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GUIDANCE NOTE ON TRANSFERRING RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

Deliverable 4.2

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Executive summary

The purpose of this desk-study is to provide information and recommendations for the SPLASH project on “improving the communication channels through which water research, policy making and practice interact.” The focus is on communication processes for improving the utilization of research results. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the communication channels between research and policy and practice work both ways – for communication results as well as for communication demand for new research.

There is a broad consensus in the literature that successful communication between researchers and research users is crucial for the effective utilization of research in decision-making in policy and practice. Communication between researchers, research funders and research users can happen in a number of different ways, given the high number of different research users, a variety of research producers (coming from different disciplines, ranging from very much policy oriented to more applied action research) and the different levels in the policy and practice domains where communication of research happens. Successfully communicating the results of water research has to take this into account and there cannot be one way of communicating research that fits all settings.

Entry points in policy and practice are those channels through which research results can not only reach their users but also influence decisions. Consequently, an entry point to policy and practice is not only defined through the dissemination pathway used but also defined through other factors like institutional structures and external influences or personal attitudes of the individuals involved.

Three different dimensions have to be taken into account when assessing entry points in policy and practice:
First, the dissemination activities through which research knowledge is distributed, second, the institutional linkages between the different stakeholders have to be considered as they are important for the emergence of routes for disseminating research, and third, the political and practitioners context for research use influence where and how research can be used successfully in policy and practice.

There is one group of intermediating actors influencing the dissemination as well as the linkages between research, policy and practice. Because the interaction between researcher policy-maker and practitioner is constrained by a number of factors intermediaries can help to connect the research and decision-making domain. Thus, knowledge brokering can be an important service in this field to secure well-informed decision-taking.

An knowledge broker is a person or a business that examines disseminated information and knowledge for clients and prepares usable, targeted synthesis for his/her client. In contrast to this form of “active brokerage” knowledge brokers could also put the focus of their activities on organising the interactive process between the producers of knowledge and the users of it (2006, 1). This refers to “interactive brokerage” which is characterised as a multidirectional communication process in partnerships.

Three issues are in the focus for improving the use of different policy entry points through increased communication and engagement:

- First, the development and improvement of dissemination strategies of research results. This targets primarily on how to package research results to be easily understood by and applicable for decision-makers. Actively involve knowledge brokers can be part of a dissemination strategy. The dissemination strategy can be designed and implemented by researchers as well as research funders.

- Second, establishing institutional links between researchers and decision-makers is a key to improve the communication and utilization of research. The institutional links between researchers and decision-makers influence at what levels and at what stages of decision-making processes research results can be fed in as well as demanded for. As mentioned above, knowledge brokers can be an important link. This can be influenced by researchers, research funders as well as decision-makers.
- Third, the enabling environment and the incentive structures for decision-makers and researchers. The decision-maker's personal attitude towards research at the level of the individual and the incentive structures within the decision-making organisations determine at what point in a decision-making process research results are demanded and used. This is beyond the influence of researchers and research funders. The incentive structure for researchers, however, also plays an important role. Changes in the incentive structure for researchers can be influenced by research funders.

Besides recommendation for researchers, research funders and research users for reaching improvements in each of the above explained dimensions, the paper formulates recommendations for the SPLASH project.

These are in brief:

- Engage with knowledge brokering platforms / networks in the field of water for development
- Apply the recommendation for good dissemination
- Include dissemination and follow-up on impact in call requirements
- Actively develop capacity building to improve the uptake of research using integrated approaches for practitioners
- Optimise brokering for water for development research at the European level through engaging with or building up a platform for communicating European Water for development research.

1 Introduction

"To understand research-policy linkages we need to understand how information flows, how it is received, digested and acted upon in different contexts" Building on a complex, interactive model of communication, communication is a demanding process where the "sender needs to communicate the message, then find ways of checking with the recipient how the message was interpreted and , based on this feedback, re-communicate the message" (Court, Hoveland, Young 2005, 39)."

