

Bridging the Research Policy Gaps in Developing and Transition Countries: Analytical Lessons and Proposals for Action^{*}

A synthesis of findings from the Global Development Network's Bridging Research and Policy Project

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INTRODUCTION

Policies that are informed by evidence help in the effective identification of needs and in the formulation of better strategies. In environments plagued by resource scarcity, informed policies can help reduce poverty and save lives by lowering delivery costs and improving targeting. Proposals for reform that incorporate informed feedback from civil society groups are more likely to be accepted and acted upon. Although there is a growing recognition of these basic principles of governance, we remain poorly informed about the pathways of research uptake, especially in developing and transition countries⁴. The questions that arise include: how can policy-makers best use research and move towards evidence-based policy-making; how can researchers best use their findings in order to influence policy; and how can the effectiveness of the interaction between researchers and policy-makers be improved?

The Global Development Network’s Bridging Research and Policy (BRP) Project aimed to address these questions in a very diverse set of “southern” contexts ranging from a mature democracy with a sophisticated system of “checks and balances”, to state capture by powerful elite groups, to domination of civil society by the state bureaucracy, to weakness of both state and civil society actors. While the nature of research-to-policy gaps in these contexts is quite different, a common fundamental challenge for most “southern” nations is to build and sustain – while graduating from aid dependence – research and policy making capacities in the face of fierce global and internal competition for talent and resources.

The BRP project drew upon a large body of multi-disciplinary literature which provides theoretical insights as well as practical tools that are relevant to developed country contexts. However, the main challenges for the BRP project were, first, to generate valid and reliable knowledge about research-policy linkages (and gaps) in developing and transition countries, and, second, to develop a set of operational conclusions and tools that can assist policy makers, researchers and donors in these settings.

The BRP project was based on a combination of methodological approaches ranging from surveys to case studies and within each individual study triangulation was encouraged in order to enhance validity and reliability. Table 1 provides a summary timeline of the BRP project.

Table 1. Bridging Research and Policy Project: a Timeline

Preparation and Proposal Development Phase (1999-2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First GDN Annual Conference (1999) at Bonn had “Bridging Research and Policy” as its theme • Further discussions held during Second GDN Annual Conference (2000) at Tokyo • Two-day Workshop on BRP held at University of Warwick in June 2001 • Project proposal is drafted by an international team of experts during second half of 2001 • Desk study to map other existing initiatives begins in July 2001 • BRP project proposal is presented, discussed and approved during the GDN Annual Conference (2001) in Rio de Janeiro
Phase One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary case studies on research policy linkages across regions, sectors and themes collected

⁴ Throughout this paper we refer to both transition and developing countries as the “south”. When relevant, we highlight the experience of particular regions and countries.

(2001-2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey of policy makers and researchers in developing and transition countries completed • An analytical framework on Bridging Research and Policy developed to inform Phase Two in-depth research
Phase Two (2003-2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Background Papers commissioned on: mapping current understanding on how to assess impact in policy relevant research; approaches to measuring capacity and capacity-building for policy-research; a review of how external agencies influence research agendas and research-policy links; and a review to develop a simple tool to characterise political/institutional contexts. • A Comparative Study commissioned on: Research Institutes and their impact on use of research in policy-making and practice • Open call for research proposals from developing and transition countries launched in on April 2003. Proposals invited for the following categories: Action Research, Episode Studies, Good Practice Studies, Country Studies, Sector Studies • 22 out of 367 proposals selected through intensive reviews • Workshop with pre-selected authors conducted in New Delhi (January 2004) and research work commenced • Interim reports and some final reports presented at a BRP workshop in Dakar (January 2005) • A session on BRP held at GDN Annual Conference (Dakar, 2005)
Phase Three (2005-2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference for conducting the Synthesis of Phase Two studies and preparing BRP training materials are released • Synthesis and Training teams present preliminary findings at the BRP workshop at St. Petersburg (January 2006) • BRP training material is developed and piloted at a seminar for Central Asian think-tanks and university leaders (June 2006).

As can be seen from Table 1, a key component of Phase II of the BRP project was a large set of studies aimed at identifying and analysing research-policy linkages in a variety of specific developing and transition country circumstances. These studies generated a rich harvest of material that has been elaborated in over 20 final reports and a similar number of “bridging briefs”. Phase II also generated case studies of individual policy research institutes. (see References for a full list of research outputs from all BRP studies and Annex A “Summary of Key Issues”). This synthesis paper provides an analytical summary of the key findings and recommendations from Phase II studies with the aim to:

- enhance our understanding of the factors that are responsible for the existence and persistence of gaps in knowledge generation, communication and utilisation in developing and transition countries;
- identify general lessons from the Phase II studies and use these to formulate practical guidance for a diverse set of stakeholders in developing and transition countries, most particularly research institutes, policymaking institutions, donors and international organisations.

The approach adopted is linked to the evolution of the bridging literature since 1970s which can be interpreted as a reaction to the apparent failure of social sciences to contribute to policymaking and the parallel failure of policymakers – in both developed and developing countries – to utilise research or knowledge that could inform

their decisions. While we observe that policies are very often driven by political imperatives and conveniences, we implicitly assume that policy-makers should normally seek to justify and base policies on evidence. At the same time, it has to be recognised that there are exceptions, for example some policies may quite legitimately be based on moral or philosophical values⁵.

Following Lindquist (2001), we use a rather broad definition of “evidence”, “knowledge” or “policy inquiry” which encompasses not only scientific research but also other forms of knowledge generation including policy analysis, data gathering, and dissemination of information. We agree with Lindquist that the term “research” implies a particular kind of analytical value-added which is very often absent in the kind of materials that are commonly a part of the policy process.

In order to draw out the main messages from the individual projects regarding the way in which research (or, more generally, knowledge or policy inquiry) was provided and utilised we have undertaken a detailed analysis of the project materials. This was supplemented by a Synthesis Survey involving all project participants in order to create a dialogue with the authors about the hypotheses we formed on the basis of their findings. In this way, the survey strengthened our conclusions and recommendations. The questionnaire may be found in Annex C. The full set of survey data is also available upon request.

A particular challenge for the synthesis has been to find a manageable structure for conceptualising and analysing research-policy gaps. We felt it useful to develop a “typology” of gaps, as presented and explained in Chapter 1, where we identify four distinct aspects of the research-policy divide (or types of gaps). This “four gap” typology provides the analytical backbone of the synthesis paper. Thus, Chapter 2 deals with questions of supply, Chapter 3 with information/communication gaps and Chapter 4 considers governance and demand gaps together. Please note that the volume of material on supply and communication factors (Chapters 2 and 3) is considerably larger than that on demand and governance issues (Chapter 4). This “lack of balance” in the synthesis paper reflects the nature of the episodes documented by the underlying BRP studies⁶. The emphasis on research and communication issues may follow from the selection of episodes; however it may also be indicative of a real bias in stakeholder attention to issues of research capacity building and communication at the expense of policymaking and governance complexities in developing and transition nations.

Each chapter ends with a summary of bridging interventions that were observed in the Phase II studies and makes further suggestions for action by interested parties: policymakers, researchers, NGOs, and international donors. Chapter 5 focuses on three inter-related proposals for innovation in research capacity building and “bridg-

⁵ Examples of policies where ‘moral’ or ‘value’ concerns dominate the policy debate include the use of the death penalty for murder where objections to the death penalty are typically based on a moral position; the role of private property in a society, where property rights are sometimes defended in terms of natural law; or the legitimacy of same sex marriage, where objections are often based on religious principles. However, even in such cases appeal is often made to evidence e.g. the deterrent effect of capital punishment, the economic efficiency of a system of private property, or the reproductive importance of heterosexual marriage. At the same time even in cases where the necessity for evidence is widely accepted as paramount, e.g. the use of a drug for medical treatment, evidence may not be the only consideration and often a balance may need to be struck between cost, benefit and the depth and reliability of evidence.

⁶ Here it should also be borne in mind that the ex post gap analysis represents our interpretation of what the project authors have reported.

ing" that may enhance the role knowledge in policymaking in developing and transition countries. It concludes with a brief discussion of implementation issues.

A note on literature

Our aim here is not to provide an extensive literature review⁷ but rather place the synthesis paper in the context of the existing bodies of work. In recent years, political science literature has tended to deemphasise the "direct relevance" view of social sciences. Instead, starting with Weiss (1977), this literature discovered the enlightenment role of knowledge e.g. in altering the language and perceptions of policy-makers, and "achieving influence indirectly through the circulation and percolation of ideas" (Lindquist (2001)). This development was associated with the apparent failure of academic social sciences to achieve visible impact and the empirical difficulty of discerning such impact when analysing major policy shifts.⁸

Indeed, as argued by Sabatier (1988) and others, most fundamental policy changes involve an intense conflict among competing advocacy coalitions with scientific knowledge playing a marginal role in the actual decision-making. The uncertain redistributive implications and high implementation risks of such policy shifts necessarily limit the role of scientific knowledge in the actual decision making, especially when such knowledge is inherently inconclusive.

Despite the view that researchers and policymakers live on different planets, as propagated e.g. by Caplan (1979), knowledge appears to be playing a rather direct role in many cases of less visible and less contentious decisions, typically those involving marginal adjustment of policies. Such decisions are more often than not taken on the basis of in-house analyses and commissioned studies, regular inflation, employment and consumption surveys. Relevant types of policy inquiry, in particular data and information, may have a rather strong and direct impact on decisions to raise interest rates, target subsidies, modify parameters of environmental protection policy, etc.

As discussed in Neilson (2001), much of the theoretical literature is concerned with generalisations about the "politics of policymaking", offering an impressive array of models and conceptual frameworks to help explain knowledge utilization in decision-making and the process of policy change⁹. However, this literature provides little if any guidance on practical measures to deal with the general problems of knowledge management and governance systems in a society, or specific practical advice for BRP actors.

Much of the practical literature, on the other hand, is concerned with three sets of issues: (i) how to improve the management of policy research institutes (e.g. Struyk (2002) and how to promote "think-tanks" as a global "good practice" of independent knowledge provision (e.g. McGann with Johnson (2006)); (ii) how to improve the capacity of governments to utilise knowledge through the establishment of knowledge-friendly processes and procedures; and (iii) how to establish an appropriate evaluation framework for discerning and assessing the policy impact of research (e.g.

⁷ Excellent literature reviews are provided e.g. by Neilson (2001) and Stone (2001)

⁸ For instance, the shift from communism to a market economy as well as the Thatcher revolution were quite clearly based on the alleged empirical superiority of the market model over the collectivist or 'statist' one, yet both were driven by political exigency rather than any 'scientific' theory of transition.

⁹ Nielson, for instance, lists the following models: (1) linear; (2) incrementalism; (3) interactive; (4) policy networks; (5) agenda-setting; (6) policy narratives; and (7) policy transfer

Carden et al (2002) and Lindquist (2001)). Given the practical twist of this literature, it tends to provide “how-to” templates and recommendations that ignore, “for simplicity”, the systemic nature of the bridging conundrum in much of the developing/transition world. In particular, it does not sufficiently emphasise the lack of incentives for “southern” policy actors to build and sustain relevant capacities (whether in government or the research sector) and to engage each other. Such a tendency is evident, e.g., in the proclivity to recommend training and capacity building measures for specific actors, as opposed to more complex, “structural” reforms that affect the environment which frames the interaction of these actors. The synthesis paper seeks to fill in these gaps.

CHAPTER 1: CONCEPTUALISING RESEARCH-POLICY “GAPS”

The very terminology “bridging research and policy” implies the presence of a “gap” to be “bridged”. While recognising the inherent difficulties of defining and classifying research-policy gaps, never mind identifying a unique metric by which they might be measured, we felt the need to develop a typology of gaps to guide the synthesis effort and the ensuing practical work.

First, the proposed typology is used as an organising principle for the wealth of material resulting from the entire range of BRP studies - country and cross country studies, sector studies, episode studies, action research and good practice studies – few of which discussed explicitly the somewhat philosophical issues of what we understand by research-to-policy gaps or how such gaps might be conceptualised. Second, and most importantly, the proposed typology may also be thought of as a heuristic device for diagnosing situations and problems within a unified framework as well as for designing and evaluating bridging interventions.

At the highest level of aggregation, it may be possible to characterise the research-policy divide in terms of only two dimensions: one dimension corresponding to the degree of *provision* of research (or more broadly “policy inquiry”). The other dimension can be thought of in terms of the degree of *utilisation*. Loosely speaking, these concepts correspond to the supply (provision) of and the demand (utilisation) for knowledge but are somewhat broader than what may be implied by supply and demand in a “knowledge market” analogy. Thus provision is intended to capture the quality of provision as well as its quantum, while the degree of utilisation is intended to capture a variety of ways in which policy makers consider (or not) evidence, ranging from passive exposure to information to active pursuit of advice and original research which then translate into action or policy documents. Although both “provision” and “utilisation” are generally seen as positive, we also observe situations when knowledge or evidence is purposefully distorted or misused to promote special interests or add legitimacy to a particular course of political action.

Our analysis of the BRP projects suggests that a simple provision/utilisation dichotomy does not adequately capture certain key aspects of the observed research/policy interactions, whereas more nuanced taxonomies of “problem situations” as developed e.g. by Stone et al (2001) offer a classification that is too detailed for operational purposes. Hence we propose a more manageable typology of four gaps loosely linked to the Stone et al typology of problems, as listed in Annex B¹⁰:

¹⁰ Two problems in Stone et al constitute special cases that do not fit neatly into our four gap typology. The first case (problem 10) is when knowledge is inconclusive and/or contested, providing little guidance for policymakers; the second (problem 8) is when knowledge performs an enlightenment function. Both

(i) Supply failure or gap

This kind of gap exists when insufficient research is available to policy makers. This category includes extreme situations when research or researchers are totally absent, as well as when available research is of inadequate quality. A supply failure may be thought of as a public goods problem (Stone et al problem 1) and appropriate measures should normally seek to promote the supply of research and researchers and, if needed, to improve quality.

(ii) Information/communication failure or gap

An information failure or gap may arise when relevant research or knowledge either exists or could be made available but either policy makers or researchers or both are not fully aware of the possibilities it may yield or do not understand the potential relevance or both. Within the Stone et al classification this kind of gap corresponds to problem 2 (lack of access to research, data and analysis for both researchers and policy makers), problem 3 (poor policy comprehension of researchers towards both the policy process and how research might be relevant), problem 4 (ineffective communication by researchers), and problem 6 (ignorance of politicians about the existence of policy relevant research). Corresponding interventions would focus on access to data, opportunities for greater interaction, and other measures to improve communication, build trust and overcome stereotypical thinking.

(iii) Demand failure or gap

A third kind of gap may emerge when relevant research or knowledge exists or can be produced by the research community, policy makers are aware of it but are unwilling or unable to fully utilise it. In terms of the Stone et al classification the following problems may fall into this "type": problem 7 (policy makers and leaders being dismissive, unresponsive or incapable of using research). This kind of gap may be thought of as a demand failure. Corresponding interventions would focus on building the capacity of bureaucrats to engage the research community through networking, working groups, formal and informal meetings, and creating relevant institutional incentives through civil service reforms. The latter may also involve the establishment of specialised government units to perform a "bridging" function.

(iv) Governance failure or gap

A fourth type of gap may arise where either the provision or utilisation of research or both are manipulated by a few powerful groups in a society. While aligning with special interests does not necessarily constitute a failure (indeed, it may be considered a part of a "normal" strategy to influence decision-making), having a situation in which non-aligned ideas cannot be openly debated does represent an important gap¹¹. This may include situations where policy research institutes are expected to produce "evidence" that explicitly serves special interests (e.g. trade unions, industrial lobbies and/or regions), or when policymakers misuse research by selective appeal to existing knowledge and/or commissioning research in order to add legitimacy to a pre-determined course of action. In the Stone et al classification this corresponds to problem 9 (i.e. a problem of power relations in which validity of knowl-

cases do not represent "problems" or "gaps" to be bridged but rather serve as possible explanations for the lack of direct and immediate impact of research on policy.

¹¹ A perceived governance failure was what brought into existence the first "think tanks" in the US in the Progressive Era, i.e. around 1910 (See McGann et al 2006). The situation, roughly speaking was that the reform movement, reacting to corruption and the dominance of special interests, called for the introduction of more "scientific" methods of policy making.

edge(s) may be contested, and where issues of censorship and control as well as of ideology may be a matter of concern) and to some extent problem 5 (societal disconnection of both researchers and decision-makers from those who the research is about or intended for)¹². Here the gap may be said to reflect a failure of governance. Corresponding interventions could focus on strengthening a politically neutral professional bureaucracy, promoting the generation and use of alternative local “knowledges”, and mobilising civil society organisations and media.

In practice, the various “gaps” may be manifestations of larger systemic problems concerning governance and knowledge generation in a society, and, hence, are likely to be observed simultaneously. Moreover, we may often observe a circular causal link, or strong interdependence among “gaps”. For instance, inadequate capacity to provide knowledge may frustrate attempts by potential “users” to engage local actors in research and policy debate. The reverse is also true. A lack of government interest in or capacity for knowledge utilisation is likely to cripple knowledge provision and shut down communication channels. Finally, both provision and utilisation of knowledge may be biased by power politics, creating a “great wall” of distrust between those making policies and those failing to influence decision-making through the use of scientific evidence.

