in this area are detailed in AusAID's Strategic Plan. AusAID may wish to consider how as part of this broader initiative specific design issues relating to long-term research such as incorporating partnership arrangements may be addressed. It may be advisable to nominate an individual to specialise in design of long-term research projects amongst staff who are envisaged to play a more active role in design in future.

In project design in general, and particularly in the case of research projects it is necessary to consider the processes in addition to content and structures. A critical dimension in this regard will be actual methods of research employed. A participatory approach will involve local researchers and possibly potential research users in decisions about research methodology, field work, and the identification and analysis of knowledge. In addition, and as emphasised above it will be important for the design process to consider dissemination strategies and promotion of the use of research, including in AusAID.

4.7.3 Management Arrangements

Consideration of how AusAID should approach management of long-term research projects will be influenced by:

- AusAID's own strategic direction that involves improving its analytical capacity, use of and engagement with research.
- A tendency noted from the long-term research projects examined in this review for a fairly hands off management style, reinforced by a perceived cultural divide between AusAID staff and researchers who were largely based in academic institutions

Overall there is a need for more management involvement in projects. This may have several dimensions:

- Stronger attention to management of the activity cycle, reinforced itself by greater attention to design
- Greater engagement with externally contracted researchers through means such as participation on steering committees, regular meetings, inviting researchers to be involved in strategic planning sessions, seminars and training
- Possible involvement of AusAID staff in conduct of long-term research, either through secondment to externally operating projects (for short or longer periods) or through mounting a limited number of projects within the agency. In the latter case, AusAID staff may conduct or lead projects possibly with support from external consultants.

The predominant model for mounting future long-term research, in line with general agency trends, is likely to remain through contracting of external organisations. Certainly this approach has many efficiencies given limited AusAID staff resources

and is consistent with objectives of building developmentally-orientated research capacity in partner countries, and also in Australia. Constraints were evident at the time of the review, however, in terms of the limited range of external organisations engaged in long-term research, both in Australia and overseas. Particularly overseas, there were very few organisations formally engaged in long-term research. In order to address this, the Review suggests that measures be taken to:

- Expand the range of Australian academic and research organisations involved in long-term research through tendering and direct engagement. AusAID is likely to need to be proactive to expand the research base beyond its predominant focus on Canberra. Creating a register of ‘pre-qualified’ research Australian organisations may be considered to aid this process.
- Expand the range of overseas academic and research organisations involved in long-term research. As a starting point, AusAID may consider specific countries where it may wish to expand such involvement and identify potential for engagement with specific institutions
- Develop a specific program, possibly as a subset of ADRP that is based on partnership between Australian and overseas research organisations.

The development of a partnerships program in long-term research, and trialling of new modes of long-term research in general will be resource intensive in terms of AusAID staff time and the necessity to provide guidance, and refine arrangements. In order to facilitate this work, AusAID may wish to consider:

- Maintaining and consolidating the Research Peer Group operating in AusAID to encourage staff interchange and coordination
- Creation of a Research Advisory Group comprising both outside research specialists and staff to provide guidance to the development of the research effort in AusAID including long-term research
- Establishment of a Technical Advisory Group drawing on outside expertise to provide more focused assistance to research planning and program development
- Engagement of individual consultants, possibly from a specialist category of research-focused period contract

4.7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for long-term projects need to be enhanced, and geared more strongly to assessment of internal project objectives and achievements, and to those of broader program objectives, principles, research strategy and corporate and aid program objectives. Reference to, and siting of monitoring and evaluation within these multiple tiers allows a much more ready contribution to organisational learning.

This type of evaluative framework should be applied to the existing suite of long-term research projects and for those that are newly established. The Review noted the previous tendency for the evaluative assessment of long-term research projects to be limited to achievement of internal project objectives (which were often sketchy) and terms of reference which were not able to apprehend the broader context of research in the agency.

The trialling of new arrangements such as partnership programs as recommended in this review will place additional demands on effective monitoring and evaluation so that learning from this context will contribute to refinement of long-term research programs. Maximising the involvement of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation will increase the utility of feedback received, and enhance a sense of ownership of the program, together with its general effectiveness.

Enhanced monitoring and evaluation measures for long-term research projects need to be considered at the level of the individual project, and more broadly within evaluation of AusAID long-term research programs and strategy. Such an approach will enable AusAID to demonstrate whether individual projects are effective and efficient, and contribute to the achievement of broader planning objectives. Similarly, periodic evaluation will enable AusAID to assess whether the overall direction and structure of long-term research supported by the agency is appropriate.

4.8 Other Considerations

4.8.1 Research Programs as a Catalyst for Australian Research Expertise

The scope of long-term research programs supported by AusAID has an important bearing on the Australian research community. Although relatively well-endowed compared to partner countries, it is worth noting that in Australia:

- Support to research from all government sources is relatively low compared to other OECD countries
- Current national research priorities favour high-tech endeavours and not the social sciences (including development)
- Development research, including support to external research organisations, forms a relatively minor part of AusAID's program relative to other donors

While AusAID's priorities in relation to research are changing, the context is one where Australian research infrastructure does not currently strongly support a research community especially in the social sciences. AusAID will have interests in promoting research attention in Australia on specific topics and ensuring that it has a sufficient core of research expertise to call on as required. There are also some contexts where research interest may be waning due to aging of researchers, and fashionability of topics. The relatively stronger research interest in Asia compared to the Pacific is a case in point. AusAID may wish to consider such matters in determining the scope and focus of its research efforts. Such considerations should not dilute a primary focus on building up research capacity in partner countries, but rather be regarded as additional, although important factors.

4.8.2 Cost Effectiveness

Design of long-term research projects needs to strike a balance between the cost and quality of the project. This involves making judgments about the size and cost of the project in comparison to its likely impact. Indicative costs of similarly designed projects conducted by other donors will be an important reference point in this regard.

In general, long-term research projects with a capacity building focus are likely to be resource intensive, particularly in the early stages of cooperation. Development and trialling of new forms of cooperation will also be relatively expensive. There are also greater risks of some failures and setbacks in this context. Factors that would contain AusAID's costs include effective project design and management and cost-sharing in appropriate circumstances. For example, host institutions/partner governments could provide part-support of salaries (of their staff involved in the project) and other in-kind support related to various project activities and products such as report production, hosting seminars and the like. There may also be some synergies with other forms of development support e.g. scholarship programs that may include staff from partner organisations, and educational sector programs operating in the host country.