1.1 Background information – the SPLASH project

This report is an output of the work package 4 of the SPLASH ERA Net. SPLASH is a consortium of 15 ministries, research and technological development agencies from 11 European partner countries. SPLASH aims to improve coordination of European funded water research for poverty reduction. The geographic focus is Africa (including the northern Mediterranean countries) and the Mekong regions.
Work package 4 aims at engaging the main actors in research communities and beneficiaries to contribute to a better and more appropriate prioritisation and utilisation of water research for development

1.2 Purpose of the report, target audience and introductory definition of terms

The purpose of this desk-study is to provide information and recommendations for the SPLASH project on improving the communication channels through which water research, policy making and practice interact. The focus is on communication processes for improving the utilization of research results. Nevertheless, it is assumed that it works both ways – for communication results as well as for communication demand for new research.

The paper should allow the SPLASH project partners to learn which are possible policy entry points for water for development research and what role intermediaries can play. This will help to focus the SPLASH activities for increasing the utilization of research and engage with the relevant actors. Accordingly, the target audience for this report are the SPLASH project partners.

"Research", as it used in this report, refers primarily to policy oriented research in all disciplines in the field of water for development.This definition implies a high degree of generalisation since different types of research are subsumed under this definition with dissimilar objectives, applying different methods, producing results that address very different problems and demand for adapted communication strategies. Although, the scope of this paper does not allow for a distinction between different types of research, the recommendations arrived at should be applicable for the whole range of water research.

The term "action" in the title of this report comprises decision-making processes by policy makers and by practitioners. In the framework of the SPLASH project the policy makers and practitioners who potentially use research are:

- those who make policy for research in the North including Member States,
- those who make policy for research including Developing Countries
- those who make policy for water development, often located in a number of different ministries.

- practitioners in the Developing Countries who support water users in implementing water services, for which research findings would be useful.

Given the fact that SPLASH, a consortium of European researchers, research funders and development policy makers, addresses a broad field of actors in Europe as well as in the developing countries in Africa and the Mekong regions a broad range of “actions” are concerned. The concerned European and Developing Countries stakeholders act in diverse and differing institutional settings. Therefore, this guidance note aims at generally characterising the communication channels between researchers and policy makers and practitioners and derive recommendations on how to improve these.

This report is informed by the theoretical background of research – policy interactions presented in deliverable 5.1 of the SPLASH project (“Influence of policy research on government strategies”). D 2.6. (“International networks and organisation report”) assesses information on the role of water relevant networks and other intermediary institutions and is expected to supplement this paper with practical facts.
The findings of this report will be taken up by deliverable 4.3. “Guidelines for improved dialogue procedures”, provide information for the consultations with stakeholders from European as well as from Developing countries.

2 Communication channels for transferring research into action

There is a broad consensus in the literature that successful communication between researchers and research-users is crucial for the effective utilization of research in decision-making in policy and practice. Literature shows that effective dissemination and demand-driven-ness of research correlate (Fisher, Odhiambo, Cotton 2003, 12) because communication channels transport messages in both ways for communication results and for communicating demand for new research