CHAPTER 2: SUPPLY GAPS

Supply gaps were observed in nearly all of the BRP studies, a finding that was also confirmed by the survey of authors. Only two respondents indicated that knowledge provision was fully adequate in the episode they studied, and on average provision was given a score of 4.5 on a 1 to 7 scale (7 standing for fully adequate).¹³

Supply gaps have been particularly pronounced in the former communist countries in the BRP II projects – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Ukraine – which, at the start of transition, clearly faced a serious deficit of policy relevant knowledge in the economic and social sphere (see, e.g., Krastev (2002)). The initial “knowledge vacuum” in these and other post-communist countries was quite quickly, but partially, filled by the international organisations such as the IMF and World Bank; partially, by policy consulting agencies with funding from bilateral donors such as USAID or the UK “Know How Fund”; partially by private foundations who created policy research institutes such as the Soros Foundation, Latvia (later Providus) or the International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS) in Ukraine; and finally by initiatives to train or re-train local social scientists such as the Phare ACE programme (EU), Muskie and Fullbright (US) stipends and Chevening scholarships (UK).

In Africa, where one would expect supply gaps to be particularly acute, our studies suggest that this may not be universally the case. Thus for Uganda, Kiiza et al (BRP 2006) claim that “no major episode of policy change has taken place in contemporary Uganda without some form of research”. The energy sector report (which covers five eastern and southern African countries – Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe) finds considerable variation in the degree of local knowledge provision and local ownership of the energy reform process with the richer Botswana being significantly more advanced than other countries of the region. However, in all five countries, local governments were able to commission studies and consult local researchers, albeit in a limited way: “Text and timeline analysis in conjunction with

¹² Societal disconnection may also imply an ‘information failure’ leading to ‘supply’ and ‘demand’ failures.

¹³ The authors and institutes participating in the survey were often the principal local knowledge providers in the domain they investigated, and, hence, this assessment may even be over-optimistic.

focus group discussions identified a small number of research undertakings that have influenced the energy policy formulation in each of the study countries” (Karekezi et al (BRP 2005)).

On the other hand, in India, as might be expected, supply of knowledge was not regarded a serious constraint for evidence based policymaking. Thus Das (BRP 2005), who studied the reform process in a number of sectors, note that India has “a wide network of research institutes” and these institutes collectively produced much relevant research/knowledge. The availability of relevant research was confirmed by Mehendale (BRP 2005) who studied the education reform process, and also by Borgoyary (BRP 2006) who conducted a comparative analysis of participatory forestry management networks which comprised “reputed research organisations ... and academicians held in high regard by the policy makers”.

Supply gaps can also be present in countries with a more developed policy research infrastructure. Thus, in Chile, the belief that policy-making was dominated by short term thinking led to the creation, in 1997, of the Public Policy Research Fund (PPRF) aimed at supporting policy relevant research and evaluation of policy (O’Ryan et al (BRP 2005)). The PRFP was managed by the University of Chile and was financially supported by the Ford Foundation.

Within any country, research capacity and, hence, the quality and quantum of supply can vary significantly across regions and policy areas. Thus, in Argentina, the absence of strong provincially-based research organisations led, in the mid-1970s, a Cordoba-based business association (Fundacion Mediterranea) to launch a policy think-tank (IERAL) aimed at bringing independent pro-market research into policy-making (Colina et al (BRP 2005)). Likewise, policy inquiry was found to be of inadequate quality in policy areas that are not in the spotlight of public debate, do not receive sufficiently stable government attention and are not the main target for donor support. For instance, Karekezi et al (BRP 2005) suggest that research on the use of environment-friendly forms of renewable energy have been traditionally neglected by both governments and research organisations in East Africa.

2.1. Types of knowledge producers

While admitting considerable variety in types of actors and “knowledges” (see e.g. McGann with Johnson (2006)), the literature has produced many sweeping generalisations about the efficacy or prevalence of PRIs in various political contexts. Of doubtful theoretical value, the resulting insights and recommendations also offer limited value for the practical challenges of “bridging” since factors that constrain or further one type of policy inquiry may be irrelevant for other types of knowledge provision (or have the opposite effect). Our goal here is to provide a more differentiated account of knowledge producing organizations. In particular, we identify three “ideal types” of PRIs and corresponding types of knowledge, as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Types of policy actors and corresponding social and political roles

“Ideal types” of knowledge producers	Social and political role
Problem solving. Organisations and individuals that sell their products and services – analysis, data, or advice	To directly assist decision-makers in grappling with well-defined policy challenges (e.g. generating relevant data and statistical analysis, clarifying the implications of alternative policy scenarios, monitoring policy implementation, helping design policy processes and procedures).

<p>Critique and advocacy. Organisations and individuals that try to influence societal choices and the embodiment of these choices in actual policies</p>	<p>To expose social problems, criticise the status quo and/or promote competing ideologies, interests and ideas (e.g. economic liberalisation, promotion of local self-government, protection of minority rights). Actors assigning to this role typically distance themselves from government and opposing special interests. Accordingly, they use policy inquiry to increase the appeal of proposed reforms and policy innovation.</p>
<p>Fundamental. Organisations and individuals that promote scientific inquiry by developing rigorous¹⁴ methods and applying them for the study of social, political and economic behaviour</p>	<p>To produce scientific knowledge about the mechanics of social interaction, generating and testing hypotheses that feed into the policy inquiry arena, developing methodologies and models that can have applied value or serve to alter the language and perceptions of policy-makers and their advisors. The latter influences are indirect and, hence, much more difficult to discern over a short period of time.</p>

2.1.1. Problem solving

Problem solving may take a variety of forms: commissioned studies (generation of data and statistical analysis, analysis of best international practices, etc.), design of policy programs and processes, provision of ad hoc policy advice. Outsourcing analytical tasks to policy consultants is particularly frequent in the context of long-term strategic planning in such areas as economic growth, poverty reduction, or energy policy (see BRP studies by Karekezi et al (BRP 2005), McNeill (BRP 2005)). Governments may also outsource policy analysis to an academic institution so as to generate “objective” data and analysis (develop a menu of options) on which to base a regulator’s decision, or find an optimal way to implement a reform (arsenic regulation, allocation of school meals in Chilean study, see O’Ryan et al (BRP 2005)).

This pragmatic aspect of social sciences appears to be rather neglected in the theoretical “bridging” literature given its preoccupation with the “complexities” and “irrationality” of policymaking. And, yet, it is this type of policy inquiry that is most amenable to policy uptake and not as dependent on contextual factors such as degree of democracy or freedom of expression.¹⁵ In fact, even in countries like China, Cuba, Belarus and Uzbekistan, where political competition is limited, governments do encourage policy innovation by outsourcing policy analysis and training tasks to independent or semi-independent groups (e.g. in the healthcare sector, monetary policy. See Yuan et al (BRP 2005), Seuc (BRP 2006), Menkova (BRP 2005), and Afontsev (BRP 2006)).

The main issues with the quality of “problem solving” knowledge are associated with the following factors:

¹⁴ The description of “fundamental” knowledge as rigorous does not imply that other kinds of knowledge are not. Rigour, however, is imposed on academic knowledge providers through a culture of peer review and standards of professional journal publication. In contrast, external peer review is rarely practiced by consulting and advocacy-type organizations the majority of which report in-house review as the main quality control mechanism.

¹⁵ Our survey provides little support for the hypothesis that democracy is associated with better provision of knowledge and technical knowledge in particular: political and legal constraints are assigned the lowest weight among 13 factors negatively affecting knowledge provision.

- (i) **Public demand for external knowledge provision:** political culture, quality of government organisation and length of the planning horizon;
- (ii) **Competition:** ability of new actors to enter the policy consulting market and strengthen the incentives of incumbent institutions to invest in own skills and capacities, including degree of transparency in the allocation of consulting contracts, peer pressure and quality control;
- (iii) **Nature of technical assistance** in the relevant policy domain, and availability of local capacities to absorb and re-invent global knowledge.

(i) Public demand for external knowledge provision. It comes out very strongly from the BRP Synthesis Survey (see Introduction and Annex C) and the case studies that the *level* and *regularity* of government demand for policy consulting services is the single most important constraint for technical knowledge provision¹⁶. At the broad regional level, the incidence of outsourcing policy inquiry is much more rare in Asia, where the political culture and practice lead to *state domination of civil society* (Shai 2001, quoted in Stone, Maxwell, Keating (2001)). Asian governments typically have the capacity to conduct relevant analysis in-house as is demonstrated, e.g. by the study of the healthcare sector in China (Yuan et al BRP 2005), where virtually all policy consulting functions at the provincial level are performed by state institutions.

At the other extreme, in political contexts characterised by a *lesser extent of government organisation*, such as in many African nations, Latin America and the former socialist countries during the early stages of transition, policymaking rarely follows an orderly, “rational” pattern, reducing the scope for knowledge production and uptake. The same is true of policy sectors, such as trade and energy, where major decisions are often made under the pressure of negotiations (Aninat BRP 2005) or following a crisis (e.g. after a sharp fall in the supply of hydroelectric power, as reported by Karekezi et al (BRP 2005)). In both cases, lack of a stable demand constrains knowledge provision in the short run, and creates long-term disincentives for potential providers to build relevant capacities and relational capital.¹⁷

(ii) Competition. As might be expected, the quality of knowledge provision is also affected by *the degree of competitive peer pressure* and *nature of the knowledge market place*¹⁸. While there is no shortage of general purpose think-tanks and consulting firms in India or the more developed Latin American countries, the market may be quite thin within the more specific policy niches, e.g. urban development, agriculture, or healthcare policy. It is certainly very thin in many less developed countries where the policy consulting market is often captured by a single provider (see Afontsev (BRP 2006) for a useful discussion of the situation in Central Asia). In a sense, lack of competition may be viewed as a “small country” (or “small knowledge market”) problem. Many least developed countries may be too small to support more than one PRI, and even one “expert” per policy area.

Weak competition among knowledge providers may have particularly serious implications for the quality of “problem solving” knowledge because:

¹⁶ Among factors negatively affecting knowledge provision, short-term and project-based funding is ranked first, and lack of a stable government demand as the second most important factor.

¹⁷ The argument here is that the link between demand for external advice and institutional strength is not linear. We hypothesise that for developing countries such demand is highest at some intermediate level of institutional strength, as measured e.g. by Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton (1999).

¹⁸ The market was considered to be non-competitive by 42% of respondents to our survey and lack of competition was ranked fifth out of the 13 factors negatively affecting knowledge provision.

- unlike research, consulting products are rarely subject to peer review, whereas consulting know-how (e.g. forecasting models) may be shrouded behind a screen of intellectual property right protection;
- relevant government agencies – the clients – may lack the capacity to verify the quality of deliverables.

A special feature of the knowledge market is that information asymmetries increase the importance of personal trust and track record, thus strengthening the position of incumbent actors (typically, specialised consulting firms). A by-product of this market imperfection are the so-called “closed policy advisory loops” or “group think”. This may be one of the root causes for non-transparent allocation of consulting contracts, which inhibits the entry of new actors, stifles innovation in policymaking and reduces the incentives of the established (and connected) knowledge producers to invest in own capacity, causing quality to decline over time. See discussion of credibility/trust issues in Section 2.

(iii) Nature of technical assistance. Both theoretical considerations and empirical evidence suggest that technical assistance (TA) may have two contradictory effects. On the one hand, it may help develop local capacities – individual and institutional – to design, implement and monitor policies in the relevant sectors. A good case in point is the US Urban Institute (UI) which has been contracted by USAID in the early 1990s to assist the Moscow government. The project has been implemented by a local team which has later set up an independent Institute of Urban Economics (IUE) in Moscow. A strategic partnership between the UI and the IUE has helped secure additional international funding and contracts with the federal and regional authorities in and outside Russia, propelling IUE to a leading position in the regional policy consulting market (see Kolosnitsyna (BRP 2005)).

On the other hand, TA projects may squeeze fledgling indigenous organisations from the market. The relevant example are TA projects operated by for-profit Western consulting firms¹⁹. While ostensibly improving government procedures and processes, such TA efforts may undermine the ability of local organisations to build up their own consulting and research capacity by hiring away able analysts. To take another example, the wholesale and largely non-critical adoption of EU norms and regulations (as required by the terms of accession) by the Baltic countries has facilitated their transition and yet is reported to have reduced the scope for genuine local research to feed into policy, thus weakening local would-be-knowledge providers (Vanags BRP 2005).

2.1.2. Critique and advocacy

Providing solutions is not the only and, perhaps, not the main role of social sciences. They may also serve the purpose of identifying problems, criticising the policy status quo or promoting particular ideas, ideologies, and interests. This is the sense in which Lasswell (1951) referred to social sciences as the “policy sciences of democracy”. It is not surprising that the critical function of knowledge is strongly associated with *independent* PRIs, many of which were included in the BRP sample. Focusing on such topics as pro-market reforms and economic liberalisation (particularly in the

¹⁹ The situation may be gradually improving, at least in the for profit consulting sector, as donors switch from project based TA to general budget support. This tends to shift the contracting from the donor headquarters to the regional office of the donor, or the government itself. In both cases, the contracting gradually shifts to local providers.

transition region), good governance and corruption (Latin America), and self-government (India), advocacy organizations are a common feature of the policy inquiry landscape in sufficiently liberal contexts.

Our survey indicates a relative lack of success in promoting independently produced critique/advocacy type of knowledge. Unsolicited knowledge is reported to have very limited direct impact on policymaking. If at all considered, it is likely to be ignored for the purpose of decision-making (55% of responses). The qualitative evidence from our studies points in the same direction. For instance, according to Borgoyary (BRP 2006), research is one of several tools used by participatory forest management (PFM) networks in India in order to substantiate their cause. It emerges from the study, however, that "research does not seem to have had any direct impact on policy change. Even when research was done on demand from policy makers, only those studies that aimed at improving the implementation of existing programmes had any impact". This finding dovetails with the work of Kingdon (1984) on "policy windows", which argues that independent ideas and PRIs have impact only when a number of different factors coincide. A similar point is made in Carden et al (2002)²⁰.

Despite or, perhaps, because of these difficulties, critique/advocacy type of knowledge has attracted considerable attention in the international development discourse and practice. Funding agencies and international NGOs may support independent advocacy groups and issue networks as part of a general push for democracy (to provide a "critical balance force against state power and agency" (McGann with Johnson, (2006)) or because of concern with particular issues such as gender equality, good governance, small and medium enterprise development, etc.

Provision of critical knowledge is subject to three main types of constraints:

- (i) **Funding and legal restrictions** on the operation of independent knowledge producers;
- (ii) **Biases in knowledge production** related to excessive dependence on funding agencies and the external intellectual environment;
- (iii) **Deficiencies in knowledge production** related to the very notion of independence.

(i) Funding and legal restrictions. Scarce funding and legal restrictions are two key factors that affect the strength and viability of "southern" knowledge producers and their very ability to maintain an independent (critical) voice. While freedom in the "positive" sense (e.g. availability of human and financial resources) is essential for all types of knowledge provision, critical knowledge is particularly sensitive to government-imposed restrictions.

Founded in 1979 by Argentine professionals who had suffered the loss of their children to the repressive action of the dictatorial regime, the Centre of Legal and Social Studies (CELS) (see Weyrauch, D'Augustino (BRP 2006)) provides a unique example of an independent research and advocacy organisation that has defied the political system. The exceptional success of CELS can be attributed to the *enormous intrinsic motivation of its founders*. Yet, a far more common practice among PRIs operating in a legally restrictive environment is to apply self-censorship and shed the critical

²⁰ Carden et al (2002) develop a useful classification of policy environments in terms of government receptivity to independent knowledge ranging from unawareness of the issue, to disinterest, to open hostility. The latter type of attitude implies that ideas must be inserted into the public debate via the civil society channel.

function so as to mimic a consulting agency or a non-partisan and agnostic research organisation (Afontsev (BRP 2006), Menkova (BRP 2005)).

The funding constraint may be particularly acute in policy areas that have *the attributes of a public good* and hence are less likely to be addressed by governments, powerful lobbies and civil society groups that act in pursuit of self-interest (e.g. organised labour and business). A classical example is environmental policy. In the forestry policy case (Borgoyary (BRP 2006)), the notion of participatory management was successfully placed on the agenda of Indian governments and donors because of the strong welfare implications it had on the affected (organised) communities. The issue of renewable energy in Africa, while of great potential significance for poor rural households, was neglected by both governments and knowledge producing organisations. Thus, the bulk of energy policy analysis in Africa, as reported by Karekezi et al (BRP 2005), has been focused on conventional energy generation and distribution. Perhaps, the public good nature of environmental issues has made environment-minded NGOs and PRIs an attractive target for donor support in many "southern" countries.