Cost effectiveness must necessarily take account of resource efficiency with respect to the use not only of agency resources but also of the resources of others participating in the project. Thus the resource implications of the respective activities/outputs should be clearly identified and costed in respect of all those involved. Time and resource constraints should also be taken into account. All the quantifiable costs should be considered in the context of the project's objectives and its expected impacts so as to avoid the commissioning of high cost, low impact projects.

5. Conclusion

This review identified considerable potential and many challenges involved in harnessing long-term research to the achievement of broader agency objectives identified in AusAID's Strategic Plan. While many of the individual projects displayed a reasonable, and sometimes impressive level of achievement as measured against their own internal project objectives, cumulatively these achievements lacked cohesion and focus. Three vital elements were missing that would otherwise provide direction and enhance the impact of the research effort. These were:

- A set of guiding principles and objectives
- The use of research partnerships in order to effect capacity building in developing countries
- Consideration of the use of research products, particularly to enhance aid effectiveness through policy and program development.

The achievement of enhanced outcomes and impact from long-term research efforts will require further careful consideration and close management – it will not be a hands-off exercise. Hopefully, the framework that is a major product of this review will provide guidance in this effort in terms of priorities identified and means that can be employed to achieve them. The framework has commenced the process of elucidating the specific planning documents that are required to guide future long-term research efforts including identification of objectives and guiding principles. The following steps, such as development of strategy documents and research program guidelines were beyond the terms of reference of this review but remain important and immediate challenges required to enhance the research effort.

Overall, the review was impressed with the level of commitment and skill of the researchers who contributed to the study; and by talents and professionalism of AusAID officers who were involved with research projects. With increased attention to planning, management, and more communication and engagement between these stakeholder groups the impact and value of their efforts will be considerably enhanced. Such is the intent of AusAID's Strategic Plan; and it is to this intent that the review hopes it has made a contribution.

Annex 1 Performance Checks And Indicators for Recommendations

The following performance checks and indicators are advanced for AusAID's use in assessing performance against the report's recommendations:

Recommendations from Report

Research Focus

1. *That AusAID consider undertaking a periodic analysis of its corporate research needs (possibly every three years) identifying priority needs, objectives, strategies, and themes and issues.*

i) Annual survey of how current research projects are matching current AusAID priority needs, objectives, strategies, and themes and issues. Annual findings show trends that are useful for proposed three-year review.

2. *That AusAID promote the incorporation of aspects relating to long-term research as part of strategy development within its regional and country programs.*

i) Annual survey of means used for AusAID officers to be made aware outputs/developments in long-term research projects.

3. *In developing a long-term research agenda, AusAID consider undertaking wide consultations to ensure input from an appropriate balance of AusAID, academic, and broader development community interests, both in Australia and overseas.*

i) Annual list of consultations – form and outcomes.

4. *That AusAID expand the relative emphasis given to long-term research with a thematic focus (including research on specific issues and forces affecting development conditions) as opposed to research focusing on countries and regions.*

i) Annual survey of means used by researchers involved in long-term research to become aware of themes, issues and forces affecting development conditions within long-term research across the agency.

Disciplinary Perspectives

5. *That AusAID seek to ensure that the disciplinary focus of its long-term research efforts is selected to match and best promote the realisation of its identified research priorities.*

i) Survey of AusAID branches to find if research outputs are in a form/language that is directly useful.

Contributing to Aid Effectiveness

6. *That AusAID seek to ensure that all future long-term research endeavours are linked to and support AusAID's strategic objective of poverty reduction and promoting sustainable development.*

Does research proposal give clear indication of how research outputs are likely to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development?

Do research outputs over time have a distinct impact on poverty reduction and promotion of sustainable development?

7. *That AusAID strengthen links between long-term research projects and their contribution to aid effectiveness, and specifically to AusAID policy development and programming.*

See summary/priority recommendation 1 below.

Development Practice

8. *That AusAID consider giving greater priority to long-term research projects that focus explicitly on the enhancement of development practice.*

Does research proposal give clear indication of how research outputs are likely to enhance development practice?

Do research outputs over time have a distinct impact on development practice?

Dissemination

9. *That AusAID encourage multi-faceted dissemination strategies within its long-term research projects including a greater focus on partner country audiences, and methods by which the agency may publicise research activities and products through its own publications, newsletters and website.*

- i) Annual list of research dissemination processes and output for each long-term research project;
- ii) Annual review of feedback from audiences the dissemination strategy is targeting.

Utilisation of Research

10. *That AusAID consider incorporating strategies to promote the utilisation of research as part of the design process of long-term projects, with specific attention to the information needs of different stakeholders (including AusAID), and means to promote interaction between researchers and these stakeholder groups.*

How likely are research utilisation methods in research proposal to be effective?

Annual survey of effectiveness of research utilisation.

Also see summary/priority recommendation 1 below.

11. *That AusAID adopt strategies for enhancing the utilisation of research within the agency through means such as staff development, seminars and forums and dissemination of material in a user-friendly manner.*

- i) Annual survey in AusAID branches and sections of type and effectiveness of means to enhance research utilisation.

Also see summary/priority recommendation 1 below.

Institutional / Partnerships / Stakeholder Involvement

12. *That AusAID consider diversifying the range of organisations that it engages to undertake long-term research to ensure access to a wider range of skills, personnel and perspectives.*

How is the range of organisations engaged enlarged effectively?

13. *That AusAID examine the possibility of establishing collaborative research funding arrangements with the Australian Research Council and Australian universities as a means to stimulate development research in priority areas that it has identified.*

Exploration of issue involving identification of key issues and ways to develop such a scheme.

Establishment and operation of scheme if considered appropriate.

14. *That AusAID incorporate a greater emphasis on partnerships, particularly between Australian and in-country research organisations, within its long-term research program.*

See summary/priority recommendation 2 below.