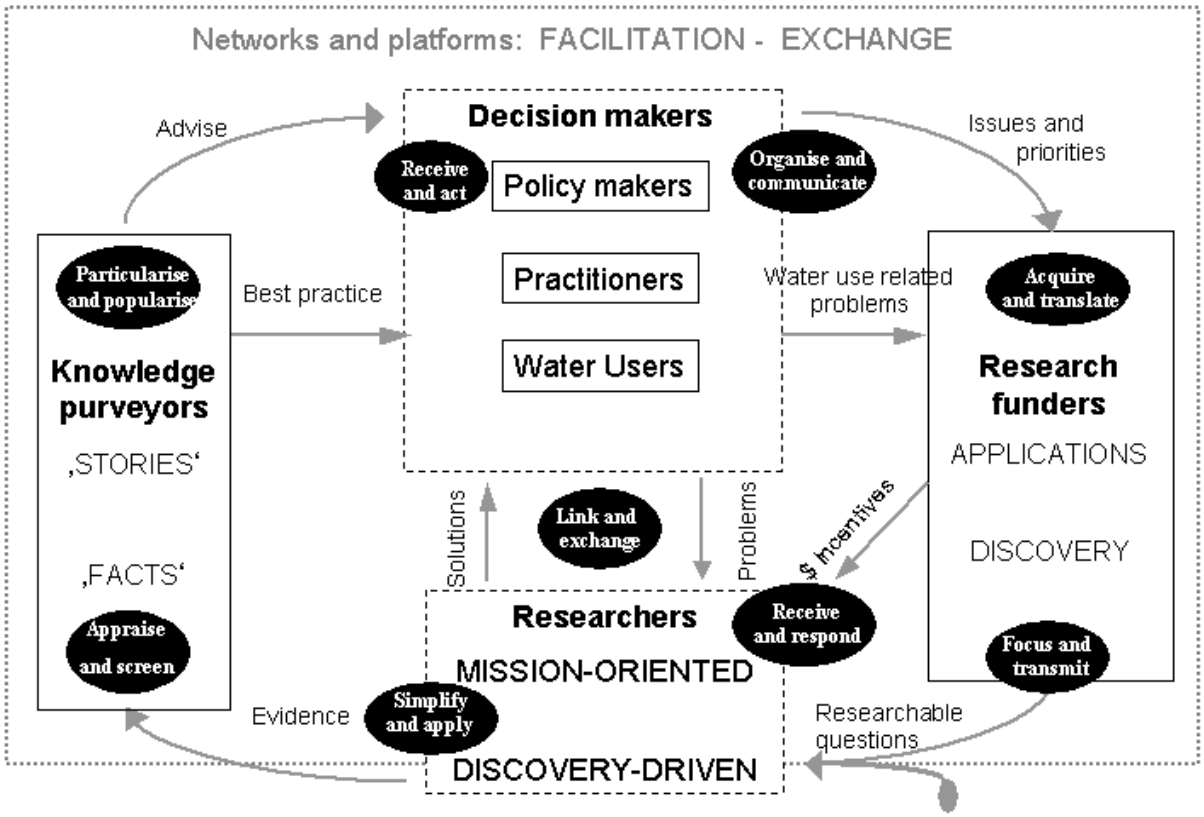
Communication between researchers, research funders and research users can happen in many very different ways due to the number of different research users, the variety of research producers (coming from different disciplines, ranging from very much policy oriented to more applied action research, working independently from each other in a fragmented European research landscape) and the number of policy levels (local, national, regional, global). For the diverse group of “practitioners” the communication can range from a personal contact between an irrigation farmer and a researcher in the field to the interaction of a globally active company and an international institution providing research results. The number and nature of the communication interfaces in question is even augmented through knowledge brokers interacting between the groups of actors.

The communication and exchange model developed by CHSRF (see Figure 1) conceptualises the different interfaces where the stakeholder groups involved communicate and exchange knowledge. Focussing on the communication interfaces, the model does not aim at depicting other influencing factors for research uptake (like for example the quality of research, the external influences, political context).
It basically considers four groups of stakeholder: researchers, knowledge purveyors, decision makers in policy and practice and research funders. The groups are assumed to be inhomogeneous and

variable. To be adaptable to the SPLASH context the model has been enlarged to incorporate at least a second set of stakeholders to reflect the European as well as the Developing Countries partner who might be addressed or cooperating partner for researchers, development and science policy making and research funders in Europe. The various networks and dialogue platforms are depicted in the model as a facilitating frame in which the dynamic discourse of research, knowledge broker, decision-makers and research funders happens. Networks might consists of a mixture of actors from each group who might act as knowledge purveyors and broker the entry of new ideas into the decision-making process or influence the communication at the other interfaces shown in the model.