The general weakness of non-state actors in a "southern" context has a strong negative impact on the civil society channel of funding independent policy inquiry. This channel plays an important role in developed democratic systems, where PRIs are often affiliated with powerful lobby groups, political parties, and labour unions. When non-state actors are weak and poorly organised, as is arguably the case in the "south", independent advocacy groups and PRIs may be de facto dependent on *external donor support*. Thus, government-imposed restrictions on the ability of local NGOs and PRIs to receive grants from external sources, such as practiced in Belarus and Uzbekistan, have the potential to effectively silence the independent voice.

(ii) Biases in knowledge production. The first type of bias concerns the *highly unequal distribution of skills and resources in a southern society*, with some civil society groups being much "more equal" than others in terms of ability to reach out to policymakers and substantiate their political claims by reference to evidence²¹. This issue has been singled out by Sanchez (BRP 2006) in her analysis of the land reform process in the Philippines: "civil society organisations that represent the underprivileged sectors have highly inadequate access to resources and research evidence which limits their capacity to impact public policy". To the extent that evidence does affect decision-making, such a lack of balance implies that powerful groups are likely to have the upper hand in the policy debate.

Biases in critical knowledge provision may also be associated with knowledge producers' dependence on external sources of funding and global (western) wisdom. This type of bias is reflected, for instance, in the thematic focus of externally-funded advocacy groups which tend to promote western values (e.g. individual human rights and gender equality), interests (e.g. privatisation and trade liberalisation), and beliefs (e.g. good governance and democracy). While our sample of advocacy-type organizations is by no means representative, it is quite telling that not a single case involved the promotion of Marxist, Islamic, Africanist, Hindu, Confucian or any other non-Western thinking or values despite their prevalence in the southern academic circles and the intellectual elite.

²¹ The survey provides another indication of the problem. Knowledge is deemed (by researchers participating in the survey!) to be biased toward the interests and values of powerful/active knowledge producing organisations (this is the most popular option, with 60% of respondents).

(iii) Deficiencies in independent knowledge production. The quality of independently produced knowledge may be compromised by the very nature of independent investigation:

- First, independence may have a cost attached in terms of access to necessary key players, data and information in policymaking environments that lack transparency. As a result, knowledge generated independently from the relevant government agencies may lack a proper empirical base;
- Second, analysts working for externally-funded independent organisations may not want to consider or lack awareness of the specific policymaking environment. The resulting “knowledge” may not address policymakers’ concerns in a timely fashion, may lack relevance, or fail to take into account political economy and financial constraints. This particular scenario has been corroborated by the survey. Lack of necessary attention to the government decision mode²² and relevant political constraints was ranked second as a reason for inadequate utilisation of knowledge;
- Finally, independent researchers may also lack in pragmatism, as illustrated by the experience of judicial reforms in Argentina. The fact that government was in an incremental decision-making mode and received support from the World Bank’s Legal Department (Riggirozzi BRP 2006) did not stop critically-minded independent groups from propagating radical reform measures that had no chance of being accepted. Such an idealist approach has necessarily limited the percolation of critical knowledge until a favorable change in political context (political crisis of 2001).

To sum up, the capacity of independent societal actors to produce and deliver critical knowledge is an important ingredient of a competitive democratic process. Yet, one must be aware of the constraints and incentives such actors face in contexts characterised by highly unequal distribution of limited resources and knowledge. The danger that research organisations will compromise established standards of rigorous investigation is quite real in situations when knowledge production gets mixed up with interest group politics and is not subject to strong peer review procedures. Such standards need to be cultivated and protected so as to distinguish PRIs (such as “think-tanks”) from NGOs and advocacy groups. Finally, in the absence of a proper assessment of their relevance, independent PRIs may be tempted to pay lip service to policy relevance, building “bridges” to donors while taking the notion of independence from government so seriously that they are irrelevant.

2.1.3. Fundamental

Finally, social sciences – like any fundamental sciences – are quite often not concerned with a direct and immediate impact on policy. That being so, scientific ideas and scientists have a tremendous impact on societies around the globe. Ideas, sometimes the wrong ideas, are, indeed, “more powerful than is commonly understood.

²² Using Lindquist’s terminology (2001), the disposition of policymakers to use evidence may depend on their “decision mode”, which is a function of the level of scrutiny and debate over the logical underpinnings of the current policy regime. The options he proposed are a) ‘Routine’ – policymakers focus on adopting existing policies to emerging conditions with little discussion of their logic; b) ‘Incremental’ – policies may be selectively adjusted at the margin without wholesale re-thinking of current approach; c) ‘Fundamental’ – policymakers tend to re-think the general approach to a policy domain as a result of crisis, new minister or government, etc.; and d) ‘Emergent’ – a new policy niche characterised by a lack of clear policy vision and limited policymaking capacity.

Indeed the world is ruled by little else" (Keynes 1936: 383). It may be up to politicians as well as policy and business entrepreneurs, however to apply scientific ideas to policy and business practice.

Unlike applied science and client-oriented consulting activities, fundamental knowledge is a classical "public good" on a global scale. For this very reason, it is "under-produced" in countries that lack the relevant traditions, the public commitment and/or the resources to support fundamental research. The ability to scan and access globally available fundamental knowledge implies that even the most technologically advanced countries, such as Finland, can have a "free ride" and ration costly investment in research activities that do not bring immediate financial dividends. Lacking a "critical mass" of well-trained academics and financial resources, the vast majority of developing countries are not in a position to even consider such investment. For most transition countries, the paramount challenges in science and education policy are how to avoid squandering their achievements in sciences after 15 years of almost total neglect and how to establish excellence in social disciplines that have emerged from a heavy ideological repression into an environment characterised by excessive commercialization and corruption (Livny & Polishchuk (2005)).

The bridging literature is typically highly critical of the "disinterested" social scientist, as conveyed by the following extensive quote from Stone et al (2001):

"Academic institutes tend to focus on workshops, conferences and the publication of books or scholarly articles, rather than on the dissemination of policy relevant ideas. There tends to be little communication across disciplines, or even within sub-fields of the discipline. Existing practices and standards of excellence in the social science disciplines encourage scholarly policy research that may not be of immediate relevance to policy. The peer review process furthermore means that academic journals can actually dampen genuinely new ideas. In economics, for example, research meets academic standards of excellence without either reflecting the needs of policy makers or being useful in solving policy problems. In general, "economics that is usable for advising on public policy is at about the level of introductory undergraduate course" (Frey & Eichberger 1997:28)"

While the short-term impact of fundamental knowledge may be, indeed, quite limited, this description overlooks its importance for countries that wish to establish own capacity in applied research and policy analysis. Carrying no immediate impact on policy, fundamental research is nevertheless an essential ingredient of a successfully functioning policy inquiry "market". It is absolutely crucial in the context of transition and development:

- as a learning device for young scholars ("human capital" argument);
- as a bridge to global epistemic communities, knowledge and scientific ideas ("diffusion and local reinvention" argument).²³
- for the positive "external" effect it has on the quality and culture of policy inquiry proper. The significance of this last factor is best understood against the backdrop of supply gaps discussed in the previous two subsections: namely, low quality provision, lack of peer pressure and the need to cultivate professional standards in policy inquiry ("external effect" argument").

²³ On the importance of global scanning and local re-invention for developing countries see Stiglitz (2000).

Moreover, if we consider the non-research forms of policy inquiry, the distance between the academic community and policymaking is not as large. Academics are frequently appointed as policy advisors and are involved in a broad range of “convocation” activities that bring together scholars and policymakers to discuss problems and reflect on possible solutions. In addition to seminars and conferences, the latter may also include working groups (e.g. Shopov BRP 2005) which provide opportunities for academics to make a direct contribution to policymaking.

The desire of donor agencies in more recent years to promote policy inquiry has led to a surge in “policy-relevant” academic research in many developing countries²⁴. Despite the general lack of interest in policy issues and/or lack of capacity to address them in a practical and timely manner, academics are often producing “policy-relevant research” and donors are quite often funding it. In practice, however, much of the policy research conducted by academics is not really intended for policymakers’ use and ends up in journals rather than policymakers’ hands (see studies by Yuan et al (BRP 2005), Mehendale (BRP 2005), Das (BRP 2005) among others). This suggests that the notion of “policy-relevant research” must be guarded against pro forma use to justify donor funding decisions.

This outcome may be driven by a number of institutional factors, including self-selection and purposive hiring/promotion policies adopted by academic institutions; lack of policy acuity and policy-relevant research skills by individual faculty members (resulting from self-selection but also lack of training and/or first-hand experience), weak support structures (e.g. university-based policy research centres) and, finally, lack of professional incentives for policy work which increase the opportunity cost of faculty involvement in policy analysis as opposed to teaching and academic research.

2.2. Cross-cutting issues

There are a number of cross-cutting factors and common themes we would like to highlight. These include:

- (i) Accumulation and retention of human capital
- (ii) Choice of appropriate business models and PRI sustainability issues
- (iii) Interaction with external actors.

(i) Accumulation of human capital. The human capital challenge was and remains very acute in most post transition and developing countries. At the beginning of transition there was an almost universal shortage of researchers qualified to undertake “market-oriented” economic and social research. Moreover, the local universities also lacked the capacity to train or retrain people. Thus, people wishing to acquire modern research skills were (and still are) obliged to go abroad. Turning around such a situation is a lengthy process and as a starting point requires local acknowledgement that the problem exists²⁵, along with a strong commitment to reform.

²⁴ Stone (2001:2) links this evolution to the effort of financially strapped donor agencies to re-invent themselves given the reduction in development assistance funding in OECD countries. Even as funding levels started rising more recently, donors continue to feel obliged to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of aid.

²⁵ Traditional state universities that tend to dominate higher education in post-communist countries are reluctant to acknowledge the shortcomings of what they have to offer.

The transition experience illustrates the difficulties of research capacity building in policy areas that emerged because of a fundamental regime change. Another challenge is that of sustaining human capital in fields such as energy studies, which are subject to sharply fluctuating local demand for knowledge. In contrast, readily available international funding ensures a steady flow of individual and institutional entrants into the poverty research "industry" in most poor and many middle income countries.

Even if qualified researchers may be in principle available, there is, in many transition/development countries, a problem of both internal and external "brain drain" that has grave implications for the sustainability of knowledge providing institutions. In countries that see their best human capital sucked away in a process of external brain drain, the internal labour market competition is a "zero sum game" that does not increase the quantity of domestically available talent. Facing fierce domestic competition with the private sector, the academic and non-governmental sectors are kept afloat largely through the infusion of western funding. However, such short-term injections of external funding do not enable these sectors to retain and/or repatriate the best educated scholars and intellectuals.

Human capital deficiencies in the policy research industry can also be attributed to specific institutional factors. Small and financially insecure independent institutions, such as PRIs, may not be able to offer adequate professional incentives and career prospects for highly qualified policy analysts. Larger universities, on the other hand, may be less interested in hiring policy specialists, a preference reflected in the university hiring and promotion rules.

(ii) PRI business models, independence and sustainability issues. The broad international acceptance of the think-tank business model as a "best practice" of choice for development actors has led to its rapid diffusion on a global scale since 1970s (McGann with Johnson, (2006)). Think-tanks are expected to fill in the perceived policy/research void by building relevant capacities outside or on the margins of the traditional university sector and mobilising global resources and know-how. For instance, according to UNDP (2003), think-tanks are "the bridge between knowledge and power in modern democracies".

Reflecting this global trend, most PRIs in our sample are organised as independent or quasi-independent²⁶ organisations loosely based on the North American think-tank model; only a few are university-based research units. Our survey suggests that while the "start-up" phase has been successful for many organisations in BRP sample of PRIs, "deepening" and sustaining early achievements remains a challenge. Most PRIs continue to face tremendous difficulties related to human capital accumulation, financial stability and the need to balance impact on policy and independence.

Funding. Funding represents the major challenge for a typical knowledge producing institution in the BRP sample of PRIs. Organisations that were started with generous external funding sooner or later find themselves obliged to compete for projects in order to survive. This tends to compromise the independence of their agenda and, perhaps more importantly, financial uncertainty seriously limits their ability to offer a career structure for young researchers in order to attract and retain the best qualified staff.

²⁶ Most organizations in the BRP sample of PRIs have independent governance structures yet depend on government contracts and/or good will to be able to operate.

Not a single organisation in the BRP sample of PRIs had access to endowment-type funding which is the predominant form of financing think-tanks in North-America. The vast majority of organisations receive the bulk of their funding from foreign sources, in the form of institutional support and for specific projects. A few organisations are supported by business associations (in Latin America), but this raises issues of bias and credibility, to the point where they are often excluded from certain policy discussions. Many PRIs, especially in Africa and Asia, depend on government contracts, which also raises issues of independence.

Independence. Operating in a less than fully liberal political environment, independent PRIs may face a stark trade-off between independence from government and impact on policymaking.²⁷ As shrewdly observed by Stone (2005:3), “the notion that a think tank requires independence from the state in order to be ‘free-thinking’ is an Anglo-American norm that does not translate well into other political cultures”. Certainly in Asia, “it is not unusual for think-tanks to be created by governments as an extra-bureaucratic arm of government”, sometimes on the basis of an agreement and with funding from international donors (see, for instance, the case of Sustainable Development Policy Institute in Pakistan (Syed Mohammad Ali (BRP 2005))).

In non-liberal contexts, e.g. in Uzbekistan and Belarus, both “independence” and “free thinking” may be counterproductive from a PRI point of view. This may be so because of dependence on the government for research contracts and even permission to operate, but also because the alternative, civil society channel of impact – through public media, grass roots and parliamentary politics – may be ineffective. Constrained as they are, PRIs may still perform “problem solving” work while applying self-censorship and focusing on fundamental research, consulting or training services for national governments and regional donors.

(iii) Interaction with external actors. A persistent theme in the Phase II projects is the marginalised position of *local* researchers. This is especially the case where the international agencies and donors have been involved. The study on judicial reform in Argentina explicitly addressed this question and the conclusion is stark: “The fact that the World Bank offered reform proposals based on its own “in-house” research production and consultants with experience in judicial reform in other countries, and that it also had the money to support it, led government officials to crowd out other sources of reform proposals and research, even those that came from within the bureaucratic team in the Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, the World Bank itself did not ... incorporate the input of those with more in-depth knowledge of local institutions even though the Bank facilitated joint research production with local actors during initial stages of background analysis and diagnostic work” (Riggirozzi, BRP 2005).

Similarly, in Uganda, Kiiza et al (BRP 2006) note that “the Africanist alternatives were defeated and the IFI reform agenda adopted in reforming African countries (like Uganda) because of the institutional source of pro-reform evidence, the interests at stake, the availability of finances, and the economic crises (such as hyperinflation) of the 1980s and 1990s.” In the Baltic states too, the international institutions have been influential in the market reform process (e.g. the World Bank) and played a key role in pension reform in all three countries. The EU accession process also had the effect of marginalising local research because accession required a virtually uncritical

²⁷ This trade off is well captured by the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Policy Studies in Singapore, according to whom the position of think-tanks should be “close to, but not part of government” (quoted in Stone (2005)).

adoption of the EU template in the form of the *acquis communautaire* and by and large obviated the need for local research and local solutions (Vanags BRP 2005).

2.3. Bridging supply gaps

Dealing with supply failures would normally require measures to promote the supply of research and researchers, and to promote quality, if there is a quality issue. For small developing countries, however, there may be little economic justification for maintaining sophisticated analytical capacity in a broad range of disciplines and policy domains. Instead, it may make sense for a country to specialise in a few strategically important areas, while using access to regional and global knowledge networks to import other types of expertise. In fact, conducting an *audit of BRP gaps* and elaborating an explicit *country/sector strategy* concerning priorities for investment in indigenous analytical capacities is a key policy recommendation of the current paper (see Chapter 5 for more detail).

Our studies provide examples of three types of approaches to bridging supply gaps:

- (i) Ad hoc actions that address short-term needs for local or international evidence in order to solve a concrete policy related problem;
- (ii) Bridging actions that promote *general* scientific inquiry (and its quality) with an eye to the potential long-term impact of research on policy;
- (iii) Bridging actions that aim at creating *specialised* research and/or advocacy capacity in areas deemed important.

A taxonomy of actions/instruments available to each type of stakeholder, as suggested by the BRP studies, is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Supply gaps: “bridging” actions by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder	Purpose and type of action
Policy makers	Ad hoc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsource and commission research • Engage local and international advisors Long-term, general purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve publicly funded university education • Fund research grant programs • Streamline procedures for public funding of research Long-term, special purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create in-house or extra-bureaucratic research capacity in areas deemed strategically important
Researchers/PRIIs	Ad hoc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to calls for proposals/participating in tenders • Participate in conferences and seminars Long term, general purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen research incentives, creating research support units and improving internal management Long term, special purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialise and reach out beyond national markets • Form strategic partnerships with specialised international NGOs, research institutions and networks
Donors and technical assistance	Ad hoc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide short-term funding for research projects

agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver technical assistance/advice <p>Long term, general purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate general capacity building and “methodological spillovers” from international to local researchers • Facilitate international networking and institutional development of independent PRIs <p>Long term, special purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote research capacity building in areas deemed strategically important (possibly with co-funding and in cooperation with local government). • Promote partnerships and twinning arrangements involving local and specialised international organisations
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Supply gaps are inherently difficult to bridge in a southern context because of the poor institutional environment (i.e. presence of other types of “gaps”), internal and external brain drain, and competition with global knowledge providers. Given the range of problems, stakeholders involved in bridging the supply gap are likely to do better if their actions are coordinated and adhere to an agreed upon strategy.

