Towards a new international oriented Danish research programme

Mapping of current experiences with documentation and communication of development results

Nordic Consulting Group A/S

TOWARDS A NEW INTERNATIONAL ORIENTED DANISH RESEARCH PROGRAMME
Mapping of current experiences with documentation and communication of development results

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIS	Agency Information System
CGD	Centre for Global Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLEAR	The Regional Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DCED	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
DEFRA	(UK) Department for Food and Rural Affairs
DevCom	Development Communication
DFID	Department For International Development (Britain)
DIME	Development Impact Evaluation Initiative
EB2P	Evidence Based Policy making and Programming
EVD	Evaluation Department
FFA	Forum for the Future of Aid
GF	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GPRA	US Government Performance and Results Act
HQ	Head Quarters
IACDI	Advisory Committee on Development Impact
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
KM	Knowledge Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAP	Multi-country HIV/AIDS Program
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MCC	Millennium Challenge Cooperation

MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
RAPID	Research And Policy In Development
RED	Research and Evidence Division
RTC-Ps	Research and Training Centres and Programmes
SADEV	Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation
SCLP	Strategic Communication Learning Program
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNRISD	The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNU-WIDER	United Nations University - World Institute for Development Economics Research
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTV	Internal Department for Evaluation (SIDA)
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Overall Context and Trends Observed

This mapping has been conducted at a time of economic restraint in OECD countries resulting in increased scrutiny and debate about public spending and serious cuts in public budgets; Hence, political stakeholders try to ring fence and safeguard their special interests to minimise cuts in their areas of priority. This includes development assistance spending. Interviewees brought up this contextual situation consistently, both that of the bilateral agencies and the World Bank and it was suggested that this context gives the main push for the recent rethinking and further development of the results frameworks. The rethinking includes the enhanced use of evaluations and research findings to document what works and utilise this knowledge thoroughly in future activities[1].

The focus on effectiveness and results is not new. Some agencies, such as USAID, have for years been closely scrutinised by the policy makers. Respondents from other agencies said that they had been "on the way" with more results orientation for several years but in the last two years they had been pushed by their political and economic environment to become far more serious about mainstreaming of results frameworks. Across agencies, intentions are to table more precise documentation on what development assistance does, the results achieved (focus on outcomes and impact) and institutional learning and communicating results effectively to external stakeholders[2] - all with a view to justify development assistance.

Internally in organisations, the changing political and economic context has resulted in a search for approaches, methodologies and organisational set-ups that can accommodate the external requirements. The functions under scrutiny are: monitoring and evaluation, research (and research-uptake) and improvement of mechanisms to understand and follow trends in the political economy of focus countries. At the same time as organisations work towards adjustments, there is a ceiling on employment in public sectors and although rationalisation of existing work procedures seem to be a key task, it was said that a lot more could be done if the staff and resources were available.

The common questions on development assistance is "how and what": the "how" covers approaches, tools and methodologies and the "what" considers entry points of engagement i.e. sectors, themes and countries and their specifics (geography, state fragility, particular areas of concern, etc.). "Does aid work?" – the question researched and debated by Cassen and Associates in 1986[3], has recently reoccurred as the central question in development cooperation. The renewed focus on "what works" and the demand for results that we see today has lead to the increased focus on evidence and application of methodologies of high validity. This has guided a rediscovery of the virtue of research. Organisations seem to try to develop closer links between their portfolio and research and between evaluation and research. An example is the popularity of impact methodologies in evaluation and on research findings being synthesised and communicated regularly to practitioners (DFID, CIDA).

Trends in Research Practices

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[1] This is also the essence given in the background section of the ToR for this mapping. See Annex 1.

[2] As also formulated in the Terms of Reference for this mapping study.

[3] Cassen, Robert and Associates (1986): *Does Aid Work?* Report to an Intergovernmental Task Force, Oxford

Aid administrations commission research – especially at the level of approaches, themes and sectors to inform their portfolio. However it was evident that larger macro-questions were not asked in commissioned research.

There is an interest to link research results on topical issues of development closer to practice. In SIDA it is found that research findings increasingly inform policies. The problem is obviously the different lead-time between research and operations but also the trend towards better evidence, giving research a platform as a contributor to development approaches.

DFID invests heavily in research aiming at directly supporting the portfolio and the utilisation of research findings; hence, 10% of each research programme must be aimed at optimising the utilisation of it (research uptake). The increased utilisation of research and the fact that the research uptake is measured is a very visible way of demonstrating the increased importance of solid evidence, as a basis for operational choices. It was underlined that it takes a major and serious effort to strengthen the linkages between research and aid administrators. As one interviewee from DFID said: "you must never underestimate the amount of time you have to spend on changing mindsets".

Although the World Bank also works to improve effectiveness and has tuned its operations towards results, the Development Research Group maintains its focus on topics of development. As said in the interview: research needs to be driven by questions, and questions to be asked have to be the prerogative of the 'chief economist' function, i.e. have some independence.

In USAID research programmes are monitored and evaluated on impact, quality, participation, coordination (with the scientific/research and donor community) and investment along with operational programmes. USAID works in partnerships with various higher education institutions. It does not seem as if USAID supports research related to the macro-questions of development. As said in the interview: Research is worthwhile when trying to answer the macro-level questions. What really changes minds however are the micro-level questions – it is at micro-level that change practice - when evidence is proven.

Think tanks represent the "supply side" and seem to be suitable vehicles for development research. The number of think tanks is increasing and there is a substantial number both in the North and the South. They claim to be independent but typically receive funds from donor agencies. Some of the think tanks cover very broad topical areas (e.i. ODI), others have a more narrow focus (e.i. DCED, UNU-WIDER). The think tanks mapped focus on issues of how and if aid works and develops methodologies and approaches that aim to give practitioners robust evidence to base further qualitative improvements of development portfolio. Think tanks have both their own research agendas and works on commissioned tasks. The latter risks incrementalism and could question impartiality, although this was claimed not to be the case. The AERC does not focus on development assistance, it is concerned with the broader development challenges on the African continent and finds question of development assistance to be of secondary importance to their research agenda.

With regards to the organisational aspects of research, there was a general assessment that the independence of researchers is key and they should therefore sit in think tanks, higher learning institutions or similar. However, it was pointed out that it is difficult to contract researchers and receive deliveries that can be transformed into operational decisions, and it is also difficult to have researchers deliver on time – research simply has a different time frame. Universities especially tend to "swallow" research funds in the way that terms and agreements are subject to change in the course of implementation. In the World Bank DRG, it was suggested that if a bilateral wants to effectively use research on aid it should be considered to establish a "chief economist function" internally. This would be a very senior function, which has the weight within the organisation to take on "unpopular" findings. It would also require somebody with an academic network who can commission research

from universities and think tanks as well as know the landscape well enough to steer through this and avoid pitfalls.

Trends in Evaluation Practices

Most development agencies have internal evaluation departments with independent status. The UK is now setting up a watchdog function externally to oversee all activities, including commissioned evaluations. This department will report to Parliament on aid effectiveness and strengthen accountability towards the public. This process seems to counteract the tendency of development assistance professionals to operate in a "closed community".

Some agencies see evaluations of the portfolio rather than academic research as more important when it comes to evidence of what works and what does not work. The trend for the evaluation departments is however to apply more scientific methodologies such as impact evaluation methodologies in the evaluations they commission.

Impact evaluations are given considerable attention internationally. Several interviewees said that these evaluations are valuable because they dig deep and strengthen evidence on the attribution of aid. Critics say that they are expensive and often too narrow.

The World Bank aims to mainstream impact evaluations in the portfolio as part of a standard monitoring and evaluation procedure, linked to the knowledge agenda. This is an interesting but also intellectually demanding initiative, which requires long-term commitment and a major capacity building component.

It was also said that evaluations do not answer the macro-questions. One agency strongly advocated for attention to the micro-level in evaluations. It was argued that it is the concrete situations that change minds and practice. Overall the emphasis on methodologies such as impact evaluations, shows the trend of a closer link between research and evaluation – the interest is to be able to present robust evidence.

Dissemination and utilisation of evaluation findings continue to be a challenge, however there is a general trend both in theory and practice towards user-oriented evaluations, emphasising internal learning. One overall trend in evaluation practice in organisations is to respond to the weaknesses above and enhance the utilisation of evaluation findings. This is rooted both in demand for aid effectiveness and the increasing political demand for results and documentation.

In the interviews there were reflections in several organisations with regard to the dependency and independence of evaluations: The external watchdog setup in the UK and the change of the evaluation function within DFID has stirred international discussions. It was also said that in cases where the mandate of the evaluation function becomes too detached from the aid administration organisation, the uptake of results is difficult. It is in this light that SIDA has placed the evaluation function closer to operations.

Trends in Monitoring Practices

With the Paris Declaration and focus on local ownership and joint programming, the challenge of monitoring has become even more pronounced, as it is data and monitoring systems of the recipient country, which is the centre of monitoring. The aid administrations in this process can continue their business as usual, i.e. the monitoring of inputs – but the outputs, outcome and impact becomes the role of the recipient. In this respect several aid agencies increasingly focus on supporting statistical

functions and building capacity for monitoring in recipient institutions, i.e. both within governments but also independent think tanks, higher learning institutions and NGOs.

Trends in Communication Practices

Effective communication also takes centre stage in development agencies as well as NGOs, think tanks and research institutions. Documentation and communication are seen as an inseparable pair. Agencies, institutions and think tanks interviewed were searching to find new and powerful ways of communicating successes and failures. This was also the case for explaining complex topics and their results in simple terms using the new ways and tools of communication that is taking the scene today.

When talking about best practices in communicating about development results, it was reiterated repeatedly, that there are some central dilemmas which must be dealt with. Firstly, communication today is much more complex than previously – information travels in networks and informers depend on trusted messengers. There is no longer a great effect achieved from one-way communication, which is a huge challenge for public organisations. This means that the emphasis is on the new methods of communication such as campaigns, online social media and advertisement-like slogans. However, these media seriously limit the possibilities for communicating the complex nexus that development and development assistance often operates in. Hence, if the aim is to communicate to a very wide-ranging target group, the trade-off is often made in the content.

Correspondingly, communicating the results of one specific agency's development assistance somewhat contradicts the intentions most aid administering agencies has committed to with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. Moreover, wanting to spell out clear results and attribute them to a specific agency entails methodological tradeoffs because it requires a set of universal indicators to report on globally. Some agencies choose to accept the insecurities this entails and thereby be able to provide their taxpayers with clear messages, whereas other agencies maintain that such statements are estimations and that they are too insecure.

Internal communication and learning were also reported in interviews to be key elements in improving results[4]. Development organisations are committed to improvement and work tirelessly on improving the link between evidence-based research-learning-practice. For some it has a higher priority than others since it is costly and time consuming. DFID and CIDA invest considerably resources in this.

Some overall trends in internal communicating are of course similar to those seen in external communication. Specifically more and more agencies and theorist realise, that effective communication in terms of knowledge sharing, is done informally. It is not necessarily the resource-heavy ICT solutions or strategies that yield the greatest results, rather it is the trustful meeting between actors. Therefore, many agencies are currently working with ways to build these stronger personal and institutional linkages as well as relations between actors. In terms of integrating research that results in the policy dialogue, the same lesson is evident – messages have a much greater chance of getting across if they are conveyed by trusted messengers.

All in all the mapping observed that there are relevant tradeoffs to be handled when endeavouring to measure and communicate results, because not everything is easily measurable or communicated. Oversimplification is therefore a relevant threat. Similarly, communicating what works has to be clear

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[4] The Terms of reference emphasises external communication, but because the internal communication needs – both of research, evaluation and monitoring findings were elaborated on, this report has included a section on internal learning.

in relation to coverage and general applicability - micro-level results are not necessarily transferable to the macro-level.

It was reiterated in interviews that organisational efforts were ongoing to improve internal absorption of findings from research, evaluations and monitoring in order to improve the development assistance portfolio (USAID, MCC, CIDA, DFID, World Bank as well as others). It is not new that evaluation and monitoring results should feed into programming, but there is a general recognition that research findings should be better utilised in informing programmes. This point is not necessarily driven by the political context but it is an integral part of the focus on results.

General observation

Overall, the mapping found that the issues outlined in the terms of reference, are issues currently on the lips of most actors involved in development assistance. Organisations and institutions worldwide are defining and discussing their approach to the increased demand for documentation and communication of results. It seems to be a difficult task for all actors and while some initiate major organisational restructures and others tire to tackle it within the existing framework of their organisation, all agree it demands an extensive amount of resources. The mapping has identified interesting cases and best practises but can also conclude that regardless of how the issues are tackled it will inevitably involve tradeoffs.

Overview Matrix

To capture the essence of the findings in this mapping exercise, the following matrix presents findings in key words of the TOR by agency. Think tanks are not included in the matrix.