The model describes a virtuous circle between researchers, intermediaries, decision-makers and researcher funders where the better the information flows the more applicable and applied will be the research funding, research implementation and impact. As depicted in Figure 1 research results and demand for research might be directly communicated between researcher and decision-makers, or knowledge purveyors and research funders might act as intermediaries between researchers and decision-makers in policy and practice.

Figure 1 Communication and exchange model



Source: Adapted from CHSRF 2000, p 6

2.1 Entry points in policy and practice and dissemination pathways

Entry points in policy and practice are those channels through which research results reach their users and are able to influence their decisions. Consequently, an entry point to policy and practice is not only defined through the dissemination methods used but also shaped by the institutional structures and the nature of the policy process in question. The extend to which a piece of research influences a policy or its implementation is, however, also dependant on further factors like the quality of the research, external and systemic influences, the personal attitudes to name just a few (compare D 5.1).

Figure 2 shows a simplified linear model of research use in to policy making and practice.

Figure 2 Chain of Utilisation

"Standards of research use" - Research use among policy makers

- 1. *Reception*
  reception means that research has been received by an individual lands on the desk, but the findings might never be read.
- 2. *Cognition*
  The next stage occurs when research is read and understood.
- 3. *Reference*
  When research changes way of thinking – provokes a shift in an individual's "frame of reference", for example in terms of defining key problems and priorities.
- 4. *Effort*
  Research has shaped action: some effort has been made to get the findings adopted, even if this is ultimately unsuccessful.
- 5. *Adoption*
  Adoption means that research has had a direct influence on the actual policy
- 6. *Implementation*
  While research may have been used to develop policy, at this stage it has also been translated into practice on the ground.
- 7. *Impact*
  Utilisation of research when the implemented policy is successful in producing tangible benefits to the citizens.

The pipeline model: Different stages of practicioners' use of research

- Practitioners are *aware* of findings from research
- Practitioners *accept* the research findings
- Practitioners view the research findings as *locally applicable*
- Practitioners view the research findings as *doable* within the local context
- Practitioners *act* on the research findings
- Practitioners *adopt* the research findings
- Practitioners *adhere* to the research findings

Source: Adapted from Knott and Widavsky 1980 and Glasziou and Haynes 2005 adapted in Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007,

47-49

Three common dimensions have to be taken into account when assessing the entry points for water research results to the potential users:
First, the dissemination[1] pathways through which research knowledge is distributed. Dissemination pathways are the different media or types of outputs produced by a research programmes like official reports, manuals, trainings, flyers, T-shirts, articles, conferences, TV, radio, in-service-training etc. The routes research takes are shaped by the forms of dissemination to and within an organisation (Nutley, Walter, Davies, 2007, 62). The literature on the topic shows that the personal communication, personally or through networks, is the most important route for transmitting research into policy and practice, as well as social learning through peers. (Nutley, Walter, Davies 2007, 65, 88). It has to be kept in mind in this regard that dissemination can be effective through different communication channels at different stages and for different purposes (Court, Hoveland, Young 2005, 42).

A research communication strategy can comprise active as well as passive dissemination activities. Passive knowledge dissemination is mainly untargeted, including unplanned ad hoc forms of communication, or disseminating (explicit) knowledge through publication in academic journals (Nutley, Percy-Smith, Solesbury, 2003, p. 35). Whereas active dissemination is characterised by tailoring research findings to a target audience and a dynamic flow of information from the source (Nutley, Percy-Smith, Solesbury, 2003, p. 35) to increase the uptake of research in policy making.

But researchers may face time and capacity constrains for realising active dissemination, for translating research results in brief, un- or at least less complex information, develop and evaluate resulting policy options and engage adequately with policy makers. Thus, intermediaries. are needed to connect the research and research users domain. This role can be played by knowledge brokers to connect research with policy and research with practice.