The majority of bridging actions documented by the BRP project addressed, rather successfully, ad hoc supply gaps. More ambitious initiatives were often found to employ inappropriate mechanisms and lack the necessary scope, focus, and duration. Thus, as demonstrated by a number of PRI case studies, donor-assisted efforts to build institutional research capacities may fail to create viable, self-dependent organisations. Research grant programs may serve as instruments for distribution of donor or public funding that produce “policy relevant” research that is rarely reviewed by policymakers (as is arguably the case with e.g. publicly-funded research programs in Latvia (Vanags (BRP 2005)) and also in China (Yuan et al (BRP 2005))). Most importantly, when implemented in isolation from other measures, such programs do not create *long-term* incentives for capacity building, quality and relevance.

Our analysis suggests that efforts to bridge supply gaps in a more systematic fashion have to be guided by the following principles:

- **Focus and depth**²⁸. At the national level, measures to improve provision might be more effective if aimed at achieving greater depth and excellence in fewer research areas, including measures to encourage institutional consolidation and mergers among knowledge providers. Thematic priorities could be strategically established on the basis of a country/sector BRP audit of needs and capacities (see Section 5 for more detail), with quality expectations being set via a rigorous application of peer review procedures, including “relevance review” in addition to the usual “technical review”.
- **Duration**. To lead to *sustainable* outcomes, funding and other research incubation arrangements must provide a reasonable level and duration of financial

²⁸ An argument can be made, based on complexity theory, that organizations should be open to new directions, and be able to change course. This is precisely why cash-strapped and survival-oriented organizations in the “south” do tend to avoid greater specialization and focus. Specialization is risky and counter-productive from the individual PRI point of view in a small knowledge market subject to shifting policy priorities. Hence, the low quality conundrum. Our point is that specialization can be consistent with survival and “complexity” provided organizations expand their geographic reach by forming regional networks. This is the business model used by the majority of international NGOs (e.g. the Urban Institute) and specialised technical assistance agencies.

security for good quality and *improving* institutions, and for talented individuals who choose to join the policy research industry.

- **Scope and coordination.** To achieve systemic impact, interested parties may establish co-funding and coordination arrangements involving potential clients (government, donors, and private sector) and different types of knowledge providers (e.g. universities, PRIs, and advocacy groups).

Below we dwell on a number of supply-oriented bridging tasks to be incorporated in local, national and regional bridging initiatives based on their goals and a careful assessment of gaps. Among these, we single out 1) the need to involve select PRIs in comprehensive multi-year capacity building and partnership initiatives, and 2) set up regional networks to promote the quality of research and research-based policy advice, and connect PRIs to regional knowledge users. These two key recommendations of the current paper are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.

(a) **Strengthen the capabilities and skills of incumbent PRIs** (especially those operating independently of governments) to play a more effective role in the policy process. This may involve increasing their knowledge of the specific policy context and decision-making process, language and style requirements, as well as other formal and informal rules of presenting information and data to public officials. Training on these topics may follow the models employed by such agencies as the Overseas Development Institute (www.odi.org.uk/RAPID), IDRC (Organizational assessment technique – Lusthaus et al (2002)), the Urban Institute (Struyk (2002)), and the Population Research Bureau. Importantly, capacity building programs offered by these institutions also involve collaboration and coalition building among researchers and civil society groups. Government internships may provide another, practical way for academics to participate in the policy process and acquire the relevant skills and relational capital. Finally, a particularly effective vehicle of continuous knowledge transfer is afforded by strategic partnerships among southern and northern PRIs. As should be the case with most bridging interventions, capacity building programs should adhere to a multi-year framework, focus on carefully selected topics and institutions, and be implemented in coordination with other stakeholders, including potential clients and users of knowledge.

(b) **Attract highly skilled young professionals to the policy research industry.** Relevant measures may include, in addition to financial incentives, improved access to data and information, career opportunities, and provisions for international mobility. In particular, developing countries have to devise strategies to “network” their expatriate expert communities. Given the inexorable forces of globalisation, this may be the most effective way of reversing and even exploiting brain drain, thus providing a longer-run response to human capital deficits.

(c) **Promote a process of consolidation in the policy research industry**, involving experimentation with new business models, mergers and alliances. Such a process is likely to result in more complex institutional arrangements that:

- nest policy research units within larger academic institutions or civil society organizations engaged in complementary activities so as exploit synergies (“nesting”),
- link them to international/regional research organisations (“twinning”), and
- integrate them within government bureaucracy, private sector or civil society organisations (“vertical integration”).

(d) **Promote a process of PRI specialisation** necessary for operation in a broader regional market, whether individually or as part of larger cross-country research and policy consulting projects. This may take a variety of forms including organisational

consulting/coaching, training and twinning arrangements to develop technical and managerial skills. Greater specialisation should go hand in hand with increased capacity to manage multidisciplinary partnerships and external expert networks. The need to do so may be particularly strong in policy areas that call for specialised analytical inputs (e.g. energy and social policy, environment and agriculture).

(e) **Strengthen the external incentives for PRI to invest in quality.** This calls for a more rigorous assessment of quality and impact to be conducted by funding agencies. In so doing, donors may help wean PRI and individual researchers from relatively “easy” donor funding and prepare them for higher quality policy consulting work. Greater stringency and transparency in the evaluation of policy consulting products should also encourage new entry and greater competition, providing an addition impetus for investment in quality by incumbent PRI.

(f) **Help open national knowledge markets and establish a competitive regional marketplace for knowledge.** In practical terms, this calls for the emergence of *regional* knowledge “brokers” or networks with the ability to open up national markets, facilitate south-south and north-south cooperation among PRIs, and act as connectors and quality assurance agencies vis-à-vis private and public sector clients. Measures to open up *national* knowledge markets will:

- lead to greater transparency and professionalism in the allocation of consulting contracts and grants by national governments and donors,
- facilitate regional cooperation in knowledge generation and south-south outsourcing of analytical tasks,
- induce the creation of regional knowledge depositories of data and information allowing for greater cross-fertilisation and horizontal learning.

The role of networks is further discussed in sections 3 and 5.

(g) **Help create formal structures and stronger internal incentives** within academic institutions (particularly universities) in order to reduce the opportunity costs and risks related to academics’ involvement in policy work. Relevant measures may include creation of policy research centres, reduction of the teaching load and recognition of policy research for hiring and promotion purposes. Many university academics in developing countries do “policy consulting work” by selling their services directly to donors, not through the university. The main challenges for academic institutions are, therefore, to perform a facilitator role, organise peer review and other forms of quality control, and create incentives for academics to channel their policy research activities through the university.

(g) **Promote international transfer of skills** (as opposed to knowledge) as part of Technical Assistance projects, so as to help build lasting local capacities.

CHAPTER 3: INFORMATION GAPS

If knowledge is regarded as an important input into policymaking then, almost by definition, information flows and communication between social scientists (“knowledge-producers”) and policymakers (“knowledge-consumers”) represent a crucial element in the effective deployment of knowledge in the policy process. The notion that these two communities may be “vertically disintegrated” has been the basis of the “knowledge utilisation” literature which emerged in late 1970s (e.g. Caplan (1979), Lynn (1978), Weiss (1977)). This theory associated the research-policy gap with ignorance about needs and capacities on both sides of the divide, stereotypical thinking and lack of trust. While “the two communities” line of analysis has fallen out

of favour²⁹ in more recent years, the view that researchers and policymakers live in separate worlds is still commonly held (“where one group feels nobody listens, the other feels their opposite numbers have little to say” (DanIDA, 2001:9). BRP studies confirm that communication difficulties still play a big role in hindering effective research-to-policy interaction. Limited access to information, data, and policy discussion spaces are among the most common problems facing researchers in developing and transition countries. Poor understanding of both the policy process, and the related language and style requirements by the research community are a common complaint of policymakers.

Information gaps appeared as an issue in most studies in two main forms:

- Inadequate information exchange between researchers and policymakers;
- Credibility/reputation issues.

The first kind of failure is to some extent specific to the type of knowledge while the credibility of knowledge and the reputation of knowledge providers is the most important of the cross cutting issues.

3.1. Communication gaps for different types of knowledge

Problem solving: Effective delivery of problem solving knowledge generates the least in the way of gaps in communication and information flows. After all, both sides of the “knowledge divide” have a common interest in “solving the problem” and indeed the most convincing of the Phase II project good practice studies were the two problem-solving episodes concerned with efficient allocation of school meals and the development of acceptable arsenic standards in the Chilean mining industry. In both cases there was a well defined “problem” and the policy makers were able to engage reputable researchers who successfully addressed the problem.

In such cases there is clearly not a data problem, other than the usual scientific issues, and at a general level, effective communication of “problem-solving” knowledge is mainly a question of familiarity with the client’s language and other requirements, including ability to stick to deadlines. Not surprisingly, many successful consultancies, e.g. in the trade policy sector in Chile (Aninat BRP 2006), are established by academic researchers with prior policymaking experience in relevant government agencies.

A possible communication issue even in the problem solving sphere concerns the ability and incentives of government, especially at lower levels, to effectively engage the research community. We discuss these problems and possible remedies in the next section devoted to governance and demand failures.

Critique and advocacy: Communication of independently produced critical knowledge is inherently difficult in a southern context. First, independence may imply lack of intimate knowledge of the policy environment, and limited access to policymakers or potential “connectors”. Second, when governments resist change, communication of critical knowledge must take the form of advocacy, public campaigning, etc., which requires a set of “entrepreneurial” skills that research organisations and individuals rarely possess. Third, independent PRI in developing/transition countries tend

²⁹ It has been recognised firstly (and very clearly so in the BRP project) that any policy domain includes multiple actors in addition to policy makers and knowledge providers, and secondly that, in practice, the ‘distance’ between the two communities may vary across its various dimensions: research, convocation activities, social and professional inter-penetration.

to be too small to provide effective assistance with policy outreach and “marketing”, and their boards are not always set up to guide strategic communication. Finally, public campaigning in non-liberal contexts may be hindered by the weakness of political parties, submissive media, and government skin-thickness with respect to civil society pressures and public opinion.

The PRSP processes have tried to address some of these gaps by establishing the formal mechanisms and spaces for NGOs and PRIs to be included in the public policy debate. However, as reported by Wangwe (BRP 2006), McNeill (BRP 2006), Kiiza et al (BRP 2006), the PRSP process has not produced the desired results and has had only a limited impact on the contextual factors that inhibit the uptake of knowledge in the longer run.

Fundamental: Even under the best circumstances there is an inherent difficulty in translating fundamental knowledge, e.g. theoretical research, into knowledge that can be applied. Moreover, scientists are rarely equipped or motivated to serve as interpreters of fundamental knowledge. Indeed, part of the role of both policy consultants and policy oriented NGOs is to perform exactly this task. In the “real world”, as discussed in the previous chapter, even policy relevant academic studies may not be intended for policymaker use and may never end up in their hands. For instance, Yuan et al (BRP 2005) report “a lack of incentives both for policymakers and researchers to communicate directly with each other” in the Chinese healthcare sector. Instead, researchers appeared to be more concerned with furthering their academic careers by getting research results published in scholarly journals.

Nevertheless, academic researchers are frequently involved in meetings as well as formal committees and working groups that are organised in order to deliberate on policy issues (Shopov BRP 2005). In the Baltic states, perhaps the compactness of their respective researcher/policy-maker communities contributed to the observation of a high “frequency of contact between researchers and policy-makers ... both formal and informal” (Vanags (BRP 2005)).

3.2. Cross-cutting issues

Credibility/reputation. It is a well known problem in the “market for knowledge” that “sellers” i.e. knowledge producers may have difficulties in authenticating the quality of the knowledge they have to offer. To be successful in such a market, institutions need to establish reputation or credibility. This issue appeared in a number of studies and was particularly acute in the post-communist countries, where a favoured solution has been for local research organisations to work with or under the guidance of foreign institutions or programs thereby implicitly riding on the reputation of the foreign associate.

Thus, in the Bulgarian pension reform episode, the local Centre for Economic Development was “affiliated to several types of research institutions ... [including] foreign consultant companies, international organisations and consultants” (Shopov (BRP 2005:29)). Interestingly, in the Bulgarian case study the local researchers were key participants in the pension reform working group, playing the role of intermediaries or interpreters. In Ukraine, too, all three of the private institutes involved in the documented reform episodes had foreign associates – Germany in the case of the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, Poland for the Centre for Social and Economic Research – CASE Ukraine, and the Open Society Institute for the International Centre for Policy Studies (Eremenko (BRP 2005)) .

The reputation issue clearly also emerged in the Africa energy sector study (Karekezi et al (BRP 2005)) where it is noted that “for researchers to become influential in policy they have to build their reputation over longer periods of time through relatively successful projects”. In practice, as became evident from a retrospective analysis of energy policy documents, the issue of credibility was addressed by involving researchers trusted by governments or government officials. To some extent this quality assurance “mechanism” was found to compromise the independent nature of investigation and limit the opportunities for independent knowledge provision. Involvement of government researchers may represent a form of rent seeking or corruption, especially if their involvement is remunerated,

Centre vs. periphery. Certainly in large countries, distance puts provincial PRIs at a disadvantage compared to organisations based at the capital city. Electronic communication cannot be a substitute for physical proximity to decision-making centres, especially in monocentric political systems and in policy sectors with highly concentrated decision-making power. Organisations in the periphery may simply not be aware of opportunities that are available to them. As suggested by Mehendale (BRP 2005) in the context of the Right to Education Constitutional Amendment in India, “a majority of the research community did not access [available policy] spaces primarily because of lack of awareness about the proposed amendment and spaces available for external influence”. The issue of centre-periphery imbalances in terms of ability to communicate relevant knowledge and exert influence on the central government was also prominently featured in the case study of Fundacion Mediterranea and IERAL in Argentina (Colina et al (BRP 2006)).

Ad hoc vs. permanent communication channels. Most studies identify ad hoc communication arrangements that serve as effective means of delivering a particular policy relevant message. For instance, such arrangements were about engaging influential “policy champions” or “connectors” – prominent international scholars, businessmen, or former politicians. This has clearly been the case in two episodes of financial sector reform in Ukraine (Eremenko et al (BRP 2005)) – lowering reserve requirements and the development of a deposit insurance scheme – where the role of policy champions was performed by senior western researchers. Such success stories, however, highlight the lack of more *permanent and readily available* channels of communication and fora for policy consultations and debate.

Even relatively competitive democracies, such as India, may lack a truly participatory dimension. Thus, public hearings and committees may be part of a political ritual (see Mehendale (BRP 2005)). Most developing countries, however, lack even the formal mechanisms and institutionalised spaces for an open and inclusive policy debate, let alone real contestation of policies. This deficit is reflected, for instance, in political decisions being dominated by the executive branch of government, and the general top-down nature of the political process. Thus, Karekezi et al (BRP 2005) report that in the East African energy sector “the agenda for policy formulation is controlled by the ministry of energy [which] indicates a possible bottleneck in the participation of independent researchers in the policy making process”. The overwhelming power of the executive branch of government reduces the opportunities for using the parliament and parliamentary committees as a base for meaningful research-to-policy interactions. While the study does find evidence of top-down communication, its nature gives rise to the potential for information failures.

Role of networks. BRP Phase II studies directly or indirectly assessed the impact of three networks: the Indian Participatory Forestry Management (PFM) networks, the African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN) and the Open Society Institute’s network of International Policy Fellows (IPF) in Eastern Europe and former USSR

countries. The actual roles of these organisations are quite different. The specialised networks – AFREPREN and PFM networks are reported to promote a certain policy agenda (advocacy) and in so doing facilitate the local application of relevant policy prescriptions (typically drawing on global or regional knowledge). The IPF attempted to build the capacity of and “network” its individual fellows in order for them to serve as catalysts of public policy debate and institutional change in their home countries.

In the forestry sector, Participatory Forestry Management networks have emerged in response to strong demand from relatively well organised communities, which provided the basis for the legitimacy and sustainability of the networks. As reported by Borgoyary, these networks have “directly or indirectly used [policy inquiry] to support their lobbying and advocacy activities” (Borgoyary (BRP 2006:19). India is an example where “grass roots democracy” and a tradition of extensive policy consultations seem to foster intermediary organisations that actively try to reduce the research/policy gap. Thus, Mehendale reports “The NGOs, networks and advocacy coalitions played a critical role of “research brokers” by taking key research findings to the policy makers, media and the civil society” (Policy Brief p 2). In more hostile environments, donors may be required (tempted) to put in place rather sophisticated and difficult-to-sustain networking mechanisms to build individual capacities and support the organisations on which these individuals depend for policy outreach activities (Pop (BRP 2006)).