	DFID	USAID	WB	SIDA	CIDA/IDRC
Key research and documentation activities	Objective of research programme: to ensure that research and evidence are at the heart of policy making. - Extensive budgetary allocation to research support to operations - Research uptake teams - Establishment of new watchdog-institution - The R4D website communicating in very accessible way the results of DFID supported research (also on results of aid)	Objective of research programme: to produce knowledge that will offer solutions to specific development challenges. - Research is linked to concrete development challenges. - Documentation is related extensive and increasingly evaluation focus at micro-level. Belief that this is where evidence is robust, and results are tangible and can be communicated.	Objective of research programme: to provide the development community and Bank staff with the analytical tools and research data necessary to generate more effective development policy. - Research topics are independent of the portfolio. Researchers have the freedom to ask questions and be critical. Programme approved by a board. - Standard products such as the World development report. The narrow question if and how "aid works" could be on the agenda, if this is decided by the DRG to be a priority. Research agendas tend to be broader questions.	Objective of the research programme: to strengthen the research capacity of partner countries and promote "development oriented" research. - Partner countries and their research capacity is central for the research cooperation. - The support is divided into three main areas: 1) bilateral university cooperation 2) support to inter- national and regional organisations and networks and 3) support to Swedish research on developing countries.	Objective of research programme: to create empowerment through knowledge. - IDRC fund applied research by researchers in developing countries on the problems they identify as crucial to their communities. Most supported projects result from direct exchanges between the Centre and developing-country institutions. IDRC provide expert advice to those researchers. IDRC build local capacity in developing countries to undertake research and innovate.
Organisational set-up of research and evaluation	- Internal research department administrating research portfolio - Research uptake-team & Knowledge brokers – also in the countries - Evaluation dep. is currently being	- Internal research department primarily aimed at supporting research and not at research uptake. - Evaluation dep. is currently being restructured.	- Internal, independent research department employing 80 staff members. - There are two evaluation-functions: a) Self-evaluations in each department and b) independent evaluations by the IEG. The self-evaluation	- Internal department for research support (programme activity). - Evaluation is likewise an internal, but independent, department. - Both departments are overseen by independent	- IDRC is a research centre (a crown corporation). - CIDA also has some research but major focus on evaluations, monitoring and internalizing lessons learned.

	DFID	USAID	WB	SIDA	CIDA/IDRC
	restructured and merged with the research dep. - Overseen by watchdog-function in the future.		is part of operations (DIME) and uses impact evaluation methodologies.	advisory group	
Prime Methodologies used for research and documentation	- Range of methodologies depending on topics and questions asked. Active search for new approaches that enhances quality and results.	- USAID has focus on micro-level evaluation methodologies to present evidence - The MCC uses economic rate of return calculations for all programmes	- The research methodologies are determined by the questions asked. - The DRG is moving towards delivery of whole sale "tools", i.e. a software for poverty analysis to assist researchers in developing countries.	- Research methodologies are the prerogatives of researchers and depend on the questions asked. - SIDA is currently working on developing their skills in utilisation-evaluations. An interesting approach, where evaluations are no longer independent, but where the utilisation of findings (learning) is enhanced.	- IDRC strong database with a wealth of information on research supported and the results. Commissioned a website with a range of tools on methodologies and approaches to enhance the quality of research.
Good practice examples in research (if relevant)	- Research uptake team & Knowledge brokers - Several programmes based in ODI working on linking research with practice.	- Concrete evidence based examples of what works at micro-level, is a powerful way of improving practice and communicating results.	- The DRG is often considered to be the centre of new and innovative research on development issues. - The "whole-sale" concept is innovative good practice. - If DIME and mainstreaming of impact evaluation is feasible, there is a model to follow which gives solid evidence on what works (resource demanding).	- Other interviewees saw SIDA's approach to evaluations, as innovative good practice, breaking new ground in linking evaluation with practice.	- Web based resources on approaches and methodologies (IDRC funded) managed by One World Trust. (This is a type of wholesale concept - see WB box).
Good practice examples in documentation (if relevant)/Lessons learned	- DFID has chosen to institute standard indicators across programmes, which enables them to report on global effect of British development assistance.	- USAID has prioritised to focus on the micro-level stories on results of American development assistance, as they are convinced this is where the results are to be found.	- The WB has much less focus on public diplomacy. Due to its size and arms length of practitioners and parliamentarians it can communicate via channels that are not sufficient for the bilateral agencies.	- SIDA has prioritised to focus a lot on learning processes by investing heavily in new methods for evaluations. Hence, this mapping did not come across innovative communication initiatives with SIDA	- CIDA is launching a programme called "Knowledge the driving force @ CIDA", this takes in monitoring, evaluation and research and aims to strengthen the institutional learning from these functions.

Section 1. CONTEXT

1.1 Political demand for aid effectiveness

This mapping has been conducted at a time of economic restraint in OECD countries resulting in increased scrutiny and debate about public spending and serious cuts in public budgets. Hence, political stakeholders try to ring fence and safeguard their special interests to minimise cuts in their areas of priority. This includes development assistance spending. Interviewees brought up this contextual situation consistently, both that of the bilateral agencies and the World Bank, and it was suggested that this context gives the main push for the recent rethinking and further development of results frameworks. This rethinking includes the enhanced use of evaluations and research findings to document what works and to utilise this knowledge thoroughly in future activities[5]. As stated in a recent publication from the World Bank Group: "*over the past year, the response to the global financial crisis has continued to dominate development and the work of international institutions, including the World Bank Group (WB). Challenges of poverty and fragile states, environment, and climate change remain daunting. But the manner in which these are best addressed is shifting. The WBG, a crucial partner in the solutions to global development, must adapt to these changes for greater development effectiveness*"[6].

The focus on effectiveness and results is nothing new. Some agencies, such as USAID, have for years been closely scrutinised by parliamentarians. According to the interviewees, this has resulted in the mainstreaming of a results frameworks and focus on the utilisation of evaluation and research findings in the organisation during the past decade. Moreover, the demand for results in the US political system has led to the establishment of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The MCC specifically aims to form partnerships with some of the world's poorest countries, but only those committed to: "good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens". The MCC has from the outset a strong and mainstreamed monitoring and evaluation system in place with regular reviews of progress and fulfilment, of the mutual agreement between MCC and a specific country and achievements of results. The system is associated with a preparedness to give up partnerships if agreements are not fulfilled (discussed further in 2.3.2.).

Respondents from other agencies said that they had been "on the way" to be more results orientatated for several years, but in the last two years they had been pushed by their political and economic environment to become far more serious about mainstreaming of results frameworks. In a recent speech to the British Parliament, the secretary for development cooperation Andrew Mitchell put the "new" paradigm across in the following words: "*In respect of the aid budget, we are absolutely clear that we will never maintain public support for Britain's significant and important aid budget unless we can demonstrate clearly to taxpayers that for every pound of their hard-earned money that we spend on development they are really getting 100 pence of value. It is for that reason that we have long argued in opposition for two key changes, which we are now seeking to implement. The first is that we must focus very specifically on*

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[5] This is also the essence given in the background section of the ToR for this mapping. See Annex 1.
[6] IEG World Bank/IFC/MIGA: Fast Track Brief: Results and Performance 2010: The World Bank Group. Presented July 2010.

results, on outputs and outcomes, and less on inputs…"[7].

Interviews and a web-search of this mapping, indicate that the increase in results orientation takes different forms but the common denominator is that these efforts are pushed forward by the parliamentarians more than ever before. Across agencies, intentions are to table more precise documentation, on what development assistance does, the results achieved (focus on outcomes and impact), institutional learning and communicating results effectively to external stakeholders[8] - all with a view to justify development assistance.

The private actors in development assistance also focus on documenting and communicating results of their spending. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF) – as an example – has dedicated a section on their website to communicating the effect of their work and the results within the areas they target, to a broader audience[9]. The Global Fund measures progress in delivering effective aid against the 2010 targets to track achievements of the Paris Principles (PD), as laid out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Baseline measures of the PD were established in 2005 and followed up in 2007 and 2009 by employing processes and methodology developed by the OECD and the application of an "Aid Effectiveness Scorecard". The GF reports against this scorecard[10].

1.2 Result orientation is channelled through several functions

Internally in organisations, the changing political and economic context has resulted in searches for approaches, methodologies and organisational set-ups that can accommodate the external requirements. The functions under scrutiny are: monitoring and evaluation, research (and research-uptake) and improvement of mechanisms to understand and follow trends in the political economy of focus countries. Effective communication also takes centre stage in development agencies as well as NGOs, think tanks and research institutions. At the same time as organisations work towards adjustments, there is a ceiling on employment in public sectors and although rationalisation of existing work procedures seem to be a key task, it was said that a lot more could be done if the staff and resources were available.

1.3 Dealing with the common and simplistic questions

The common questions on development assistance is "how and what": The "how" covers approaches, tools and methodologies and the "what" is about entry points of engagement i.e. sectors, themes and countries and their specifics (geography, state fragility, particular areas of concern, etc.).

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7 House of Commons: Minutes of Evidence Taken Before International Development Committee The Secretary of States Plans for the Department for International Development, Thursday 15 July 2010, RT Hon. Andrew Mithcell (MP), Evidence heard in Public Questions 1 - 86
8 As also formulated in the Terms of Reference for this mapping study.
9 http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/performance/?lang=en
10http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/performance/effectiveness/aideffectiveness/measuring/

"Does aid work?" – the question researched and debated by Cassen and Associates in 1986[11], has recently reoccurred as the central question in development cooperation. This time it takes both similar and different forms, for example: does aid lead to macro-economic growth? Will the world's focus on the MDGs up to 2015 result in a leap forward in social and economic indicators as intended? A difference to the aid questions of the 80s and 90s is the clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of development assistance. Aid is increasingly understood as just one of several avenues to spur development (trade, military engagement to remove despots, etc. are other avenues). Moreover, there is a wide recognition of the difficulties in showing the attribution of development assistance and the general level of ambition is to look at contribution. Nevertheless, the renewed focus on "what works" and the demand for results leads to a focus on evidence and application of methodologies of high validity. This has guided a rediscovery of the virtue of research[12]. Organisations seem to try to develop closer links between their portfolio and research and between evaluation and research. An example is the popularity of impact methodologies in evaluation and on research findings being synthesised and communicated regularly to practitioners (DFID, CIDA).

1.4 Communication is part of the accountability equation

Efforts to improve and even rethink communication about development assistance came through in most interviews of the mapping. This is also a contextual requirement (as put by Minister Mitchell in the quote above). Documentation and communication are seen as an inseparable pair. Agencies, institutions and think tanks interviewed were searching to find new and powerful ways of communicating successes and failures, as well as explain complex topics and their results in simple terms. One challenge for communication seems to be that the audience has a limited interest in the deeper substance matters (ODI, DCED). Both the communication of results to external stakeholders and the internal communication of results and uptake of lessons learned, were brought up as difficult task by interviewees[13]. Internal communication and learning were also reported in interviews to be key elements in improving results. In relation to external communication there is a drive to find a new "niche" in societies with information overload and to reach both decision makers and the broader public, with the aim of saying that development assistance is worth it; it is public funds well spent, but also challenging.

The Danish Minister for Development Cooperation recently formulated the communication challenge to external stakeholders as follows: We [actors in development cooperation] need to tell the story that Denmark cares about value for money and takes decisions to this effect – that we document and communicate to stakeholders. Indifference about our aid spending is the worst thing that can happen and the worst we can signal. Better documentation and communication is a way to show both the public and the recipient that we care and want value-for-money[14].

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[11] Cassen, Robert and Associates (1986): *Does Aid Work?* Report to an Intergovernmental Task Force, Oxford

[12] Interview with Sida.

[13] The Terms of reference emphasises external communication, but because the internal communication needs – both of research, evaluation and monitoring findings were elaborated on, this report has included a section on internal learning.

[14] Launch of Verdens bedste nyheder, (World's best News), 17 August 2010

It takes considerable resources to document and communicate more systematically, which is a challenge in a time of public spending cuts. Moreover, there are tradeoffs to be handled when endeavouring to measure and communicate results because not everything is easily measurable or communicated. Hence, oversimplification is a relevant threat. Similarly communicating what works has to be clear in relation to coverage and general applicability – micro-level results are not necessarily transferable to the macro-level. The mapping discusses these issues as they were communicated during interviews.

1.5 Organisational change is an integral part of the response to results orientation

It was reiterated in some interviews that organisational efforts were ongoing to improve internal absorption of findings from research, evaluations and monitoring to improve the development assistance portfolio (USAID, MCC, CIDA, DFID, World Bank as well as others). It is not new that evaluation and monitoring results should feed into programming, but there is a general recognition that research findings should be better utilised in informing programmes. This point is not necessarily driven by the political context but it is an integral part of the focus on results.

1.6 Denmark's intentions - a note on the Terms of Reference

Before moving on to the findings of the mapping, this section will briefly describe the intentions of Denmark as these are described in the Terms of Reference. Denmark intends to "supplement" the existing functions of documentation and communication with an internationally oriented research programme, which aims to increase the knowledge and focus on what works and what does not work[15]. The initiative aims to synthesise existing research and only to a limited degree, commission new research. The research programme will sharpen the approaches in the key areas of the strategy for Danish Development Assistance[16].

The context as described above and mapped in more detail in the report intends to place the Danish initiative into a setting of international efforts meeting similar objectives, as those tasks stated in the ToR.

This report has been structured according to the questions of the ToR but the structure has also been guided by how agencies that is part of this mapping exercise and was interviewed seem to address the challenges of results orientation and which functional areas (and their interplay) they emphasise, when meeting the challenges of improving documentation and communication. The different approaches and emphasis have led to inclusion of sections on research, evaluation, monitoring as well as communication both to external stakeholders and as internal learning. During the mapping it was noted that the terminology used when discussing these issues is not uniform, though terminologies have considerable overlap.