Second, the institutional links between the different stakeholders, researcher, research-users and research-funders, influence which route research findings take to reach their potential user. These links can be the physical access to research in libraries or database, the ad-hoc or institutionalised links for knowledge exchange between researchers and policy makers, or through intermediaries such as knowledge brokers and formal and informal networks. Active dissemination strategies can imply a closer engagement of the producer with the user of research results, thereby allowing for an improved flow of information and ideas[2]. Increasing the impact of research through closer collaboration between producer and user to improve impact of research does not only impact on knowledge dissemination but also on research planning and organisation as it encourages demand-led research.

Actively communicating research is (at least) a twofold activity: on the one hand it comprises part of translating and tailoring products to users, on the other hand, however, closer engagement and linking with decision-makers always have to deal with the problems of personal communication.

[1] Dissemination can be defined as the circulation and/or re-presentation of research findings, orally or in written form, and including guidelines and guidance. (Nutley, Percy-Smith, Solesbury, 2003, p. 35). Dissemination is part of an overall communication strategy to link research and its users together.

[2] In this case, new knowledge is produced through linking of tacit and explicit knowledge in social interaction. This idea goes back to Huberman's (1993) model of 'sustained interactivity' (Hargreaves 1999 cited in Nutley, Percy-Smith, Solesbury, 2003, p. 39)

Importantly in this regard are concerns about the independence of researchers which are very closely engaged with decision-makers, who might also decide on future research funding, and the negative incentives for researchers achieving less scientific merits through publications in peer-reviewed journals.

Third, a group of factors defining the political and practitioners context defines entry points into policy and practice. One example of this third dimension are an incentive structure within the decision-making organisation. Rewarding research-informed decision-making might increase the decision-makers awareness for research and encourage active accessing and using of research. An example is the “Pay-for-performance-schemes in the health sector. A CHSRF study in Mali points in the same direction. It assesses the influence of context for developing countries policy makers and concludes that accountability of political decision-makers is a decisive factor for the degree of research uptake by policy makers in developing countries. (Albert, Fretheim, Maïga 2007, 5). Only where decision-makers can be held accountable for any unsuccessful decision the use of research to underpin their action is required. Other example could be research use included in job-descriptions or as a criterion for staff appraisal.

In addition to the incentive structure, knowledge management within the research-user’s organisation belong under this section as the nature and extend of internal information dissemination system also determines whether and how research is used (Nutley, Walter, Davies 2007, 63).

For the practitioners communities’ use of research the political support and an organisational culture that encourages investigation of research-based practice changes is crucial.

In the political context the incentives to ongoing capacity building to access and use research are important. Facilitation approaches are based on change management and learning theories which say that support for removing the barriers for change is needed. These approaches might involve professional development activities so that decision-makers can improve their capacities to access and use research by themselves. Incentives to ongoing capacity building can also be set by funding of learning partnerships between researchers and research users.

2.2 The potential role of knowledge brokers

As mentioned above empirical work showed that the personal contact between researchers and the potential users of research seems to be the most important route for research to enter policy and practice. This supports the assumption that research use is a social process where interacting individuals jointly (re-) construct research evidence through debate, interplay and exchange (compare Nutley, Walter, Davies 2007, 89).

This interaction between researcher and policy-maker, however, is constraint by a number of factors so that mediating knowledge brokers can be needed to connect the research and decision-making domain. Researcher may face time and capacity constrains regarding synthesising, packaging and communicating their research results and engaging adequately with policy makers. One might even assume that researchers are generally not the trained to extract policy options out of scientific research, Since “Science is scepticism. Science is curiosity. Science is organised doubt. (Richard Dawkins)” and it does not necessarily translate in clear practical options for the instrumental use in policy making.

On the other hand, knowledge has been increasingly recognised as a critical issue in the development community. Therefore, being able to access and use knowledge is regarded more and

more important. This is even more the case as development agencies aim at impacts at higher levels and try to coordinate themselves nationally within sectors. Consequently, not only locally specific project relevant knowledge is needed but knowledge of an entire sector (Heres, 2007, 3). Evidently, knowledge brokering can be an important service in this field to secure well-informed decision-taking.