Capacity Building

15. *That AusAID place a greater emphasis on capacity building of in-country researchers and research organisations within its long-term research program using partnerships and associated joint projects, research training and institutional development support for this purpose.*

See summary/priority recommendation 2 below.

Management

16. *That AusAID give priority to management of the activity cycle within its long-term research projects, and particularly to comprehensive design processes.*

How are research proposals sought? Assessed? Reviewed on regular basis? What performance indicators are collected regularly (probably annually) and analysed for trends? Is AusAID prepared to close down long-term research projects that are not meeting agreed objectives?

17. *That AusAID consider producing a specialist guideline or manual on long-term research as a complement to the processes already detailed in AusGUIDE.*

Production of research guidelines updated annually (cf. ARC and NHMRC guidelines).

18. *That AusAID consider developing a specialist period contract category to provide access to research expertise particularly to assist in AusAID research program development.*

Development of specialist period contract category to provide access to research expertise – updated regularly.

Monitoring and Evaluation

19. *That AusAID give priority to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the design and implementation of long-term research projects.*

Regular collection of performance indicator data and analysis and publication of trends.

20. *That AusAID consider constructing peer review and expert panels to referee research undertaken, and a possible advisory group to guide long-term research program development.*

Establishment of peer review panels with membership reviewed and refreshed every three years.

Summary and Priority Recommendations

1. *That AusAID give priority to making outcomes from long-term research more applicable to policy and program development as a means to enhance aid effectiveness.*

i) Annual survey of AusAID branches and sections e.g.

Research project	Useful in policy development in Year x (Y/N)?	Which policy/procedures/strategy was assisted by this research project?	Means of assistance - through reports? Papers? Meetings? Seminars?
Research project 1			
Research project 2			
etc.			

ii) Annual survey of major research projects e.g.:

Do you think your research project affected AusAID policy, strategy and procedures in the last year? If so which policies/procedures made use of your research? What research outputs (Meeting? Report? Presentation?) were used?

2. *That AusAID give priority in long-term research efforts to building research partnerships between Australian and partner country researchers as a means to capacity building.*

- i) Annual list of active existing partnerships and names of partners;
- ii) Contribution (financial, in-kind) each partner has made in last year;
- iii) Outputs from partnership in last year e.g.
 - research projects undertaken with list of chief investigators and funding sources
 - staff involved in research partnership
 - research students involved
 - research theses
 - publications and citations
 - research conferences/symposia hosted
 - research conferences/symposia attended and type of participation
 - impact on policy/procedures of research partnership
- iv) Long-term impact of partnership on research capability in developing countries involved, assessed annually (Is an independent, high-impact, effective-output capability developing? What is particularly aiding this development? What is impeding it?)

3. *That AusAID give priority to the development and refinement of long-term research program strategy and guidelines as a means to focus and consolidate the overall research effort.*

- i) Development of program strategy and guideline documents, and annual updating.

Annex 2 Terms of Reference

REVIEW OF LONG-TERM RESEARCH MODELS: BEST PRACTICE OPTIONS

Background

- 1 AusAID has adopted a pragmatic definition of ‘research’. Research in AusAID encapsulates the broad spectrum of analytical activities undertaken by the agency: from country-specific desk studies that directly inform short-term program priorities, through to academic research on core development-related issues.
- 2 AusAID is bringing a renewed focus to its development research activities. The impetus to improve AusAID’s development research activities is linked to expanding the agency’s analytical capacity in support of strategic aid delivery. Ultimately, an effective research effort should improve the outcomes AusAID achieves on the ground.
- 3 Research in AusAID is funded either directly from program funds or through the centrally managed AusAID Development Research Program (ADRP). The ADRP’s budget has risen steadily in parallel with the phasing out of core funding to the National Centre of Development Studies, as recommended by the Simons review.
- 4 AusAID commissioned research usually takes the form of one-off activities linked directly to program and policy requirements. In recent years, however, there has emerged a range of longer-term research ‘projects’ funded through bilateral programs. Feedback from staff suggest that – while not without problems - these longer-term project models can have value, both in terms of the quality of research outputs, and in responsiveness to AusAID requests for advice. It is these long-term research projects that are the focus of this study.

Purpose of this study

- 5 The purpose of this study is to review long-term research projects currently operating in AusAID to:
 - a) draw out best features and lessons learned with a view to improving the effectiveness of future long-term research projects in AusAID;
 - b) increase staff understanding of the development, policy and/or program benefits that can be provided by different long-term research models;
 - c) identify long-term models that can be used by AusAID to conduct research on key thematic issues.

Scope of Services

- 6 In performance of the specified services, the Contactor will:
 - a) Review all relevant material provided by AusAID, including

- i) Relevant project files
 - ii) AusAID's Corporate Plan 2001-2003
 - iii) Information Management Study, March 2001
 - iv) Review of Current Australian and New Zealand Development Research Activities
 - v) Documents relevant to AusAID's strategic planning process.
- b) Consult with relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, including:
- i) AusAID officers, in Canberra
 - ii) AusAID officers at specific posts, as directed by AusAID staff in Canberra
 - iii) A sample of academics, in Australia, and overseas in SMERU (Indonesia) and the University of the South Pacific (Suva)
 - iv) A sample of other Australian government departments and/or Australian institutions that source/manage a large quantity of research activities.

7 The Contractor will:

- a) Review and analyse current thinking on the development benefits of supporting development research through aid programs. This section is designed to set the scene for the following analysis. It should:
- i) Briefly canvass, through a literature review, the key theoretical issues related to the links between research, policy development by donors and partner countries, and aid effectiveness.
 - ii) Identify a comprehensive range of objectives and detail relevant mechanism for supporting development research that a donor, like AusAID, should consider. The contractor should link these objectives to the broad categories of direct interest to AusAID, that is:
 - (1) Research that directly informs AusAID's policy and program activities.
 - (2) Research that builds indigenous research capacity in our partner countries.
- b) Review and analyse the different types of long-term research projects currently operating in AusAID
- i) Draw out the best features of each project.
 - (1) What are the particular strengths of the project?
 - (2) To what extent does the research process and/or research outputs contribute to better aid effectiveness, improved policy development by donors and/or partner countries, a more strategically positioned AusAID, and enhanced development practice?
 - (3) Outside the stated objectives, what other aspects of the project are considered to be useful? The contractor should consider the more intangible benefits that long-term projects can offer AusAID staff (in Canberra and at Post) such as informal channels of advice.
 - ii) Comment on the possible weaknesses of each project.