It was noted during the mapping, that research on the effect of development assistance is not typically linked to specific sectors or themes but are most typically concerned with the overall effect of aid on development. Interviews with researchers made it clear that

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[15] Terms of Reference, p. 1. (See Annex 1)
[16] Freedom 2.0.

those concerned with sectors and specific professional areas are not keen on deciphering and looking isolated at the effect of aid. Researchers are mainly interest in the development trends within a specific topical area – caused by all the various factors that are at play.

Figure 1, on the following page, attempts to visualise the functions in play to increase documentation and communication of development results in those organisations interviewed and mapped. The figure also shows the intention of Denmark (as described in the ToR) to design an additional programme to enhance existing functions in the Danish aid administration. The elements of that programme are marked in the Figure as "Addition".

Common organisation of "documentation and communication" in development agencies; including the positioning of the planned research programme as outlined in the ToR for the mapping study.

The functions marked with (x) are discussed in the mapping report.

Addition: Synthesising relevant research (documentation) of "what works and what does not work". Commissioning of new research (limited).

Evaluation, research, monitoring, policy dialogue and political economy analysis turned into management information, operations, knowledge sharing and communication (x)

External communication (x) -Communicating with the public /public diplomacy with parliament, recipient societies and clients.

Addition: Communicating the findings of the documented research synthesis

Internal Learning (x) Lessons learned feeding back into the future strategies and designs.

Addition: Identifying and following international trends in relation to what works and what does not work in development assistance, with focus on the main themes of the Danish strategy ("Freedom 2.0").

Policy Dialogue and political economy analysis Both at HQ and at country-level.

Monitoring (x) Ongoing monitoring of programmes, often elements of RBM.-

Evaluation (x) Generated internally, but in departments with independent status. Evaluations linked to portfolio, also joint with others

National and International Research (x) financed by different sources including from the development assistance budgets

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Section 2. FINDINGS

This section presents findings from the mapping in the following sub-categories: research, evaluation, and monitoring, i.e. functions related to documentation. The sections are structured as follows, a brief summary of key points, an overview paragraph, a run through approaches of different agencies and institutions and finally a paragraph on trends in approaches and methodologies applied by various organisations, to the extent that this has been possible with the broad theme of the exercise.

Sub-sections on communication follow the mapping of documentation functions. This comes in two sub-sections, i.e. communication to external stakeholders and internal learning in organisations. The external communication is included in the ToR for the mapping study but the internal learning came through as a paramount function to be strengthened in the interviews held and in the web based mapping of the organisations. It has therefore been included in the report.

Finally, the findings include a section on organisational aspects as these were mentioned in interviews.

2.1 Trends in research practices

Main Findings:

- *There is a trend that aid administrations seek evidence and documentation through research – particularly to answer the questions of aid effectiveness.*
- *The link between aid administrations and research on aid effectiveness is often in the form of partnerships with (inter)national, independent institutions and think tanks (often commissioned work or research initiated by the institution and then financed from aid budgets).*
- *One pitfall is the risk of "incrementalism" when research is too closely linked to the aid administration - main reason to keep the research at arms length (and possibly not finance "aid works research").*
- *The communication links between researchers and practitioners/parliamentarians is weak, encumbering the mutual learning process.*
- *Indications that organisations focus on building up research communities in the South through assistance to access tools and methodologies (the "wholesale approach")*
- *DFID goes an extra mile in linking research with practice and has instituted a major organisational change, ODI has several initiatives working on these issues.*

	DFID	*USAID*	*WB*	*SIDA*	*IDRC*
Key areas of research	1) Growth 2) Sustainable Agriculture 3) Climate Change 4) Health 5) Governance in Challenging Environments 6) Future Challenges and Opportunities	1) Broad-based economic growth 2) Environment 3) Population, health and nutrition 4) Democracy 5) Providing humanitarian assistance and aiding post-crisis transitions.	1) Finance and private sector development, 2) Human development 3) Macroeconomics and growth 4) Poverty and inequality 5) Sustainable development 6) Trade and international integration	There is no thematic focus of SIDA's research programme, but the support is divided into three main areas: 1) bilateral university cooperation 2) support to inter- national and regional organisations and networks and 3) support to Swedish research on developing countries.	1) Environment and Natural Resource Management 2) Information and Communication Technologies for Development 3) Innovation, Policy and Science 4) Social and Economic Policy
Organisational setup around research	DFID is currently undergoing an extensive re-structuring process, and a research and evidence division is being established which includes a "research uptake team" ensuring that research results are communicated and utilised internally in DFID.	USAID supports research through its research department – an internal entity. (Evaluation is strong function).	An internal department (DRG: Development Research Group) is working independently and employing around 80 members of staff. Research in DRG is directed toward recognized and emerging policy issues and is focused on yielding better policy advice.	The research programme lies with the internal secretariat for research cooperation aimed at supporting partner country capacity in research. An independent advisory group appointed by the government oversees the programme.	Research on Canadian development is placed with the IDRC – an independent institution that reports directly to Parliament.
Key lessons learned from mapping	DFID has experience that it takes immense amounts of human and capital resources to change the mindsets in an organisation when aiming to optimise the research uptake.	USAID has been supplemented by the MCC, which takes on areas in development that are considered more measurable than some other topics. USAID takes on the whole palette and also areas where results are harder to pinpoint.	As a multilateral organisation, WB has the possibility to separate the research agenda from political agendas and questions about aid effectiveness.	SIDA has institutionalised various independent advisory groups, overseeing both their research department's work, but also other parts of the portfolio.	Tools for partners to be available, and communication and outreach very strong elements
Research on Aid effectiveness?	"Independent Watchdog Institution" is in-the-making. The objective is to look at the effect of British aid. Research on aid effectiveness is done by ODI, funded by DFID.	Research in USAID is a programme activity and related to development challenges. Specific research on what works in aid is not commissioned	Research on aid effectiveness is taken on if the board researchers in DRG find it relevant.	SIDA's Research Programme does not target Aid Effectiveness currently as it is a programme activity.	Research on aid effectiveness is not significant, but application of the research findings in practice is an important elements.

2.1.1   Introduction

This section presents a mapping of the research related to the contribution of aid and its role and approaches, i.e. the research, which is related to "what works and what does not work". Thus, this section is not a mapping of the broader aspects of research in developing countries or on the discussions within "development theory". Instead, the links between the aid administrations and the research institutions and think tanks is presented. None of the (mapped) bilateral donor agencies (except CIDA) has major research entities in-house, but all of them have links to research institutions and think tank and utilise these, when dealing with the issues of aid effectiveness. Some of these research institutions and think tanks were interviewed and are also presented in this section, with focus on their cooperation with aid administrations. Generally, research institutions and aid administrations interact in two ways: the researchers asks their own research questions and then later communicates their findings to the administrations – a process somewhat frustrating to both parties. Alternatively research work is specifically commissioned by administrations with a scope to answer specific questions raised by the administrators – a process that bears the danger of *incrementalism[17]*.

The mapping does not answer questions but describes how development agencies, selected higher learning institutions and think tanks that were interviewed, approach and strengthen their efforts. This is seen in light of the present context, in which parliamentarians and aid administrators ask for evidence of what works and if aid is effective and interventions are based on good practice.

2.1.2   International research debates

Before this section presents the thinking and approaches of aid administrations it should be noted that, as mentioned above, the international research debate on the topic of the contribution/attribution of aid is found in research communities. It is this research debate (which has several sub-themes), which parliamentarians and aid administrations lean towards, when they ask if and how their own funding makes a difference[18]. Interviewees referred to the strong and well-established research communities around Jeffrey Sachs on the one side and Bill Easterly on the other side, who debate if and how aid works and contributes to poverty reduction[19]. Another group of researchers were mentioned during interviews, this is the group who argues that development assistance prevents sustainable development (Moyo 2009; Rajan and Subramanian 2008 and others).

This mapping showed that these broader debates are influencing the thinking of parliamentarians and aid administrators. As was said in an interview, aid administrators are constantly aiming to become better at their jobs and they are looking for better approaches and answers. Research debates are closely followed by aid administrations but if the influence is merely at the intellectual level, it is not possibly for this mapping study to ascertain. However, aid administrations commission research – especially at the

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[17] These dilemmas will be further discussed below.

[18] Interviews with IEG, DRG in the WB, USAID

[19] Easterly maintains a blog called www.Aidwatchers.com and Sachs blogs in different media, for example the www.huffingtonpost.com.

	DFID	USAID	WB	SIDA	CIDA
Focal areas for evaluations	Aligns with Programme Activities	Aligns with Programme Activities	Aligns with Programme Activities	Aligns with Programme Activities	CIDA focuses on three core areas, which are also focal areas for evaluation: • Increasing food security; • Stimulating sustainable economic growth; • Securing the future of children and youth.
Methodologies in focus (if any in particular)	The ongoing process of restructuring in DFID also means a even stronger focus on measurability of all programmes and portfolio activity. According to DFID staff, they want built-in "evaluability" already at the stage of programme design.	USAID's website states the following: *Evaluation typically employs a range of quantitative and qualitative measures in addition to pre-selected indicators and may consider both planned and unplanned results.*	There are two evaluation-functions: a) Self-evaluations in each department (DIME) and b) independent evaluations by the IEG. DIME is using impact evaluation methods and is part of M&E and also linked to the learning agenda of the Bank.	Methods to further the utilisation of evaluations is currently in focus at SIDA.	CIDA has moved to align its results framework with the Millennium Development Goals and new approaches for aid effectiveness. CIDA has developed a framework of Key Agency Results, with the Millennium Development Goals and related targets as the overarching development results the Agency is seeking to achieve.
Organisational setup around evaluation-function	DFID has an internal evaluation department (EVD) with independent status, that carries out individual programme and project evaluations. However, the EVD is going to be integrated into the research department under the current restructuring.	The U.S. agency for International Development (USAID) is currently restructuring their evaluation department, which means that the organisational setup is in flux.	The IEG is an internal but independent department. Self-evaluations are carried out in the respective departments. DIME, the impact evaluation initiative is part of operations.	All departments carry out evaluations within their specific area. A separate department carries out crosscutting thematic evaluations. All SIDA's work is overseen and evaluated by an independent watch-dog function.	The evaluation directorate is responsible for design and implementation of evaluations, they report to the Strategic Policy and Performance Branch, who then report to a evaluation committee with members from CIDA, the Government, civil society, the private sector and academic institutions.

	DFID	USAID	WB	SIDA	CIDA
Key lessons learned during mapping	Up until now, the EVD has been overseen by the Independent Advisory Group, but again this setup is under restructuring and there are plans to establish a watchdog-function.	USAID is rethinking its evaluation approach and moving towards evaluation at micro-level where results are more easily detectable.	DIME is an interesting initiative using impact assessment in monitoring and linking the findings to the results agenda and internal learning - intellectually demanding for an organisation.	SIDA is doing a lot of work on utilisation evaluations – focusing strongly on the aspects of knowledge uptake.	In CIDA there is considerable emphasis on the utilisation of monitoring and evaluations (and research findings) in internal learning processes.

level of approaches, themes and sectors to inform their portfolio. Again it was not evident that the larger macro-questions were asked in commissioned research.

2.1.3 Development agencies and research trends

SIDA
SIDA has an internal research department for research cooperation that handles all SIDA's support to partner-country research activities, as well as Swedish research with relevance for developing countries and development cooperation. The overriding objective of the research cooperation – as decided by Parliament – is to strengthen the research capacity of partner countries and promote "development oriented" research. In the more detailed elaboration of the objectives of the cooperation, it is stated that the partner countries and their research capacity is central for the research cooperation. The objective of SIDA's research programme is currently to: "Provide support to improve the ability of developing countries to run research programmes of their own thereby helping themselves. SIDA provides support to research that can contribute to the solution of important development problems and support Swedish research programmes that focus on issues related to development and development co-operation".

A research committee that is appointed every three years by the Government oversees all decisions regarding research. The research committee has an overall role of examining SIDA's work. Two of 11 members are SIDA-staff. The research cooperation does not at present target effectiveness issues and the role of aid. It came across in the interview with SIDA's research secretariat that the limited research on "the role of aid", should also be understood as a reflection of the fact that there is very little interest in the research community to take this topic on, as there are topics of more burning interest for researchers. Secondly, if and when such research is taken on, it would seem natural that this research is financed from other sources than the development budget, in terms of credibility.

It was also said that, at a more general level there is an interest to link research results on topical issues of development closer to practice. In SIDA it is found that research findings increasingly inform policies, though they often face the problem of different lead-times between research and operations. Nonetheless, the trend towards better evidence does give research a platform as a contributor to development approaches. Aid administrators in Sweden show little interest in research as such, however, they are increasingly interested in the robust evidence that research methodologies can provide. (The increased emphasis on results and aid effectiveness in Sweden is discussed in the evaluation section, i.e. 2.3.2 of this report).

