



## Making Research Relevant to Policy-makers, Development Actors, and Local Communities

NCCR North-South Report on  
Effectiveness of Research for  
Development

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NCCR North-South Dialogue, no. 23

2010

*dialogue*

The present study was carried out at the following partner institutions of the NCCR North-South:

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<sup>b</sup>  
**UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN**

**CDE**  
CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT  
AND ENVIRONMENT

NCCR North-South, Management Centre,  
Centre for Development and Environment (CDE),  
University of Bern, Switzerland

and all partner institutions in Switzerland and in the  
nine partnership regions (JACS)

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and Cooperation SDC

The NCCR North-South (Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change) is one of twenty National Centres of Competence in Research established by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). It is implemented by the SNSF and co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the participating institutions in Switzerland. The NCCR North-South carries out disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on issues relating to sustainable development in developing and transition countries as well as in Switzerland.

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Researchers, local people, and governmental representatives discussing options for introducing new health services for mobile pastoralists in the Northern Region of Chad.  
(Photos by Jakob Zinsstag)

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# Contents

|                |   |           |
|----------------|---|-----------|
| <b>Summary</b> | <b>7</b>  |           |
| <b>1</b>       | <b>Monitoring and evaluation in the NCCR North–South</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>2</b>       | <b>Scope of the report on effectiveness</b>   | <b>15</b> |
|                | 2.1 Aim of the report   | 15        |
|                | 2.2 Methods   | 16        |
|                | 2.3 Data  | 17        |
|                | 2.4 Potential and limitations of the report   | 18        |
| <b>3</b>       | <b>Making research relevant to policy–makers, development actors, and local communities</b>   | <b>19</b> |
|                | 3.1 The 23 case studies   | 19        |
|                | 3.2 Overview of the 23 case studies: map and tables   | 20        |
|                | 3.3 Case study on policy:<br>Contributing to the formulation of a rights–based and<br>gender–sensitive migration policy in Pakistan | 25        |
|                | 3.4 Case study on implementation and policy:<br>Socio–economic atlases in Laos and Vietnam  | 29        |
|                | 3.5 Case study on local communities:<br>The Household–Centered Environmental Sanitation (HCES)<br>approach                          | 32        |
|                | 3.6 Case study on policy, implementation, and local communities:<br>Risk management in Bolivia                                      | 36        |
| <b>4</b>       | <b>Chances for sustainability of NCCR North–South outcomes</b>  | <b>39</b> |
|                | 4.1 Sustainable outcomes  | 39        |
|                | 4.2 Chances for sustainability of outcomes  | 39        |
| <b>5</b>       | <b>NCCR North–South researchers’ strategies for interacting with non–academic partners</b>  | <b>41</b> |
| <b>6</b>       | <b>Conclusions of this report and recommendations to the NCCR North–South</b>   | <b>47</b> |
| <b>7</b>       | <b>References</b>   | <b>49</b> |
|                | <b>Appendix 1: Worksheet</b>  | <b>51</b> |
|                | <b>Acknowledgements</b>   | <b>52</b> |

## Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Figure 1:</b> Monitoring Research Effectiveness (MORE) in the NCCR North-South.<br>(Diagram by Claudia Michel, Karl Herweg, Eva Heim)   | 13 |
| <b>Figure 2 (on page 21):</b> World map: Overview of the 23 case studies.<br>(Map by Simone Kummer)  | 20 |
| <b>Figure 3:</b> NCCR North-South researchers from SDPI at a policy event in Pakistan.   | 25 |
| <b>Figure 4:</b> Two atlases provide a new perspective on socio-economic issues<br>in Laos and Vietnam.  | 29 |
| <b>Figure 5:</b> Information of and interaction with stakeholders has led to changed<br>planning practices for sanitation in unplanned settlements.  | 32 |
| <b>Figure 6:</b> In La Paz, Bolivia, settlements have been built in areas highly exposed to<br>landslides.   | 36 |
| <b>Figure 7:</b> Strategies of NCCR North-South researchers for interacting with<br>non-academic partners, and frame conditions which they need to take<br>into account.                                       | 41 |
| <b>Figure 8:</b> Researchers are only one group among many who influence policy and<br>practice. Therefore, researchers should proactively ally with other<br>stakeholders in order to strengthen their voice. | 44 |

## Tables

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Table 1 (on page 22):</b> Effects of research mainly on policymakers.                                       | 20 |
| <b>Table 2 (on page 23):</b> Effects of research mainly on development actors.                                 | 20 |
| <b>Table 3 (on page 23):</b> Effects of research mainly on local communities.                                  | 20 |
| <b>Table 4 (on page 24):</b> Effects of research on policymakers, development actors,<br>and local communities | 20 |

## Summary

Bridging the gap between research and policy is a topic of growing interest in international development. For this reason the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, an inter- and transdisciplinary research network focusing on sustainable development, introduced monitoring and evaluation of its effects on development. Making research relevant to society is the third objective of the long-term research programme, the first being the generation of knowledge, the second the training of academic people, and the fourth the creation of research networks and institutional structures.

A system for Monitoring Research Effectiveness (MORE) was introduced as a self-assessing and learning tool in order to enhance researchers' understanding of how they share knowledge with policy-makers, development actors, and local communities – ultimately with a view to providing guidance for further increasing effectiveness. Effectiveness is defined in terms of outcomes. Outcomes are changing practices observable among external partners to whom the research programme is directly linked and with whom it anticipates opportunities of mutual influence; research is therefore effective when the dialogue between researchers and actors from policy and practice leads to partners' practices changing in a positive direction.

The guiding question for this report was: how has research conducted within the NCCR North-South programme contributed to societal learning involving research, policy, and implementation, and will it eventually lead to sustainably changed practices among partners? The report is based on an internal evaluation (2009) during the course of the programme, which is still running (2001-2013). The results are currently serving as a basis for collective learning and for widespread adaption within the programme.

The data for the report consisted of monitoring worksheets and interviews as well as complementary information from annual reports, workshops, journal articles, websites, and personal accounts about research experiences. In 2009 information was provided on 23 representative outcomes by all institutional partners in Switzerland as well as by the programme's regional partners overseas. Thematically, the examples of outcomes deal with topics such as governance, conflict, livelihoods, globalisation, health, sanitation, natural resources, and sustainability in general. The examples are located in Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania, Kyrgyzstan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Costa Rica, Mexico, Bolivia, and Switzerland. Although many more outcomes exist within the programme, the authors of the present report consciously decided to limit data collection to a choice of the most significant examples because the report is aimed at facilitating internal learning from good research practices.

The 23 examples of outcomes reveal that researchers had interactions with the following types of partners:

- Policy-makers,
- Development actors, and
- Local communities.

The results of data collection are presented on a world map. In addition, tables feature short descriptions of the outcomes as well as lists of NCCR North-South actors and important non-academic partners involved.

Out of the 23 research outcomes, four examples were explored in detail in order to better understand the types of partners addressed by the NCCR North-South. The first case study focuses on policy and highlights information about the way in which researchers interacted with governmental officials and policy-makers in Pakistan in order to contribute to changing a national law. The second case study on implementation sheds light on how researchers informed the strategies of national policy and international development agencies in Vietnam and Laos with regard to poverty alleviation. The third provides insights into local communities, presenting a participatory planning approach for urban sanitation in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The fourth example highlights research outcomes at all three levels (policy, implementation, and local communities) with regard to natural hazard risk management in Bolivia.

Further, the report assesses the chances that outcomes of NCCR North-South research for development will be sustainable. Sustainability is defined as the extent to which positive outcomes of the programme continue after completion of the programme. In contrast to measuring de-facto sustainability in an ex-post evaluation, this report assesses the *chances* of sustainability in the *future*.

The report provides a synthesis of the essential elements of the NCCR North-South's researchers' strategies for collaborating with development partners in policy, in implementation, and at the local level. The elements of researchers' strategies for bridging the gap between research and policy are:

- Disseminating research results beyond the scientific audience;
- Networking with policy-makers, development practitioners, and local communities;
- Sharing and mutual learning;
- Advising decision-makers;
- Capacity development;
- Implementing research; and
- Lobbying/advocacy.

Strategies used by researchers in their partnerships are framed by three conditions considered decisive for achieving successful and sustainable policy dialogue: sufficient

orientation of research towards development (research approach), adequate choice of partners, and an appropriate alliance strategy.

The report concludes with recommendations for the NCCR North-South regarding how to increase its effects on development. Recommendations include, first, that plausible links between researchers and the context in which policy dialogues take place should be brought into focus. More empirical evidence is necessary to improve understanding of the relation between researchers' strategies for interacting with non-academic partners, on the one hand, and the social and political environment in which this interaction takes place, on the other hand. Second, the report recommends that NCCR North-South members should reflect on the alliance strategies they practise as well as on what strategies they could perhaps initiate in future. In this respect, a rich experience in networking with partners exists. This is a potential that should be shared and tapped even more strategically in future.

In this spirit, the report on the effectiveness of NCCR North-South research for development practice is one step in a long journey to improve the relevance of transdisciplinary research for societal learning among policymakers, implementers, and local communities.



# 1 Monitoring and evaluation in the NCCR North–South

There is a growing demand for understanding the link between research, policy, and implementation. Findings of research on sustainable development relating to themes as diverse as natural resources, governance, health, and conflict are communicated to policymakers and development practitioners. But do such findings influence practices in international development positively, and do local people eventually benefit? The question is discussed both in development studies and in international development. In order to better understand the effectiveness of research, inter- and transdisciplinary research programmes on sustainable development are subject to specialized evaluations. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a means of systematically observing the effectiveness of research findings in policy and development arenas.

M&E emerged in the context of international development cooperation and has been adapted to the characteristics of research programmes. One of the particularities of M&E in the realm of research is that it has to work for academic and non-academic partners, who are subject to different systems of logic and responsibilities. Another characteristic is that partners often work across major institutional, cultural, and geographical distances.

The Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South is an inter- and transdisciplinary research network focusing on sustainable development that recently introduced monitoring and evaluation. Transdisciplinary research refers to research “that is driven by the need to solve problems of the life-world” (Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2008), thereby overcoming the boundaries between researchers and actors outside academia. Research partnership academics from various disciplines and from countries around the world have been cooperating since 2001 within the framework of the NCCR North-South. In 2010, the NCCR North-South consisted of 279 members, 74% of whom had nationalities other than Swiss. These persons worked in senior positions, as PhD candidates, as MSc/MA students, and in other functions (NCCR North-South 2010). 219 institutions cooperated as third parties on the basis of general exchange of knowledge, exchange of data, technology, staff, joint projects, or other forms of collaboration. Taking influence on societal partners is one of the various goals of the NCCR North-South, the most important ones being the generation of scientific knowledge and the training of academics.

Within the NCCR North-South, one of the most prominent spaces in which interactions between research, policy, and practice take place is the component of the programme called Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes (PAMS). This is a vehicle for testing the practical application of doctoral research results in concrete development contexts. The programme component provides funding for facilitating societal learning. 77 Partnership Actions (PAMS) were carried out within the first two phases of the

NCCR North-South, enabling exchange of knowledge and mutual learning between academics and non-academic actors.<sup>1</sup>

A practice-oriented component of the NCCR North-South: Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes (PAMS) are projects of limited financial scope and duration, implemented by local actors in partnership with scientific and non-scientific stakeholders. In close connection with research efforts, Partnership Actions implement and test approaches, methods, and tools developed in research, in order to identify promising strategies and potentials for sustainable development. The projects can cover a variety of activities such as training courses, policy dialogue, cultural programmes, or small-scale improvements in infrastructure and technology. Each Partnership Action project is carefully planned to enable and promote mutual learning between the research community and society.

In 2005, the Management Centre of the NCCR North-South began working on the design of a system for Monitoring Research Effectiveness (MORE), the aim of which was to serve as a self-assessing and learning tool (Michel and Herweg 2008). The MORE system is based on an international understanding of effectiveness: research is effective when the dialogue with actors from policy and practice leads to partners' practices changing in a positive direction. The MORE system is strongly influenced by Outcome Mapping (Earl et al 2001), a methodology from which it adopts a shift away from assessing the products or the impacts of a programme to a focus on people, organisations, relationships, and changing practices. In addition, a considerable input into MORE comes from Impact Monitoring and Assessment (IMA; Herweg et al 1998; Herweg and Steiner 2002a; Herweg and Steiner 2002b). The clarity and straightforwardness of this instrument have helped to develop a monitoring system which can be adapted to the complexities of the interface between research, policy, and implementation from the global to the local level. Finally, analysis in MORE is oriented towards the evaluation quality standards of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>2</sup>

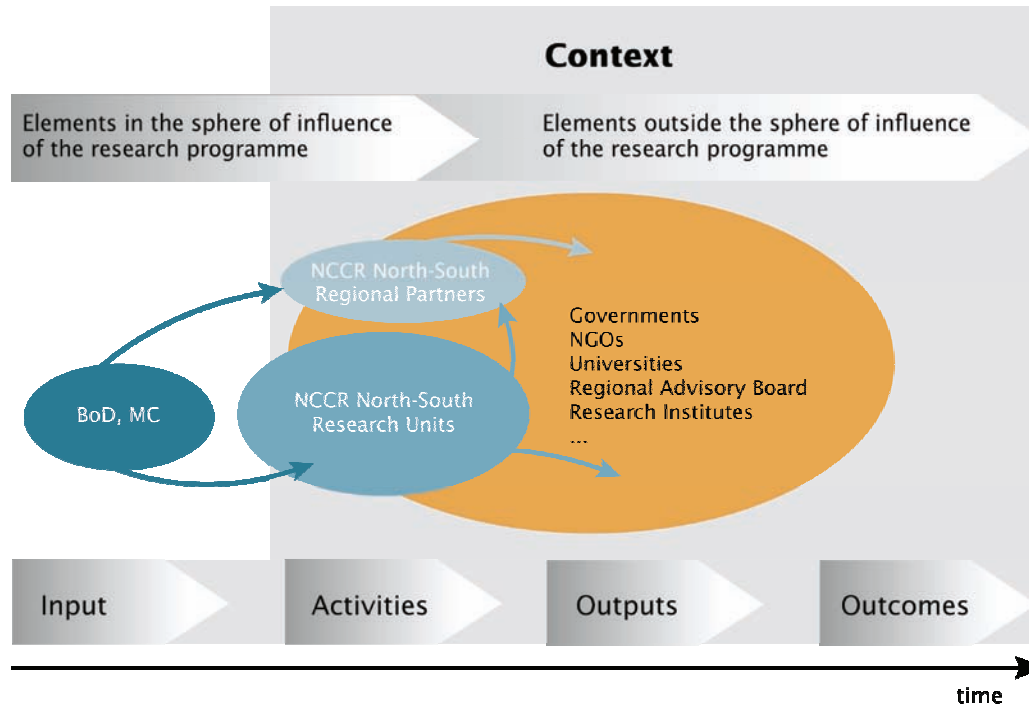
In the NCCR North-South, outcomes are defined as “changes in the behaviour, relationships, practices, activities or actions of the boundary partners – i.e. people, groups, and organisations with whom a programme works directly” (Earl et al 2001) – as a consequence of NCCR North-South activities and research. In other words, outcomes change the practices of non-academic partners. Non-academic partners are

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<sup>1</sup> To-date, 77 PAMS have been financed entirely by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), with a total expenditures of CHF 2,472,620.

<sup>2</sup> The draft standards were approved by the members of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation at its fourth meeting in March 2006 for a test phase application of three years ([http://www.oecd.org/document/30/0,3343,en\\_21571361\\_34047972\\_38903582\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/30/0,3343,en_21571361_34047972_38903582_1_1_1_1,00.html); 03/02/2010).

those individuals, groups, and organisations to whom the programme is directly linked and with whom it anticipates opportunities for influence (Carden 2009). The desired changes are defined by the researchers together with their partners, rather than prescribed by the NCCR North-South.



**Figure 1:** Monitoring Research Effectiveness (MORE) in the NCCR North-South. (Diagram by Claudia Michel, Karl Herweg, Eva Heim)

The different units of the NCCR North-South, as illustrated in Figure 1, comprise the Board of Directors (BoD), including the Management Centre (MC) in Bern, the Swiss research units, and the regional partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. As these units have different tasks and links, they are considered to be internal partners (in blue in Figure 1). External partners of NCCR North-South researchers are mostly academic partners, but they can also be non-academic partners: parliaments, governmental and non-governmental organisations, civil society actors, and local communities (in orange).

MORE differentiates between input, activities, outputs, and outcomes. *Inputs* are financial, human, and material resources for research, whereas *outputs* are completed research projects, reports, articles, and conference papers. *Outcomes*, among other things, include the mid-term changing practices of non-academic partners, i.e. uptake and application of research results. Research outcomes depend not only on researchers' outputs but on a variety of external factors. The term "context" in Figure 1 refers to the receptiveness of decision-making systems, e.g. the political will for change among decision-makers, but also broader socio-economic and cultural influences, e.g. donor policies (Court and Simone 2006; Carden 2009). The context has a major influence on how effectively researchers can interact with their partners. With time, it becomes

increasingly difficult to attribute outcomes to research activities (Herweg and Steiner 2002a). This is an important reason why MORE focuses on plausible rather than causal links between research, policy, and implementation.

## 2 Scope of the report on effectiveness

### 2.1 Aim of the report

Informing policy and implementation from a research perspective is an important goal of the NCCR North-South.<sup>3</sup> The present report focuses on the successes and challenges of supporting “societies in partner countries and institutions in their efforts to address syndromes in their regions and find means to mitigate them” (NCCR North-South 2009, p 14). Partners can be supported through societal learning. Societal learning implies that individuals with different professional and cultural backgrounds come to a common understanding (Rist 2007). For analysis of effectiveness, the driving question was to explore how transdisciplinary research carried out by the NCCR North-South contributed to societal learning involving research, policy, and implementation, and eventually led to sustainably changed practices among non-academic partners.

The guiding question of this report was: how has research conducted within the NCCR North-South programme contributed to societal learning involving research, policy, and implementation, and will it eventually lead to sustainably changed practices among partners? The results of the internal evaluation are used for internal guidance of the programme.

The aim of the report is to assess good practices of dialoguing at the interface of research, policy, and implementation. According to the planning of Phase 3 of the NCCR North-South, further reports on effectiveness will be written on the various goals of the research programme. The visibility, analysis, and discussion of these practices should be a basis for collective learning and for widespread adoption within the programme. This constitutes an internal evaluation of the NCCR North-South while the programme is running. Therefore, the results are used for internal guidance of the programme.

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<sup>3</sup> The four principle goals of the NCCR North-South that were taken into account for this evaluation are the ones listed in the programme’s proposal for Phase 3 (NCCR North-South 2009, p 14). The order of the goals indicates their relevance for the programme: a) *Research goal*: To conduct disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research aiming to promote sustainable development and mitigate syndromes of global change; b) *Capacity development goal*: To help strengthen institutions, primarily by building individual competence and capacity for developing socially robust knowledge for mitigation action; c) *Empowerment goal*: To support societies in partner countries and institutions in their efforts to address syndromes in their regions and find means to mitigate them; d) *Structural goal*: To develop a Swiss Network of Excellence in Sustainable Development Research with high international recognition and linkage, and based on individual Centres of Excellence in research partnerships and on formal inter-university training at post-graduate levels in Switzerland.

## 2.2 Methods

The NCCR report on effectiveness is based on the MORE dataset. A worksheet on outcomes was developed for data collection (see Annex). The worksheet is a reporting scheme that includes the following sections:

- Description of outcome, i.e. changed practice of non-academic partners;
- Description of outcome indicators;
- Description of NCCR North-South non-academic partners;
- Outputs of the NCCR North-South that contribute to the outcome;
- Description of enabling factors and actors outside the NCCR North-South that were essential to effect the outcome;
- Reasons for the outcome;
- Unexpected outcomes;
- Lessons learnt; and
- Recommendations to other NCCR North-South members.

Each head of the NCCR North-South's institutional partners in Switzerland, as well as the 9 regional partners, were requested to fill in one worksheet, i.e. to describe one outcome regarding how the NCCR North-South had informed policy and/or implementation from a research perspective.