3.3. Bridging information gaps

The BRP Phase II studies document a variety of actions aimed at improving communication and information flows between researchers and policymakers. In fact, 92% of the responses to our survey of project authors indicated that bridging efforts have mainly improved communication. Most of these were about improving policy makers’ access to relevant research through specialised publications (e.g. newsletters and policy briefs) or engagement of policy advocates. Communication and dialogue have also been prominent components of the PRSP processes.

Table 3 below provides a taxonomy of bridging actions to improve communication and information flows, by stakeholder and type of action (ad hoc vs. long-term), as suggested by BRP studies.

Table 3: Information gaps: bridging actions by type of stakeholder:

Stakeholder	Purpose and type of bridging action
Policymakers	<p>Ad hoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish ad hoc working groups or committees • Hold public consultations on policy issues • Hire researchers <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform civil service to improve the quality of bureaucracy • Institutionalise stakeholder consultations (e.g. parliamentary hearings, green papers) • Increase transparency of policymaking processes, including access to government documents (e.g. white papers) and statistical data • Create/participate in networks with researchers as partners • Create in-house or extra bureaucratic liaison units to engage the research community • Serve on Boards of independent PRIs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish government internships for PRIs/academics
Research-ers/PRIs	<p>Ad hoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate research findings (seminars, conferences, publications and policy briefs) • Write in popular press and create public opinion • Attend public hearings/policy events • Maintain informal and personal contacts with the policy makers • Engage “research brokers” or “research advocates”. <p>Long term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communication skills • Establish communication/outreach units within PRIs • Involve Board members representing government, and other influential stakeholders • Design and institutionalise regular policy outreach events (lunch-time presentations, etc.) • Join specialised regional and international networks • Design and publish regular policy papers
Donors	<p>Ad hoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund conferences, publication and communication of research • Act as carriers of international and domestic research ideas • Promote consultation-based planning processes such as PRSP <p>Long term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create specialised networks to bring regional knowledge to bear on policy • Promote civil service reforms • Promote regional knowledge markets and networking
Civil society (NGOs, labour, business, ethnic groups, etc.)	<p>Ad hoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use media and direct field action to create public opinion and generate awareness about available evidence on policy issues • Initiate and/or help organise public consultations on policy issues <p>Long term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create specialised NGOs to serve as clearing-houses for information on policy issues • Form strategic alliances involving civil society groups and research organisations (with a regional or international partner) • Create and institutionalise spaces for public policy debate at the local level, promote peripheral and underprivileged groups to central debate arenas

Improving communication is clearly a multifaceted task, one that involves building incentives, capacities and structures for effective dialog and debate. A number of somewhat longer-term approaches and mechanisms are highlighted below:

(a) Working groups. A large number of BRP studies, including country studies of the Baltic countries and India, and the pension reform episode in Bulgaria provide strong evidence that ad hoc working groups can be a particularly effective bridging mechanism. We find that the “co-location” and collaboration of researchers and policymakers enhances the understanding and appreciation of mutual needs and facilitates the development of essential capacities for communication and relationship building. It appears that ad hoc working groups that addressed pressing policy issues have been quite effective in bringing knowledge to bear on policy, in particular by translating and localising global solutions, and hence could be recommended as a requisite “bridging” methodology for donors.

(b) Research networks. To some extent, specialised research networks reflect a trend in communication technology and globalisation. Many networks have emerged in the recent decade with the help of donors, sometimes spanning large states and multi-state regions. The GDN itself is an example of a global and regional networking enterprise. Networks by their very nature strive to improve *horizontal* information flows between network participants. A more demanding task, requiring a different set of skills, concerns facilitation of *vertical* communication and liaison between producers and users of knowledge. In our view, research networks are more likely to be sustained in a developing/transition context if they are designed to add value to policy research products and act as “vertical” connectors between research organizations and their clients. This is another key recommendation of the current paper (see Section 5 for further discussion). Below we briefly discuss two alternative (or complementary) approaches to networking, both of which produce value added for their constituent members and clients. These models are “ideal types” that incorporate select features of existing prototypes, such as AFREPREN, Participatory Forestry Networks in India, and the Centre for Strategic Research in Russia (www.csr.ru).

- **Research networks cum government outreach units.** Governments can develop in-house “outreach” units (within ministries or specialised agencies) or extra-bureaucratic networking organisations. A network’s role in this case would be to coordinate policy research projects implemented by external (independent) PRIs and provide a regular space for consultations involving the local and international research community. The network’s main asset under this scenario is proximity to government which ensures financial stability and convening power.

- **Specialised PRI networking-type organisations.** Networks can emerge as *regional brokers* between independent PRIs and national governments³⁰. Such networks can provide three types of value added: (i) help member PRIs compete in tenders outside their national markets, thus extending their geographic market niche; (ii) strengthen the policy dimension of projects undertaken by member PRIs by engaging specialised policy consultants, (iii) build regional PRI coalitions, possibly with the involvement of international partners, to address requests for research, capacity building and consulting by multinational institutions, IFI and national governments.

(c) Incentives for policy maker/knowledge producer interaction

- **On the demand side:** civil service reforms, including performance evaluation and promotion criteria that reward professionalism and innovation, meaningful decentralisation (vesting authority to innovate at lower levels of government) and institutionalisation of such practices as white/green papers, working groups and other forms of public discussion of policy options.

- **On the supply side:** contractual arrangements, performance evaluation and promotion criteria could provide incentives to engage in research and policy analysis (e.g. reduction of teaching load). Specialised units within research and teaching institutions could lower the “cost” for faculty of getting involved in policy analysis by helping prepare proposals for tenders and grant competitions, and/or providing assistance with policy outreach and “marketing”.

³⁰ However, as reported by Karekezi et al (BRP 2006), this may be not easy: “except in the case of Uganda, the importance of regional research institutions is relatively low compared to national organisations”

(d) Interpenetration of research and civil service elites

- **A "revolving door" practice**, whereby researchers assume positions in government (on a temporary or permanent basis) and retired policy makers serve on boards or staff of knowledge producing institutions may be quite effective in alleviating information failures, mitigating stereotypical thinking and creating opportunities for meaningful cooperation. A possible version of inter-sectoral mobility consists of movement from academia to government service to policy research and consulting, as reported by Aninat (BRP 2006) in the context of the trade policy sector in Chile. Such mobility depends on availability of opportunities and incentives for entry-exit within the two communities which could be created by political parties, civil service, and the research community. There is some evidence from a related field (on the uptake of scientific R&D by industry) that it is the mobility of people between universities and industry which influences the rate of diffusion.

- **Organisation of joint conferences, working groups, public hearings:** this is fairly standard practice but is an important communication/trust-building mechanism the efficacy of which could be greatly improved. Of note, for instance, is the practice of lunch-time seminars at the Overseas Development Institute, and the Centre for Economic Policy Research (www.cepr.org) in the UK, which has organised 500 such meetings across Europe over the past 25 years.

CHAPTER 4: GOVERNANCE AND DEMAND GAPS

We now focus on the last two gaps in our typology concerned with the ability and willingness of government to pull in and utilise knowledge that exists or can be produced by local researchers. As is widely acknowledged (see e.g. Stone et al, 2001), the aspect of governance concerned with knowledge utilization is fraught with difficulties. The following quote from Colina et al (BRP 2006) is indicative of the range of problems:

"Research seldom plays a role in the Argentinean policy making process. Formal institutions and mechanisms aimed at enhancing the links between research and policy making, such as a highly professional and independent civil service, or competitive and transparent allocation of public funds towards research hardly exist. Furthermore, the legislative power lacks the technical capabilities to design policies, political parties have no established links with research institutions and, hence, public policies appear as a monopoly of the executive power and lobby groups".

When analysing demand/governance gaps and considering potential remedies, it may be useful to distinguish between three types of situations in which policy makers do not make use of available knowledge:

- Situations where policymakers are "captured" by special vested interests and make selective use of evidence (or even generate distorted evidence).
- Situations where they do not know how to use it ("capacity" problem), and
- Situation where they do not have any reason to use it ("incentives" problem)

Arguably, such situations represent failures of different kinds. The last two situations represent "demand gaps" and are intimately related to the quality of civil service, and the culture and practice of policymaking. At least in principle, they are amenable to change contingent on the availability of adequate political will and resources. The first challenge – a "governance failure", according to our terminology – may be firmly rooted in the social and political milieu of a country or sector. That said, governance

failures can be understood more broadly than the extreme form represented by state capture. For example lack of incentives for policymakers to base policy on evidence or lack of transparency and accountability in the policymaking process can also be regarded as governance failures even if they do not originate in vested interests. Thus, more often than not demand gaps are the result of poor governance broadly defined. For this reason we have chosen to treat these two gaps together in one chapter.

4.1. Governance gaps

India, although generally regarded as “a success story of economic reforms”, has been unable to liberalise its labour markets. Das (BRP 2005) argues that “progress of privatisation and labour reforms was slow ... due to political economy constraints. Despite various studies done in India indicating substantial benefits from liberalisation of labour markets ... Indian labour laws still remain highly restrictive. Most of these studies were ignored by the trade unions and left parties”. In her study Mehendale also notes that research may often be used “to justify the decisions already made or as “tokenism”” (Mehendale BRP 2005). Perhaps this is a price to be paid for Indian democracy. “Policy making, in a democratic system like India” argues Mehendale, “is a complex and a multi-layered exercise, which creates both opportunities and obstacles for research uptake”.

The Philippines study (Sanchez (2006)) focuses on several case studies in land reform. The main message concerns the dominating influence of research undertaken to support the position of particular interests. In a sense we have here a conflation of a supply failure – absence of reliable independent research, information failure – lack of an even playing field in communicating knowledge, and a governance failure – manipulation of knowledge to support partisan views.

The stated purpose of increasing parental benefits in Estonia and Latvia, as reported by Vanags (BRP 2005), was to encourage families to have more children. However, due to political reasons, the government in both countries ruled in favour of high earning middle class families without taking the opportunity to examine the relative efficacy of alternatives in raising fertility.

In all three cases – land reform, labour market liberalisation and allocation of parental benefits – the generation, communication and utilisation of knowledge have not been problem free primarily because the (weak) state was unable to reign in the powerful economic interests at stake. The inter-relation of governmental and societal organisation is a matter of great relevance for understanding the incidence and scope of governance gaps. As argued by Shai (2001) and others, in many Asian or communist countries, such China or Cuba, strong governments tend to dominate poorly organised civil society.³¹ In such settings, to have an influence on the policy-making process one has to work from within or in close cooperation with the powerful and, presumably, rational and neutral bureaucracy. The state, embodied in the bureaucratic apparatus (and/or ruling party), is *relatively* immune from capture by special interests, being equidistant from poorly organised civil society groups and maintaining control of both knowledge generation and communication channels.

The “statist” version of evidence-based policymaking, characteristic of many Oriental nations, certainly falls short of the participatory democratic model, and yet, at least

³¹ This proposition can be traced back to the questionable notions of ‘Oriental Despotism’ and ‘hydraulic civilisations’ which were popularised by Wittfogel in the 1950s, at the onset of the Cold War.

in some settings, it may be more effective in terms of reflecting (if not representing) the interests of the underprivileged, unorganised and poorly informed classes. Elsewhere, in many least developed African and Latin American countries, both government and society are not very well organised and effective, with the weak state frequently falling prey to organised special interests, giving, indeed, the impression that public policies are “a monopoly of the executive power and lobby groups” (see above, Colina et al (2006)).

4.2. Demand gaps

Despite its virtues from the government capture point of view, the paternalistic, state-heavy setup may be highly problematic as far as government incentives are concerned. Thus, an examination of the health sector at the local and provincial levels in China (Yuan et al (BRP 2005)) finds that policy makers were often unwilling to use available research. Government “disinterest” in the use of research appeared strongest where there was the biggest “accountability” gap. A major factor in this was a political structure in which a given level of government is accountable to the level of government above it, and not to the public. Thus, knowledge utilisation at the provincial level was found to be higher in areas in which there was central government pressure to hit a certain policy target (e.g. health insurance coverage, birth plan) whereas in other areas the incentive was lacking and research results were ignored.

In general, the incentives and capacity of government agencies to embrace a participatory approach to public policy appear to depend on the following factors:

- (i) Political regime and degree of political stability
- (ii) Structure of bureaucratic incentives, quality of civil service, and resource constraints
- (iii) The presence of donors and external actors
- (iv) Sector and policy-specific factors

(i) Political regime and degree of political stability. Recovering from decades of colonial rule, and subject to competitive pressures of the globalised world, many southern countries (unwillingly) embrace relatively uncompetitive authoritarian or excessively competitive democratic or quasi-democratic regimes. To the extent that generalizations are possible, both extremes appear to inhibit the build up of bridges:

- a highly stable and non-competitive political regime (whether a formal democracy or not) is likely to be less conducive to an open debate of policy (as in the Chinese healthcare policy example above)³²;
- excessive competitiveness, however, may translate into political instability, leading to political opportunism and reducing the chance for effective research-policy dialog. Short time horizons in crisis-ridden and unstable democracies and autocracies tend to reduce the government incentives for learning and innovation beyond populist slogans.

³² More generally, conditions must exist for the public to monitor government performance and vote ineffective government out of office. The importance of free and independent media has been recently established (for a different aspect of public policy) by Besley and Burgess (2002) who find that Indian states with a strong media delivered better performance on disaster relief.

(ii) Structure of bureaucratic incentives, quality of civil service, and resource constraints. In recent years (Wangwe (BRP 2006)) donors have made conscious efforts to not only provide "technical solutions" but also orchestrate a process of public debate (e.g. PRSPs in Uganda, pension reform in Bulgaria). However, sustaining donor-given "bridges" turns out to be a daunting task if issues concerned with demand-side incentives, capacities, and resources are not addressed. As a rule, such bridges become dysfunctional as soon as the window of opportunity for reforms shuts down (Shopov (BRP 2005)).

First, weaknesses in knowledge utilisation can be partially explained by the lack of bureaucratic incentives to innovate. Such incentives are primarily a function of decentralisation, protection from undue political pressures (particularly important in case of deep societal conflict over policy), and a performance evaluation system that rewards professionalism and innovation rather than compliance (Sanchez (BRP 2006)). When the above conditions are not present, bureaucracy tends to become a strong conservative power, timidly expecting marching orders from the higher level of hierarchy.

Second, overstretched government agencies may be short on the capacity to engage the external research community. Thus, they often lack staff with sector-specific technical knowledge to be able to participate in project design, and verify the quality of deliverables. Similarly absent may be the more general skills and experience related to organisation of research tenders and management of a consulting process.

Finally, in some of the least developed countries, governments simply lack the financial resources to manage a process of consultations and "own" the process of reforms. The comparison of energy policy formulation in the relatively rich Botswana and the poorer countries in East Africa (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania) is quite telling in this regard (Karekezi et al (BRP 2005)).

(iii) The presence of donors and external actors. In many of the least developed countries, policymaking is often informed and/or dominated by external actors. Such external influences are exerted in a variety of ways, including conditionalities as well as technical assistance, support for capacity building, research and for policy advocacy on specific topics. The sheer presence of these external actors may transform the local research-policy dynamics, including demand for, supply and communication of knowledge.

Thus, in the Argentine case study of judicial reforms, Riggiozzi (BRP 2005) notes that by delivering funds and policy ideas, the World Bank has skewed both the demand for and supply of knowledge by empowering and legitimising certain actors while disempowering others. She concludes that the Bank should recognise the broad range of interests that are involved in the policy debate and act to include research and expert groups that hold "alternative" sets of ideas.

The PRSP processes in many African states confirm that external impact on the established policymaking frameworks can be rather limited in the short run. Significant changes can only be accomplished over time, through institutional change and considerable investment in capacities. McNeill (BRP 2006), and Kiiza et al (BRP 2006) argue that, with minor variations, donor-driven PRSPs have *temporarily* boosted government demand for local knowledge and provided a platform for increased participation of local NGOs (with backing from foreign partner organisations and donors). As argued by these authors, however, PRSP were not always owned by national governments but rather were imposed on them as a kind of conditionality. This became quite evident at the policy implementation stage.

Despite these short-term limitations, the institutional environment and the nature of the policy debate in many African countries have evolved significantly since the adoption of national PRSPs as the framework for country development strategies. In particular, new policy analysis and capacity building needs have emerged with force at the forefront of the national dialogue thereby seeding higher expectations and highlighting new capacity gaps to be addressed in the medium and long-term. As argued by Samba Ka (private communication), "African PRIs were compelled to adjust to emerging needs from the public, the private sector and civil society. For example, some of them introduced research on socioeconomic issues while reducing the share of core macroeconomic research in their work program. Others sought to rely on external consultants in such areas as health and education policies. However, given the limited pool of relevant professional staff, they were unable to meet the expectations of their stakeholders through a commensurate response to the increased demand."