DFID
DFID invests heavily in research aiming both at supporting the portfolio directly, and enhancing the utilisation of research findings; hence, 10% of each research programme *must* be aimed at optimising the utilisation of it (research uptake). In fact, the research up-take was said to typically account for up to 30% of each research programme[20]. The increased utilisation of research and the fact that the research uptake is measured, is a very visible way of demonstrating the increased importance of solid evidence, as a basis for operational choices.

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[20] Interview with Kerry Albright (DFID)

The Research Strategy 2008-2011 sets out the priorities for research and has six overall priority areas (The focus areas are in line with the priorities in programming)[21]:

1) Growth
2) Sustainable Agriculture
3) Climate Change
4) Health
5) Governance in Challenging Environments
6) Future Challenges and Opportunities

DFID is currently undergoing extensive organisational changes (also discussed in the evaluation section 2.3.2). The research and evidence division (RED) takes over elements of the present evaluation function. The organisational changes and the establishment of a division of "research and evidence" underscore the changed emphasis on research and establishment of the link between research and operations into practice. The research and evidence has topical teams for each of the above listed themes. The teams include 7-9 practitioners supported by between 1-4 senior research fellows (holding very senior positions in universities). The research division also has a management team, a research uptake team, a global outreach team (working with country offices) and a global statistics partnership team. The establishment of the research uptake team is an interesting new approach to tenure the linkage between research and practice. The team is established on the background that DFID is a good commissioner of research but not very good at utilising the results, as it was put in the interview.

The Research and Evidence division has started to commission Systematic Reviews. A pertinent question related to the portfolio is agreed upon and then put out a tender to think tanks and universities to answer this question in the form of a systematic review. This initiative shows that DFID is getting very serious about methodological thoroughness and that more academic thinking will be internalised within DFID (as said in a DFID interview). On the DFID website these reviews are described as aiming to provide rigorous and timely assessments of the evidence base to the decision makers and thereby strengthen the internal capacity to make evidence-informed decisions. The tool is directly linked to the recognition that better-informed decisions, increase impact and value for money. The systematic reviews also intend to make it easier for parliamentarians and practitioners to develop evidence informed policy.

RED has recently commissioned a consultancy to undertake a review of research uptake pathways and lessons learned across DFID's research programmes on health, education and agriculture.

Another initiative in DFID is the Research Into Use Programme, managed by the RED Agriculture Team[22]. DFID had an 11-year research strategy dedicated to agriculture until 2006 (2 billion Pounds). The minister recently asked, "how do we now know that it actually worked?" Accordingly, the team started looking at if and how the research findings could be traced and generalised. This work is ongoing.

DFID works very closely with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). They work for example on research-policy dialogue (ODI). It was underlined that it takes a major

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[21] See http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/newresearch.asp
[22] This programme's website http://www.researchintouse.com/about/index.html

and serious effort to strengthen the linkages between research and aid administrators. As one interviewee from DFID said: "you must never underestimate the amount of time you have to spend on changing mindsets"[23]. In the same interview with DFID, it was also remarked upon that development practitioners are eager to commission new research but it is difficult to get them interested in research uptake, which is a challenging fact in terms of research uptake in the longer run. Some academics in the UK are actually very excited about ring-fencing part of the research budget towards actual uptake (10%), however, it has been more difficult to get the practitioners on board.

The World Bank
The World Bank differentiates between the 'narrow' and short-term focused country- and sector specific studies on one hand and on the other research that is focused on the longer-term and policy level. It is the latter that is classified as Research Activities.
The objective of the WB research is to provide the development community and Bank staff with the analytical tools and research data necessary to generate more effective development policy.

The World Bank's research reflects the breadth and depth of development concerns in finance and private sector development, human development, macroeconomics and growth, poverty and inequality, sustainable development and trade and international integration, all directed toward the World Bank's ultimate objective of reducing poverty in a fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable manner. The best-known publication of the Bank's Development Research Group (DRG) is the annual World Development Report, often considered one of the most powerful reports on development on topics and approaches and directions of development assistance.

World Bank research, placed in the DRG – in contrast to academic research – is directed toward recognized and emerging policy issues and is focused on yielding better policy advice. Activities classified as research at the Bank, do not therefore, include the economic, sector work and policy analysis carried out by Bank staff to support operations in particular countries. Bank research aims to contribute to "the intellectual foundations of future lending operations and policy advice". The DRG is free to take up any topic that is considered to be of importance for development as long as the topic is within the mandate for research.

According to the Director it is part of the mandate to be critical, so at times there are uncomfortable relations between the research group and other parts of the bank.

The DRG has about 80 researchers with a relatively independent status within the institution. In DRG every staff has to sell 30% of their time to operations. Often there is no "market" for the researchers to join operations but the system forces researchers to be active and engage with other parts of the institutions. During the interview it was emphasised that it is very important to have the link between research and operations in order to keep the institution's thinking as cutting-edge as possible.

The clients of DRG are both internal and (especially) external: academics, governments, bank internally and advisers in the developing countries and networks.

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[23] Kerry Albright, DFID

A new way of doing business for the DRG is getting into the "wholesale" rather than the "retail" of research. Retailing is the usual finished products (study reports), while the wholesale mode covers the delivery of tools such as data and software. A great success is in the distribution to researchers of a software called Adept, which enables the running of statistics of the raw data for poverty analysis. This has so far been inaccessible and very expensive but the World Bank has nevertheless bought the rights. The tool is then further developed and shared with researchers in developing country doing research. The technologies reduce the cost of entry into research. It also gives greater transparency on data and it is enabling for researchers in developing countries, who can then produce work that is much more robust.

Although other parts of the World Bank work to improve effectiveness and towards results orientation, the DRG maintains its focus on topics of development. As said in the interview: research needs to be driven by questions not by methodologies. The questions to be asked have to be the prerogative of the 'chief economist' function. The (subjective) interpretation is that it is not political agendas of what works and what does not work that should drive the research agenda of DRG.

USAID

USAID supports applied and development research addressing both immediate and long-term strategic objectives. Research in USAID is a programme activity and specific research on what works in aid is not commissioned. USAID supports research that is intended to produce knowledge that will offer solutions to specific development challenges, so this is very close to the portfolio.

Research progress and results are (as all other programme activities) monitored and evaluated on impact, quality, participation, coordination (with the scientific/research and donor community) and investment. In other words there is data monitoring conducted on the research, just as there is for other programme activities. In many areas, research is assessed through a peer review process such as technical advisory committees and groups as well as a formal review through peer- reviewed publications. USAID works in partnerships with various higher education institutions. It does not seem as if USAID supports research related to the macro-questions of development. It was also said in the interview that: Research is worthwhile when trying to answer the macro-level questions. But what really changes minds, is the micro-level questions – it is at micro-level that change practice, when evidence is proven.

IDRC

In Canada development related research is placed with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)[24]. As a Crown corporation, IDRC is guided by a 21-member, international Board of Governors and reports to the Canadian Parliament through the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Approximately 83% of IDRC's 2008/2009 revenues came from Parliament.

The Centre supports research within four broad themes:
1) Environment and Natural Resource Management
2) Information and Communication Technologies for Development
3) Innovation, Policy and Science
4) Social and Economic Policy

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[24] Only IDRC is covered in this section, the interview at CIDA gave more information on the general issues of results orientation.

A recent book by Fred Carden, *Knowledge to policy: Making the Most of Development Research*, focuses specifically on the impact of development research on public policy and decision-making. Based on a review of the literature and an evaluation of 23 research projects funded by IDRC, Carden shows how research can contribute to better governance in at least three ways: by encouraging open inquiry and debate, by empowering people with the knowledge to hold governments accountable and by enlarging the array of policy options and solutions available to the policy process.

In the interview it was said that the key message from the link between research and practice is the importance of engaging those who have the specific knowledge on a subject and then engaging them in producing and distilling what works and what does not work, rather than commissioning independent research[25]. It was also said that the most simplistic question should be: "What is going on?" rather than "what works"? This points to using the information "at the bottom of the pyramid", such as the project completion report and the excellent databases, which have the results and information on the projects, better than is the case at present. The IDRC seems to be strong within the topical areas of their themes. A main focus of the IDRC is the partnerships within their thematic areas and the capacity building within the research areas. They do not work on the aid effectiveness and results agenda. IDRC operates with an internal results framework and has a well organised management information system, which can provide information on status of operations and if programmes seem to be working (regular reviews).

The IDRC also has a focus on the development and accessibility of tools with the aim of strengthening research communities. One such tool is a project with The One World Trust, which has produced an online accountability database. It is an output of a three-year project, titled "Accountability Principles for Research Organisations". The database is designed to support researchers, campaigners and research managers to think through the way they use evidence to influence policy in an accountable way. The rationale for the database is that research organisations are increasingly diverse – they are no longer just universities but private companies, public institutes and non-profit think tanks. The database provides an inventory of around two hundred tools, standards and processes, within a broad, overarching accountability framework. The database offers users ideas and tools which can be adapted to their circumstances and which can help do anything from launching a comprehensive accountability review to addressing a specific process[26].

2.1.4   *Selected think tanks and research institutions*

On an introductory note, it is worth noting that in interviews with think tanks and similar institutions, information was provided on their role as providers of research and their niche, their relationship with funding agencies and their ongoing work on methodology development to increase aid effectiveness[27]. Note for example, recent work on think

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[25] Interview with CIDA, July 2010.

[26] http://www.oneworldtrust.org/apro

[27] There were practical constraints for the mapping team to arrange think tank interviews in the months of July and August, but it would add value to this mapping and particularly add more information on trends in tool development and methodologies.

tanks and the rise of the knowledge economy where the role of think tanks in relation to aid administrators are explored and discussed[28].

DCED

The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) is a coordinating and harmonizing body for donor agency knowledge sharing private sector development (PSD). The work of DCED includes a wide range of knowledge-sharing activities, such as the management of inter-agency databases at www.value-Chains.org and www.Business-Environment.org. The three DCED sites[29] attract over 100,000 page views per month. Plans are now being laid to enhance the knowledge-sharing activities of the DCED.

DCED is currently (year 2010) piloting a Minimum Standard Measurement Method for private sector development (PSD) programmes and initiatives[30]. This Standard is from the outset highly committed to impact measurement. DCED works closely with member agency staff on this – exploring overlaps and commonly developing the pilot. On the public website[31] there are implementation guidelines, formats and explanations available for downloading.

The DCED also holds further information about methodologies for measuring the results of PSD, including the approaches currently used by different donors. The outset for DCED's proposed Standard is that the logical framework approach (LFA) and similar planning instruments do not provide adequate tools for programme managers to measure results in PSD. The LFA tends for example, to compile all the outcomes together into one box,, whereas they are usually sequential, happening in parallel etc. So ogframes may work for programme designers and supervisors but for managers, something more explicit is needed. Hence, the proposed new Standard is aimed at the programme managers for their use in measuring their own results. This turns results measurement from an event into a process. Credibility is assured through external certification of the measurement process, used by the programme instead of asking a consultant to duplicate that process. Thereby, at the end of a programme, managers and evaluators will not have to 'reinvent the wheel' when results are being measured. The Standard recommends that the findings of results measurement are fed back into implementation (Control point 8.6). In other words, the foundation of the results chain articulates the assumptions on which a programme is based (that specific outcomes and impacts will cascade from specific outputs) and the Standard then calls on programmes to validate those assumptions and to adjust the approach if they prove not to be valid. In practice, this is often the greatest added value for programmes - for example if they find that a key assumption is not actually valid, during implementation. To ensure that the results reported are credible, an external auditor then audits the system.

An interview with DCED offered some interesting views on communication, which are reported in section 2.4.

UNU-WIDER

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[28] Datta *et al* 2010

[29] Including http://www.enterprise-development.org/http://www.enterprise-development.orgwww.Enterprise-Development.org

[30] DCED 2010

[31] http://www.enterprise-development.org/page/measuring-and-reporting-results

UNU-WIDER is a UN research and training centre established in 1984 in Helsinki by the United Nations University (head-quartered in Tokyo). UNU-WIDER's research is at the cutting-edge of development economics. The Institute's publications have influenced debates in such areas as poverty and human development, food security, as well as conflict and development. UNU-WIDER's has a resident team of research staff based in Helsinki, who have extensive research and publication experience. The Institute has a good track record in engaging researchers from the developing world and is now deepening its engagement with Africa through a partnership with the African Economics Research Consortium (AERC) on the issue of climate change. UNU-WIDER's senior staff has engaged extensively with Nordic aid agencies, DFID and the World Bank. It has extensive contacts with senior policymakers in the developing world, particularly in Africa (including both ministers and central bank governors as well as senior staff at academic institutions).

Of particular interest to this mapping is UNU-WIDER's upcoming research on the following themes, each of which is comprised of a series of individual projects:

- Aid Effectiveness – Examines the technical and methodological issues integral to assessing aid's effectiveness at generating economic growth, reducing poverty and achieving other development outcomes (such as peace and security).

- The Changing Donor Landscape – Assesses the interaction between global governance and the international aid architecture (including climate change), the role and potential impact of new bilateral government donors and the increasing role of non-official aid (including the implications for fragile states).

- Perspectives and Politics of Aid in Africa – Analyses aid's impact on Africa's policymakers, politics, and institutions, including the perceptions of Africans regarding aid effectiveness and reform.

- Prospective Changes to Aid in Africa – Considers both emerging threats to development progress in the region (such as climate change and state fragility) as well as potential opportunities for reducing aid-dependency (including the mobilisation of more domestic revenue).