A total of 23 outcomes were collected. The list of case studies includes at least one example from each institutional partner in Switzerland and each of the 9 regional partners (8 overseas and 1 in Switzerland). Although many more outcomes exist within the programme, data collection was consciously limited to a choice of the most significant examples. As the aim of the report is to facilitate internal learning from good practice, the most important cases were selected for full analysis. A comprehensive – but less explicit – compilation of all outcomes of the NCCR North-South was not foreseen. While such a report would give an account of the manifold effects of the research programme, it would imply a much higher investment.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews ranging from 45 to 90 minutes were held with each of the 23 worksheet authors. The interviews considerably broadened insight into the described outcome, and the recordings also served as a quality check.

A framework was developed for analysis of the outcomes. The changing practices of non-academic partners were depicted on a time-space matrix. Each outcome was related to specific research outputs of the NCCR North-South as well as to the context – i.e. the contributing actors and factors. These contexts were attributed to the following types of non-academic partners:

- Policy-makers;
- Development actors; and
- Local communities.

Partners act in different social realms. Policy-makers act in a political context, e.g. in a parliament, and are responsible for legislative processes, while development actors must refer to the duties of governmental and non-governmental agencies that conduct development projects and programmes. In contrast to these partners, who are often involved in national and international relations, local communities are generally more related to local concerns and the problems of individual livelihoods. NCCR North-South researchers' strategies for informing policy and practice need to be tailored to the different types of partners.

### 2.3 Data

The main data consist of worksheets and interviews, but other sources were also considered. Complementary information came from NCCR North-South annual reports, annual workshops, journal articles, reports, presentations, websites, or personal accounts.

In 2009 information was provided on 23 representative examples of societal learning involving researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and/or local communities. Thematically, these examples deal with topics such as governance, conflict, livelihoods, globalisation, health, sanitation, resources, and sustainability. The examples are located in the following countries: Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Kyrgyzstan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Costa Rica, Mexico, Bolivia, and Switzerland, with some cases located in multiple countries. In some cases, collaboration of NCCR North-South members with partners in these regions was long term (several decades). The report covers the whole time span of the NCCR North-South since 2001, with an emphasis on the recent years.

Of the 23 case studies, four were selected for detailed analysis. The selection aimed at balanced presentation of the thematic, disciplinary, and regional variety of the North-South research partnership; only case studies with a complete dataset were chosen. Whether the interaction with societal partners was successful or not was not a decisive selection criterion. As MORE is an internal tool for capitalizing on experiences and sharing examples of good practice, NCCR North-South partners focused mainly on positive examples.

Additional criteria for selecting the case studies were the extent to which they provided information on our principle questions:

1. Did the description clearly focus on the research programme's partners, i.e. on policy-makers, development practitioners, and local communities?
2. Did the information include aspects of the social, political, and institutional contexts in which NCCR North-South non-academic partners are active?

The 23 examples of researchers' knowledge sharing and learning with societal partners are inseparably connected with the programme's research projects and with Partnership

Actions (PAMS, see above). Generation of scientific knowledge and collaboration between academics are two preconditions for exchanging with societal partners. The report on effectiveness was coordinated and conducted by two members of the Management Centre, with contributions from all members of the NCCR North-South from the Swiss research institutes and Regional coordination offices. The results were presented and discussed at the annual retreat of the NCCR North-South in March 2010.

## **2.4 Potential and limitations of the report**

The report at hand is the first to provide an overview of the effectiveness of NCCR North-South researchers in informing policy, practice, and local communities, based on specific data collection. The report shows the types of societal actors with which NCCR members are collaborating; it also exemplifies how researchers conduct dialogue across academic boundaries.

The report does not present the totality of effects that the NCCR North-South has on society. Moreover, the outcomes are mainly qualitative descriptions of effective research activities. It will be the task of a future report to better assess effectiveness in quantitative terms. However, it will also be important to find a balance between investments in generating quantitative statements and the benefits of such activities, given the fact that the quality of exchange of knowledge and societal learning is not easily expressed in numbers.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the report does not introduce the research conducted in the NCCR North-South and the network of academic partners from the North and the South on which the dialogue between research, policy, and practice is based.

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<sup>4</sup> According to Annette Boaz and co-authors, quantitative methods are suitable for repeat analyses and comparisons. They can be very cost-effective but are often difficult to use in the analysis of the impact of research on policy (Boaz et al 2009).

## 3 Making research relevant to policy-makers, development actors, and local communities

This chapter provides an overview of important outcomes of the NCCR North-South. The first section introduces 23 case studies. The subsequent sections draw on four selected case studies in order to describe in greater detail the effects of interactions between academic and non-academic partners on local communities, implementation, and policy.

### 3.1 The 23 case studies

We focus on representative case studies that illustrate interaction between NCCR North-South researchers and third-party institutions, the so-called external non-academic partners (see above). We decided to categorise these third-party institutions according to the social realm to which they belong: policy, implementation, and local communities. *Policy* addresses individuals and institutions in the policy sector such as parliaments, governmental organisations, or parties. *Implementation* refers to development actors, for example governmental units with a focus on development matters or NGOs. *Local communities* are local organisations such as municipalities, farmers associations, or self-help groups. Obviously these categories are not mutually exclusive, but they still help to distinguish the scope of interaction.

Of the 23 outcomes, four examples were selected for in-depth exploration in order to better understand what types of non-academic partners are addressed by the NCCR North-South: The first case study focuses on policy. It highlights information on the way researchers interacted with governmental officials and policy-makers in Pakistan to contribute to national law changes. The second case study on implementation sheds light on how researchers informed the strategies of national policy and international development agencies in Vietnam and Laos. The third provides insight into local communities, presenting a participatory planning approach for urban sanitation in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The fourth example is a “mixed” example that highlights outcomes at all three levels (policy, implementation, and local communities) with regard to risk management in Bolivia. These examples make it clear that the effects of research can be observed in various dimensions. Each example is followed by shorter descriptions of outcomes on the same type of non-academic partner from the larger dataset, in order to provide broader insight into the manifold effects of the NCCR North-South.

### 3.2 Overview of the 23 case studies: map and tables

The following four pages offer an overview of the 23 case studies: a map (Figure 2) shows the regional distribution of the individual studies. In addition each case study is briefly described in one of four tables (Tables 1 to 4), along with a list of research institutions involved (NCCR North-South members) and non-academic partners on whom activities had an influence. Page numbers added in the description of some outcomes refer to further information provided about these case studies in the present document. Numbers in the final column of the tables refer to the corresponding case study numbers on the map (Figure 2). The four tables classify the case studies according to the main effect of research on specific categories of actors.

#### **Overview:**

**Figure 2 (on page 21):** World map: Overview of the 23 case studies. (Map by Simone Kummer)

**Table 1 (on page 22):** Effects of research mainly on policymakers.

**Table 2 (on page 23):** Effects of research mainly on development actors.

**Table 3 (on page 23):** Effects of research mainly on local communities.

**Table 4 (on page 24):** Effects of research on policymakers, development actors, and local communities








**Table 1: Effects of research mainly on policymakers**

|  | Outcome   | NCCR North-South members               | Non-academic partners   | No. on map |
|--|---|--|---|------------|
|    | PAKISTAN<br>Research on forests, livelihoods, and power in Pakistan contributed to the emergence of actors who challenged the dominant forest management practice in Pakistan. This opened up new avenues for discussing participatory sustainable forest management.   | DSGZ, RCO South Asia                   | Government (Ministry of Environment, Forest Department), NWFP and local authorities, Sungi Development Foundation   | 1          |
|    | SWITZERLAND<br>As a result of an initial policy brief, the SDC Section Global Programme Migration is now taking into account NCCR North-South research outputs on migration.  | Management Centre                      | SDC Section Global Programme Migration  | 2          |
|    | INTERNATIONAL<br>As a result of long-standing experience developed in the NCCR North-South, the programme's Director was asked to be the leading co-author of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). The concept of multifunctional agriculture, as introduced by the NCCR, was incorporated into the report. | CDE, all NCCR North-South units        | IAASTD committee, WB, FAO, UNEP, UNDP, governments of countries that signed the IAASTD assessment   | 3          |
|    | PAKISTAN<br>Research on migration contributed to the formulation of a rights-based migration policy in Pakistan.<br><br>p. 25   | SDPI, DSGZ, RCO South Asia             | Ministries dealing with migration reform (Policy Planning Cell, Ministry of Labor Manpower, Overseas Pakistanis, Overseas Pakistani Foundation), Dir Development Organisation                             | 4          |
|   | ETHIOPIA, SUDAN, EGYPT<br>Between 2002 and 2004, a series of three Dialogue Workshops on the Eastern Nile Basin led to a "Nile Forum" that contributed to the "Nile Basin Initiative" of the riparian states.<br><br>p. 27  | Swisspeace, RCO Horn of Africa         | Members of the Nile Basin Initiative, young professionals in water ministries/foreign ministries  | 5          |
|  | SWITZERLAND<br>A PhD researcher provides advice on the basis of a mandate to the Political Department IV of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Advice focuses on traditional authorities in Sudan and their involvement in state-building processes.<br><br>p. 27   | Swisspeace, RCO Horn of Africa         | Political Division IV of the Swiss foreign ministry (FDFA)  | 6          |
|  | CHAD<br>In Chad, the "One Health" approach developed by Swiss TPH (and co-financed by Optimus Foundation) led to close collaboration between human and veterinary scientists working in the field of vaccination and led to changed health behavior among nomadic populations.  | Swiss TPH, CSRS, RCO West Africa       | National and district veterinary and health administration and services; nomadic people   | 7          |
|  | NEPAL<br>A Nepali think tank on land issues fosters continuous exchange between researchers and policymakers and informs decision-making on current land reforms.<br><br>p. 28  | RCO South Asia, DSGZ                   | High Level Land Reform Commission, Ministry of Land Reform and Management, National Land Rights Forum, Nepal Institute of Development Studies, Community Self-Reliance Centre Nepal, Kathmandu University | 8          |
|  | THAILAND, VIETNAM<br>An appropriate on-site sanitation system was realised by strategic partners as a means of achieving more sustainable sanitation in developing countries.<br><br>p. 28  | AIT, RCO Southeast Asia, EA-WAG/Sandec | Government (PCD, DOH Thailand) UN-Habitat, IWA, research institutions (CEETA Vietnam)   | 9          |





Photos courtesy of: 1: Urs Geiser; 2: NCCR North-South Policy Brief No. 4; 3: IAASTD; 4: SDPI; 5: Simon Mason; 6: Martina Santschi; 7: Esther Schelling; 8: Bishnu Upreti and S. Singh; 9: EAWAG/SANDEC.