A knowledge broker examines disseminated information and knowledge for clients and prepares usable, targeted syntheses for the client. (RELU 2007, 9) This is called “active brokerage”. Following van Kammen, de Savigny and Sewankambo knowledge brokers could also put the focus of their activities on organising the interactive process between the producers of knowledge and the users of it (2006, 1). This refers to “interactive brokerage” which is characterised as a multidirectional communication process in partnerships. Learning Alliances are an example (Burns and Schuller (OECD paper, 2006 cited in Leney 2007, 4

Box 1 Characteristics of interactive brokering

- Organizing and managing joint forums for policy-makers and researchers
- Building relationship and trust
- Setting agendas and common goals
- Signalling mutual opportunities
- Clarifying information needs
- Commissioning synthesis of research of high olicy relevance
- Packaging research syntheses and facilitating access to evidence
- Strengthening capacity for knowledge translation
- Communicating and sharing advice
- Monitoring impact and know-do gap

Source; van Kammen, de Savigny, Sewankambo, 2006, 608

Knowledge brokers differ in their constituencies and target audiences, the topics they work on, the resources available for their brokering work and the dissemination activities to communicate. They can include a wide range of individuals, organisations, consultancies, development agencies, knowledge networks, regulatory bodies, business advisers or professionals (RELU 2007, 9). Networks can also act as “resource banks” and knowledge brokers to transport research results to policy makers and trigger policy change/influence government strategies.

Box 1. Examples for knowledge brokers in the field of research for development

For example **e-journal** "***Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*** is a new peer-reviewed, open access journal that provides a platform for the dissemination of new practices and for dialogue emerging out of the field of sustainability. The *e-Journal* fills a gap in the literature by establishing a forum for cross-disciplinary discussion of empirical and social sciences, practices, and policies related to sustainability. *Sustainability* will facilitate communication among scientists, practitioners, and policy makers who are investigating and shaping nature-society interactions and working towards sustainable solutions." Acts as a platform, allows for knowledge brokering as it bundles research results and provides opportunities for comments. Time research to deliver solutions at the right time to specific questions facing practitioners and policy makers

International Water Management Institute (IWMI)
The IWMI perceives knowledge brokering in the field of water research as part of it responsibility. IWMI is opening up a "window-on-the-world for researchers through the development of international research alliances, both South-South and South-North" (Giordano, 2007, p. 3). Brokering is done here for different research partnerships

Learning Alliance SWITCH Project (see link www.IRC.nl)

Three case studies analysing knowledge brokering of an

- international organisation (WHO as a knowledge broker for the international community and at the national level),
- a formal water related network (Danish Water Forum) and
- knowledge brokering at the local level in Developing Countries (Rural Water Supply Network as a knowledge broker for practiioners)

In the field of development cooperation and policy think tanks exist that claim to be independent and guided by shared development values (social justice/equity/poverty reduction). These Think Tanks can play an important role as knowledge brokers because they have the capacities to process high-quality research and present already distilled policy options to decision makers.

Research funders can also act as knowledge-brokers. One example is the UK NHS Service Delivery and Organisation Research and Development Programme which developed a dissemination strategy for the research it funds. Part of this dissemination strategy is bundling and tailoring dissemination formats for its key audiences (compare http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/whatwedo.html).

What has to be kept in mind, however, is that knowledge is not neutral and research procession, communication, packaging is not neutral either but a can as well be seen as a political resource.. Campaigners, a prominent example is probably Al Gore, also act as knowledge brokers, as they translate scientific knowledge and disseminate information to a wide audience following a political interest. Out of this line of thinking the most important criterion that intermediaries between research, policy and practice have to meet is that they should be accepted by both sides through making their own interests transparent or through independent brokering. The question to be answered first then is: who brokers what, guided by what interests. Box 2 presents a list of further criteria for successful knowledge brokering.