The programme will have a strong focus on Africa. The programme includes a sub-project on analysing the various intervening mechanisms through which aid should impact both growth and poverty. This is expected to lead to recommendations on how to enhance aid's growth and poverty impacts in different types of economies (resource-rich versus resource-poor, landlocked versus coastal, etc.).

UNU-WIDER's funding structure, in which an endowment managed by UNU, typically covers more than half of the Institute's expenditures, was said to secure the independence of UNU WIDER in researching aid. Based on the interview with the Director, it appears that UNU-WIDER would need to strengthen its communication profile and capability and steps to achieve this will be undertaken to ensure that its research on aid reaches the widest possible audience.

ODI

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is a leading think tank on international development and humanitarian issues in the UK. ODI aims to inform policies and practice, which lead to the reduction of poverty, the alleviation of suffering and the

achievement of sustainable livelihoods in developing countries. In the ODI's own words this is done by "by locking together high quality applied research, practical policy advice,and policy-focused dissemination and debate"[32].

ODI is spearheading the international discussions on research's impact on public policy. The state of affairs of this impact as well as its importance for the quality of aid was recently tabled at a workshop hosted by the ODI with the World Bank: "Knowledge to policy: Making the most of development research". Annette Boaz[33], in a paper entitled "Assessing the impact of research on policy: A review of the literature for a project on bridging research and policy through outcome evaluation" has looked broadly at methods for evaluating the impact of research on policy outcomes. The review identified 156 UK and international papers and found a very wide range of formal and informal, qualitative and quantitative approaches being used but very little analysis of their effectiveness at capturing impact or costs. It was also found that developing better methods to evaluate the impact of development research on policy and practice and using the results to develop better approaches to maximise the value of future research, is vital to improving development outcomes.

An ongoing programme at ODI – the **Research and Policy in Development** (RAPID) Programme, also works with the interface between research and development. With this programme, ODI tries to change the situation that research is often being produced but not utilised by policy-makers because it is not appropriately communicated. One problem is, as said in an interview, that whereas research is continuously re-inventing the wheel and coming up with new findings that contradict what was previously said, policy makers cannot change their mind every time something new comes up. Likewise, aid administrators and parliamentarians need information that is easily digestible – something researchers seldom provide (as it was put in an interview).

The RAPID team organises research around five main factors that influence the ability for knowledge to play a role in policy and practice: context, sectoral dynamics, actors, innovative frameworks and types of knowledge.

The programme is both oriented internally in ODI focusing on improving ODI's communication but also externally by engaging partners of all types and trying to attract them to use research more effectively in the policy process. The programme works with NGOs and research institutions/think tanks across the world, assisting them to a) make their research more relevant to aid administrators and parliamentarians and b) incorporate research in their policy-related work.

Another programme at ODI in assessing aid effectiveness is the **Centre for Aid and Public Expenditure.** One theme under this is the issue of improving the effectiveness of aid delivery – analysing the factors that influence aid allocation at country and sector level, to ensure development outcomes.

ODI hosts the **Forum for the Future of Aid** (FFA) – an online community where issues of aid effectiveness, aid instruments and the future of aid are discussed[34]. This forum encourages dialogue and discussions on the international aid cooperation – whether it works, why it doesn't work in some places, what could be done to improve it

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[32] ODI website.

[33] Joint Managing Editor of the journal *Evidence & Policy*. (Boaz *et al* 2008)

[34] http://www.futureofaid.net/

etc. It is primarily aimed at giving voice to researchers, scholars and practitioners in the South but is also open to Northern actors' input. It is recognised that even in the largest donor agencies, it is hard maintain an international, up-to-date perspective on the aid system as a whole and consider alternative future scenarios for it. This is what the forum hopes to change. Initially the Forum was funded through a DFID funding mechanism but this allowed DFID no editorial influence. Now the initiative seeks funding from various sources.

The discussions of the forum are accommodated in various ways:

- An online discussion forum[35].
- A newsletter/email service providing briefs on major aid institutional developments as they are implemented and assessed, looking at their possible systemic implications.
- Presentation of research and opinions from the South and the North.

The forum also offers help to set up and maintain small networks on issues of aid and later offers customized research to the members of the networks.

UNRISD

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an independent agency in the UN family conducting research on the social dimensions of current problems affecting development. The aim is to encourage debate and discussion and to contribute to the policy dialogue on key development issues at play in the UN system and with its partners. UNRISD was created in 1963 as part of the first United Nations Development Decade, which emphasized a "new approach to development", in which "purely economic indicators of progress were seen to provide only limited insight and might conceal as much as they indicate". Although it is a small organisation, the strength of UNRISD from the outset has been that, it developed social indicators, has implemented research on central themes of social policy and has contributed to the development debate.

During the interview, the director noted that through its research findings, UNRISD has influenced paradigms of political and social processes and relationships that underpin any development process including aid/external development interventions. A powerful example is the now widely accepted importance of community and people's participation. UNRISD was a pioneer in research on "popular participation" in the 1970s, which revealed the limits of top-down, externally imposed interventions.

A number of other examples of UNRISD research influencing social policies in a development context are available. Some of these are acknowledged in the summary volume of the UN Intellectual History Project, "UN Intellectual History Project: UN Ideas that changed the World"[36].

UNRISD research is broadly focused on social development but this involves multidisciplinary approaches across the social sciences.

Recent research themes covered by UNRISD include

o Social Policy and Development

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[35] Currently some of the topics of discussion are: ""Appropriating" the aid dollar", "Aid is like AIDS", and "The Paris Declaration is Gender Blind". Please visit the following URL for the full list of current debates: http://www.futureofaid.net/uieforum

[36] Please also refer to annex on UNRISD in this report for further examples.

- o Poverty reduction
- o Gender and Development
- o Democracy, Governance and Well-Being
- o Civil Society and Social Movements
- o Markets, Business and Regulation
- o Identities, Conflict and Cohesion

Besides conducting in-house research, UNRISD supports research institutions in developing countries in their research activities, since it is the conviction that studies on development should be carried out by national researchers. This allows research themes to be adapted to situations on the ground and considered by those most knowledgeable on local conditions[37]. Such conviction has manifested itself in UNRISD's organisational setup, whereby research and related activities are undertaken by extensive networks of researchers and institutions, principally in the global south. UNRISD research has been carried out in more than 90 countries with different partners.

With regard to the utilisation of the research it is widely acknowledged that UNRISD is able to bring knowledge from the global research community to the policy-making process – the example of approaches to community development (mentioned above) was said to be a case in point. UNRISD pays particular attention to bridging the gap between development research and policy making, and sees itself as having the capability to serve as a conduit of knowledge from sites where it is generated to sites where it may be used.

The Centre for Global Development

The CGD is a think tank for "independent research and practical ideas for global prosperity" based in Washington. CGD is known for its eminent research and influence and its researchers are among the best on international development. Two interesting research programmes are: 1) Aid Effectiveness and 2) The Evaluation Gap. The first is briefly presented here.

The Center's work on aid effectiveness focuses on policies and practices of bilateral and multilateral donors. It includes analysing existing programs, monitoring donor innovations, and designing and promoting fresh approaches to deliver aid. CGD researchers also investigate how foreign aid and other aspects of development—such as trade, migration, investment, and climate change policies—undermine or complement each other.

Examples of recent work:
- Monitoring the activities of the U.S. Millennium Challenge Account (MCA);
- Comparative analysis of the three largest donor responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; The World Bank's Multi-county HIV/AIDS Programme (MAP); The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR);
- The design and promotion of a "Cash on Delivery" approach to aid under which donors would pay for measurable progress on specific outcomes pre-agreed with recipient governments.

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[37] Between 1996 and 1999 over 60% of the research contracts awarded by UNRISD went to researchers and institutions based in the South.

- Research on improving the effectiveness of health aid through CGD's Research on aid in fragile states through the Engaging Fragile States project, and special analysis of the challenges confronting U.S. assistance to Pakistan.
- Design of a new analytical tool to assess and compare bilateral and multilateral donors on the quality of aid.

In addition, the aid component of CGD's Commitment to Development Index includes indicators for both the quantity and quality of aid.

On the quality of Aid, CDG has a programme building on the experience of the Centre's Commitment to Development Index, which examines aid quality in addition to quantity, as well as on the work of the OECD-DAC, CGD is collaborating with staff at the Brookings Institution to develop and publish an annual assessment of the quality of the aid disbursed by official donors. The Quality of Official Development Assistance (QuODA) is intended for a broad audience including donor agencies, civil society, legislatures and the public and aims to produce useful comparisons across donors. Even in early stages, a prototype assessment could help to catalyze interest in improving the supply and delivery of aid. The pilot assessment will be in 2010[38].

The African Economic Research Council

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is a not-for-profit corporation established in 1988. It was set up as a response to the structural adjustment programmes and the need to build capacity in Africa on macro-economic policy. It is based in Nairobi, Kenya. Its principal objective is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

Its work is based on two premises: first, that development is more likely to occur where there is sustained sound management of the economy and secondly, that such management is more likely where there is an active, well-informed group of locally based professional economists to conduct policy-relevant research. Hence, the mandate of AERC is threefold:

- enhancing the capacity of locally based researchers to conduct policy-relevant economic inquiry;
- promoting retention of such capacity;
- encouraging its application in the policy context.

The AERC has two strands of principal activities. A) *a research programme;* B) *a training programme (postgraduate)*. In addition the AERC places emphasis on *communication and networks.*

AERC has moved from strictly macroeconomic issues to longer-term sustainable development issues. The intention is also to situate African economic research in the global context and ensure that the research agenda and programme of activities respond to the professional and policy needs in the region.

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[38] An interview with CDG is pending due to summer holidays in July and August. A contact has been made and CDG has offered a telephone interview any time in September/October.

The current thematic areas are Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Market Issues; Trade, Regional Integration and Sectoral Policies; Macroeconomic Policies, Stabilisation and Growth; and Finance, Resource Mobilisation and Investment. According to the director there is increased emphasis on agriculture, food security, climate change, natural resources including "the natural resource curse". On the question whether any research was conducted with regard to the effects of aid and the inter-linkage between aid and macroeconomic development or specific sector issues, the answer was clear that aid is seen as a secondary issue to the development challenges that the consortium supports in its research.

The mapping exercise has found the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is of relevance for the new Danish International research programme for the following reasons:

The consortium adheres to academic standards (has international support); the main areas of research overlap with some of the priorities in Freedom 2.0, these are in particular: economic development, climate change and natural resource management. At a cross-cutting level the consortium is concerned with the link between research and informing public policies in Africa and in building the capacity both of researchers and practitioners.

The consortium has strong links with national research institutions in many African countries (Anglophone). It also has a sister system for the Francophone countries. The AERC is to some extent a "guarantor" for the academic standards of research of the collaborating institutions. Denmark could, as country level information, in the increased efforts of documentation and communication, consider to link up with the national partners under the AERC, when commissioning research or syntheses of research as part of the new research programme.

The consortium does no focus on "aid" related topics but the national institutions in the network works according to the AERC on contracted topics.

The communication of the main areas is seen as follows:

Research —leads to academic papers, which are communicated in workshops (high level) and the findings "sink" into the minds of policymakers. It was stated in the interview that it is an illusion to believe that policymakers read academic work but they will listen to convincing arguments and participate in discussions.

Training strengthens the knowledge of individuals, who then go back in their institutions and from their positions they can influence administrators and politicians in different types of dialogue.

2.2 Trends in evaluation practices

Main Findings:

- *Most development agencies have internal evaluation departments with independent status.*
- *The UK is now setting up a watchdog function externally to oversee all activities, including commissioning evaluations. This will also report to Parliament on aid effectiveness and strengthen accountability towards the public.*
- *All agencies consider evaluations of the portfolio of high importance when it comes to collecting evidence of what works and what does not work. The trend is to apply more scientific methodologies such, as impact evaluation methodologies.*
- *Impact evaluations are given considerable attention internationally. They are costly and major undertakings, but they dig deep and provide stronger evidence on the attribution of aid. Critics say that they are too expensive and often narrow.*
- *The World Bank aims to mainstream impact evaluations in the portfolio as part of a standard monitoring and evaluation procedure, this is also linked to the knowledge agenda.*
- *Overall, the emphasis on methodologies, such as impact evaluations, shows the trend of a closer link between research and evaluation – it is important to be able to present robust evidence*
- *Evaluations are "closer" to portfolios than research, but evaluations do not answer the macro-questions. One agency strongly advocated attention to the micro-level in evaluations, because it is the concrete situations that change minds and practice.*
- *Dissemination and utilisation of evaluation findings continue to be a challenge, however there is a general trend both in theory and practice towards user-oriented evaluations emphasising internal learning.*

	DFID	*USAID*	*WB*	*SIDA*	*CIDA*
Focal areas for evaluations	Aligns with Programme Activities	Aligns with Programme Activities	Aligns with Programme Activities	Aligns with Programme Activities	CIDA focuses on three core areas, which are also focal areas for evaluation: • Increasing food security; • Stimulating sustainable economic growth; • Securing the future of children and youth.
Methodologies in focus (if any in particular)	The ongoing process of restructuring in DFID also means a even stronger focus on measurability of all programmes and portfolio activity. According to DFID staff, they want built-in "evaluability" already at the stage of programme design.	USAID's website states the following: *Evaluation typically employs a range of quantitative and qualitative measures in addition to pre-selected indicators and may consider both planned and unplanned results.*	There are two evaluation-functions: a) Self-evaluations in each department (DIME) and b) independent evaluations by the IEG. DIME is using impact evaluation methods and is part of M&E and also linked to the learning agenda of the Bank.	Methods to further the utilisation of evaluations is currently in focus at SIDA.	CIDA has moved to align its results framework with the Millennium Development Goals and new approaches for aid effectiveness. CIDA has developed a framework of Key Agency Results, with the Millennium Development Goals and related targets as the overarching development results the Agency is seeking to achieve.
Organisational setup around evaluation-function	DFID has an internal evaluation department (EVD) with independent status, that carries out individual programme and project evaluations. However, the EVD is going to be integrated into the research department under the current restructuring.	The U.S. agency for International Development (USAID) is currently restructuring their evaluation department, which means that the organisational setup is in flux.	The IEG is an internal but independent department. Self-evaluations are carried out in the respective departments. DIME, the impact evaluation initiative is part of operations.	All departments carry out evaluations within their specific area. A separate department carries out crosscutting thematic evaluations. All SIDA's work is overseen and evaluated by an independent watch-dog function.	The evaluation directorate is responsible for design and implementation of evaluations, they report to the Strategic Policy and Performance Branch, who then report to a evaluation committee with members from CIDA, the Government, civil society, the private sector and academic institutions.