**Table 2: Effects of research mainly on development actors**

|   | Outcome  | NCCR North-South Members          | Non-academic Partners  | No. |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|-----|
|  NEPAL, INDIA, PAKISTAN | Collaborating partners of the RCO South Asia have improved communication skills and developed competence in knowledge management and successful administration of partnership activities.<br>p. 28   | RCO South Asia, DSGZ, Swisspeace  | TISS, COLARP, SDA, KU  | 10  |
|  KYRGYZSTAN             | The Kyrgyz veterinary services adopted the strategy of mass livestock vaccination recommended by NCCR North-South researchers.<br>p. 31  | CSRS, RCO Central Asia, Swiss TPH | Governmental veterinary services, Swiss Red Cross                      | 11  |
|  LAOS, VIETNAM          | The (SDC-funded) Vietnam and Laos atlases enhanced the ability of many development agencies to target their efforts. It also enhanced the availability and sharing of data at larger scale.<br>p. 29   | CDE, RCO Southeast Asia           | Government (DOS, MPI Laos), WFP, UNFPA, SDC, various NGOs              | 12  |
|  CHAD                  | A Partnership Action (PAMS) conducted in Chad on the health of nomadic populations was approved by the government as well as by NGOs. As a consequence, an inter-sectoral programme on the health of nomadic populations was implemented.<br>p. 31 | RCO West Africa, CSRS, Swiss TPH  | Chadian government (Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs), UNICEF | 13  |
|  CHAD                 | The European Union funded a large-scale project combining human and animal health services in Eastern Chad. This project applies research results from the NCCR North-South.   | Swiss TPH, CSRS, RCO West Africa  | European Union   | 14  |

Photos courtesy of: 10: JACS SAS; 11: J Kasymbekov; 12: www.laoatlas.net; 13: Daniel Weibel; 14: Esther Schelling.

**Table 3: Effects of research mainly on local communities**

|  | Outcome  | NCCR North-South Members          | Non-academic Partners   | No. |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
|  TANZANIA    | A Partnership Action (PAMS) to improve local governance of common resources in the Rufiji flood plains empowered local communities. Grassroots institutions were established to support sustainable use of the Ngumburuni forest in Rufiji.<br>p. 35   | CDE, RCO East Africa              | Various Rufiji District Officers, LEAT, local communities   | 15  |
|  MEXICO      | In Mexico City, a Partnership Action (PAMS) in a poor neighbourhood helped citizens shape plans to improve the settlement.<br>p. 35  | LaSur, RCO Central America        | City Government of Mexico City, local stakeholder associations, University UAM-A  | 16  |
|  SWITZERLAND | The multi-stakeholder participatory process that took place in the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch UNESCO World Heritage site enabled mutual learning and initial steps towards conflict resolution between researchers and various local stakeholders, including administrators and private and non-governmental organisations. | CDE, RCO Alp                      | Local administrators, farmers, hotel owners, construction companies, environmental organisations, cablecar companies        | 17  |
|  COSTA RICA  | Research on the Household-Centered Sanitation (HCES) approach caused NGOs and Costa Rican health, water, and housing authorities to rethink their approach to sanitation.  | RCO Central America, EAWAG/Sandec | The municipality of San José, Housing Foundation (NGO), national financial and health authorities, University of Costa Rica | 18  |

|  | Outcome   | NCCR North-South members  | Non-academic partners  | No. on map |
|--|---|---|--|------------|
|  | MEXICO<br>As a result of a Partnership Action (PAMS) conducted in Mexico City, the basis for a “School of Citizens” was established in Tepito, a low-income, historic neighbourhood in the capital city.  | RCO Central America, LaSur                                      | City Government of Mexico City, local stakeholder associations   | 19         |
|  | KYRGYZSTAN<br>The development and implementation of a newspaper and a radio programme on the topic of sustainable pasture management has aided the dissemination and application of research findings.<br>p. 35   | CDE, RCO Central Asia   | Herders, livestock owners, rural communities, politicians, technicians, specialists, vet-doctors, donors, local NGOs | 20         |
|  | COSTA RICA, TANZANIA, KENYA, LAOS<br>The new Household-Centered Environmental Sanitation (HCES) approach was validated as a strategic planning approach for unplanned and unserved urban areas in cities of the developing world by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG) in collaboration with scientists, governmental, and non-governmental organisations in Costa Rica, Tanzania, Kenya, and Laos (among others). A number of spin-off projects grew out of the HCES projects.<br>p. 32 | EAWAG/Sandec, RCOs Central America, East Africa, Southeast Asia | SECO, SDC, national sector ministries, local administrations, international organisations (UN-Habitat, WSSC)         | 21         |

Photos courtesy of: 15: Urs Wiesmann; 16: Tina Hirschbuehl; 17: Urs Wiesmann; 18: EAWAG/SANDEC; 19: Tina Hirschbuehl; 20: Daniel Maselli; 21: EAWAG/SANDEC.

**Table 4: Effects of research on policymakers, development actors, and local communities**

|  | Outcome   | NCCR North-South Members               | Non-academic Partners   | No. |
|--|---|--|---|-----|
|  | BOLIVIA<br>An atlas on “threats, vulnerabilities and risks in Bolivia” and a toolbox for risk management were developed. These support national and local risk management in Bolivia.<br>p. 29                                | IHEID, Swiss TPH, RCO South America    | Ministry of Civil Defence, military school La Paz, Fundepco, Oxfam, municipalities          | 22  |
|  | KYRGYZSTAN<br>The Kyrgyz government acknowledged the role of local people in a joint survey on pasture assessment and management. The approach of participatory pasture management was developed within the NCCR North-South. | CDE, CSRS, RCO Central Asia, Swiss TPH | Kyrgyz Giprozem, CAMP Alatoo, GTZ-CCD, local village administrations, and local communities | 23  |

Photos courtesy of: 22: Annika Salmi ; 23: Peter Messerli.

### 3.3 Case study on policy: Contributing to the formulation of a rights-based and gender-sensitive migration policy in Pakistan



**Figure 3:** NCCR North-South researchers from SDPI at a policy event in Pakistan. (Photo courtesy of SDPI)

*Globally, more than 200 million people live outside their countries of origin. Migration is a particularly important source of revenue for sending countries such as Pakistan. Researchers from an NCCR North-South partner institution, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute SDPI – Jan Maqsood, Karin Siegmann, and others – made significant contributions to current decisions on migration by the government of Pakistan.*

This case study is about NCCR North-South researchers who contributed to the formulation of a rights-based and gender-sensitive migration policy in Pakistan. The upcoming legislation expands the possibilities for women to earn a living. Under the old legislation only men were allowed to migrate for income-generating activities, whereas today women as well as men should be able to leave the country.

The change in the law took place in the context of both a global and a national debate on migration. At the global level, international norms were established to facilitate migration, such as the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which entered into force in 2003. International regulations aim to protect the political, social, and economic rights of migrants. With more than 200 million people living outside their countries of origin worldwide, half of them being labour migrants, protecting these people is a global concern. At the national level, migrants are a particularly important constituency for Pakistan due to their contribution to the development of the country. Since the oil boom of the 1970s, millions of Pakistani men have migrated to the Gulf

States and sent back billions of rupees in foreign exchange. According to SDPI, Pakistani workers' remittances exceeded Rs 240 billion in 2007.<sup>5</sup>

Migration is of additional importance to the country due to serious development problems in the main sending regions. Remote rural regions such as the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) are faced with multiple problems: immigrating refugees from Afghanistan, natural disasters, and a fragile infrastructure, to name only a few of the challenges. The weak labour market has no capacity to absorb the growing labour supply; therefore, migration to other regions or outside the country is one of the few livelihood options open to the population. In view of changing global norms, the desperate situation of the local population, and the national interest in remittances, the government took an initiative and began negotiations on a new migration policy.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), the NCCR North-South partner in Pakistan, seized the opportunity of the legal process to intervene from a research perspective. It facilitated a process of exchange and mutual learning among different stakeholders in order to inform policy-making on migration. Three public seminars were held in 2009, two on gendered migration,<sup>6</sup> and one on migration risks. The latter included a panel with researchers and governmental representatives from ministries dealing with migration matters. Governmental representatives spoke on this occasion, presenting governmental procedures.<sup>7</sup> A public meeting was organised on the International Migration Day, during which individual migrants, their families, and communities spoke up in front of NGOs, INGOs, and governmental representatives, relating their experiences, hopes, and fears. Migration was discussed from the angle of human rights, and recommendations were formulated for the ongoing reform process. Lastly, a stakeholder meeting was organised in which local, regional, and national policy-makers as well as NGOs from the local to the international level were assembled. In contrast to the former meetings, which focused on the migrants' lives, this meeting focused on the development problems of the sending regions.

In 2009, a rights-based gender-sensitive migration policy was formulated that will allow women to migrate. There are indications that SDPI's research communication contributed to this change in legislation. Of course, SDPI is not the single contributor to this outcome, since many other actors were involved in this process and worked towards equal opportunity for migration. Therefore, we would conclude that the link between SDPI's activities and the change in the law is plausible rather than causal.

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<sup>5</sup> Further details can be found on the SDPI webpage:  
[http://www.sdpi.org/research\\_Programme/human\\_development/gender\\_and\\_globalization\\_nccr\\_tp2.html](http://www.sdpi.org/research_Programme/human_development/gender_and_globalization_nccr_tp2.html);  
01/09/09.

<sup>6</sup> One seminar was entitled "Coping on Women's Backs" and was facilitated by NCCR North-South researchers Susan Thieme and Karin Siegmann.

<sup>7</sup> The conference contribution at the 10<sup>th</sup> SDPI annual conference was dedicated to the same topic: "Re-/Inducing Risk: Gender & Migration in South Asia".

Interestingly, SDPI's recommendations reveal that the researchers never explicitly argued for equal chances to migrate, although indirectly they did so by referring to ILO and UN conventions. Rather, SDPI critiqued the Government of Pakistan for blindly promoting migration without protecting the rights of those who migrate. SDPI always pointed to the fact that the livelihoods of people in the sending regions should be supported in order to give them the choice to stay in their communities rather than to migrate. They criticised the government for its interest in the remittances rather than the remitters.