Benevolent external actors can also negatively affect government demand for genuine local knowledge by imposing universal policy templates. Most recently and rather surprisingly, EU accession had the effect of creating a special and unique problem of non-accountability for candidate countries. Once EU accession was accepted for the Baltic states (and more recently Bulgaria) the "knowledge gap" in many policy areas was quite simply been filled by the requirement to apply the EU "template" in the process, effectively closing policy debate. In practice this led to a demand failure whereby policy makers were not interested in (local) research because policy was pre-determined by accession requirements. Interestingly, now that accession is achieved, Baltic states policy makers have shown more interest in research because they need to be properly informed in EU policy debates where they now participate as equal members.

(iv) Policy and sector-specific factors. First, the incentives of government to engage in external consultations may strongly depend on how prominent and politically sensitive is the issue in question. Governments would tend to conduct external and, perhaps, largely pro forma consultations when contemplating large policy changes and when the cost of mistakes is high. Conversely, research is less likely to play a role in decision making under the pressure of negotiations (see Aninat 2006 on trade policy in Latin America) or in a crisis situation.

Second, the way in which the external research community is engaged may depend on the regularity with which a particular set of problems appears. In case of recurrent questions, government has a strong incentive to develop in-house capacity, as is the case with central banks and ministries of finance; questions that come to the fore with some regularity may be outsourced to specialised organisations outside government; one-off major reforms, e.g. pension or energy reform, may be best resolved while relying on international expertise.

Finally, evidence is more likely to be requested when potentially decisive and when the problem can be defined in technical terms. Unlike inherently value ridden policy problems such as income and land re-distribution, some problems e.g. efficient allocation of school meals (O’Ryan et al (BRP 2005)) are purely technical, while others can be defined as such: develop a menu of options for value-based judgment (e.g. for regulator’s decision in the case of arsenic in Chile).

4.3. Bridging governance and demand gaps

Governance and demand failures represent complex societal phenomena and thus may require a complex set of measures, oftentimes beyond the control of a single actor. The BRP case studies reveal that very few interventions have been executed to

systematically address gaps due to a governance failure. Demand failures characterised by the lack of willingness and/or inability of policymakers to make use of evidence are most often dealt with on an ad hoc basis, by utilising “windows of opportunity” associated with crisis situations, changes in government, etc.

Longer-term and more comprehensive approaches to fixing demand/governance gaps fall in the following three categories:

- Indirect measures, addressing supply and information gaps, to demonstrate the value of knowledge and knowledge producing organisations (e.g. by proactively approaching government with a “solution” or relevant international evidence, through joint working groups, etc.);
- Direct measures to build the capacity of policy makers to engage with the research community and utilise relevant knowledge;
- Direct measures – civil service and public policy reforms – to create the mechanisms and incentives for research uptake.

Table 4: Demand and governance gaps – a summary of “bridging” actions by type of stakeholder

Stakeholder	Purpose and Type of Action
Policymakers	<p>Indirect (long-term) measures to address supply gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selectively strengthen research organisations, increase contestation in the knowledge market by engaging regional and international consultants, create stable and transparent mechanisms for public funding of research <p>Direct (ad hoc) measures to pull in knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint advisory panels/research advisors on specific topics, establish joint working groups and committees • Appoint researchers to policymaking positions • Publish policy decisions for expert/general scrutiny • Commission studies and retrospective “policy reviews” to assess the use of evidence in decision-making <p>Direct (long term) measures to build government capacity and instil motivation for research uptake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create research and outreach units within government departments to design and manage research contracts and engage with an external research community • Formulate rules and specific guidelines for knowledge utilisation in decision-making • Establish appraisal/peer review system within policy units to assess professionalism and knowledge utilisation as part of civil service reforms • Build mechanisms to ensure greater accountability and transparency in decision-making, including measures to facilitate public access to data and information.
Researchers/PRI	<p>Indirect measures to address supply and communication gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively “nurture” government demand for knowledge through publications, informal meetings, seminars and conferences • Establish peer review and reputation-building mechanisms to distinguish agnostic or neutral PRIs from lobbying organisations; create structures to perform the “research broker” role – issue networks, communities of practice, etc; involve policymakers in

	<p>the management of research networks and PRIs.</p> <p>Direct measures to increase the capacity of policymakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise training programs to develop policymakers' capacity to use research (teaching at administrative staff colleges, offering in-service training programmes in specialised fields, etc.) • Deliver advice concerning re-organisation of civil service and public policy procedures <p>Direct measures to strengthen the policymakers' incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the opportunity cost of implementing "bad" policies through targeted advocacy efforts, including joint action with civil society organisations; • Lobby, together with other stakeholders, e.g. donors, for changes in policymaking machinery and practice to strengthen the participatory dimension of decision-making
Civil Society (NGOs, Business groups, media)	<p>Direct measures to strengthen policymakers incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use media and direct field action to create public opinion, generate awareness about available evidence on policy issues and advocate for or against particular policy options • Create "watch-dog" bodies to monitor the use of evidence, promote accountability and transparency in policy making;
Donors	<p>Indirect measures to address supply and communication gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help launch and/or support policy consultation processes such as PRSP; support policy research projects and other joint ventures that promote research-policy communication; strengthen NGO and research communities, and sponsor bridging actions originating in these communities (see above) <p>Direct measures to strengthen policymakers' capacity and incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use conditionalities, technical and financial assistance to promote civil service reform and the establishment of more transparent and participatory decision-making procedures

The BRP case studies offer examples concerning attempts by PRIs to address demand/governance gaps in developing and transition countries. For instance, in the case of FIEL (Argentina), researchers used a communication strategy that tried to introduce into "the public agenda the need by government to use statistics" leading to "the formation of a new culture in certain government groups" (Braun et al (BRP 2004-1)). In Peru, GRADE researchers have successfully lobbied for changes in the policymaking practice by connecting to influential donors (Braun et al (BRP 2004-3)). In Tanzania, ESRF conducted a broad range of government capacity building programmes on the use of research. The authors suggest that as a result of these activities, stakeholder participation has become an integral part of political decision-making in Tanzania (KIPRA, ((BRP 2005)). Even in Belarus, the Institute for Privatisation and Management (IPM), which works under restrictive and challenging conditions, uses publications to influence the views of local policy makers . IPM strategically engages mid-level officials, e.g. at the National Bank, who are more receptive to modern research ideas and methodological approaches (Menkova (BRP 2005)).

The case studies suggest, however, that efforts of the research community to push knowledge into the policymaking arena are likely to fail if not matched by a pull from policy makers. The incentives for learning and innovation and, hence, demand for knowledge can be strengthened if planning horizons in the line ministries and local government be extended. One concrete recommendation that follows concerns the need for governments to identify specific policy areas/subjects that would require or

benefit from long term partnerships with local (and regional) research communities. Establishing such partnerships could also involve measures to create opportunities for greater policy debate and contestation of policies.

Our studies document a few attempts by governments to deal with research uptake by setting up specialised agencies e.g. research management divisions within health bureaus in China (Yuan et al (BRP 2005)) or the Unit for the Measurement of Education Quality within the administration by Fujimori in Peru (see Braun et al BRP 2004). Despite these isolated examples, there is strong evidence that in “public sector bureaucracies in developing economies ... the incentive and accountability systems are too weak to promote research-based innovation. Thus [opportunities for innovation] are explored and exploited only when pressures or incentives are supplied from outside” (from the case study of the Department of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines, Sanchez (BRP 2006)). It appears, therefore, that measures to set up specialised government units to perform the “bridging” function should be part and parcel of comprehensive civil service and public policy reforms that emphasise professionalism, research-based innovation, and participatory decision-making.

Other examples of ad hoc measures that are unlikely to provide a lasting remedy include attempts to invite subject experts to take on the mantle of policy making. E.g. in cases of CEPA in Ghana (Coleman (BRP 2006)) and IERAL in Argentina (Colina et al (BRP 2005)) researchers were appointed as ministers by heads of state. Such appointments certainly infuse professional and technical energies into the bureaucracy, but to have a more lasting impact they must be accompanied by a more comprehensive effort to re-train the existing cadre of civil servants and change their behaviour.

To avoid provoking political crises, as exemplified by the land reform stalemate in the Philippines and labour market liberalisation debate in India, societies should normally make policymaking as transparent as possible. In developing countries that face great social disparities in political power and income, there is an additional need to guard the policymaking process from capture by organised interests that may control knowledge generation and communication channels, including mass media. While it is difficult to suggest specific practical measures for addressing governance gaps, it may still be useful to distil a number of guiding principles:

- In contexts prone to governance failures, societies may be best protected by rules, guidelines or non-negotiable principles of policymaking that offer greater objectivity in the generation and assessment of evidence, and that ensure representation of underprivileged groups in the policy debate (beyond voting in a formally democratic election).
- As argued earlier in this section, governance gaps may be addressed by measures to increase the role of a presumably neutral bureaucracy in “checking and balancing” partisan interests. Protecting government agencies from undue civil society pressures and developing their capacity to innovate, generate evidence and critically assess evidence produced by politically-connected actors appears to be an effective strategy for pre-empting if not resolving governance failures.
- An extremely important condition for dealing with governance gaps concerns the freedom and genuine independence of media (independence from government *and* group interests). Independent media are a necessary condition for maintaining a level playing field among advocacy coalitions. Independence of media is also essential for social actors to be able to increase the “cost” (for government) of maintaining the policy status quo and ignoring critiques of bad policies.

As we have seen in this chapter, demand and governance failures are inherently difficult to address and the same time they are key to resolving other types of gaps – in knowledge supply and communication. Hence the need for individual societies and the development community to come up with comprehensive bridging strategies that provide systemic solutions rather than short term remedies which temporarily address one or the other gap.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

The capacity building aspect of any development initiative has the potential to frustrate all those involved – donors, technical assistance agencies and governments. Compelled to roll a huge rock up a steep hill, Sisyphus had to start each time anew after (nearly) reaching the top of the hill. His labour may have led to more sustainable outcomes had structures been put in place at the top of the hill to keep the rock from rolling back. These structures were evidently absent. The building of capacities, whether individual or institutional, is always a risky endeavour in “bad” environments that fail to provide the incentives and structures that would keep them from dissipating once donors shift their attention elsewhere. This happens through the brain-drain of talent, degradation and dissolution of fragile institutions, and the reassertion of the local way of “doing business”.

As argued throughout the paper, bridging research and policy can be a truly Sisyphean task if approached in a piecemeal fashion. This has to do with the generally poor environment in which their interaction occurs in developing and transitioning nations, and the systemic nature of BRP gaps. If bridging actions are to lead to sustainable outcomes they have to be guided by the following considerations:

- First, the gaps analysed in this paper are inherently interdependent: hence, an effective bridging strategy has to be multi-faceted, treating both provision and utilisation problems. The building of capacities on both the research and policy end of the divide must be accompanied by measures to create the structures, the incentives and the processes to keep these capacities “on top of the hill”.
- Second, given resource scarcity and the global competition for talent, every effort must be made to ensure the efficient use of potentially available resources which implies the need for policies that encourage specialisation across institutions and geographic jurisdictions; institutional arrangements that enable regional cooperation in knowledge generation and sharing; and strategies to reverse and even exploit brain drain affecting all developing and transition nations.
- Third, systemic solutions of this nature must be coordinated with and draw on the resources of the entire range of BRP stakeholders, including not only conventional actors within the “two communities” of researchers and policy makers, but also the NGO sector and, most certainly, western donors. Moreover, it requires coordination and cooperation among national governments.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this paper provide detailed taxonomies of bridging interventions appropriate for different types of gaps. These interventions are critically assessed and illustrated with reference to individual BRP case studies to serve as input into capacity building and research support programs implemented by governments and donors throughout the developing/transition world. In this section we will attempt to put forth and expand on three inter-related proposals for action that would

represent a coherent BRP strategy. We will conclude with a brief discussion of implementation issues. The three proposals for action are:

- (i) Development of country/sector BRP audit and strategy papers;
- (ii) Setting up and developing regional BRP networks;
- (iii) Promoting specialised BRP capacity building activities

(i) Country/sector BRP Audit and Strategy Papers

Systemic solutions to address gaps in research and policy require comprehensive and concerted action by all stakeholders – governments, donors, PRIs and civil society groups – and a rigorous process of assessment, planning and implementation. The need for such planning is particularly pressing for resource constrained countries that have to be *selective* and *strategic* in the way they promote the BRP agenda. Selectivity implies that, for instance, a country should not automatically develop institutional research capacities whenever it lacks them. It may pay off to invest in a few strategic areas and rely on regional and global providers for the rest.

A process leading to a country/sector BRP Audit and Strategy Paper (ASP) may also provide the opportunity to move away from the practice of many short-term and poorly coordinated donor-driven programs and projects towards a longer-term, more coherent and comprehensive approach. Taking a longer term view is crucial for countries to be able to tackle brain drain and capacity building challenges, design and put in place appropriate institutional arrangements for knowledge provision and communication, and improve policymaking machinery and practices.

Depending on the country/sector circumstances, the ASPs may be commissioned and funded by governments, private sector and/or external donors. Broad based local ownership by the entire range of stakeholders, including PRIs and civil society groups, would be critical for ASP acceptance, successful implementation and sustainability. This could be achieved via a democratic and transparent representation of all interested parties throughout the audit and strategy formulation process³³.

What should BRP ASP achieve? First, BRP ASP should comprehensively assess the BRP needs of the country as a whole, a province or even a single sector in the case of large countries. In particular, it should:

- identify the policy agenda and the research needs in the relevant domain;
- identify the gaps in supply, demand and communication
- suggest the most effective ways of addressing this agenda and the gaps bearing in mind existing research and governance capacities and communication mechanisms.

Second, the BRP ASP should estimate the nature and quantum of investment required, relevant costs and political economy constraints. This should include investment in research provision and utilisation capacities, as well as relevant communication (“bridging”) mechanisms.

Third, the BRP ASP should also identify mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the progress made with respect to the goals set in the Strategy Paper.

³³ We are not taking for granted the agreement of all the relevant parties that an ASP is necessary/useful and that it is in their interests to participate in it. BRP ASP should be implemented in contexts where such broad agreement is evident.

Fourth, the BRP ASP should provide the basis for joint action by the entire range of BRP stakeholders. To achieve this objective it should seek to create coordination mechanisms and neutral discussion spaces.

What process would lead up to BRP Audit and Strategy Papers?

ASP should result from a participatory process that engages key stakeholders, namely governmental agencies, PRIs/universities/think tanks, NGOs, donors, and other key actors in an open discussion of current and future policy challenges (in key sectors or for a country as a whole):

- Moderated by a local or external organisation with relevant expertise, such discussion could provide the basis for a more detailed exploration of needs and capacities through a series of *commissioned studies* (see next paragraph for more detail on the subject matter of these studies).
- Preliminary findings from commissioned studies should be discussed with the entire range of interested parties and then fed into an agreed upon and jointly owned ASP, specifying actions to be taken, division of labour/responsibility, and timeline.
- The implementation of ASP should be primarily steered by relevant government bodies with the support and funding of external donors and in coordination with specialised PRIs, regional and global organisations and networks.

What areas should the BRP Audit and Strategy Papers address? The BRP ASP may be taken up in emerging sectors or sectors where policies are getting crystallised and demand for knowledge exceeds supply. ASP may include assessment and plans for the following in a given sector (only indicative):

- Supply (at both national and international level). Quality of externally supplied research; types and professionalism of local knowledge producers (fundamental, problem solving and critique/advocacy); quality of knowledge produced in-house; areas where local research capacities can be built; challenges and opportunities related to accumulation of relevant human capital (emphasis on brain drain/gain processes); areas where regional/global evidence can be utilised; degree of competition among local/regional PRIs in the relevant domain; overall investment required to bring supply to adequate level (including individual and institutional capacities);
- Information/communication. Assessment of communication modalities between stakeholders (working groups, networks, meetings, access to publications, data and information); gaps and institutional barriers to effective communication; innovative channels of communication and information exchange that can be explored and encouraged (IT enabled services?); mechanisms to promote credibility and reputation building.
- Demand. Assessment of current and future demand for research by policy makers (thematic priorities, how articulated, during what stage in the policy making cycle, expected deliverables and timeline); ability and willingness of policymakers to utilise research, capacity building requirements of policymakers, potential areas for civil service and public policy reforms;

- **Governance.** Assessment of transparency, accountability, contestation within the policy processes³⁴; key stakeholders in relevant policy domains; deficiencies in decision-making procedures; civil service and public policy reform measures; measures to promote independent media and represent under-privileged social groups.

(ii) Setting up and developing regional BRP Networks

For many small developing/transition countries, the best way to address BRP needs (as established through BRP ASP) may involve participation in regional knowledge networks that provide for an efficient use of available human and financial resources. Self-sufficiency in knowledge generation may simply not be an option for many countries, hence the need to specialise while looking outside and exploring alliances and networks at the regional (and global) level.

How and where should Regional BRP Networks be set up? Regional BRP networks can be set up around existing PRIs in regions where relevant expertise is not equally distributed across geographic jurisdictions, and where individual countries and PRIs face paucity of resources (both financial and human) to independently undertake research in crucial areas of policy. Regional BRP networks can be more effective in regions where countries encounter similar policy challenges, and where ethnic, linguistic, political and socio-economic conditions do not pose hurdles for horizontal communication.

