

# Research Into Use

Enabling the poor  
to benefit from research





## What is 'Research Into Use'?

The Research Into Use (RIU) programme is a pioneering initiative that has a twofold purpose: to maximize the poverty-reducing impact of previous research on natural resources funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and, in so doing, to increase our understanding of how the promotion and widespread use of research outputs can contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth.

DFID has been a major supporter of natural resources research through its Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRSS), which ran from 1995 to 2006. Such research has enormous potential to alleviate poverty, promote economic growth and mitigate environmental problems. But that potential, although demonstrated through pilot projects, has yet to be realized on a large scale.

The RIU has been established to meet this challenge. The programme – the first to be developed under DFID's new Strategy for Research on Sustainable Agriculture (SRSA) – marks a shift in emphasis away from the generation of new knowledge to the ways in which knowledge is put to productive use. The key to the challenge is innovation – the process through which entrepreneurs and other stakeholders harness new ideas in order to increase production, add value and create new products and services. Specifically, the programme seeks to empower the poor and marginalized so that they can participate in dynamic national innovation systems.



## What it is *not*!

While RIU will draw extensively on the knowledge gained from past natural resources research, it will operate differently from the programmes that typically implemented such research. RIU will not fund stand-alone research projects, but instead will link with, and add value to, existing national or regional programmes, processes and other initiatives undertaken by development partners. Researchers will be important partners in RIU, but the main emphasis will shift to the direct and indirect users of research results. By indirect users we mean those who articulate the demand for information on behalf of the poor and those who repackage information to meet that demand (known as 'infomediaries'). RIU will strongly encourage new partnerships with such users.

The new programme integrates five thematic strands:

1. **Innovation platforms**, to stimulate the uptake of technologies, policies and processes among poor research users and to create new opportunities for scaling up and out among research and service providers
2. **Policies and partnerships**, to link research to the policy environment and to encourage the harmonization of national, regional and global research-into-use initiatives
3. **Communication and information markets**, to facilitate stakeholder learning and information management and to strengthen national and regional markets for information products and services
4. **Capacity strengthening**, to improve stakeholder participation and ownership, to build the ability to turn information into innovation, and to ensure the sustainability of innovation beyond RIU
5. **Monitoring and learning**, to assess what has been achieved and to ensure lessons are shared widely with stakeholders.

## How is the programme managed?

The RIU is managed by Natural Resources International Ltd in the UK, in association with Nkoola Institutional Development Associates (NIDA) Ltd in Uganda, and Michael Flint (and the Performance Assessment Resource Centre), also in the UK.

To guide its operations, RIU has a Programme Advisory Board (PAB). This is chaired by Professor Richard Mkandawire, Agriculture Advisor to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

To ensure the effective implementation and ownership of activities by stakeholders, together with local accountability and governance, the programme is establishing decentralized management nodes in selected subregions.

## Where does it operate?

The focus of RIU is on sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the two regions of the developing world where poverty levels are highest. The programme will eventually work in 10 to 15 focus countries drawn mainly (but not exclusively) from the following list:

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- DR Congo
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- India
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Rwanda
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Vietnam
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe



## What's the time-scale?

RIU was commissioned in July 2006. Following the extended inception phase which ended in June 2007, the implementation phase will run from July 2007 to June 2011.

# What has RIU done so far?

During its inception phase the programme took stock of the RNRRS research legacy, collating and reviewing 278 outputs developed by the projects funded under the strategy. These include technologies, policies and processes in sectors directly relevant to the poor: crop science, forestry, fisheries management, livestock production and animal health, crop post-harvest technology, and natural resources management.

## Examples of outputs delivered by the RNRRS

- Improved maize seed systems to meet farmers' needs in the southern highlands of Tanzania and similar high-potential areas
- Enhanced rural livelihoods through improved rice quality and post-harvest handling in Ghana
- Dry-season crops to replace rice fallows in Nepal
- Better options for integrated floodplain management in Bangladesh
- Identification of risk factors for tuberculosis and brucellosis and dissemination of messages to at-risk populations
- Conserved forage in the form of bagged silage to maintain livestock productivity through the dry season in sub-Saharan Africa
- How to assess and manage a fishery: a collection of tools for developing fish-stock assessment and management plans
- Identification and promotion of opportunities for sustainable coastal aquaculture.

A database and short summaries describing these outputs were prepared for publication and disseminated via the RIU website ([www.researchintouse.com](http://www.researchintouse.com)) and a CD-ROM.

Another important activity during the inception phase was to assess the opportunities for RIU intervention in six countries: Bangladesh, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. The assessment teams sought to identify potential partner organizations which:

- Have a development focus and have the capacity to support an innovation systems approach
- Share RIU's interest in extending the reach of traditional science-led initiatives
- Provide RIU with an opportunity to add value to existing national or regional efforts
- Have a strong field-based capacity so that user demand can be fed back efficiently into the innovation process and appropriate responses developed.

Other inception phase activities included the establishment of management and governance structures and the development of strategies for two of the thematic strands – communications and capacity building. In addition, links were established with key programme partners at the regional level, such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (APAARI).



## What are RIU's future plans?

During 2007 and 2008, RIU will begin working with innovation platforms and coalitions in the five African countries selected for early intervention: Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. A separate exercise to stimulate entrepreneurship with venture capital will be piloted in East Africa.

A different approach is intended for Asia, where an RIU Innovation Challenge will be issued to identify opportunities in one or more of the following countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam.

## An invitation

We are keen to build our list of potential partners in the regions where we will operate. To strengthen the research-into-use effort, we aim to work with the widest possible range of relevant institutions and individuals. So why not get in touch with us to explore the opportunities for working together? We look forward to hearing from you.



## Contact us:

For further information about RIU, please visit our website:

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