We assume that governmental representatives very selectively accepted the research results that served their purpose, namely to promote migration. Whether the new legislation will lead to more equitable decision-making within families in the sending regions is subject to future analysis.

**Further examples of research informing policy:**

**Nile Forum between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan.** NCCR North-South researchers initiated a series of Dialogue Workshops on the Eastern Nile Basin between 2002 and 2004; these eventually led to a "Nile Forum" which contributed to the "Nile Basin Initiative" of the riparian states of Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. The "Nile Forum" and the Dialogue Workshop series were a unique combination of classical capacity building and interactive learning. They enabled exchange of experience between riparian countries at different levels. Partly in parallel and partly supported by four Partnership Actions (PAMS), the "Nile Basin Initiative" was established and is still functioning, with branches in each country.<sup>8</sup> Members of the "Nile Basin Initiative" had a platform for exchange and their trust in one another increased. In this sense, the governments benefited significantly from the studies of the NCCR North-South researchers.

**Advice for the Swiss government regarding Sudanese traditional leaders.** After years of violent conflict South Sudan is undergoing a delicate process of conflict transformation and state-building. This has opened up new avenues for negotiating state power and authority. Non-state institutions such as networks based on clans, along with traditional leaders, are crucial in governing and providing services. At the same time, South Sudanese actors take up Western ideas in order to construct new concepts and institutions. By studying power plays at the interface of tradition and modernity, the PhD study of an NCCR North-South researcher on negotiating statehood provided new insights on the emerging state in post-war South Sudan. These insights have been the basis for a backstopping mandate since August 2007, given to swisspeace in Bern by the Political Division IV (Human Security) of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

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<sup>8</sup> [www.nilebasin.org](http://www.nilebasin.org); access: 22/02/2010.

**Bridging the gap between research, policy, and practice regarding land issues in Nepal.** In Nepal, land has always been the most contested natural resource. Land reform debates, peasant movements, and land-based research at different levels address land-related problems. But these actions have not been coordinated, and collective responses to undertaking land reform and management were therefore missing. Researchers in the NCCR North-South have successfully carried out research on land-related issues for years. A group of academics decided to form a “Consortium for Land Research and Policy Dialogue (COLARP)” in association with Nepali academic institutions, policy-makers, NGOs, and activists. The think tank helps to bridge the gap between research, policy, and implementation for land-related issues by feeding ongoing research results into land policy formulation, while emphasizing the perspectives of poor farmers and landless communities. COLARP is a unique combination of academic and non-academic institutions that successfully formulate responses to land-related issues. There is a great demand for these recommendations from policy-makers active in land reforms. COLARP was originally established with the financial support of a partnership action (PAMS). Today, it works partly independently of the NCCR North-South as an important Nepali forum where knowledge on land issues is regularly exchanged.

**New regulations on sanitation in Vietnam and Thailand.** Long-term integrated research in South-East Asia has resulted in the development of national guidelines and laws related to the use and application of sanitation products, as well as to their adoption and implementation. Research has been directly translated into: a) a revised environmental protection law in Vietnam, where faecal sludge has newly been recognised as an important waste stream; b) national technical regulations issued by the Ministry of Construction in Vietnam on urban environmental management infrastructure, faecal sludge, and decentralised wastewater treatment systems; c) a set of technical guidelines issued by the Pollution Control Department of Thailand on constructed wetlands for wastewater and faecal sludge treatment, oil and grease management, and wastewater reuse. These newly adopted regulations will serve as models to be adapted by other South-East Asian countries.

### 3.4 Case study on implementation and policy: Socio-economic atlases in Laos and Vietnam



**Figure 4:** Two atlases provide a new perspective on socio-economic issues in Laos and Vietnam.

*Significant data are of central importance for sustainable development in countries like Vietnam and Laos, where major socio-economic changes are taking place. Based on research by Michael Epprecht, Andreas Heinimann, and Peter Messerli, who worked with further local and Swiss researchers, policy-relevant information was processed and made accessible to the broad public.*

The case study describes the development of a continuous dialogue between research, policy, and implementation around the elaboration of country atlases for Vietnam and Laos. The exchange started with two PhDs in Vietnam and in the Lower Mekong Basin in the year 2002, and broadened into long-term commitments by donor agencies today. The focus of this example is both on implementation and policy.

Laos and Vietnam have been subject to rapid economic development in recent years. In the case of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, land reforms moving towards a market-oriented economy have led to accelerated industrialisation over the past 20 years. In Laos, one of East Asia's communist states, movement from a planned to a market economy and growing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is being observed. Migration to urban centres is increasing, although subsistence agriculture is still the main source of livelihood. Progress in poverty alleviation has been achieved at national level, but disparities have increased within the aforementioned countries. Socio-economic changes in Vietnam and Laos are accompanied by a growing demand for transparent decision- and policy-making and for information.

NCCR North-South research on welfare responded to the need for information on social equality. Contrary to existing assumptions, the majority of poor people live outside poor regions. The aim of research was to understand the spatial distribution of poverty and welfare starting from census data (for 1999 in Vietnam and 2005 in Laos).

With the support of a partnership action (PAMS), a socio-economic atlas was published in Vietnam in collaboration with Vietnamese governmental officials.<sup>9</sup> These officials helped to elaborate the concept of the atlas and select relevant data and indicators. Governmental representatives received intensive training in the use of GIS software for spatial data analysis and socio-economic cartography. Vietnamese experts interpreted the maps and contributed accompanying texts. This participatory approach combined with local training paved the way for subsequent projects.

The first of these was another atlas with a focus on rural agriculture, compiled by the Vietnamese Government with support from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).<sup>10</sup> Secondly, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) provided supplementary financial support for valorisation of existing research outputs for policy advice and informed decision-making in Laos. Similar to the publication in Vietnam, the aim of the socio-economic atlas of Laos was to improve evidence-based and informed decision- and policy-making by development actors.<sup>11</sup>

The early involvement of stakeholders was a key to disseminating the methods and results as widely as possible. Innovation in terms of data availability and visual attractiveness, as well as the proactive policy dialogue of researchers who engaged in numerous presentations and media work, were also important factors of success. As a result, a gradual change in attitude towards data sharing was observed. With regard to policy-making, the speech by the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) during the ceremony for launching the atlas was illustrative. He acknowledged the validity of the atlas and stated that the insights regarding poverty and livelihoods would be taken into account in the next 5-year plan.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The General Statistics Office (GSO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

<sup>10</sup> The second Vietnamese atlas on agricultural themes provides an overview of the geography of agricultural production in rural Vietnam, based on statistical data from the 2001 rural Agriculture and Fisheries Census. The atlas was produced in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Statistics of the Vietnamese General Statistics Office (GSO), and the Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Initiative (PPLPI) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations. Funding was provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the PPLPI.

<sup>11</sup> The socio-economic atlas of Laos was jointly developed by the NCCR North-South, the Department of Statistics of the Lao PDR (DOS), and the Lao National Mekong Committee (LNMC), and financed by SDC.

<sup>12</sup> According to the researchers, there are various indications for a changed attitude towards research: The Department of Statistics (DOS) of Lao PDR integrated spatial aspects in data acquisition and processing strategies. The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) included spatial aspects into its vertical reporting structure (national-province-district). Moreover, it was possible for the United Nations World

### **Further examples of research informing development actors and policy-makers**

**Social services for mobile pastoralists.** Public engagement by the NCCR North-South led the government of Chad to propose a new policy for providing social services to mobile pastoralist populations. Studies on the health of mobile pastoralists and their animals began in partnership with Southern research institutes.<sup>13</sup> A key finding was that vaccination coverage of cattle was better than coverage of women and children. A partnership action (PAMS) and repeated stakeholder seminars with the concerned population and local and central authorities led to joint vaccination campaigns for animals and humans by the Programme Élargi de Vaccination (PEV) and the Chadian Veterinary Services. The NCCR North-South partner Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques (CSRS) co-organised a workshop together with UNICEF, and as a result the Chadian government implemented an inter-sectoral programme on the health of the nomadic population. The principle of inter-sectoral cooperation has a high potential in least developed countries, mainly because of the notorious crisis in human resources. Practical experiences of knowledge transfer exist in Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia.

**Mass livestock vaccination in Kyrgyzstan.** Collaboration with veterinary services in African and Central Asian countries on zoonoses control showed a high potential for close partnership between local veterinary services, central veterinary laboratories, and private veterinarians. The NCCR North-South members of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) undertook direct collaboration with the State Veterinary Services and Institutions of Public Health of Kyrgyzstan to assess the burden and control of brucellosis. NGOs like the Swiss Red Cross were also involved. Joint human and animal health studies were performed and led to jointly developed policy recommendations. Eventually, the Kyrgyz veterinary services adopted the strategy of mass livestock vaccination.

With the idea of building on the successes of the socio-economic atlas of Laos and of the new poverty mapping approach, SDC agreed to support follow-up activities. One follow-up project is focusing on the development of different tools to help disseminate the results of post-doc research. Additionally, “The Agro-Biodiversity Initiative” (TABi) has been launched in Laos. This is a long-term programme to support

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Food Programme (WFP) to elaborate a milestone publication on food security in Laos. The capacity of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to plan efficient interventions relating to maternal mortality was increased. Development actors (e.g. UXO Lao, gtz, SIDA) in Laos and abroad benefited from and were influenced by the outputs of the Lao Atlas, in the sense that they changed their priority setting and targeting.

<sup>13</sup> The Laboratoire de Recherches Vétérinaires et Zootechniques, the Ministries of Health and Livestock in Chad.

knowledge and information sharing among development agencies on agrobiodiversity issues in Laos. Policy dialogue not only inspired development activities but also provided an impulse for new research questions. Two NCCR North-South research projects were initiated recently, one on landscape transformation and environmental services, another on the welfare impacts of access to services and resources. Thus it can definitely be maintained that policy-making gradually became informed by research-based evidence in Laos, and that research also informed development policy and implementation.