- (1) How can these weaknesses be overcome?
- c) Draw together the analysis and information presented in parts (a) and (b) above and examine in detail how AusAID could improve the design and impact of future long-term research activities.
- i) Propose optimum models for long-term research projects. Proposed models (including their various components/activities) should be linked to clear development objectives and benefits to assist AusAID staff to choose the best option for their defined purposes. Issues to consider include:
- (1) Stated and intangible objectives and benefits offered by different models.
 - (2) The extent to which in-country research models can directly support AusAID's program and policy priorities.
 - (3) The cost effectiveness of different models.
 - (4) Optimal management arrangements for different models. Optimal arrangements may include identifying the best aspects of current approaches to managing research activities and/or proposing ways to improve management. Specific issues to focus on include management efficiency; responsiveness to AusAID tasking and policy needs; reporting regimes etc.
 - (5) Optimal dissemination strategies, channels and methods inside AusAID, in Australia and more widely to the region and internationally. The Contractor should recommend ways to better link research with policymakers. This should include identifying, as appropriate: electronic and hard copy distribution channels; links to AusAID-supported journals; entry points/methods to promote policy coherence across other Australian government departments; AusAID's website; seminar presentations (internal and external); links to global research initiatives; etc.
- ii) Propose a set of principles that may be used to guide AusAID staff in their strategic engagement with long-term research projects.

8 Using the results of this analysis as a guide, the Contractor will:

- a) Identify possible models for conducting **theme-based** long-term research projects (as opposed to geographic-based) through the AusAID Development Research Program.

Study Team

9 It is proposed that the team will comprise of the following:

- *Team Leader and Australian Academic/Development Cooperation Expert:* The team leader will be a person with extensive experience as an academic in an Australian institution and a thorough understanding of the range of tertiary institutions and development research activities in Australia. They will possess a

sound understanding of the links between aid, development and research. Experience in AusAID's processes would be desirable. Their responsibilities would include:

- Team leadership including overall management of the team; directing the methodology for the review and analysis; leading consultations with academics; preparing the analysis of current thinking on the development benefits of supporting development research through aid programs; developing optimal models for long-term research activities; and writing and finalising the report.
- *Policy Development and Public Sector Expert:* This person will possess extensive experience in policy development in the public sector at senior levels. They will possess excellent communication and analytical skills. A strong understanding of aid and development issues would be desirable. Their responsibilities would include:
 - Contributing to the development of the methodology for the review and analysis; leading consultations with AusAID staff and other government departments; refining optimal models and recommendations; and writing the report.
- *AusAID officer:* This person would have a thorough understanding of AusAID policy and program processes; and be able to articulate what a more strategic AusAID would look like. Their responsibilities would include:
 - Taking the lead in organising consultations for the team with AusAID staff – both in Canberra and at Post; guiding the review and analysis in line with the study's objectives; inputting into the development of optimal models, including dissemination strategies; and assisting with developing the Contractor's presentation to AusAID staff.

Annex 3 Descriptions of Long-Term Research Projects

(As at January 2002)

TITLE:	STATE, SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE IN MELANSIA (SSGM)
CONTRACTOR:	Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS), Australian National University (ANU)
AUSAID SECTION:	Policy and Management Reform Section (MPAC) of the Pacific Branch. Other relevant sections of the agency are able to access the project through service orders.
DURATION:	Phase 1: Jul. 1999 – 30 Sept. 2001. Phase 2: 1 Oct 2001 – 30 Sept. 2004.
BUDGET:	RSPAS, DFAT and AusAID jointly fund the project. AusAID funds half of the Convener's position and an administration position and provides funds towards a series of activities. In Phase 1, AusAID funded activities up to \$162,000. In Phase 2, AusAID will fund activities of up to \$600,000.
OBJECTIVE:	The overall objective of the SSGM project is to undertake scholarly and policy relevant research on societies, states and issues of governance and conflict in the Pacific region, with particular emphasis on Melanesia.
RESEARCH PRODUCTS:	Workshops; conferences; seminars; publications; website.
PROJECT ACTIVITIES:	Conferences/workshops in the Pacific designed to enhance dialogue on governance; regular seminars in Canberra to assist in informing Canberra-based audiences and the policy community of the state-of-play in Melanesian and Pacific Island Countries.
STAKEHOLDERS:	Collaboration with institutions/agencies in Pacific Island Countries for the purpose of organising outreach activities.
MANAGEMENT:	RSPAS is the executing agency and continues to provide funding towards the project (\$275,000 per annum). An agreement on the project activities funded by AusAID is negotiated annually. The SSGM consists of five fellows, a convenor and administrator. The role of the convenor is to manage and facilitate the research direction, consultation and outreach activity of the project and to liaise with AusAID and DFAT. The project is guided by a Steering Committee (AusAID is not on this Committee).

TITLE:	INDONESIA PROJECT
CONTRACTOR:	RSPAS, ANU
AUSAID SECTION:	Indonesia Section
DURATION:	AusAID funding for the program began 1 Sept. 1997 for an initial three years. In 2000, an external review recommended it be extended to 31 Aug. 2002.
BUDGET:	\$998,705 over 5 years. AusAID contributes directly to the funding of the editor's position for the Bulletin as well as general funding for other activities.
OBJECTIVE:	The project aims to create and sustain a high level of interest in Indonesian development among senior officials and

RESEARCH PRODUCTS:	opinion leaders in both countries; support and promote high quality policy debate and dialogue on Indonesia, and contribute in a practical manner to Indonesian development. Publication (Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies); conferences; visitors program; advisory services to AusAID.
PROJECT ACTIVITIES:	Major project activities include the publishing of the Bulletin, the Indonesia Update Conference, and support of economic research on Indonesia. Other activities include the Indonesia Study Group at the ANU which holds regular public seminars; the Indonesian visitors program; contributions to the media to raise public awareness of Indonesian economic issues; maintaining of a specialist library on the Indonesian economy; occasional related courses at the ANU and liaison with other institutions.
MANAGEMENT:	The project was established at the ANU in 1965. It is administratively located in the Asia Pacific School of Economics and Management (APSEM) and RSPAS. Since 1997, AusAID has provided a supplementary grant to the ANU to support the activities of the Indonesia Project. AusAID's support covers about one-third of the total cost of the project. Management of the project involves a simple acquittable annual grant, with the facility for writing exchange of letters aimed at providing short-term expertise. Funding for activities initiated through exchange of letters is additional to the grant funds.