Box 2: Criteria for the selection of knowledge brokers

They should

- Have a clear definition and understanding of the intended audience. This means knowing their demands, capacities and timelines.
- Have a high potential coverage of intended audiences, e.g. be part of an intermediary network for extended dissemination
- Be convinced of the message they are sharing
- Provide language adaptations for local audiences
- Provide content adaptations for non-specialist audiences
- Have access to sufficient resources to carry out an effective campaign; and
- Receive regular training

Source: Adpated from Fisher, Odhiambo, Cotton, 2003, 19

Participants from a workshop at IDS concluded that positively the knowledge broker sector is growing with initiatives and organisations supporting research communication and focusing on the needs of specific groups of knowledge user internationally and in the North. However, at the national level in many developing countries knowledge brokering services are still insufficient (Barnard, Carlie, Ray 2007, 37). In recent years a number of initiatives like GDNet try to tap on southern research to make it available at the global as well as on the national levels. (see Box 1.)

3 How to improve the use different policy entry point

Improving the use of different policy entry points through increased communication and engagement includes three main issues.

- First, the development and improvement of dissemination strategies of research results. This depends primarily on how to package research results to be easily understood by and applicable for decision-makers. Actively involving knowledge brokers can be part of a dissemination strategy. The dissemination strategy can be designed and implemented by researchers as well as research funders.
- Second, establishing institutional linkages between researchers and decision-makers is a key to improve the communication and utilization of research. The institutional linkages between researchers and decision-makers influence at what levels and at what stages of decision-making processes research results can be fed in as well as demanded for. Knowledge brokers can form an important link. This dimension can be influenced by researchers, research funders as well as decision-makers.
- Third, establish and maintain an enabling environment and the incentive structures for decision-makers and researchers. The decision-maker's personal attitude towards research at the level of the individual and the incentive structures within the organisations decide at what point in a decision-making process research results are demanded and used. This dimension is beyond the influence of researchers and research funders. The incentive structure for researchers, however, also plays an important role. Changes in the incentive structure for researchers can be influenced by research funders.

3.1 Better dissemination of results

The main point in order to improve dissemination is to consider it in the overall planning of the research project with adequate resources allocated to it and develop a targeted strategy. To be successful it has to be incorporated in the schemes of research funders as well as actively implemented by the researchers involved.

The following recommendations for active dissemination by researchers and knowledge brokers can be found in the literature

- Provide accessible summaries of research
- Keep the research report brief and concise
- Publish in journals or publications that are user-friendly
- Use language and styles of presentation that engage interest
- Target material to the needs of the audience
- Extract the policy and practice implication of research
- Tailor dissemination events to the target audience and evaluate them
- Use a combination of dissemination methods
- Use the media
- Be proactive and contact relevant policy and delivery agencies
- Understand the external factors likely to affect the uptake of research
- Build partnerships with like-minded to create support for your ideas
- Ensure that the stakeholders in the researched countries are targeted

Source: Partly: Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000 reproduced by Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007, 23 and own compilation

Research funders play an important role in improving the dissemination of research by including dissemination, communication and networking already in their funding schemes. The following key recommendation for research commissioners/ funders in improving dissemination of research results arise from the literature reviewed:

- Time research to deliver solutions at the right time to specific questions facing practitioners and policy makers
- Ensure relevance to current policy agenda
- Allocate dedicated dissemination and development resources within resource funding
- Include a clear dissemination strategy at the outset
- Clearly include the dissemination of results in the countries researched
- Involve professional researchers in the research process

- Encourage networking of researchers, research users and knowledge purveyors
- Commission research reviews to synthesis and evaluate research

Source: Adapted and elaborated from Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000 reproduced from Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007, 239

Past projects already developed comprehensive guidelines with check-lists for designing dissemination strategies for southern and northern research users which further elaborate the basic issues listed above (compare WEDC, 2003, Start / Hoveland, 2004)

3.2 Strengthen the links to sustain and open up channels for communicating research results

Some of the recommendations given above already target at strengthening the links and interaction between research, policy and practice communities. The rational behind is that policy makers and practitioners are enabled to access latest research while researchers are better able to orient their work to users needs.