### 3.5 Case study on local communities: The Household-Centered Environmental Sanitation (HCES) approach



**Figure 5:** Information of and interaction with stakeholders has led to changed planning practices for sanitation in unplanned settlements. (Photo by Christoph Lüthi)

*Lack of adequate environmental sanitation is a challenge for most cities in the world. In this context, a planning tool for introducing environmental sanitation services was tested and further developed in the framework of the NCCR North-South programme by Chris Lüthi, Elizabeth Tilley, Antoine Morel, and Petra Kohler, together with their colleagues, in seven different sites in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.*

The Household-Centered Environmental Sanitation (HCES) approach is a novel planning framework developed by the Environmental Sanitation working Group of the Water and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), headed by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG/Sandec) to improve urban water and sanitation systems in unplanned urban settlements (Lüthi et al 2009). Since the year 2007, it has been systematically tested and validated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and has led to a change in planning practices in various countries.

Rapidly growing unplanned settlements in developing countries confront engineers and urban planners with unprecedented service delivery challenges. For a long time, sanitation and water service delivery in developing countries was planned in a top-down approach, with policy-makers focusing on expensive and over-engineered solutions without consultation of or participation by beneficiaries. By contrast, the

HCES is an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach which focuses on capacity building among local authorities and beneficiaries, so that they can take informed decisions while selecting appropriate sanitation systems for their city or neighbourhood.

The HCES consists of 7 consecutive steps. At the beginning, relevant stakeholders are identified and the target community is 'triggered'. Potential sites for sanitation projects are selected and the objectives of the HCES are discussed in a multi-stakeholder approach. An environmental sanitation task force is then formed, comprising all major stakeholders. In a subsequent phase, the current status of urban environmental sanitation systems and user priorities are assessed in order to identify options for sanitation systems. The results of these assessments and the evaluation of feasible service combinations are then consolidated into urban environmental sanitation service plans. The process of implementation and construction is continuously monitored. Thus the HCES is a transdisciplinary approach that integrates the results of research in society through participatory processes.

Validation of the HCES has shown that careful assessment and pro-active fostering of the 'enabling environment' is the key to successful implementation. This 'enabling environment' refers to a set of interrelated conditions that foster or undermine the effective implementation of the HCES approach, i.e. political will, existing legal frameworks, financial arrangements, and professional capacity. None of the study sites where the HCES has been applied so far offered the 'perfect' enabling environment. However, research has shown that demand-driven planning processes can catalyse a gradual move towards more conducive environments.

Municipal officials and local NGOs play the key role in this process (EAWAG 2005). They are supported in developing a strategic plan for environmental sanitation which is consistent with regional/national policies and strategies. Public and private sector organisations are incorporated in this process. Further, municipal officials or local NGOs establish a dialogue with local people in their neighbourhood in order to consult them regarding their needs and priorities. Beneficiaries actively participate in the planning and implementation of the sanitation facilities.

In cooperation with the NCCR North-South, researchers and engineers, municipal officials, and beneficiaries select appropriate water and sanitation facilities from a range of options that are most cost-effective. Municipal officers or the NGOs involved also play a key role in negotiating solutions between the different actors involved in the planning and implementation process.

HCES validation in different countries has revealed a generally inadequate level of skills among municipal officials in dealing with bottom-up, participatory approaches, namely with negotiation, mediation, and trouble-shooting (Lüthi et al 2009). Also, municipalities often lack knowledge regarding the range of options for applicable and affordable technologies. A *Compendium of Sanitation Systems and Technologies* (Tilley et al 2008) was therefore produced to provide an overview of the range of perceived technologies, thus contributing to capacity building at the municipal level.

The application of the HCES in different countries led to important outcomes at community level. In Hatsady Tai Village (Laos), a partnership action (PAMS) was launched to implement the strategic service plan. In this project, new sanitation services were constructed for 275 residents. A Village Environmental Unit (VEU) was established to be in charge of managing the planning and implementation process. Management procedures clearly defined the responsibilities and roles of all members of the VEU and all other involved actors, particularly regarding long-term maintenance of the facilities (local authorities, beneficiaries, public and private organisations, etc).

In Dodoma, Tanzania, the household-centred approach was tested and validated in a partnership action (PAMS) as well. Similar to Laos, a project committee was established which acquired new skills in selecting and constructing toilets and in organizing events to disseminate these new skills. Moreover, the facilities constructed in this partnership action (PAMS) provide a model for safer sanitation facilities.

These and other experiences with the HCES were published and have led to further outcomes. EAWAG has received many follow-up requests for assistance from municipal governments all over the world. The ‘Compendium of Sanitation Systems and Technologies’ developed in 2008 has since been translated into French, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and is considered as a reference document for sectoral institutions worldwide.

Apart from the outcomes at the municipal level, the HCES also effected important outcomes at the level of implementation. The development sector experienced many failures when trying to introduce new infrastructure planning tools in marginalised urban areas, and few promising planning tools existed in this field. On the international level, HCES is one of the few planning concepts that were successfully tested in the field, and EAWAG/Sandec received international acclaim for this approach. Important development institutions (SECO, UN-Habitat, WSSCC) have expressed an interest in this approach. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is jointly promoting the Compendium in over 50 countries in Africa and Asia. In November 2008, EAWAG/Sandec received an award from the International Water Association for its “long-lasting and outstanding contribution to the water and sanitation sector” ([www.sandec.ch](http://www.sandec.ch)).

### **Further examples of research informing local communities**

**Citizens contribute to settlement improvement plans in Mexico City.** In a neighbourhood of Mexico City, a PhD researcher offered training for local inhabitants with the aim of improving their capacity to influence urban development. The citizens were allowed to use the settlement's improvement plan – which is part of the municipal improvement programme – for their own purposes. In order to enhance the accountability of the municipality, the UAM-Azcapotzalco University entered into a long-term engagement and agreed to continually monitor implementation.

**Recognizing local communities in forest management in Tanzania.** A partnership action (PAMS) in Tanzania contributed greatly to empowering local communities and establishing grassroots institutions for sustainable use of forest resources in Rufiji. NCCR North-South researchers carried out a workshop together with the Rufiji District Council; in this workshop, the communities adjacent to the forest reserve were recognised as key stakeholders with a say in the delimitation and management of the forest. As a result, Village Environment Management Plans were set up and by-laws were established as principal instruments for enforcement.

**Newspaper and radio programme for pasture management in Kyrgyzstan.** A newspaper and a radio programme in Kyrgyzstan were launched to disseminate research findings and provide information on livestock and pasture management. Thanks to the initiative, regular dialogue was established among livestock keepers, local authorities responsible for resource management, national authorities, international donors, and technical services. Donors such as the University of Central Asia (UCA), the Norwegian Forestry Group (NFG), and the German GTZ assured the financing of the newspaper once NCCR North-South funding for the original project ended. This novel communication tool raised interest even beyond Kyrgyzstan. Funds have already been pledged to replicate this success story in neighbouring countries, particularly in Tajikistan.

### 3.6 Case study on policy, implementation, and local communities: Risk management in Bolivia



**Figure 6:** In La Paz, Bolivia, settlements have been built in areas highly exposed to landslides. (Photo by Annika Salmi)

*In Bolivia, rural and urban highland and lowland communities are exposed to multiple natural disaster risks. Despite existing laws and decrees, there is no sound risk management at a local level. Based on PhD research by Luis Salamanca and a partnership action (PAMS), a tool box for risk management was created and implemented in several municipalities and geographical areas.*

The last case study focuses on a transdisciplinary approach for improving risk management in Bolivia. It is an example of researchers interacting with various target groups located at both local and national levels. It also addresses the concerns of individual households as well as development and policy questions.

Bolivia is exposed to various natural disaster risks, such as floods, earthquakes, and droughts. Potential risks and consequences for the population vary considerably by region. In rural areas, natural disasters affect crops and livestock, and are thus related to food security. In the cities, migration from rural areas has led to uncontrolled growth, contributing to the fact that many people inhabit places at high risk of floods and landslides. As an example, 70% of the surface of the city of La Paz is located on landslide-prone slopes, which means that the houses and shacks of about half a million people face a potential risk of being destroyed.

NCCR North-South research revealed that risk management mechanisms for facing such multiple threats were insufficient, with local governments focusing on emergency actions instead of risk prevention. Researchers thus joined hands with powerful local NGOs in order to put research insights into practice in a transdisciplinary approach. A partnership action (PAMS) was launched to bring risk management into the political debate and to raise awareness among local people and governments about strategies

and mechanisms to prevent and reduce the catastrophic consequences of natural hazards, both in rural and urban areas.

The project consisted of two separate parts. In the first, strategies for risk management were elaborated in six rural communities within the Departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, and Beni. In the second, a resilience study was implemented in six neighbourhoods in the city of La Paz.

In the first component, workshops were organised to compile vulnerability maps in collaboration with local people, showing the most important threats, risks, and exposed elements within each community. Moreover, Emergency Operation Centres were established for each municipality, in which local and national authorities, armed forces, fire fighting, and health services were coordinated in anticipation of an emergency. In addition, contingency plans were developed in five municipalities. Since the risk maps and the Emergency Operation Centres were formulated in a democratic, participatory way, acceptance by local people and governments was very high. These pilot projects in rural municipalities drew national attention and led other municipalities to seek collaboration and capacity building.

To gain access to municipalities, the project team built strategic alliances with departmental and local governments. They selected municipalities according to criteria such as prevailing risks within the municipality, political openness of the government towards NGOs and research, functioning structures within the municipality (logistics, authorities, and institutions for risk management) and political continuity (the mayor not having changed frequently in recent years). In several cases, their attempts to enter a municipality failed. As an example, in Aiquile, deeply ingrained mistrust towards NGOs, complex political structures and an overt conflict between local and departmental governments made it impossible to continue work. And in La Paz, the departmental government instructed municipalities not to give any information to NGOs.

Thus the researchers were aware of the importance of the context and took advantage of favourable conditions to bring their concerns into play. The presence of a strong private sector was a further driving force for successful implementation of risk management, as private firms are interested in developing strategies for dealing with hazards.

In addition to the work at municipal level, researchers and practitioners developed a methodology for gathering and elaborating scientific data on risk-relevant issues, bringing this information into a format that is understandable and accessible for development actors and state officials. This information was compiled in an Atlas, which is the first document to show threats and vulnerabilities in Bolivia. One vital strategy to gain access to scientific data was to build alliances with national research institutes, offering them capacity building and collaboration to compile risk and vulnerability maps instead of asking for the information itself. This approach was essential for trust building.

Ministries, development agencies (Oxfam, Save The Children, Help Age International, Plan International) and intergovernmental organisations (World Bank, UN Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Andean Commission for Disaster Prevention and Supply, UNICEF, European Commission) are now seeking collaboration and requesting the use of information from the Atlas.