TITLE:	SERIAL PUBLICATION AND OUTREACH FOR PNG AND THE PACIFIC REGION
CONTRACTOR:	National Centre of Development Studies (NCDS), ANU
AUSAID SECTION:	MPAC and the Coordination/Economic Analysis Section of the PNG Branch (CEP PNG).
DURATION:	3 years. April 2000-03.
BUDGET:	\$728,952
OBEJCTIVE:	To encourage and support scholarship on development issues in PNG and the Pacific region, and to ensure that the results of this scholarship are disseminated effectively via publication and outreach activities.
RESEARCH PRODUCTS:	Serial publication (the Pacific Economic Bulletin); seminar series.
PROJECT ACTIVITIES:	Biannual production of the Pacific Economic Bulletin; seminars held in PNG and at least one Pacific Island Country and Australia each year; and support for and provision of electronic publishing services and online facilities including a website.
STAKEHOLDERS:	The scope of services include the requirement for the Contractor to demonstrate linkages in organising the seminars in both PNG and Pacific Island Countries.
MANAGEMENT:	NCDS is the executive agency. The Editorial Board of the Pacific Economic Bulletin includes two AusAID representatives. The Board advises on management issues such as quality, budget, promotion, staff and production. Distribution of the journal is determined through consultation with AusAID. The NCDS provides AusAID with six-monthly progress reports.

TITLE: **SOCIAL MONITORING AND EARLY RESPONSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SMERU)**

CONTRACTOR: In-country support directly to SMERU - an independent research body established in mid-1998 in Indonesia.

AUSAID SECTION: Indonesia Section

DURATION: 3 years. Nov. 2000 – Dec. 2003

BUDGET: \$1.8 million

OBJECTIVE: To contribute to improved public policies and their implementation by undertaking accurate, timely and objective monitoring and evaluation of those social and economic problems most urgent and relevant for the people of Indonesia.

RESEARCH PRODUCTS: Publications; workshops; website; papers.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES: Core research activities including working papers, reports, conferences, field studies, newsletters, operation of a website.

MANAGEMENT: The executing agency is the SMERU Research Institute. SMERU appoints a project manager to coordinate and manage the provision of core research activities, which are partly funded by AusAID. SMERU provides secretariat support for meetings of the Project Consultation Committee (PCC), which consists of representatives from major donors, affiliates, the World Bank and AusAID. The purpose of the PCC is to review previous and future activities for SMERU. An AusAID representative based at AusAID's Jakarta Post represents Australia at the PCC meetings. The contract between the AusAID and SMERU allows for the facility or writing exchange of letters.

TITLE: **REGIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY SUPPORT FACILITY ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program**

CONTRACTOR: Melbourne Enterprises International, University of Melbourne (contracts have not been signed)

AUSAID SECTION: Asia Regional Section (ASIA)

DURATION: 5 years. Commencing late Jan. 2002.

BUDGET: Approx. \$8 million

OBJECTIVE: To support economic recovery and promote closer integration and sustainable economic development in ASEAN member countries, in line with the objectives and priorities of Vision 2020, the Hanoi Plan of Action and subsequent summit meetings. To provide various ASEAN bodies and member countries with high quality, high priority and timely regional economic policy analysis.

RESEARCH PRODUCTS: The main output expected is the production of research that assists develop policies that: support economic development; are non-discriminatory and promote equality of opportunity; and give due consideration to the environment.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES: Establish guidelines and facilities to guide and support the identification, selection and completion of research projects; provide high quality policy analysis to the ASEAN Secretariat; and promote and coordinate the Facility.

MANAGEMENT: The Facility is one of three programs included under the umbrella of the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program. The Facility will be managed by the ASEAN

Secretariat in Jakarta. The Facility's research program will be governed by the Research Priorities Committee, which will include the Convenor (ASEAN Secretariat); the Chair of the SEOM (ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting) and an AusAID representative (Director, ASIA).

TITLE:	REFLECTING ON PEACE PRACTICE PROJECT
CONTRACTOR:	The Collaborative for Development Action, US; and the Life and Peace Institute, Sweden.
AUSAID SECTION:	Humanitarian and Emergency Section
DURATION:	1 st phase Sept. 1999 – Apr. 2000 2 nd phase May 2001 – Jul. 2002
BUDGET:	\$100,000 per phase – funded by the AusAID Development Research Program (ADRP)
OBJECTIVE:	To improve peace-building practice by comparing and analysing past conflict-focused actions through case studies and consultations with practitioners in order to identify what works, what does not work, and under what circumstances.
RESEARCH PRODUCTS:	Case studies; consultations; report; issues papers.
PROJECT ACTIVITIES:	AusAID's funding enabled the inclusion of case studies and practitioners from the Asia-Pacific region.
STAKEHOLDERS:	58 agencies were involved in the project.
MANAGEMENT:	The executing agencies for the project are the Collaborative for Development Action and the Life and Peace Institute. Original funding for the project came from four donors: Sweden; UK; Norway; and the Netherlands. A steering group, consisting of 12 representatives from leading organisations that work on conflict, guided the selection of the case studies and the process of the consultations. Consultations with Australian peace practitioners, including AusAID, are scheduled to take place during the 2nd phase.