BRP networks can be set up as independent sector-specific regional networks or as specialised units within existing regional associations and networks the mission of which is consistent with BRP and regional knowledge cooperation and exchange. Thus, GDN's regional partner networks could be strengthened to perform the BRP function and/or incubate and house specialised networking units that connect PRIs and knowledge consumers in particular sectors. BRP networks can be autonomous of governments, or they can involve the policymakers and utilise available formal channels of diplomatic exchange (such as the ASEAN in South East Asia).

What should the Regional BRP Networks do and what value can they bring?

There are a number of ways in which BRP networks can produce value for their constituent members and clients. In addition to promoting horizontal linkages among PRIs, such networks should emphasise "vertical" communication among PRIs and knowledge consumers. To do so, BRP networks should be able to:

- Initiate and coordinate research and policy consulting activities on a regional scale (along or in alliance with other regional associations that pursue similar goals), and thus promote regional exchange of best practices and cross fertilisation of ideas.
- Encourage competition among the regional knowledge producers, thereby promoting greater transparency and professionalism in the knowledge marketplace.
- Serve as a mechanism for donor coordination and project implementation at the regional level.

³⁴ It may be more realistic to expect that the government agencies will participate in processes designed to measure their capacity, transparency, accountability, etc. if the ASP process be coordinated with and supported at a superior level of government bureaucracy, and when offered appropriate incentives.

- Provide countries and individual PRIs with the opportunity to specialise in a few strategically important areas in which they have relative advantages and import other types of expertise using access to regional knowledge networks. Regional networks should filter global knowledge and adapt it for local use.
- Hire senior policy advisors and faculty who are unaffordable or inaccessible for individual countries and PRIs.
- Increase the quality, practical applicability, and political acceptability of knowledge available at the level of individual countries.
- Improve the capacity of member PRIs to tap into funding that is available for research and conduct policy relevant research in a collaborative manner.

How can these networks be made sustainable? BRP networks may have to rely on donors' support during the start-up phase, but would need to prepare plans for eventual self-sufficiency by creating a regional market for their services (see above), and cultivating demand from national governments. A network's success will depend on its ability to produce value added in terms of quality gains and efficiency in research administration and communication. This may require deployment of state-of-the-art web-based technological solutions for communication, access to resources and joint work by geographically dispersed network members and clients. The GDNet – GDN's information and communication arm – could develop and transfer to GDN's regional partners and BRP networks relevant know-how and skills. Depending on the regional circumstances, BRP networks could establish fee-based memberships that allow participating organisations to benefit from their services.

(iii) Promoting BRP capacity building activities

As discussed throughout this paper, institutional and individual capacity deficits are among the most serious constraints for effective research-to-policy linkages in transition and developing countries. However, a blanket approach to capacity building may not work given the fact that PRIs follow different business models and differ significantly in terms of their starting point and current knowledge "production functions". The capacities to utilise available research on the part of policymakers and civil society are also quite diverse, and would require that different strategies and capacity building interventions be used in different contexts.

What approaches could be used to deliver BRP training and capacity building activities? Capacity building activities can (i) address specific needs of individual organizations (via organizational consulting and coaching) or (ii) groups of PRIs through more generic training and consulting activities. In general, capacity building programs should address institutional weaknesses related to human capital, work processes, management and governance, strategic outlook, degree of specialisation and "depth", national/regional client base and diversification of funding sources.

Under the first scenario, a BRP consulting effort could focus on developing a strategy or a road map for PRIs depending on their special requirements. It could take a coaching approach to help develop relevant structures, functions, processes and products. Support and technical assistance beyond the initial period may be required for partner PRIs reach a critical level of capacity that can be sustained.

Under the second scenario, the focus would be on preparation and delivery of training courses, case studies, internships and exchange programmes. Thematically, the emphasis should be on knowledge management skills (a topic currently addressed by GDNet), trainees' familiarity with specific stages in the policy making process in a given sector/country and identification of entry points for external impact. It may

also include discussion of appropriate business models for ensuring survival, forging alliances and promoting collaboration.

Implementation issues

While most BRP-related assistance functions could be best performed by local organizations and/or networks, there may be a role for the GDN (or a specialised service organization affiliated with GDN) to provide regionally based organizations and individuals with the tools and methodologies to act as effective BRP agents, and help mobilise necessary resources. As a global focal point, GDN would also be able to facilitate network building and sharing of knowledge and best practices across regions.

The need for external assistance is likely to be quite strong during the start up phase of most regional BRP networks. Such assistance may include advice concerned with institution building and transfer of know-how related to specific functions such networks would be called upon to perform – facilitate BRP audit and strategic planning processes, act as regional research coordination and quality assurance agencies, deliver capacity building and coaching services for member institutions and individuals.

What should the global BRP mandate include? The role of an organization acting as a global focal point for BRP issues would be three-fold. First, it would serve as an *international depository of knowledge* on BRP issues, including PRI organizational models, networking procedures and processes; communication tools/templates; and best practices of knowledge and public policy management.

Second, it would act a *resource centre* for regional BRP Networks by offering training and practical guidance concerned with the choice of an optimal approach to bridging research-policy gaps in concrete regional, national or sectoral circumstances.

Third, it could engage in vigorous global advocacy to promote BRP awareness, mobilise resources and coordinate among donors and implementing partners sharing the BRP agenda.

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All texts are available online as follows:

- Full texts - <http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=203>
- "Bridging briefs" - <http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=201>

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Georgi Shopov: The Pension Reform in Bulgaria: Bridging Social Policy Research and Policy Making (2005). <http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=47>

Good practice studies

Mamta Borgoyary: Understanding the Role of Networks as Connectors in Bridging the Research Policy Gap in Participatory Forest Policy Development in India (2005).

<http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=40>

Jorge Colina, Osvaldo Giordano: The Case of Fundacion Mediterranea in Argentina (2005). <http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=38>

Daniel Pop: Policy Research Fellowships as Knowledge Creation Endeavours (2005). <http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=45>

Raul O'Ryan, Rafael Epstein, Pablo Gonzalez: A Comparison of Different Policy Relevant Research Initiatives in Chile: Three Case Studies (2005).

<http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=39>

Sector studies

Augusto Aninat, Mercedes Botto: The Influence of Locally Produced Research on Trade Policy Making: the Case of Chile (2005). <http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=57>

Stephen Karekezi, Bereket Kebede, Jack Mutua, John Kimani: How to Influence Policy in the African Energy Sector: A Guide for Researchers (2005).

<http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=56>

Desmond McNeill: Domestic Research and National Poverty Reduction Strategies (2005). <http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=84>

Changhai Yuan, Dongmei Liu, Liying Jia Xiaoyuan Zhou, Li Zeng, Siling Bi: Identify Effective Factors for Transforming Research Results into Policies in Health Related Sectors (2005). <http://gdn.eerc.ru/details.asp?id=58>

Case studies of individual PRIs

Argentina: Braun, M., Chudnovsky, M., Di Nucci, C., Ducoté, N. and Weyrauch, V. (2004-1) Fundación de Investigaciones Económicas Latinoamericanas [FIEL]

Argentina: Weyrauch, V. D'Augustino, (2005) Centre of Legal and Social Studies (CELS)

Bangladesh: Ghani, A. (2006) Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Belarus: Menkova, V. (2005) Research Centre at the Institute for Privatisation and Management (IPM)

Chile: Braun, M., Chudnovsky, M., Di Nucci, C., Ducoté, N. and Weyrauch, V. (2004) Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP)

Colombia: Braun, M., Chudnovsky, M., Di Nucci, C., Ducoté, N. and Weyrauch, V. (2004-2) Fundación para la Educación Superior y el Desarrollo (Fedesarrollo)

India: Chakrabarti, M. and Sarkar, A. (2005) Institute of Social Sciences (ISS)

Ghana: Coleman, E. O. (2006) Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)

Latvia: Uzulena, E. (2005) Providus

Pakistan: Ali, S.M. (2005) Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)

Peru: Braun, M., Chudnovsky, M., Di Nucci, C., Ducoté, N. and Weyrauch, V. (2004-3) Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE)

Russia: Kolosnitsyna, T. (2005) Institute for Urban Economics (IUE)

Tanzania: KIPRA (2005) Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)

Ukraine: Bilodid, O. (2005) International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS)

Uzbekistan: Afontsev, S. (2006) Centre for Economic Research (CER)

ANNEX A: Summary of Key Points from Phase II BRP studies

	Region	Key Points and Questions for Further Exploration
BACKGROUND STUDIES		
Julius Court et al: What political and institutional context issues matter for bridging research and policy?	Global	Political context is the most important set of factors affecting research uptake. The context is analyzed along five dimensions (a questionnaire is attached). Highlights issues relevant for understanding the context for policy development and implementation and the opportunities for bridging. Provides country examples of mapping political context.
Daniel Pop: Approaches to measuring capacity and capacity-building for policy-research	Global	Bridging actions (e.g. training) should focus not only on individual capacities, but institutional and societal capacities. Measuring the impact of training is complicated in the absence of a counterfactual and the impact of contextual factors. Follow up questions: An interesting question is what capacities are needed for "bridging" as opposed to research per se. ODI has developed a questionnaire to measure "entrepreneurial" spirit, which may be relevant. Donors' approaches to "impact evaluation" are important since these have an impact on program design and funding decisions?
Sam Wangwe: A review of how external agencies can influence research agendas and research policy links	Global	Recent changes in the ethos of development, e.g. PRSP processes, expressly aim at greater local ownership of reform and are conducive to research capacity building Follow up questions: Specific examples of donor policies that not only build capacities or support research but also help narrow the "gap" other than PRSPs; any systematic distinctions between philanthropic foundations, government development agencies?
ACTION RESEARCH		
Fe Sanchez: Bridging research and policy towards innovation in a public sector bureaucracy: the case of the Philippine Department of Agrarian Reform	South East Asia	Undertaken by a public servant, this study helps explain incentives and the nature of decision making process in a few cases of land reforms in the Philippines. The general sense is that research evidence is used very selectively to promote political interests. Bureaucracy may lack the incentives to innovate and be open to research ideas (hence innovation has to be specially encouraged). The issue of land reform in any country is extremely sensitive from the political point of view. Hence, one should not be surprised to see little "bridging" and a lot of political manipulation. The paper suggests a number of mechanism to induce learning and innovation in a bureaucratic organization.
Armando Seuc: Evidence Based Health Policy at the Municipal Level in Cuba	Socialist country (Cuba)	An interesting analysis of public health bureaucracy in a unique institutional setting. Top-down directives to innovate based on input from researchers and practitioners by a government for which public health is a number one national priority substitute for bridging actions by "civil society" organizations and/or donor driven ini-

		<p>tiatives in much of the developing world. Very little gap between public health policy and problem-solving (operational) type of research, yet thinking 'out-of-the-box' or subjecting national policies to criticism may be restricted by the overall political context.</p> <p>Follow up questions:</p> <p>Explore limits to the top-down approach which may have to do with incentives within the research and public health policy communities. Explore "gap" size for different types of knowledge (problem solving knowledge coming from practitioners and more fundamental research).</p>
COUNTRY AND CROSS-COUNTRY STUDIES		
<p>Tarun Das: Linkages between research, policy analysis and reform outcomes in India</p>	South Asia	<p>One of the few country studies that talk about cross-sectoral differences. Identifies policy context differences across sectors (external sector vs. labor) and their impact on the effectiveness of bridging efforts. Organized interests may block innovation (the case of the labor sector).</p> <p>Follow up questions:</p> <p>What is the effect of sectoral policy context on researchers' incentives, the quality and relevance of research outputs?</p>
<p>Julius Kiiza et al: Development ideology, research and policy-making in Uganda</p>	Sub-Saharan Africa	<p>Donors and their local "groupies" sabotage authentic local participation in public policymaking in Africa by promoting western institutions and policy choices (democracy, foreign trade liberalization, privatization, etc.). The paper makes a point about policymakers' skewed incentives in donor-dominated countries. Donors may not be sensitive or open enough to local ideas and ideologies, which are brushed aside as non-relevant.</p> <p>Follow up questions:</p> <p>What is the conduct and impact of donors in less value-laden areas of policymaking (e.g. REAP) in which authentic local knowledge is not necessarily clashing with imported ideas</p>
<p>Alf Vanags: Research policy linkages in the Baltic states: comparative analysis of a natural experiment</p>	Eastern Europe	<p>A cross-country AND cross-section study. Makes an interesting point concerned with the difference among specialized (and somewhat old-style) and more modern but 'generalist' think-tanks. Surprisingly or not, the former appear to be better integrated and "bridged". Another point is that "tradable" research capacities (e.g. economics) may be difficult to build or retain given brain drain. Policy context (existence or not of steady demand for policy analysis) may have an impact on research capacity building. Thus, research capacity is not exogenous to the context. Yet another (potential) point: generation gap and different educational background may be a cause for communication difficulties among researchers and policymakers (particularly relevant for transition countries).</p> <p>Follow up questions:</p> <p>No systematic differences are reported in the paper at the country level</p>

EPISODE STUDIES		
<p>Igor Eremenko et al: Research, policy and implementation links: development of the financial system in Ukraine</p>	<p>Eastern Europe</p>	<p>IFI's may act as connectors and amplifiers of research ideas when local scholars lack gray hair and authority (relevant for transition countries where social and economic sciences had to be developed from scratch).</p> <p><u>Follow up questions:</u></p> <p>What is the nature of policymaking in transition: how is economic policymaking capacity built up, what is the role of donors and research community?</p>
<p>Archana Mehendale: Right to education and constitutional amendment: the case of India</p>	<p>South Asia</p>	<p>The main issue is exploitation (or not) of available "policy spaces" in a democratic setting. Limits to political participation in a large and fragmented society (especially given the federal structure). The paper offers many lessons related to role of authoritative champions, donors, CSOs and limits to effective research uptake ("tokenism", selective use, etc.). Also, relevant for understanding researchers incentives to produce relevant (usable) knowledge (factual knowledge, not just sophisticated analysis). An excellent source of evidence on bridging challenges (not so much about successes).</p>
<p>Pia Riggiozzi: Knowledge producers, knowledge users and the World Bank: research-policy dynamics in Argentina's judicial reform</p>	<p>Latin America</p>	<p>Donors (WB) may be biased towards the establishment's views on reform in countries that are not as donor dependent as those in Sub-Saharan Africa (government will not borrow money to implement reforms it is not interested in). Thus, donors may inadvertently filter out opposition voices that favor more radical reforms or paradigm change.</p> <p><u>Follow up questions:</u></p> <p>How systematic is this bias?</p>
<p>Georgi Shopov: The pension reform in Bulgaria: bridging social policy, research and policy making</p>	<p>Eastern Europe</p>	<p>Pension reform is a relatively technical area characterized by the availability of local ideas and ready made western solutions (hence the of donors/IFIs and a small research-policy gap). In the Bulgarian episode, donors played an important role as capacity builders, intermediaries and sources of technical expertise. Local researchers may have helped translate, adjust and further develop international expertise. The favorable policy context has been a crucial precondition for successful bridging. A government-backed working group that included representatives of all key stakeholders served as an effective bridging mechanism, both for policy design and recruitment ("revolving door") purposes during a "window of opportunity" period. The extensive reform design stage served as a policymaking and research capacity building exercise (which was exploited in the later reform stages).</p> <p><u>Follow up questions:</u></p> <p>Provide more detail on working group processes and procedures and the dilemma facing most small developing counties: how to best exploit imported expertise and knowledge in order to build local capacities and institutional solutions for bridging.</p>
GOOD PRACTICE STUDIES		

<p>Mamta Borgoyary: Understanding the role of networks in participatory forest policy development in India</p>	<p>South Asia</p>	<p>Follow up questions:</p> <p>How <u>different</u> networks function in terms of conducting research, promoting research, hooking up with policy-makers. There is very little comparative analysis in the paper which could help understand what is an effective networking mechanism. How do networks emerge (following a political decision to pursue certain policies?); What is their value added (assist in the implementation of decentralized policies)? How can they be sustained?</p> <p>What is specific, from the bridging point of view, about the forestry sector in India (poor, large and fragmented, democratic country?).</p>
<p>Jorge Colina et al: Fundacion Mediterranea: a case study of a successful business-to-research-to-policy bridge</p>	<p>Latin America</p>	<p>This a case study of a particular research institute linked to a business association. The most interesting "best practices" concern the role of private sector in:</p> <p>(1) creating and sustaining research capacity in a developing country context and outside the national capital (in the absence of steady funding, public and international, and in the face of brain drain to the private sector, abroad, and to the capital) and</p> <p>(2) serving as a "bridging" agent, which involves not only promotion of research (and researchers) to the policy arena but also active involvement in research management (providing a "reality check").</p> <p>Equally important are corporate governance arrangements that ensure think-tank independence from the for-profit funding source (the danger of becoming a lobbying arm is ever present).</p> <p>Follow up questions:</p> <p>It would be important to challenge the "key lessons". To what extent these are universal lessons and to what extent they depend on unique circumstances and personalities?</p>
<p>Daniel Pop: Impact assessment of the international policy fellowship on national policy research capacity development</p>	<p>Eastern and Central Europe</p>	<p>The study may suffer from a positive self-evaluation bias. Between the lines: building individual capacities without investing in institutions that can perform the research and bridging functions may results in a waste of time and money. Individual capacity building should be combined with interventions at the institutional and national levels.</p>
<p>Raul O’Ryan et al: A comparison of different policy relevant research initiatives in Chile: three case studies"</p>	<p>Latin America</p>	<p>A study that directly confronts bridging in three different knowledge and policy domains (problem solving, operational knowledge vs. complex public policy analysis vs. supply-driven social science research). Extremely relevant for understanding the nature of the 'gap' and how it can or cannot be bridged. A very interesting point, not sufficiently emphasized in the conclusions, concerns the role of university as neutral broker between conflicting interests (represented by ministries, industry and CSOs). Reputation, quality and objectivity of research are key requisites for successful performance in this regard.</p>
<p>SECTOR STUDIES</p>		
<p>Augusto Aninat et al:</p>	<p>Latin</p>	<p>The paper conforms to the "two communities" view</p>