The second component of the partnership action (PAMS) was a resilience study in six neighbourhoods in the city of La Paz which were affected by landslides and floods. This study assessed factors that allow people to overcome disasters and/or emergencies. Government representatives, neighbourhood organisations, and families affected by landslides and floods collaborated in this study. This contributed to a multilevel perspective. Local people and community leaders were involved from the beginning, both in developing the questionnaire and in the process of data gathering. The local NGO, with which the resilience study was conducted, had been working for over 30 years in the neighbourhood and was thus very well-known and established among community members and leaders. This study was honoured with an award by the Andean Commission for Disaster Prevention and Supply; it was also presented at a UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) event.

Both project components – elaboration of strategies for risk management and the resilience study – took advantage of existing political mechanisms such as the Law of Popular Participation. According to this law, local people can influence local planning by incorporating their demands into the Municipal Development Plans. The project leaders invested in capacity building and awareness raising among local people, who demanded that risk management be incorporated in Municipal Development Plans (MDPs). In the municipality of La Paz and in a rural municipality in Beni, this strategy was successful, with risk management being enshrined as a transversal theme in the MDP. Further, dissemination of information through several books, radio interviews, and newspaper articles played an important role in both project components.

Thus in this example, researchers joining hands with powerful NGOs in order to enhance their range of influence was essential. Moreover, researchers in this example took advantage of existing political structures and selected their project sites by carefully analyzing the political and social environment. Trust building took time but resulted in fruitful and long-lasting partnerships with ministries and governments at different levels. This multi-level approach led to important outcomes in the realm of policy, implementation, and local community life.

## 4 Chances for sustainability of NCCR North–South outcomes

Will the outcomes effected by the research of the NCCR North-South last after completion of the programme? Our analysis identified promising indications that give reasonable hope for sustainable outcomes.

### 4.1 Sustainable outcomes

Sustainability is defined as the extent to which positive outcomes of a project or programme continue after its completion. Sustainability results from partners carrying on activities independently or from positive outcomes of a project or programme being anchored in a partner organisation.

The following criteria for sustainability are applied in this report:

- Financial independence;
- Institutionalisation;
- Ownership by partners; and
- Enabling environment.

This internal evaluation of the NCCR North-South is carried out while the programme is still running. In contrast to measuring de-facto sustainability in an ex-post evaluation, our intermediate assessment therefore assesses the *chances* for future sustainability. These results will now also be used for internal guidance of the programme.

### 4.2 Chances for sustainability of outcomes

In what follows, we draw on the case studies discussed in detail in Chapter 3: 1) Rights-based and gender-sensitive migration policy in Pakistan, 2) Socio-economic atlases in Laos and Vietnam; 3) The Household-Centered Environmental Sanitation (HCES) approach; and 4) Risk management in Bolivia. What are the chances for sustainability of the outcomes reported in these case studies?

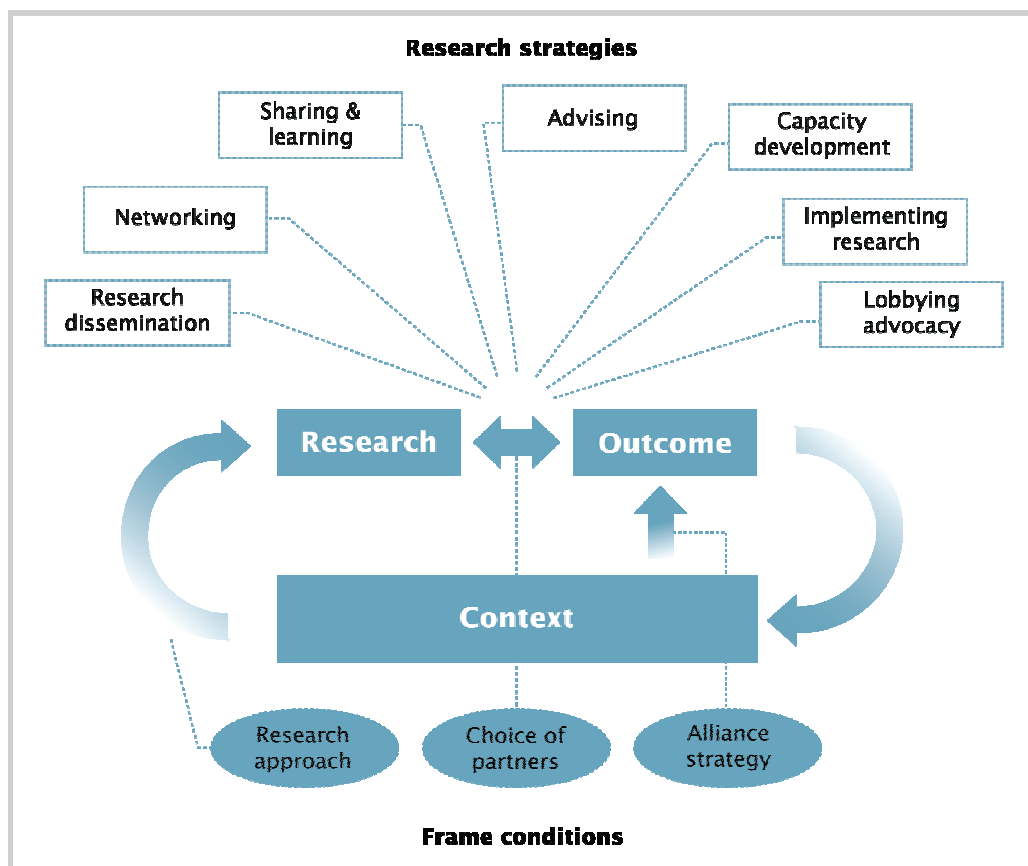
- **Financial independence:** Most of the case studies are financed by different sources, of which the NCCR North-South is only one among many. In the case of research activities in Vietnam and Laos, the researchers' activities were based only on NCCR North-South funding. But they quickly obtained external funding and were able to cover the costs of research implementation with a budget much larger than the costs of research activities. The transition from proper to external funding is an important step on the way to financial independence. In addition, the risk management project in Bolivia was taken over by OXFAM, which is now financing continuation and up-scaling.

- **Institutionalisation:** One element of the HCES is to introduce sanitation task forces in villages and cities where the approach is applied. Sanitation task forces consist of relevant stakeholders and are responsible for guiding the process and implementing sanitation services. In both Laos and Tanzania, it was possible to establish such task forces. These are not only a sign of future institutionalisation, but also of ownership.
- **Ownership by partners:** There are indications of ownership by partners in all four examples. In Vietnam and Laos, the partners published new atlases without NCCR North-South support. The researchers' partner Fundepco in Bolivia continued activities with new funding, and in Pakistan policy-makers had a strong interest from the beginning in broadening and improving migration. In addition, as mentioned above, the creation of task forces for implementing HCES is also a clear sign of ownership.
- **Enabling environment:** Finally, the enabling environment for research uptake – political will, existing legal frameworks, financial arrangements, and professional capacity – is most decisive for the sustainability of research outcomes. The HCES approach, while assessing and pro-actively fostering such favourable conditions for implementing sanitation research, considerably raises the chances for the sustainability of NCCR North-South outcomes in this field. Moreover, Bolivian researchers took advantage of existing political structures and selected their project sites for risk management carefully by analysing the political and social environment.

The results presented in the present chapter are a first move in conceptualizing our understanding of the sustainability of outcomes resulting from NCCR North-South researchers' strategies geared towards informing policy, implementation, and local communities. The framework will be systematically developed as we move forward and apply it to a broad range of case studies in future.

## 5 NCCR North-South researchers' strategies for interacting with non-academic partners

The analysis of the case studies revealed different aspects of NCCR North-South researchers' strategies for interacting with non-academic partners. The sample provides a detailed description of the basis upon which we can synthesise essential elements of NCCR North-South researchers' strategies to collaborate with partners in policy, in implementation, and at the local level. These elements – research dissemination, networking, sharing and learning, advising, capacity development, implementing research, and lobbying or advocacy – are positioned on a continuum between research and use of results, starting with activities close to research strategies on one side of this continuum, and coming closer to activities where research results are used on the other side of the continuum. The following graph visualises the elements of NCCR North-South researchers' strategies in the context of development-oriented research, in which researchers proactively work towards outcomes while also considering the context of decision-making systems.



**Figure 7:** Strategies of NCCR North-South researchers for interacting with non-academic partners, and frame conditions which they need to take into account.

The elements of NCCR North-South researchers' strategies are characterised as follows:

- ***Disseminating research results beyond the scientific audience.*** Research results are consciously translated for audiences outside the scientific realm and communicated in products and media read by policy-makers, development practitioners, and local communities. Disseminating research results in the right format is seen as a precondition for being perceived as a legitimate partner and for gaining reputation as a development-oriented research institution. For this reason many institutions in the NCCR North-South network developed communication strategies in order to target every relevant partner. In Central Asia, for example, a newspaper was produced to inform local communities about the latest research insights into livestock and pasture management see page 35).
- ***Networking with policy-makers, development practitioners, and local communities.*** NCCR North-South researchers dedicate considerable time and energy in setting up and maintaining contacts with key persons who might be interested in implementing research insights into policy and actually implement them. Networking means that researchers proactively explain the policy relevance of research insights to possible partners in order to strengthen the links between researchers and implementers and to build trust among decision-makers that research institutions are reliable sources of information. Some researchers conduct a careful stakeholder assessment before starting a dialogue, as researchers in Tanzania did in order to bring to a roundtable the most important decision-makers on the sustainable use of forest resources (See page 35).
- ***Sharing and mutual learning.*** Sharing and learning among different stakeholders is at the core of most NCCR North-South strategies. Multi-stakeholder workshops, sometimes even conducted at multiple levels, are used for almost every topic in the research programme. Workshops whose aim is exchanging different types of knowledge and supporting learning among the participants cover topics such as conflict over water resources in the Nile Basin (Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt), migration (Pakistan), sustainable sanitation (Tanzania, Costa Rica, Thailand), health (Chad, Mali, Mauritania), data availability (Laos), and pasture management (Kyrgyzstan). Methodologies for participatory workshops were developed and transferred to other topics and regions.
- ***Advising decision-makers.*** By contrast with networking, which depends on a proactive researcher, advice is given in response to demand. Researchers who are able to maintain close and trusting contacts with policy-makers offer regular counsel on policy matters from the perspective of research. This includes activities from spontaneous briefings to short- or even long-term mandates. Two examples are SDC mandates on natural resources to the Centre for Development and