TITLE:	THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY PROJECT
CONTRACTOR:	RSPAS, ANU
AUSAID SECTION:	Philippines Section
DURATION:	Nov. 1999 – Dec. 2001 (with publication in 2002)
BUDGET:	\$273,900
OBJECTIVE:	To promote Australian academic interest in the Philippines that will assist to broaden and inform the bilateral relationship, particularly in the area of development cooperation, by funding the production by the ANU, in association with the School of Economics at the University of the Philippines (UPSE), of a book on the Philippine economy.
RESEARCH PRODUCTS:	Publication; international conference.
PROJECT ACTIVITIES:	The project commissioned surveys and analyses of all facets of Philippine economic development by leading specialists in the field, organised an international conference at which first drafts of these surveys were presented for comment and scrutiny, edited these surveys for publication by both a leading international publisher and a local publisher in the Philippines.
STAKEHOLDERS:	The project was undertaken as a joint exercise between ANU and UPSE. The project may constitute the first phase of a

strategy that includes the establishment of a unit by the ANU to focus on the Philippines and to draw together academics from different disciplines within the ANU and other Australian universities to undertake research on issues relevant to the Australia-Philippine relationship.

MANAGEMENT: The executing agencies for the project were the ANU and UPSE. A representative from the ANU and the UPSE acted as joint lead coordinators of the project, and the publication's editors. Both organisations were involved in all major facets of the project. The ANU coordinator was responsible for liaison with AusAID over the project.

TITLE: **ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC LITERATURE (APEL) JOURNAL**
CONTRACTOR: National Centre for Development Studies, ANU
AUSAID SECTION: International Policy and Research section
DURATION: 5 years. Jul. 1999 – Jun. 2004
BUDGET: \$675,000
OBJECTIVE: To contribute to the governance in the Asia-Pacific region by assisting in (influencing) economic policy debates and formulation.
RESEARCH PRODUCTS: Publication.
PROJECT ACTIVITIES: AusAID subscribes to 1350 copies of each bi-annual edition of the APEL journal and provides these free of charge to targeted decision-makers in the region.
MANAGEMENT: The ANU's NCDS is the executing agency. The ANU (or its nominated agency) distributes the AusAID subscription to recipients nominated or approved by AusAID. AusAID is represented on the board of APEL.

TITLE: **PAPUA NEW GUINEA ECONOMY REPORT**
CONTRACTOR: Varies from year to year
AUSAID SECTION: CEP PNG Section
DURATION: 6-9 months. AusAID has produced an annual (with the exception of the year 2000) published report on the PNG economy since 1988.
BUDGET: \$80,000 (approx)
OBJECTIVE: To disseminate up to date information about the PNG economy; to encourage dialogue and debate on economic issues in PNG; to assist AusAID in its policy dialogue with the PNG government on economic issues; and to provide information to the PNG government which may assist in their budget processes.
RESEARCH PRODUCTS: Publication. Each report has contained a broad survey of economic developments over the preceding year or so and information about the historic context of these developments. The 2001 economic report was the first to examine in depth particular aspects of PNG economic and social development rather than presenting a broad survey of the national economy.
MANAGEMENT: Over the years, various consultants and external organisations have been contracted to undertake this project. The project is closely managed by an AusAID project manager from CEP PNG.

TITLE:	ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES
CONTRACTOR:	ADB – various consultants
AUSAID SECTION:	MPAC
DURATION:	The Economic Analysis of Pacific Island Countries program began in 1990. In 1997, Australia moved to producing economic reports, referred to as Pacific Island Economic Reports, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
BUDGET:	Approx \$100,000 - \$150,000 per annum.
OBJECTIVE:	The projects/studies are intended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the Pacific Island Country's access to information and analysis of their own economy • improve our knowledge of all the Pacific Islands economies and hence enhance the formulation of our aid program to the region • improve the quality of our economic dialogue with these countries • enhance the Australian public's awareness about the Pacific Islands.
RESEARCH PRODUCTS:	Publication
PROJECT ACTIVITIES:	AusAID's component generally covers the costs of a consultant to be part of a team, lead by the ADB, to prepare an economic report under the Pacific Islands Economic Report series.
MANAGEMENT:	Pacific Island Economic Reports are produced in collaboration with the Office of Pacific Operations at the ADB. AusAID receives and comments on reports prepared under this activity, such as inception reports; second mid-term reports; draft final reports; and final reports.

TITLE:	CENTRE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS (CDI)
CONTRACTOR:	ANU
AUSAID SECTION:	Economic and Sector Policy
DURATION:	1998-2004
BUDGET:	\$6 million over 6 years
OBJECTIVE:	The mission of the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI), established at the ANU, is to harness Australian and international best practice in support of developing countries' needs for democratic governance. The main objectives of CDI are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote democratic governance through exposure to institutional systems, and building links to key democratic institutions in Australia. • promote democratic governance through training in governance skills and systems • promote democratic governance through substantive participants dialogue (facilitated discussion, workshops, conferences) • promote democratic governance through targeted applied research • utilise fully CDI's comparative advantages in complementing AusAID's development activities.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES: CDI's major activities are short-term, intensive training courses. Three research projects are planned for the current financial year.

MANAGEMENT: The CDI Consultative Group, currently comprising 15 eminent persons, meets annually to provide overall guidance and advice to CDI on broad policy and strategic directions. The Director-General of AusAID is a member of the Consultative Group.

TITLE: ASIA RECOVERY INFORMATION CENTRE (ARIC)
CONTRACTOR: ADB (Grant)
AUSAID SECTION: ASIA
DURATION: Phase 1: Nov. 1999-Mar. 2001. Phase 2: Apr. 2001-Mar. 2002
BUDGET: Phase 1: \$1.6 million. Phase 2: \$1.845 million
OBJECTIVE: Asia Recovery Information Centre (ARIC) is a web-based facility located in the ADB in Manila which provides factual information and detailed analysis on economic and social developments in key regional countries subsequent to the 1997-1998 Asian crisis. Its goal is to facilitate access to relevant, accurate and timely information and analysis on economic and social developments since the Asian crisis, including aspects of the recovery process.

RESEARCH PRODUCTS: The ARIC website is regularly updated by a small team (including analysts) who are part of the ADB's Regional Economic Monitoring Unit in Manilla. In addition, comprehensive quarterly reports analysing regional developments are produced as glossy monographs (50-80 pages) - and also published on the web.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES: The initial focus in Phase I was primarily on Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Philippines and Thailand. This focus was expanded in Phase II to include Singapore, China and Vietnam. ARIC collects, catalogues and disseminates key data on the economic and social situation of the target countries, and provides extensive analysis of economic and social developments. It also provides links to other key websites with information on the crisis and recovery issues.