	DFID	USAID	WB	SIDA	CIDA
Key lessons learned during mapping	Up until now, the EVD has been overseen by the Independent Advisory Group, but again this setup is under restructuring and there are plans to establish a watchdog-function.	USAID is rethinking its evaluation approach and moving towards evaluation at micro-level where results are more easily detectable.	DIME is an interesting initiative using impact assessment in monitoring and linking the findings to the results agenda and internal learning - intellectually demanding for an organisation.	SIDA is doing a lot of work on utilisation evaluations – focusing strongly on the aspects of knowledge uptake.	In CIDA there is considerable emphasis on the utilisation of monitoring and evaluations (and research findings) in internal learning processes.

2.3.1 *Overall trends*

The purpose of aid evaluations have for a long time (since 1970s) been to have findings recycled into the designs of new programmes and projects – this has also been the continuous challenge for evaluators and practitioners[39]. A recent OECD/DAC report on evaluation practices in member countries concludes that the dissemination of evaluation findings is weak[40].

One overall trend in evaluation practice in aid administering organisations, is to look for suitable responses to this weakness, by finding ways to enhance the utilisation of evaluation findings. This is rooted both in demand for aid effectiveness and the increasing political demand for results and documentation. The primary goal of USAID evaluation practices (as an example), is to enhance aid effectiveness, illustrated by the following diagram[41]:
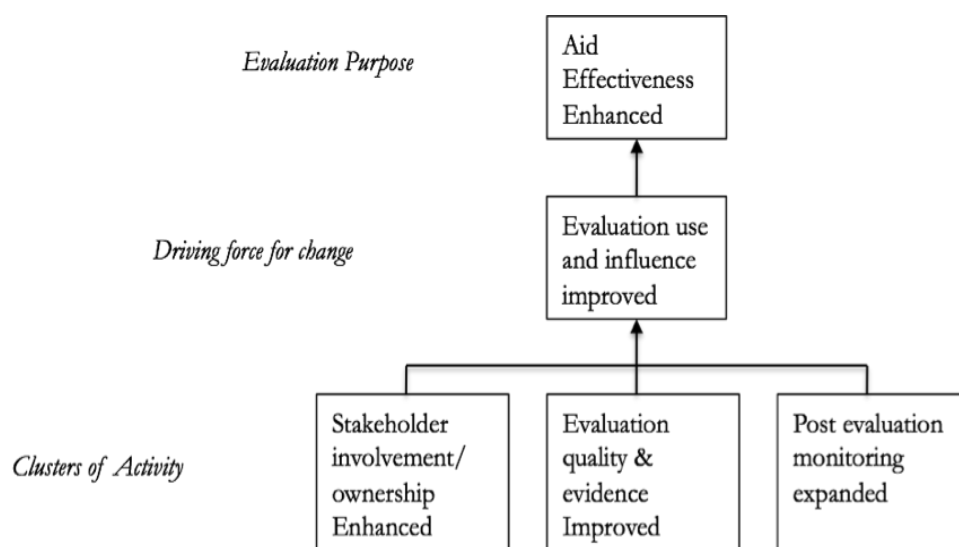
Source: Figure from USAID 2009, page 5

The increasingly decentralized aid administrations and the efforts towards aid harmonization and alignment have changed practice towards recipient led and joint evaluations. While this trend is commendable from the aid effectiveness point of view, the findings especially of thematic evaluations are reported to be difficult to internalise in individual organisations. It is said that the findings often are too aggregated and general.

2.3.2 *Development agencies and evaluation trends*

Below is an overview of lessons learned on evaluation practices and the trends in relation to improved documentation of development assistance.

USAID

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[39] USAID 2009: 6-7
[40] OECD/DAC (2009): 28
[41] USAID 2009: 3-4

USAID is rethinking its evaluation approach and moving towards evaluation at micro-level – at this level the findings are said to be more concrete and it is possible to dig deep and say what works and what does not work, this also enhances the communication potential to a broader public that is more meaningful (possible to tell the stories that are concrete and non abstract and aggregated). USAID also rethinks its communication strategy and develops "structured dialogue" sessions with specific stakeholder groups. The philosophy is that "person to person" dialogue is more powerful than policy briefs.

USAID is restructuring the evaluation department. Currently the evaluation department refers to the Director of Management Policy and Performance. Policy, sector and thematic evaluations are carried out in HQ, whereas project and programme evaluations are decentralised. All evaluations are subject to management responses, which is one way USAID strives to enhance the utilisation of evaluations.

At the overall level, the office of the Director of Foreign Assistance (DFA) manages overall oversight of U.S. foreign aid, internal knowledge sharing and offers advice on evaluation and monitoring. There are plans to further strengthen the function of FDA.

CIDA

In CIDA there is considerable emphasis on the utilisation of monitoring and evaluations (and research findings) in internal learning processes (discussed in the monitoring section). In CIDA the evaluation directorate is responsible for design and implementation of evaluations, and reports to the Strategic Policy and Performance Branch, who then report to a evaluation committee with members from CIDA, the Government, civil society, the private sector and academic institutions. This committee approves and oversees the evaluation function in CIDA. Each evaluation requires a management response clarifying how it will be utilised, and a recent study has shown, that evaluations are commonly used for future policy formulation and programme planning. A process aimed at monitoring the degree of utilisation of evaluation recommendations has recently been set up[42].

DFID

DFID has an internal evaluation department (EVD), that carries out individual programme and project evaluations. EVD has an independent status. For the last five years the Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI) has overseen the EVD. IACDI has until the recent change of government, functioned as the oversight body for British aid. The mandate of IACDI was to help DFID evaluate the impact of UK aid and give advice on the overall strategy, approach and priorities being adopted in its evaluation work. Furthermore, it worked to assure the independence of EVD and the use of evaluation results to enhance delivery and impact of UK development assistance. The Chair of IACDI prepares an annual report to the Secretary of State. IACDI is now being closed down (discussed further below).

Following the recent change of government, and as a result of internal processes aimed at identifying the best way to optimise internal learning from evaluations and research intake, a complete restructuring of the evaluation and research functions is underway. Plans are now being realised of establishing an "external watch-dog institution" (it has no

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[42] OECD/DAC (2009): 51

official name yet, this was the name used during interviews), that will oversee DFID's work and report directly to the minister and parliament[43].

The internal evaluation department will be split in two and then subordinated under the Research and Evidence division (RED) and the new watch-dog institution respectively. Subsequently, there will be no evaluation department in the Head office of DFID. A small team in RED will be supervising the evaluations carried out at country-level. There will be programme evaluations of all programmes, and what remains of the evaluation department will be a function to enable the "evaluability" (word used in an interview) of all programmes and to strengthen data. Furthermore, all future programmes will be designed so as to enable impact evaluations.

The new set-up in the UK is intended to meet the challenges of better evidence (research closer to operations), better preparation of evaluation, i.e. strengthening the data for evaluations (internal function); programme evaluation which will ensure learning from each programme and the an external oversight, which can reliably communicate to the public on the prudence of public spending on development assistance.

SIDA

In the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), all departments carry out evaluations within their specific area. These evaluations are not independent. This is a deliberate trade off, and in this way internal learning will be enhanced. Moreover SIDA has an internal department for evaluation (UTV), which reports directly to the head of the organisation and carries out broad thematic and strategic evaluations. UTV works very deliberately enhancing the utilisation of evaluations. The process is offset by meetings with all operational departments, which results in a mapping of knowledge gaps identified by the practitioners and a discussion of how evaluations could shed light on these. The result is a list of approximately 100 ideas. Subsequently, UTV chooses approximately 15 of them to carry through, the rest are carried out as decentralised evaluations and only supervised by UTV. When an evaluation is proposed, the proposing staff is required to clearly state the presumed users of the results , if there are too few, the evaluation is dropped. When carried out, the staff that proposed the evaluation become a reference-group and remain highly involved throughout. The evaluation process is framed as a learning process and involves the users the whole time, as opposed to more traditional evaluations, which aims at a fixed end product,that can in the end be presented to the users[44]. Thereby SIDA accommodates the critique, that has been directed towards more traditional evaluations that have an underlying presumption about learning as something that filtrates through an organisation when a report is issued[45]. Besides the internal evaluation function, SIDA's work is overseen and evaluated by an independent watch-dog function: The Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV). This is a government-funded agency, that independently initiates and carries out evaluations of international development co-operation. The overarching objective is to contribute to increased efficiency in Swedish development co-operation. SADEV evaluates topical and relevant issues related to international development co-

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[43] http://iacdi.independent.gov.uk/; BBC.co.uk: *Aid watchdog will reassure taxpayers, says Mitchell*, 3 June 2010; Guardian.co.uk: *David Cameron: Our Aid Will Hit the Spot*, 3 June 2010. Interview with Kerry Albright (DFID) and Paul Hailston (DFID).
[44] Notes from workshop on lesson-learning in DFID: *Evidence into Use* , 22 June 2010 (Section on Swedish experiences by Joakim Molander, UTV).
[45] This last notion is the consultants' own interpretation.

operation in order to inform decision-makers. Looking at the list of SADEV evaluations, these are often macro-and strategic questions on "what works" and related to development effectiveness[46].

WB

Evaluation at the World Bank has two major dimensions: (a) self-evaluation by the units responsible for particular programs and activities; (b) independent evaluation by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG). These dimensions link to a system of organisational learning, use of external expertise and stakeholder participation, which in combination, make the set-up unique among development organisations.

The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) is an independent unit within the World Bank; it reports directly to the Bank's Board of Executive Directors. IEG assesses the portfolio in three main ways: what works, what does not, how a borrower (recipient country) plans to run and maintain a project ,and the lasting contribution of the Bank to a country's overall development. The goals of evaluation are to learn from experience, to provide an objective basis for assessing the results of the Bank's work, and to provide accountability in the achievement of its objectives. It also improves Bank work by identifying and disseminating the lessons learned from experience and by framing recommendations drawn from evaluation findings.

In discussing the linkage between research and evaluation at the World Bank, it was made clear that ,although there is a lot of commonalities and increasingly a more scientific approach to evaluation, there are main differences, because the evaluations are demand driven – researchers can choose the topic and leave out things. Impact evaluations are similarly narrow, so the IEG cannot equally narrow as is the case in the impact of evaluation methodologies.

The IEG has a partnership with Norad and the SWISS. As an example, IEG disseminates their results in Norway – while the financing from Norad provides extra work that IEG would otherwise not be able to do. Another programme is CLEAR, i.e. a capacity development initiative for monitoring and evaluation, supported by DFID, SIDA, and IFAD. The aim is to build capacity and help establish M& E centres of excellence in developing countries.

The World Bank has initiated an interesting monitoring and evaluation programme, the Development Impact Evaluation Initiative (DIME). This is an operational programme, in fact it is a monitoring system, using impact evaluation methodologies, DIME has three objectives:
1. Increasing the number of World Bank-supported impact evaluations, particularly in strategic areas and themes .
2. Increasing the ability of staff to design and carry out such evaluations in close collaboration with government agencies in developing countries.
3. Building a process of systematic learning on effective development interventions based on lessons learned from completed evaluations.

DIME is organised around thematic clusters that are co-ordinated across countries in different regions of the world. The WB uses this approach to allow for a comparative

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[46] An interview with Joakim Molander, head of evaluation is planned (communication 1st September from Sida).

analysis of results in different settings and produces more robust estimates of programmeimpact to inform future policy and programme design.