<p>The influence of research on trade policymaking in Latin America</p>	<p>America / pending approval</p>	<p>(supported by survey results). Bridging in the trade sector is said to be difficult because of two factors: trade negotiations set hard deadlines; and policy has strong distribution effects which must be taken into account. Academic researchers tend to ignore the latter (are concerned with the overall gains/losses for the economy (why?), and have a hard time meeting deadlines. The short lead and lack of relevant information excludes academic institutions from the policymaking process, with the bulk of consulting contracts ending up in the hands of a few seasoned consultants. Not surprisingly, the paper calls for developing a longer term research and policymaking agenda.</p> <p>The paper describes an interesting transition from academia to government to private consulting firms (not really a revolving door).</p> <p>Given the broad consensus on the fundamentals of the policy regime (openness), research focuses on the details of implementation (studying the implications of particular trade agreements, etc.).</p> <p>Follow up questions:</p> <p>More detail on bridging in the face of strong lobbying efforts by powerful industries and labour unions. This is a unique feature of the trade sector. To what extent can academics play the role of objective arbiters among competing interests?</p>
<p>Stephen Karekezi et al: A study of research and policy linkages in the energy sector in Eastern and Southern Africa</p>	<p>Sub-Saharan Africa</p>	<p>The paper is focus on the energy sector across countries. According to the authors, energy policy is a highly technical area, which is reflected in the educational background of both policymakers and researchers (including the author himself, who is an engineer). Specialized energy research institutes appear to have more impact (b.c of technical research requirements and common language with policymakers). Such institutes, however, lack the more general economics skills, which are also required for effective policy research. Another missing link is to social policy and poverty research (especially relevant in the recent decade).</p> <p>An interesting point is made about different country contexts: rich Botswana which “owns” its reform process, vs. poor Uganda where locals have little say.</p> <p>In all four countries except Botswana, the government fully controls agenda setting, which tends to increase the research-policy “gap”(in the absence of strong CSO and “epistemic communities”).</p> <p>Interesting discussion of policymaking processes: stop-go, driven by external factors, does not create long-term incentives for research capacity building in the energy sector; high-turnover of staff inhibits networking and contact building.</p> <p>A suggestion is made regarding timing for research dissemination: use windows of opportunity related to energy crises (caused by frequent draughts).</p>
<p>Desmond McNeill: PRSP processes in Africa</p>	<p>Sub-Saharan</p>	<p>Donors have a crucial role in policy design processes in donor-dependent countries. Governments have no bargaining power at the policy design stage, but may</p>

	Africa	<p>“fudge” policy statements and “resist” at the stage of implementation. PRS processes have mainly increased the influence of NGOs (with backing from foreign NGOs).</p>
<p>Changhai Yuan et al: Effective factors for transforming re- search results into policies in health re- lated sectors: the case of China</p>	<p>East Asia</p>	<p>The cross-region and cross-sub-sector analysis is quite rich in detail (no other study made a comparable effort). The paper includes many interesting observations concerning the size of the gap (across sectors), and the in- centives within the two “communities” to produce and use relevant knowledge.</p> <p>The Chinese policymaking model is interesting in so far as the local and provincial government is primarily ac- countable to the above level of government, not to the “people”. Knowledge utilization is found to be higher in areas in which there is central government pressure to hit a certain policy target (e.g. health insurance cover- age, birth plan). Governments in those provinces that do well on a particular policy indicator are relatively com- placent and not open for cooperation (e.g. don’t com- mission studies). At the same time, greater decentraliza- tion (as in the case of health insurance) tends to spur demand for <u>local</u> knowledge.</p> <p>The paper compares regions that are very different in terms of wealth, international networking, and research capacity. These factors do play a crucial role for bridg- ing.</p>

ANNEX B: Ten ways of conceiving the research-policy dynamic (from Stone with Maxwell & Keating, (2001))

1. The problem can be defined as a public goods problem, where there is an inadequate supply of policy relevant research.
2. The problem can be defined as one of a lack of access to research, data and analysis for both researchers and policy makers. Recommendations to improve both access to and the diffusion of knowledge follow.
3. The problem can be defined as the poor policy comprehension of researchers towards both the policy process and how research might be relevant to this process. Overcoming this lack of understanding requires researchers to study the policy process, to demonstrate the relevance of research, and to build methodologies for evaluating research relevance.
4. The problem can be represented as ineffective communication by researchers their work. Improved communications strategies are consequently encouraged.
5. The problem can be defined as societal disconnection of both researchers and decision-makers from those who the research is about or intended for, to the extent that effective implementation is undermined. The appropriate focus is on (for example) "participatory rural analysis", "street-level bureaucracy" and encouraging "public understanding of science".
6. The problem can be defined as the ignorance of politicians about the existence of policy relevant research, or the incapacity of over-stretched bureaucrats to absorb research. The solution – "building bridges" or constructing "conveyor belts" – takes form, for example, of conferences and workshops, or the appointment of specialists to government committees
7. The problem can be conceived in terms of policy makers and leaders being dismissive, unresponsive or incapable of using research. This problem requires improvement in governmental capacity to recognise and absorb research, as well as in the capacities, personnel and resources of the state structure more generally.
8. The problem can be conceived of as not simply a question of research having a direct policy impact, but one of broader patterns of socio-political, economic and cultural influence. This leads to questioning of the domains of research relevance, impact and influence, and requires the adoption of a longer-term perspective where research may take a generation to exert real influence.
9. The problem can be defined as one of power relations. This generates concerns about the contested validity of knowledge(s), issues of censorship and control, and the question of ideology.
10. The problem can be viewed as one of the validity of research, and problems relating to the question: what is knowable? Attention is then focused on different epistemologies and "ways of knowing".

ANNEX C. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE AUTHORS

Introduction

Our purpose is to produce a thorough and accessible analytical synthesis of the wealth of findings generated by the BRP Phase II studies. Our reading of your studies together with a review of the literature on this subject has suggested a framework for examining the gaps between research and policy. Key aspects of this framework include: the emerging knowledge “market-place” in developing and transition countries, the impact of incentives and constraints on both producers and consumers in this market and the mechanisms that have been adopted to more effectively bridge the research and policy divide. This questionnaire seeks your feedback on the framework with respect to three areas:

1. Characterisation of research-to-policy gaps: This is being explored along two dimensions, i.e. degree of provision of research/knowledge and degree of utilisation of research/knowledge
2. Explaining the gaps and what accounts for their existence and persistence
3. Bridging interventions from different stakeholders that have been used to overcome these gaps.

If your study covered more than one country and/or sector please pick no more than two country/sector combinations that are different in the “bridging” sense and complete a separate questionnaire for each. In case you have any clarifications prior to filling this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to write to Eric Livny (elivny@eerc.ru). We request you to kindly send us the completed questionnaires before 24 March 2006. We will be following up with some of the authors by phone between 24-31 March, 2006.

A. Background

Q 1 What is the country + sector covered by this questionnaire?

Q 2 Please indicate the kind of study you undertook.

- a) single episode
- b) single sector/multiple episode
- c) multiple sector/multiple episode

Q 3 How would you characterise the nature of the country’s political system seen in your study?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not democratic and not competitive			Formally democratic but not competitive			Democratic and quite competitive

Q 4 It may be the case that the disposition of policymakers to use evidence depends on their “decision mode”, which is a function of the level of scrutiny and debate over the logical underpinnings of current policy regime. How would you describe the nature of decision mode in the given sector/country covered by your study?

- a) “Routine” – policymakers focus on adopting existing policies to emerging conditions with little discussion of their logic
- b) “Incremental” – policies may be selectively adjusted at the margin without wholesale re-thinking of current approach
- c) “Fundamental” – policymakers tend to re-think the general approach to a policy domain as a result of crisis, new minister or government, etc.

- d) "Emergent" – a new policy niche characterised by a lack of clear policy vision and limited policymaking capacity

B. Characterising the Gap

Q 5.1. In the context of this sector/country combination how would you assess the degree of provision of relevant research/knowledge on a scale of 1 = totally inadequate, 7 = fully adequate.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Totally inadequate			More or less adequate			Fully adequate

Q 5.2. If your assessment is 4 or less, how would you characterise the problem/gap seen in your sector/country? (select one or more options):

- Knowledge provision was not timely
- Knowledge provision was of inadequate quality (lacked analytical rigour, based on unrepresentative data)
- Knowledge provision was biased towards the interests/values of active/powerful knowledge producing organisations
- Knowledge provision was potentially relevant and of reasonable quality but was not properly brought to the attention of policymakers
- Knowledge was delivered in a form not appreciated or understood by the policy makers (e.g. technical language, excessive length, lack of operationalisation)
- Suggested solutions in the knowledge provided were not attuned to the current policy "decision mode" and/or did not take into account relevant political pressures and constraints
- The overall supply of relevant knowledge was inadequate
- other _____

Q 6.1 In the context of this sector/country combination how would you assess the degree of utilisation of available knowledge on a scale of 1 = totally inadequate, 7 = fully adequate.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Totally inadequate			More or less adequate			Fully adequate

Q 6.2 If your assessment is 4 or less, how would you characterise the problem/gap seen in your sector/country? (select one or more options):

- Policy makers did not seriously consider any evidence
- Policy makers considered mainly or only global evidence and discarded local evidence
- Policy makers did not consider a sufficiently wide range of available evidence but relied on a single research/knowledge producer
- Policy makers considered evidence but chose to ignore it while making policy decisions
- Policy makers made a formal "use" of local research by referring to it in official documents etc.
- Policy makers made manipulative use of knowledge to justify a predetermined course of action
- other _____

C. Explaining the Gaps: What Accounts for their Existence and Persistence?

Q 7 How prevalent were the following types of research or “policy inquiry” products and processes in the sector/country covered by your study? Mark each option on the scale of 1 to 7. (1- extremely rare; 2- rather rare; 3 – occasional; 4- rather common; 5 - frequent; 6 - very frequent; 7 - dominant)

- a) Academic research
- b) Generation of data and statistical analysis
- c) Institutional analysis: description of institutional arrangements and decision-making processes
- d) Analysis and dissemination of best international practices
- e) Workshops, conferences, e-discussions and other “convocation” activities
- f) Consulting, problem solving-type of analysis
- g) In-house (government) evaluation of policy processes and outcomes
- h) External evaluation of policy processes and outcomes

Q 8 What was the quality and level of competition in knowledge provision in the sector/country covered by your study? Select the relevant option.

- a) Very weak and not competitive (very limited number of independent local actors, extremely weak in capacities and outputs, relevant knowledge was provided by international organisations, if at all)
- b) Weak and competitive (many independent local actors, did basic analytical work and transmitted global knowledge without necessarily localising it)
- c) Strong but not competitive (one independent local actor who monopolised the policy research and consulting market)
- d) Strong and competitive (at least two strong independent local actors competed in the policy research and consulting market)

Q 9. Why was research or “policy inquiry” undertaken in the sector/country covered by your study? Please mark each option on the scale of 1 to 7 with 1= not relevant, to 7 = extremely relevant):

- a) Report the results of a research grant (satisfy donor requirements)
- b) Academic publication (promotion, reputation)
- c) Critique of current policy regime
- d) Identify problem and promote it to the policy agenda
- e) Evaluate policy alternatives of dealing with pressing issues
- f) Propose solution to a problem
- g) Satisfy client’s requirements (government or private sector)
- h) Other _____

Q 10 Please assess the importance of the following factors that impeded knowledge provision in your sector/country under study. These factors are roughly grouped in four clusters: basic freedoms, funding/demand for local knowledge, access to human capital and quality of research, delivery and advocacy channels. Please mark each of the options on the scale of 1 to 7 with 1 = least important, 7 = most important.

Basic freedoms:

- a) Legal and political restrictions on knowledge producers’ operation and freedom of expression
- b) Limited access of local knowledge producers to international scholarly resources, professional networks and other elements of a supportive environment

Demand/funding arrangements for research

- c) Domination of International Financial Institutions and imposition of imported concepts and solutions
- d) Weak or volatile government demand for independent policy advice
- e) Lack of transparency in allocation of public funding for research and policy consulting
- f) Insufficient and/or unstable funding of research (“projects” rather than institutional support or endowments)

Quality of inputs/outputs

- g) Poor institutional structure and management of local policy research institutions
- h) Limited access of policy research institutions to adequate human capital
- i) Lack of relevant technical (academic) skills and competencies
- j) Lack of relevant policymaking skills and competencies
- k) Weak internal competition and lack of peer pressure among local knowledge producers

Delivery and advocacy channels

- l) Weak and unorganised civil society
- m) Lack of spaces for open public policy discussion
- n) Other _____

Q 11 Please assess the importance of the following factors that impeded utilisation of knowledge/research in your sector/country under study. Please mark each of these options on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 = least important, 7 = most important.

- a) Ruling elite lacked commitment to development agenda (e.g. policymaking was dominated by vested interested, officials were corrupt)
- b) Policy debate was blocked because government was insulated from democratic pressures and civil society
- c) Policy debate was blocked for political economy reasons (e.g. populism related to electoral cycles)
- d) Policy debate was blocked by dominant coalition, corruption and lobbying by special interests
- e) Policy debate was blocked because of the nature of policy (not on the public radar screen, or urgent)
- f) Civil society was too weak and disorganised to provide an effective channel of influence
- g) Political regime was too volatile to allow for proper planning and use of evidence
- h) Policymakers at the relevant level of government lacked capacity to manage a policy consulting process and utilise available knowledge
- i) Government lacked financial resources to manage extensive consultations and/or commission research
- j) Bureaucratic rules of behaviour impeded policy innovation
- k) Relevant policymaking agencies lacked a climate of rationality and were not open to new evidence (or when internal policy debate was dominated by ideology)

D. Lessons Learnt in Bridging the Research-Policy Gaps

Q 12 What kind of “bridging” interventions were found in your sector/country covered under this study? Describe briefly.

Q 13 In the above bridging intervention, please rank the relative importance of different actors in bridging the gap between research and policy. (1= least important actor and 6/7 =most important actor)

- a) Policy makers
- b) Researchers

- c) International Financial Institutions
- d) Private donors
- e) NGOs, networks, advocacy coalitions
- f) Business organisations
- g) Any other (please specify)

Q 14 What did these bridging interventions lead to?

[1] In terms of Provision of Research/Evidence

- | | |
|--|--------|
| a) Increased the local capacity to produce and deliver high quality evidence | Yes/No |
| b) Increased the quantity and quality of evidence | Yes/No |
| c) Created channels of communication with the policy makers | Yes/No |
| d) Assisted advocacy and campaigns of NGOs and networks | Yes/No |

[2] In terms of utilisation of research (Select one)

- a) Effectively utilised all available evidence
- b) Selectively utilised available evidence
- c) Lack of utilisation of available evidence

Q 15 What kind of "gap/s" did these bridging interventions seek to address? Please select one or more of the following options.

- a) Inadequate capacities of local knowledge producing institutions to supply policy relevant research
- b) Information failures such as ignorance, lack of communication between researchers and policy makers
- c) Inadequate utilisation of research because of closed policy regimes
- d) Lack of demand or lack of willingness or lack of capacity among policy makers to make effective use of research
- e) Manipulation of research evidence or selective utilisation of research by policy makers due to vested interests or systemic factors
- f) Any other (explain)

Q 16 What prompted the observed bridging intervention? Please mark each of these options on the scale of 1 to 7 with 1= least important and 7 = most important.

- a) To create sustainable research-to-policy linkages in a particular policy domain (because "bridging" has intrinsic value)
- b) To address a specific urgent need for data, information or research
- c) As a response to external pressures and incentives
- d) As a legal or an executive requirement for policymakers
- e) To justify a pre-determined policy decision or add legitimacy to a political process
- f) To bring about a policy change or reform
- g) Other reasons (please specify)

Q 17 On the basis of the bridging interventions observed in your sector/country under study, please suggest:

- a] Three "must-dos" to ensure effective bridges between research and policy
- b] Three "must-avoids" in bridging research and policy