MANAGEMENT: ADB is the executing agency. The ARIC advisory committee, is chaired jointly by ADB and AusAID, and includes representatives from ASEAN, IMF, UNDP and World Bank. The advisory committee provides overall policy direction

Annex 4 Review Methodology

The review methodology involved the following steps:

(a) Literature Review

Conduct of a literature review on research in the field of development.

(b) Ascertain Agency Context

Examination of the agency context for the review including the policy framework for research within the agency, and the AusAID Strategic Plan

(c) Examination of Long-Term Research Projects

Examination of a set of 12 long-term research projects identified by the agency as currently being supported (see Annex 3). This included interviews and assessment of AusAID files, reports and reviews of specific projects; examination of research products including journals, monographs, reports, and reports of specific activities such as workshops and seminars. The purpose of such examination was to identify the broader issues and not to specifically evaluate each project.

(d) Consultation with Immediate Stakeholders

Consultations with those involved with management and conduct of current AusAID-supported long-term research projects. This included AusAID management involved with broader strategic / research planning in the agency; AusAID staff (in Canberra and the Post) with management responsibilities for specific long-term research projects; and researchers from a range of external institutions including universities and research institutes currently conducting AusAID-supported research projects (See Annex 5 for a list of interviewees/contributors).

(e) Consultation with Broader Range of Stakeholders

Broader consultations with other stakeholders, within and outside AusAID, concerned with development research. This included staff from other Australian government agencies that commissioned or supported research, academics and researchers not currently involved with AusAID-supported research, and NGOs (Annex 5)

(f) Analysis and Development of Models

For the purpose providing guidance to interviews, two sets of questions were constructed. These were for staff and current researchers, and for other stakeholders (see Annex 6). Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. Several written responses were received from current researchers, and from external research and consultancy agencies.

Annex 5 Interviewees/Contributors to the Review

AusAID Staff

Dr Peter McCawley, Deputy Director General
Mr Robert Glasser, Assistant Director General, Corporate Policy Branch
Mr Alan Moody, Director, Policy Development and Coordination, Corporate Policy Branch
Mr Ian Millar, Director, Asia Contracts, Contract Services Branch
Mr Paul O'Neill, Philippines Section, East Asia Branch
Ms Angela Smith, Policy and Management Reform Section, South Pacific Branch
Ms Alicia Barden, Policy and Management Reform Section, South Pacific Branch
Dr Leanne Merritt, Pacific Bilateral Section, South Pacific Branch (formerly First Secretary (Development), Australian High Commission, Tonga)
Ms Peta Fussell, Indonesia Section, East Asia Branch
Ms Frances Barns, Indonesia Section, East Asia Branch
Ms Chris Richards, Coordination/Economic Policy, Papua New Guinea Branch
Mr Chris Karabalis, Coordination/Economic Policy, Papua New Guinea Branch
Mr Stuart Schaefer, First Secretary (Development), Australian High Commission, Papua New Guinea
Ms Stephanie Copus Campbell, First Secretary (Development), Australian High Commission, Papua New Guinea
Mr Tim Nicholson, Asia Regional Section, Mekong, South Asia and Africa Branch
Mr Rob McGregor, Asia Regional Section, Mekong, South Asia and Africa Branch
Mr Frederik Van der Vloodt, East Timor Section, East Asia Branch
Ms Fiona Douglas, Director, Public Affairs
Mr Richard Webb, Public Affairs

Other Government Agencies

Mr Richard Bridge, Assistant Secretary, Research and Evaluation Branch, Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)
Mr Stephen Baker, Research and Evaluation Branch, DEST
Dr Graham Harris, Head, Flagship Program, CSIRO
Mr Stephen Walker, Executive Director, Engineering and Environmental Sciences, Australian Research Council (ARC)
Ms Linda Porritt, Project Manager, Research Section, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)
Dr Frances Perkins, Manager, East Asia Analytical Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Dr John Copland, Research Program Manager, Animal Science, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

Universities/Institutes/Contractors

Ms Helen Glazebrook, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project,
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University (ANU)
Dr Sinclair Dinnen, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, ANU
Dr Bronwyn Douglas, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, ANU
Dr Ross McLeod, A/g Head of the Project and Editor, Indonesia Project, ANU
Dr Hal Hill, Professor of South East Asia Economics, Philippine Economy Project,
ANU
Dr Ron Duncan, Executive Director, National Centre for Development Studies, ANU
Mr Perry Daroesman, Regional Manager South East Asia, Melbourne Enterprises
International
Ms Beris Gwynne, Executive Director, Foundation for Development Cooperation
Ms Gitte Heij, Senior Project Manager, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University
Dr Stephanie Fahey, Director, Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific, Sydney
University
Dr Sudarno Sumarto, Executive Director, The SMERU Research Institute, Indonesia
Dr John Maxwell, Senior Advisor, The SMERU Research Institute, Indonesia
Mr Mike Manning, Director, Institute of National Affairs, Papua New Guinea
Mr Tom Wagner, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Papua New Guinea
Dr Agogo Mawuli, Acting Director, National Research Institute, PNG.

Annex 6 Questions / Areas of Discussion for Different Stakeholder Groups

1. Staff & Researchers

Current Activities

- What are the current activities of the project(s) and who is involved?
- Why/how was the research model/s chosen?
- Do you think it was the most appropriate in the circumstances?

Broad Objectives

- Can you identify 3 main objectives that you believe AusAID should employ to guide long-term developmentally-orientated research that it supports?
- On what basis do you believe the effectiveness of such research should be measured?

Institutional / Stakeholder Involvement

- What type and range of institutions / stakeholders do you believe are best placed to contribute to long-term research?*

* This may apply in areas such as establishment of research priorities, research implementation, management, and monitoring and evaluation. Please make any specific comments or suggestions relating to any of these research stages/contexts.

Research Modalities

- What type of research modes do you think are most effectively applied to long-term research?*

* This may include, but is not limited to types of research activities, research products, partnerships and location.