The following recommendation can be formulated for researchers:

- Engage with knowledge brokers like networks to transport your messages and increase the impact of your research
- Make use of influential individuals such as role models, peer leaders and research champions to improve the use of research. Experts and peers are both important to discuss and "process" research findings (Nutley, Walter, Davis 2007, 141).
- Create platforms to make your results available to potential users
  An example could be the BOMOSA Project (http://www.bomosa.org/ accessed 1.11.2007) that will create a Technology Implementation Plan (TIP). This plan should ensure uptake of the project results. It will be a synthesis of the scientific findings including zoning of the potential water bodies for BOMOSA aquaculture within the project's partner countries, policy recommendations and a micro-financing concept to encourage entrepreneurial participation of rural communities.

The following recommendation result for research funders:

- Engage with potential users to ensure demand-led research policy
  In case research funders encourage a participatory process where potential users of research results decide of research priorities too will raise interests and open up new policy-entry points through this process.

Resulting recommendations for policy makers and practitioners are:

- Institutionalize communication channels with researchers to communicate timelines and future demands in order to better inform research policy of their needs and thereby increasing the usefulness of research results for policy making.
- Collaborate with their partners in developing countries to increase research use in their policy making through making available online sources, workshops and/ or

other interactive dissemination activities.
Policy makers and practitioners increasingly use the internet to access research findings (for example Percy-Smith et al, 2002, Rickinson 2005 cited in Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007, 63). However, the problems connected with information overload on the other hand and limited access to the internet on the other hand have to be tackled. These two problems do most probable occur in the field of water for development research where on the one hand many research projects are carried out and a great number of practitioners in DC have more limited opportunities to actively use internet sources.

- Engage with project partnerships between research and practitioners.
  There is evidence from the literature of action research and published experiences in the health sector (partnership projects in medicine and teaching and from joint advisory groups consisting of researchers and practitioners) that research is more useful for and used by practitioners (Nutley, Percy-Smith, Solesbury, 2003, 15)

3.3 Establish an enabling environment

Most of features characterising an enabling environment for the potential users of SPLASH funded water research are beyond the influence of researchers or research funders within the SPLASH project. However, research funders can influence the incentives for researchers through their funding decisions to actively engage in communicating their results in order to improve the impact of research. To track this impact research funders should adapt evaluation criteria to include policy impact.

4 Conclusions for the SPLASH project

Engage with knowledge brokering platforms / networks in the field of water for development
Engaging with knowledge brokering platforms and networks to communicate the outputs resulting of our workpackage and ensure that the results of the research financed under the SPLASH joint call (WP6) will be made available to decision-makers through this channels. D 2.5 provides a list of the potential networks active in this field. Furthermore, the report gives a number of examples. D 4.3 will come up with concrete examples from the MS with whom and how they engage.

Apply the recommendation for good dissemination
Apply the recommendation for good dissemination of results when communicating the outputs of the SPLASH workpackages and jointly funded research projects.

Include dissemination and follow-up on impact in call requirements
When formulating the call in WP 6 active dissemination and follow-up of impacts should be included. In order not to tempt overestimation of research impact joining impact assessment of all research funded could be an option.

Actively develop capacity building concepts to improve the uptake of research using integrated approaches for the practitioners community
In order to improve the utilization of research results by practitioners especially in developing countries the possibility of using the research results produced by the joint call for targeted capacity building of practitioners should be assessed and possibly developed

Optimise brokerage for water for development research at the European level through engaging with or building up a platform for communicating European Water for development research. Apart from that existing knowledge brokering networks are known and assessed (D 2.5 and the examples (to be completed by April) in this report) which should be used to transport the political message of SPLASH (increased harmonisation and coordination of MS water for development research), the results of the work packages, the announcement of the joint call and finally the results of the research jointly funded can be disseminated.

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