The clusters are:
- Conditional Cash Transfers
- Early Childhood Development
- Education Service Delivery
- HIV/AIDS Treatment and Prevention
- Local Development
- Malaria Control
- Pay-for-Performance in Health
- Rural Roads
- Rural Electrification
- Urban Upgrading
- Youth Employment and Service Program

DIME was launched in 2005 and then reorganised in 2009: The intention is that impact evaluation should be mainstreamed across the portfolio as a decentralized system. It is part of the monitoring and evaluation system at the Bank, and will be based on common indicators for operations. At present impact evaluation covers 13 of the portfolios. The interesting aspect of DIME is that it is established in order to stimulate a results based culture in the organisation, and it takes on a complicated and academic methodology and places it organisationally as a mainstream function in the interface between monitoring and evaluation. As a recent update of DIME to the Bank's Committee on Development Effectiveness: "With 170 completed and 280 active studies in 72 countries to date, DIME is the largest initiative in the world designed to systematically learn from experience on the basis of rigorous impact evaluation"[47].

2.2.1 Trends in evaluation methodologies.

Some observations have been made with regard to trends in evaluation methodologies, showing that the direction is towards using and supporting impact measurement. However, there is no uniform definition of impact – some refer to the rigorous methodological approach, others more generally focus on "what works" .Discussions around methodological approach and definitions are ongoing and obviously discussion of methodologies have to be related to the specific questions asked in an evaluation[48].

The debate is very much about micro-level and macro-level evaluation methods, and how findings are best evidenced, communicated and put into practice. In USAID's evaluation department there was a strong support for micro-level studies, because the findings are concrete, they can be understood and put into practice.

Overall, the methodology discussions aim to find means towards strengthened public accountability, being able to show what works based on robust evidence. During the interviews, it came across that impact methodologies in evaluation, are seen as "interesting" and "challenging", "expensive in terms of resources and involve serious trade-offs". One way to stay close to this debate is through the International Initiative

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[47] Committee on Development Effectiveness: Development Impact Evaluation Initiative: A World Bank-Wide strategic approach to Enhance development Effectiveness, Report to informal meeting on 14th July 2010. Official use only.
[48] This observation is strengthened by Howard White's paper on the debate around impact evaluations (White 2009)

for Impact Evaluation[49]. The World Bank's internal report on DIME has an interesting overview of impact evaluation methodologies and their applicability to different themes. This would be relevant for the themes in the Danish strategy "Freedom 2.0". The report is also frank about the challenges; it requires long-term commitment and relevant academic skills to carry out impact evaluations, so there is capacity building at country level, secondly there are challenges in linking the evaluations to the knowledge agenda.

Most agencies (here among DFID, USAID, UNDP, ADB) issue meta-evaluations each year – either by topic or by country – which sum up the most significant findings over the year. These meta-evaluations are one of many efforts towards utilising findings and getting the results communicated to a wider area[50].

2.3 Trends in monitoring practices

Main Findings:

- *The data sets for monitoring are often limited by general data availability and robustness in developing countries; the Paris Declaration principles have magnified this.*
- *Aid administrations and think tanks. focus on capacity building of statistics and monitoring in developing country institutions.*
- *Management for results has its limitations in a political environment, in its pure form it requires an organisation with a limited mandate.*
- *A drive for results based management and monitoring for results also emphasises internal learning.*

2.3.1   Overall trends

This section is not a main section of the report, but because the role of monitoring came up in interviews, as one of the functions, that was also being rethought by administrations in connection to the emphasis on results, a brief and not exhaustive section has been included in the report. Measuring for results and managing for results are common terminologies linked with monitoring systems of public sector operations. Most aid administrations have included results orientation in their management systems, although with some structural difficulties.

The Paris Declaration and its focus on local ownership and joint programming, has challenged results monitoring, as it is the data and monitoring systems of the recipient country, which is the centre of attention when monitoring results. In this process, the aid administrations can continue their business as usual, i.e. the monitoring of inputs – but the outputs, outcome and impact has to be measured by the recipient. In this respect aid agencies increasingly focus on supporting statistical functions and building capacity for monitoring in recipient institutions, i.e. within governments, but also independent think tanks, higher learning institutions and NGOs (DFID, World Bank). Because of the uneven and often low capacity in recipient countries the World Bank (IEG), for example, is heading a multi-donor initiative of training and other knowledge based activities focusing on M&E and government effectiveness. The initiative, "The Regional Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results" (CLEAR), responds to the need for quality data through two key components: 1) Regional centres to provide applied in-region training,

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[49] http://www.3ieimpact.org/
[50] USAID 2009: 26-27

technical assistance and evaluation work, 2) Global learning to strengthen the practical knowledge-sharing on M&E and performance management across regions (on what works?, what does not work?, and why?).

Most "older" aid administrations are in a "cultural" transition towards more results orientation, while a relatively new agency such the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has been established based on management for results principles.

2.3.2   Selected development agencies and monitoring trends

MCC

One of the most comprehensive monitoring practices based on a results management approach is that of the MCC. It works with poor countries, but only those committed to: good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens. There is a selection procedure up-front based on a number of uniform criteria applied to countries before these countries may qualify for support from the MCC

There are two primary types of MCC grants: compacts and threshold programmes. Compacts are large, five-year grants for countries that pass MCC's eligibility criteria. Threshold programs are smaller grants awarded to countries that come close to passing these criteria and are firmly committed to improving their policy performance.

As a federal agency, MCC is committed to the principles of performance measurement mandated under the US Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), and applies this same focus on results to its compact programming.

The MCC has a monitoring approach that starts with tracking performance on processes and outputs at the beginning of a Compact's life and then continues to track high-level outcomes and impacts to the end, in order to concretely assess how its activities have affected poverty and economic growth. Economic rate of return analyses are applied to estimate the aggregate estimated impacts, and details on the impact evaluations that are intended to measure the achievement of these results. Monitoring is integrated into all phases of Compact operations – from compact development through implementation. The diagram shows the cycle and how results that are tracked become part of a feedback loop that is used to improve performance during a Compact and to apply lessons learned to future Compacts.

MCC monitors progress towards compact results on a regular basis using performance indicators that are specified in the M&E Plan of a Compact. Lower level indicators (process and output level) and their targets are typically drawn from project and activity work plans. Higher level indicators and their targets are often, though not always, directly linked to the economic rate of return analysis that was are conducted to estimate the impacts of the investment and are drawn from the benefit streams of that analysis.

Every quarter each Millennium Challenge Account submits an Indicator Tracking Table (ITT), that shows actual performance of each indicator relative to the baseline level that was established before the activity began and the performance targets that were established in the M&E Plan. MCC also reviews this data every quarter, to assess whether results are being achieved and integrates this information into project management decisions.

Data for performance monitoring and reporting comes from baseline and follow-up surveys, project implementers and other entities. MCC strongly supports comprehensive, quality data collection conducted by local resources and frequently uses Compact M&E funds to invest in surveys fielded both by private firms and national statistical agencies or other government entities.

The system of monitoring described above is comprehensive, and considerable resources are allocated to its adherence and implementation. Development assistance or the partnership is seen as a linear process, which makes it difficult in cases where political change "upsets" the system and causes delays or other deviations. The approach is still being unfolded and closely followed by the US Congress. The MCC staff did find the approach promising, but also challenging and it came across in the interview that the results orientation and the use of the economic rate of return as an impact measure in such a "pure form" can stand the test, because the mandate of the MCC is quite narrowly formulated on the economic growth agenda. This was echoed by USAID in an interview. USAID sees itself as the "mother agency", which takes on all the more difficult development agendas, and having an Agency such as the MCC is only possible, if it indeed has a very narrow agenda and a mother agency, which can take over the more problematic agendas as well as those which are more political in nature.

CIDA

In CIDA results based management has been practised for more than thirty years, but in the last couple of years it has been strengthened. In the Policy Statement from 2008 it is declared "*CIDA focuses on results to ensure that it employs management practices that optimise value for money and the prudent use of its human and financial resources. CIDA will report on its results in order to inform Parliament and Canadians of its development achievements*"[51]. CIDA is also launching a programme called "Knowledge the driving force @ CIDA", this takes in monitoring, evaluation and research and aims to strengthen the institutional learning from these functions. The initiative is based on information derived from various diagnostics such as a survey on CIDA's practices in Evidence Based Policy making and Programming (EB2P) and Focus groups on EB2P. The (perception) surveys showed that CIDA has a weak uptake both of CIDA and IDRC funded research results, and that the evidence base for planning is not robust. The case to built on, is that there is an increased

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[51] CIDA: 2008- Results-Based Management Policy Statement.

appetite among staff to use monitoring results, evaluations and research for learning and thereby improve the quality of aid. This is at present being formulated in a knowledge strategy[52].

2.4 Trends in communication

Main Findings:

- *There are two lines of communication going on in organisations: Communicating to the external stakeholders about results and development (public diplomacy), and then communicating to internal stakeholders with the purpose of enhancing results and development (learning).*
- *All mapped organisations talked about those two functions as intimately tied together – drawing on the same information and to some extent using the same channels.*
- *Ways of communicating about results is currently being reformed with the many new channels available (such as social forums online). However, the challenge is to be able to communicate the substantial issues.*
- *There is a general lack of confidence in ways of communicating to the 'wider public' on substantial topics beyond "hungry children".*
- *Development agencies generally feel the knowledge sharing (research-practice-evaluations) could be strengthened, and many have introduced procedures and formal arrangements to accommodate this.*
- *Knowledge management and knowledge sharing are difficult to formalize – knowledge is most effectively shared informally.*
- *Synthesising knowledge from research, practice and evaluations to strengthen aid effectiveness creates benefits as well as trade-offs.*

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[52] This is only available as a powerpoint in hard copy at present.

	DFID	USAID	WB	SIDA	CIDA/IDRC
Key methods for external communication	- An online portal telling the micro-level stories - An annual report communicating on overall results of British aid in a statistical manner. - Research programmes and their results are communicated through the R4D website – browse database.	- An online portal "Telling our story" where all visitors can browse for stories from USAID-funded programmes. Focuses at the micro-level.	- WB is very focused on communication to peers, where classical instruments are used – primarily newsletters and reports. - The DevCom offers clients advice and training on communication strategies.	SIDA communicates in very traditional ways via the website. Results of the Swedish Development Assistance are not easily accessible.	- A Report "Development for Results - at the heart of Canada's efforts for a better world." Aimed at the Canadian public on CIDAs contribution to development cooperation - A website offering an RSS-feed service, and an online database with "stories from the field - IDRC likewise publishes results online – such as a monthly story (online) under the heading "Lasting impact" - There is a government website on results of all government spending – incl. aid
Key methods for internal communication	- DFID has well-developed ICT solutions for internal knowledge sharing - In terms of research uptake, DFID has a 'research uptake team'	- USAID has a knowledge management department providing staff with tools and inputs to improve knowledge management and sharing.	The World Bank has a number of initiatives for internal learning – these were not included in the mapping.	Not yet covered in the mapping.	- Staff share information and knowledge through their Agency information system (ICT solution) (Through various tools (i.e. a project browser and disclosure reports), this information is extracted from the AIS and shared with the public.)
Key lessons learned during mapping/best practices	- Though ICT systems and other formal institutions are in place, the best knowledge sharing is person-to-person, and learning is best transmitted by trusted messengers.	- USAID has prioritised its focus on the micro-level stories based on the results of American development assistance, as they are convinced this is where the results are to be found.	- A multilateral organisation like WB has much less focus on public diplomacy and due to its size and weight it can communicate via channels, that are to some extent not sufficient for the bilateral agencies.	- SIDA has prioritised its focus mainly on learning processes by investing heavily in new methods for evaluations. Hence, this mapping did not come across innovative communication initiatives with SIDA	CIDA is launching a programme called "Knowledge the driving force @ CIDA", this takes in monitoring, evaluation and research and aims to strengthen the institutional learning from these functions.

There are two ways of linking results management and communication; Communicating *for* results and communicating *about* results. Mostly organisations do both, and the two approaches overlap and interact so much, that it is not possible to divide them completely – however, a division is attempted according to the following definitions:

- Communicating *for* results is primarily (but not entirely) an internal process for the sake of learning and knowledge sharing.
- Communicating *about* results is what agencies do to convey the message of what aid is achieving and what its purpose is. Communication of evaluation results and research findings to external stakeholders are done for the sake of transparency and accountability and can be directed either at "the wider public", the recipients or the parliamentarians in the donor country.
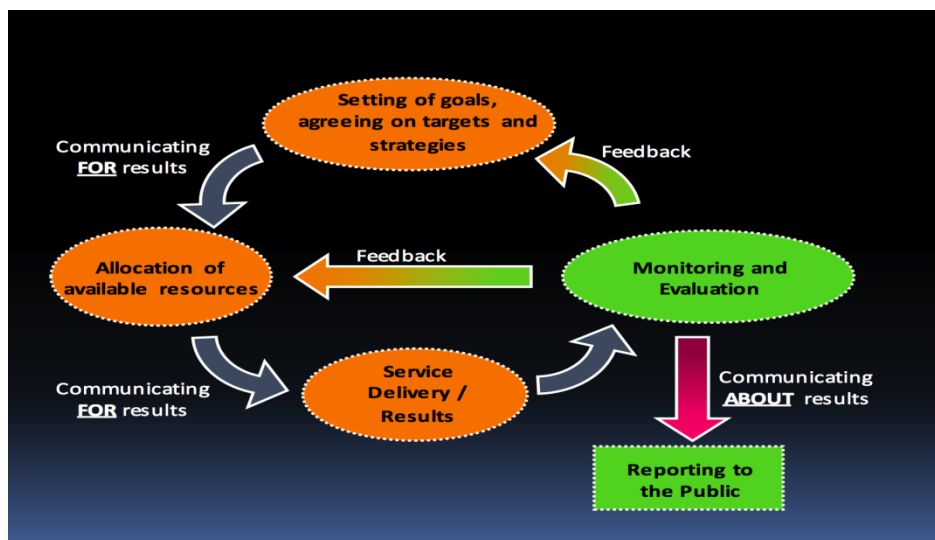
Source: da Costa 2009: 6

There are some trends in the ways of doing both, but the most dominant trend is that development agencies are struggling, both with how this can be done better (in terms of reaching the target group/external communication), and how it should be embedded organisationally for most effective results (internal learning). The following is a mapping of the reflections and lessons learned that came across during interviews and literature reviews[53]. This mapping can only briefly touch upon key issues.