Broad Assessment

- Please identify benefits of the current research project(s), and the key stakeholders.
- What are the best and worst features of the current research project(s)?
- What is the relationship between the research project(s) and policy development?
- What is your overall assessment of research effectiveness?
- With the benefit of hindsight, how would you have structured the long-term research that you have employed? Why?

Research Dissemination and Utilisation

- How is the research disseminated and utilised?

- What measures do you believe can be taken to ensure that the results of such research are most effectively disseminated and utilised?

AusAID/Donor Issues

- How would you describe and assess the relationship of the research project(s) to AusAID corporate/program objectives?
- In what ways has the research project(s) contributed to policy development and/or strategy development in AusAID, other donors or partner countries?
- In what ways has the research project(s) contributed to program development in AusAID, other donors or partner countries?
- Can you outline any proposed improvements to research planning, implementation or management to improve the linkages between research and any of the above areas?

Application to Development Practice

- In what ways has either the research process or products led to an identified improvement in development practice? How is this area relevant to your research?
- Can you outline any proposed improvements to research planning, implementation or management to make research or research products more relevant to development practice?

Capacity Building

- Does the research project(s) involve partnerships with in-country researchers or other stakeholders?
- If so, in what ways are in-country partners/stakeholders involved in the project(s) eg setting of research priorities, implementation, management and evaluation?
- If not, how might this have been incorporated into the research methodology?

Research Process and Management

- How were/are research ideas generated in the project (s) and how does this process relate to other stakeholders?
- How would you describe the strengths and weaknesses of research implementation? How were the weaknesses addressed?
- How would you describe the strengths and weaknesses of the management of the research including the roles of your own institution and AusAID? How were the weaknesses addressed? Please comment on specific issues such as form and style of management, efficiency, and reporting.
- What arrangements have your project(s) had for monitoring and evaluation of research and how effective have these been?
- Can you outline improvements to any of the above areas to promote better outcomes for research and its application?

Effectiveness of Institutional Arrangements

- How would you assess the institutional arrangements for the current research projects including any links with partner organisations? Please comment on specific issues such as levels of support, degree and extent of involvement of different stakeholders, on-shore vs offshore arrangements.

AusAID staff understanding

- What involvement have AusAID staff had with this project?
- How might this project have increased AusAID staff understanding of the utility of this (or other research) model/s to development policy and/or program development?

Other Areas

Please comment on any additional areas not covered above.

2. Other Stakeholders

Broad Objectives

- Can you identify 3 main objectives that you believe AusAID should employ to guide long-term developmentally-orientated research that it supports?
- On what basis do you believe the effectiveness of such research should be measured?

Institutional / Stakeholder Involvement

- What type and range of institutions / stakeholders do you believe are best placed to contribute to long-term research? Please provide the reasons for your particular observations.

* This may apply in areas such as establishment of research priorities, research implementation, management, and monitoring and evaluation. Please make any specific comments or suggestions relating to any of these research stages/contexts.

Research Modalities

- What type of research modes do you think are most effectively applied to long-term research?*

* This may include, but is not limited to types of research activities, research products, partnerships and location

Research Dissemination and Utilisation

- What measures do you believe can be taken to ensure that the results of long-term research are most effectively disseminated and utilised?
- What measures can be taken to promote better links with policy makers?
- What measures can be taken to ensure that long-term research most effectively contributes to policy development in AusAID and partner governments?
- What measures can be taken to promote the application of long-term research to program development in AusAID?

Capacity Building

- How do you believe capacity building of in-country researchers and other stakeholders can be best promoted through the conduct of long-term research programs?

Research Management

- Do you/your organisation have experience with the management of long-term developmentally-orientated research projects? Please provide details.
- Do you have any comments or suggestions about optimal arrangements for management of long-term research projects?*

* This may apply to management by AusAID, management within institutions conducting research on behalf of AusAID, or to the management of research partnerships developed for research planning and implementation. Comments could pertain to areas such as management forms, efficiency, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation.

Other Institutional Arrangements

- Are there any other institutional factors that you feel may be important to consider in determining arrangements for long-term research projects?*

* This could apply to factors such as arrangements within host institutions, on-shore vs off-shore arrangements, research partnerships, type of expertise available, and relationship between research projects and other institutional activities.

Other Areas

Please detail any other areas that you feel should be considered in determining models for future support of long-term research by AusAID.

Annex 7 Summary of Recommendations on Research endorsed by the AusAID Executive in November 2001

1. Endorse a series of actions aimed at facilitating a more strategic approach to development research, such as:
 - a Transferring all ADRP management functions to policy branch;
 - b Confirming the parameters of policy branch's research mandate as: issues of particular corporate importance and/or issues beyond the mandate of any particular functional area within the agency;
 - c Creation of an 'AusAID Research Group';
 - d The use of a small amount of ADRP funds to support visibility and outreach activities associated with research;
 - e The creation of a development research management function within the policy area.

2. Endorse the approach to improving quality in development research activities by exposing commissioned work to peer review and public scrutiny to the greatest extent possible. This will involve, where appropriate:
 - a Ensuring the names of research contractors appear prominently on documents, and subjecting work to high-level oversight (such as use of external peer reviewers);
 - b Looking for opportunities to link appropriate AusAID research outputs directly to publishing outlets such as APEL, PEB or international development journals;
 - c Distributing research outputs as widely as possible, including through electronic publication.

3. Endorse the approach to supporting increased research outputs by facilitating a research culture and investigating means of lifting research efficiency.
 - a Dedicating specific resources within branches to be responsible for coordinating branch development research;
 - b The provision of an 'AusAID Research Award';
 - c Streamlining and assisting 'one-off' research processes;
 - d Exploring options for improving AusAID's approach to longer-term research.

4. Endorse the development of a research page on AusAID's website, closely linked to other research websites supported by AusAID (eg APEL, SSGM etc) and to ICT initiatives such as the VCP.

5. Endorse the use of development research to contribute to outreach events in concert with PAG's efforts to promote the aid program with various audiences.

6. Endorse the development of a high profile 'development research' publication series.
7. Endorse the approach to investigate ways to further our support for indigenous research capacity, with a view to improving the quality and quantity of local researchers, particularly in the Pacific region.

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