Environment (CDE) and various services offered by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH).<sup>14</sup>

- **Capacity development.** Capacity development is a specific way of transferring research results into policy and implementation. Researchers are sometimes assigned to teach in their fields of competence. One example: Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) researcher Patrick Bottazzi gave a course on governance and globalisation for Iraqi diplomats.<sup>15</sup> Expanding the capacity of target groups through teaching is an efficient way to build strong links between partners and empower people. Yet it differs greatly from sharing and mutual learning, as knowledge exchange takes place in hierarchical structures.
- **Implementing research.** Apart from developing knowledge and tools for decision-making, some researchers take the lead in implementing research results. Implementation plans are developed, tested, and – in the absence of concrete leadership in the policy or development sector – realised. To give an example: Many Partnership Actions (PAMS) make considerable progress towards implementation of research results and are regularly led by NCCR North-South researchers.
- **Lobbying/advocacy.** Lobbying and advocacy are used when policy and implementation actors show indifference or even hostility towards research. It implies a close link with civil society organisations and the media in order to raise the public pressure on decision-makers. For example in Nepal, the Dalit movement was supported by researchers to campaign for the rights of the landless at a moment of political turmoil. Legitimate hopes of incorporating the interests of the poorest citizens were met.<sup>16</sup>

We conclude that the strategies for collaboration presented above are framed by three conditions that we consider decisive for successful and sustainable policy dialogue:

1. **Research approach.** Research must be oriented towards application from the very beginning. The NCCR North-South has a transdisciplinary approach, which implies that research is focused on problems of the life-world. For this reason research is conducted in collaboration with non-scientific stakeholders from the beginning when research objectives are defined up to stage when research results are disseminated and applied.
2. **Choice of partners.** The choice of both academic and non-academic partners significantly influences the nature of researchers' involvement in policy dialogue. NCCR North-South researchers aiming to inform policy-makers, development

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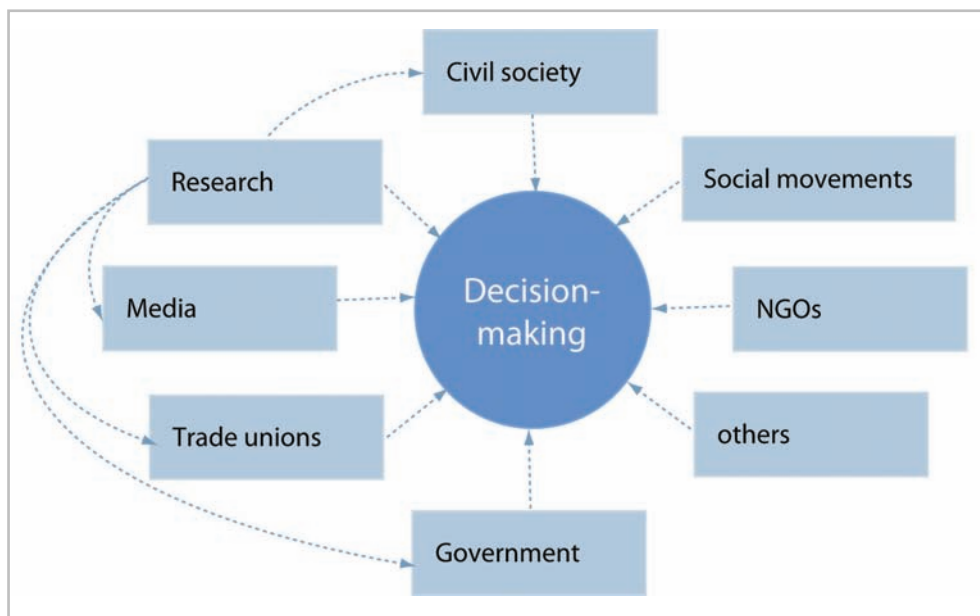
<sup>14</sup> For the SDC mandates to CDE, see <http://www.cde.unibe.ch/>, for the services offered by Swiss TPH see <http://www.swisstph.ch> (access: 30/04/2010).

<sup>15</sup> NCCR North-South Annual Report Year 7, p. 535 (NCCR North-South 2008).

<sup>16</sup> For more details on the partnership action (PAMS) with the Dalit movement, see: [www.north-south.unibe.ch](http://www.north-south.unibe.ch), search for "Partnership Action" (access: 30/04/2010).

actors, and local communities need to carefully select non-academic partners whom they want to influence; they have to adapt their interaction strategies accordingly. Links to these partners need to be viewed in a long-term perspective in order to achieve consolidated and trustful relations.

- 3. Alliance strategy.** Researchers' strategies focus not only on direct interaction between researchers and non-academic partners. Another central element of their strategies is to invest energy into influencing other social actors (see Figure 3). They are most effective in doing this if they have an alliance strategy. An alliance strategy implies that NCCR North-South researchers are conscious that research is only one actor among many in influencing decision-making. In their attempt to inform policy and implementation, therefore, they pro-actively seek collaboration with partners to strengthen their voice (see Figure 3). Collaboration is sometimes sought at the beginning of research by including non-scientific partners, through Partnership Actions, or through campaigning.



**Figure 8:** Researchers are only one group among many who influence policy and practice. Therefore, researchers should proactively ally with other stakeholders in order to strengthen their voice.

Elements of the NCCR North-South strategy regarding how to influence policy, implementation, and communities are used by all NCCR affiliates at least partly. Most members consciously manage research, disseminate research results, network with policy-makers, development practitioners, and local communities, and offer services for sharing and mutual learning. Some researchers successfully advise or teach policy-makers. Some are dedicated to the implementation of research or to lobbying and advocacy activities.

If we acknowledge that research is only one among many elements of decision-making and that the role of research should not be overestimated, strategic alliances are essential for strengthening researchers' voices. We conclude that this vision, however,

is not shared by every NCCR North-South researcher. The dataset provided by our colleagues provides sparse information about the policy and/or development contexts within which researchers act. Although the data are too limited to allow for general conclusions, they do reveal indications about the policy context in some cases. Many informants reported that research was funded by non-academic sources and researchers were approached by decision-makers – two clear indicators of an open policy context. We also noted that researchers benefitted from changing attitudes – e.g. towards data accessibility – and thus were able to further open the policy window and generate a need for data among policy-makers. In the examples mentioned and in others as well, researchers reflected on the comparative advantage of the role of researchers in relation to other actors. These examples show that there is a rich experience in making research relevant to development in the NCCR North-South; this should be tapped in future as well, in a more systematic way than has been done to date.



## 6 Conclusions of this report and recommendations to the NCCR North-South

The guiding question of our report was to find out how transdisciplinary research in the NCCR North-South is contributing to changed practices involving research, policy, and implementation. This the third of four goals of the research programme, the first being the generation of scientific knowledge, the second the training of academics, and the third structural change. We approached these questions by carefully analysing internal NCCR North-South documents that reported changed practices among partners of the NCCR North-South affiliates. The analysis provided a categorisation of how NCCR North-South researchers interact with their non-academic partners in order to be effective.

We conclude with recommendations for the NCCR North-South. We recommend, firstly, that plausible links between researchers and the context should be brought into focus. More empirical evidence is necessary for a better understanding of the relation between research strategies and their environment. These findings should be discussed in the light of recent debates in evaluation research. In the literature, new concepts are emerging that provide a better grasp of the context of researchers' policy dialogue (Carden 2009; Young and Mendizabal 2009). The NCCR North-South has rich experience in contributing to this debate. This experience should be systematically collected, discussed, and analysed.

We advise secondly that NCCR North-South members should reflect on the alliance strategies they are practising as well as the strategies they may be able to initiate in future. We believe that many have a great potential and rich experience in networking and partnering, but this knowledge could better be shared within the NCCR North-South and invested even more strategically in future. In this spirit, our analysis of the effectiveness of NCCR North-South research is one step in a long journey to improve the relevance of transdisciplinary research for societal learning in policy, implementation, and communities.



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## Appendix 1: Worksheet

A worksheet was developed in 2009 to gather specific data on outcomes of the NCCR North-South. It is based on the evaluation method of Outcome Mapping (adapted from IDRC: see Earl et al. 2001).

|  |  |
|--|--|
| In a nutshell  |  |
| Date   |  |
| Contributor(s)   |  |
| NCCR North-South Goal                                  | Empowerment goal   |
| Outcome Indicator(s)                                   |  |
| Partner(s)   |  |
| Progress in Outcomes                                   | <p>Description of the outcome (partners' changing practice, the mid-term implication or effect of a planned activity/output)</p> <p>Describe those of your outputs that contributed to the outcome</p> <p>What are the reasons for the outcome?</p> <p>What contributing factors &amp; actors were essential to effect the outcome?</p> <p>Means of verification, source</p> |
| Did you perceive unexpected outcomes?                  |  |
| What lesson(s) did you learn, and what did you change? |  |
| Recommendations to the NCCR                            |  |

The worksheet was filled out by every Regional Coordinator (RC) and Head of Institutional Partner (HIP). After completion, a semi-structured interview was conducted for improving understanding of the content and for quality control.

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Bridging the gap between research and policy is of growing importance in international development. The National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North–South has rich experience in collaborating beyond academic boundaries to make their research relevant to various societal actors. This publication is the first to provide an overview of the effectiveness of NCCR North–South researchers' efforts to interact with policy, practice, and local communities with a view to effecting a change in practices.

A systematic assessment of researchers' interactions with non-academic partners is presented, based on principles of monitoring and evaluation. On this basis, tools for collective learning and widespread adaptation are proposed. The report shows with what types of societal actors NCCR North–South researchers collaborate and analyses examples of how researchers conduct dialogue beyond academic boundaries, leading to specific outcomes. It also explains the frame conditions considered decisive for successful and sustainable policy dialogue and concludes with recommendations about how the NCCR North–South can increase the effectiveness of its research for development. The publication is a valuable source of inspiration for those interested in better understanding how to generate the multiple benefits of making science relevant to society.

The NCCR North–South Dialogue Series presents reflections on research topics of concern to programme members throughout the world

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