"Slightly more than one-third of OECD countries currently integrates communication in development programmes or projects, although half of those that have not yet moved in this direction plan to do so in the near future. It is unclear what percentage of projects and programmes integrate communication. Only 10% of those donors integrating communication in development programmes or projects have a formal communication strategy". (da Costa 2009: 6)

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[53] The field of communication for development is huge and a very extensive literature base has been identified constituting background literature and post writings from the First Work Congress on Communication for Development that took place in Rome in October 2006.

2.4.1 Communicating results

Overall trends and debates

The new aid modalities, and the enhanced alignment and collaborations between donors is a problem in terms of clear communication of what exactly it is that the Danish, British, Swedish, American, etc aid is achieving. It has become increasingly harder to attribute results to any one donor, or even to aid: "Addressing this challenge [that results are hard to attribute] calls for a paradigm shift in the way that results are conceived of and communicated. It implies telling a compelling story about how aid – as one of a number of inputs – is making a significant contribution to wider development efforts. It is in this endeavour that communication assumes increasing importance."[54].

At the launch of the Danish Campaign: 'Verdens Bedste Nyheder' (Best news of the world), it was said that the Danish public often feels they are better motivated towards aid by good than bad news. Nevertheless, interviewees internationally had experienced how challenging it is to get the medias to accept the stories of successes and results[55].

The public (in Denmark) is increasingly fatigued by pictures of hungry children and endless misery, and want the stories of development 'successes' – if they are to be further positively motivated towards development assistance. However, the media is not (yet) willing to show these stories, as they do not have an immediate sales value.

All interviewees stressed that the challenge of communication is daunting. DCED director Jim Tanburn talked about the "charity agenda" (the hungry child) as opposed to the agenda of sustainable development. He acknowledges that it is hard to communicate beyond the charity agenda in the UK – the public has a common understanding of developing countries and their people, in this understanding it is the depiction of the powerless, hungry children. DCED is currently investigating the possibilities for developing a way to communicate a different agenda, and still awake "sympathy" with the public. The problem is, that there is no shared mental image of what the development agencies have to offer besides immediate relief to the hungry child. Jim Tanburn reiterates the importance of identifying **key champions** if messages of other themes are to be conveyed[56].

In continuation of this is the issue on ways of communicating. The recent decade has seen a change in how communication is done – it is no longer a one-way process, where agencies offer the media stories. Communication is first and foremost a process between people or actors that have some sort of relationship. Conveying a message is often easiest through a key champion/trusted messenger and this calls for more interactive ways of communication.

In March 2010, African Development Bank and OECD/DACs DevCom group co-hosted a workshop on communicating development results[57]. Issues that were outlined include the following key-points, which are highly relevant in the context of this mapping[58]:

Challenges:
      1. What results do we communicate?
      2. Getting the results.

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[54] Da Costa 2009: 4

[55] Interviews med Finn Tarp UNU-WIDER, August 2010 & Charlotte Henriksen UM, 20 August 2010

[56] Interview, Jim Tannburn DCED, 4 August 2010

[57] Please see this website for event details http://www.afdb.org/en/news-events/article/afdb-and-devcom-organize-round-table-on-improving-results-communication-6454/

[58] UNDP presentation at the workshop: *Communicating Restults*, March 2010.

3. Who is the audience?
4. Resources –financial/human
5. Competing with politics and entertainment news

What results should be communicated?

1. Delivery Vs Impact
2. National scale (long term) Vs project
3. Human stories Vs Statistics
4. Whose results – Donors Vs programme countries
5. Governments Vs Public[59]

Best practices in communicating results
When talking about the best practices in communicating development results it was reiterated repeatedly, that there are some central dilemmas, which must be dealt with. First, communication today is much more complex than previously – information travels in networks, and informers depend on trusted messengers. It is no longer a effectively coming from one-way communication, which is a huge challenge for public organisations. This means that the emphasis is on new methods of communication such as campaigns, online social media and advertisementlike slogans. However, these media seriously limit the possibilities for communicating the complex nexus that development and development assistance often operates in. Hence, if the aim is to communicate to a very wide-ranging target group, the trade-off is in the contents.

Secondly, communicating the results of one specific agency's development assistance somewhat contradicts the intentions most aid administering agencies have committed to with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. Moreover, wanting to spell out clearly results and attribute them to a specific agency entails methodological trade offs because it requires a set of universal indicators to report on globally. Some agencies choose to accept the insecurities this entails and thereby be able to provide their taxpayers with clear messages, whereas other agencies maintain that such statements are estimations and that they are too insecure.

The following is a presentation of what the mapped organisations have done in terms of external communication, whether they can be labelled best practice depends on the stance towards the above outlined dilemmas.

Development agencies and external communication trends

Most of the mapped agencies have extensive online resources and tools for communicating the results of the bilateral aid (DFID, USAID, SIDA, WB, CIDA). DFID and USAID have sections of their website specifically aimed at telling the success-stories in easily accessible language and often focusing on the individual stories of people in recipient countries (USAID: Telling our story, DFID: Media room, CIDA: On results). WB and SIDA's websites are more focused on sharing information with professional partners. As observed throughout, DFID has advanced tools for

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[59] A survey was conducted (under DevCom) in 2006 on exactly these issues, but it has not been possible to get a copy as it demands a log-in to DevCom: Zimmerman, R (2006), *Communicating About Aid Effectiveness, Budget Support and Corruption – Survey of Good Practices*. OECD Development Centre. October 2006. TheSame for another one conducted in 2007: Zimmerman, R (2007), *Communication and Development: Practices, Policies and Priorities in OECD Countries – Results from the DevCom Donor Communication Profiles Survey*. OECD Development Centre.

communicating: Staff members blog on their website, there is an easily accessible browsing tool which enables the visitor to look for stories within specific countries and/or sectors. CIDA offers the visitor an easily understood matrix of progress against the MDGs, and like DFID presents 'stories from the field'.

Browsing these websites reiterates the point that all agencies are increasingly preoccupied with fulfilling their duty in terms of public diplomacy – the issue of development and aid is no longer reserved for professionals. Danida with a number of other Danish organisations have recently engaged in the campaign "Verdens Bedste Nyheder", which in some ways is an expression of the same tendency, the news about development successes is spread in untraditional ways – for instance through online fora such as Facebook, Twitter etc.

USAID

As mentioned above, USAID has developed an online portal with the purpose of "telling our story" both to media, peers and 'the wider public'[60]. It is focused on telling the country and/or sector specific results and does not answer the question: Does aid work? This corresponds to USAIDs prioritisations in terms of research and evaluations as described above – there is a clear focus at the micro-level when looking for results and effectiveness.   USAID also believes in dialogues and has just tested an approach called structured dialogue, which takes up a particular issues and addresses a closed forum (say businessmen). This is not a lecture but a dialogue.

CIDA

In order to better inform Canadians about the impact of CIDA's efforts, improved reporting mechanisms were announced on May 20, 2009. The Report *"Development for Results - at the heart of Canada's efforts for a better world."* aims at telling the Canadian public how the $3.6 billion was spent between April 2008 and March 2009 and highlight in which ways they have made a difference to the poor. This CIDA publication is one of the ways that CIDA endeavours to increase its accountability to the public, it is very easy to read, has lots of box-stories and intuitive maps and tables. As an example, the report contains the following fact-box:

In the period covered by this report, CIDA and its partners around the world made a real difference to the lives of people:
- 102 million people fed
- 3.5 million people taught better agricultural methods
- 75,000 small businesses launched
- 3 million people treated with antiretroviral drugs
- 70 million mosquito nets distributed

In terms of concrete tools, CIDA's website also offers an RSS-feed service and has an online database with "stories from the field". CIDA clearly communicates both the

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[60] http://www.usaid.gov/stories/

individual, micro-level stories, as well as attempting to share the wider perspectives on the impact of Canadian aid.

Some of CIDAs external communication falls under IDRC. The centre offers newsletter subscription and videos, podcasts and slideshows on different issues can be downloaded from their website. The media-section has editorials, slideshows, speeches, press releases etc. Each month, a feature story under the heading *lasting impact* is published online, which tells the story of how IDRC funded research "has helped change the life of poor people".

DFID
Besides the interactive web-resources described above, which aim to communicate widely the results of British aid through micro-level case stories, DFID has different initiatives in terms of communicating research findings that are funded by them. The way DFID communicates the message about the effectives of their aid, is based a lot on research findings to a degree not mirrored by other bilaterals.

Since 2008 DFID has reported increasingly on results in their annual report and has introduced a slogan-like way of communicating the effect of "their" development assistance. In connection to their launch of the 2008 annual report, DFID stated on the website: "*The UK is leading the way in the fight against poverty. We estimate that the Department for International Development helps to lift 3 million people out of poverty every year.*" [61] The 2010 report presents the following key achievements (p 3):

In 2008-09, DFID's bilateral programme in its 22 priority countries¹:

→ Trained over **150,000** teachers

→ Built or reconstructed over **9,500** classrooms

→ Trained over **70,000** health professionals

→ Vaccinated over **4 million** children against measles

→ Delivered over **6 million** anti-malarial bednets

→ Provided anti-retroviral drugs to over **200,000** people with HIV

→ Distributed over **400 million** condoms

→ Provided over **2.5 million** people with clean water

→ Provided over **2.5 million** people with better sanitation

→ Built or upgraded **1,500 km** of road and...

→ ...maintained a further **14,500** km

→ Provided new/improved electricity to over **50,000** households

→ Assisted over **13 million** people through food security programmes

→ Assisted over **3 million** people through social assistance programmes

Source: DFID annual report 2010 p. 3

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[61] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/About-DFID/Finance-and-performance/Annual-report/Annual-Report-2008/

This way of putting across results demands the implementation of standard indicators across all countries and all sectors, which entails dilemmas in terms of methodological rigorousness and the context-specificity that is always dominant when talking about how many people are lifted out of poverty. DFID has taken the step beyond reporting on inputs and contributions, which was debated during many interviews because of its implications in terms of tradeoffs.

Another innovative British initiative is the "Where does my money go?"-website, that tracks all public spending in Britain, including aid spending[62]. On this website DFID in cooperation with the Open Knowledge Foundation has attempted a visualisation of aid spending in the period 2004-2009.

In terms of specific reporting on their research programme, DFID issued an annual report up until 2010 describing the research projects that DFID currently funds and findings from research that DFID has funded in the past. It demonstrates the impact of DFID funded research[63]. However, these reports have now been replaced by an online portal called Resarch4Development, which contains over 5,000 project outputs across all the DFID research themes in the form of peer-reviewed articles, summaries, reports, papers and case studies. An inter-active profile is attempted, as an example the R4D Admin System allows users to submit new documents and revise the details of existing documents resulting from DFID-funded research. This is particularly aimed at DFID-funded researchers or programme implementers.

WB

The World Bank is evidently focused more on communicating to peers than to the 'wider public', as their constitutional foundation differs decisively from bilateral agencies. However, the communication department in WB contains interesting structures and resources and will therefore be discussed in the section on communication *for* development as that is the primary focus. (The World Bank's many communication initiatives were not included in the mapping.)

Other selected experiences with communicating about development assistance and results

The Global Fund

The Global Fund (GF) has an online Global Fund Evaluation Library. This website library includes studies led by a wide range of different stakeholders and also studies and descriptive papers produced internally by the Global Fund. These documents address diverse aspects of the different mechanisms and processes of the Global Fund. Also in the library specific and general evaluations can also be downloaded just like independent position papers and policy statements are available. The Global fund is very focused on results and specifically on impact and communicate these very visibly via their website. As mentioned above, the GF reports against an aid effectiveness scorecard that makes the results very easy to communicate.

Norad

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[62] www.wheredoesmymoneygo.org
[63] See "*DFID Research 2009–2010 Providing research evidence that enables poverty reduction*"

In 2007 Norad issued its first report on the results of Norwegian development cooperation. It asked if aid works, and answered: "Yes, but not well enough". In 2008 the agency then examined the complex international aid system and found no clear differences in the results from the various channels for Norwegian aid. The 2009 Results Report investigates the private sector as a target, channels and partners in development cooperation. The findings are often encouraging, with many examples of positive contributions to economic development. The report collates international research, which reject claims that aid is wasted and undermines economic growth. However, this report has been heavily critiqued by researchers for not being precise and thorough enough to live up to its name and rather resemble a "glossy add" for political purpose than a serious piece of results measurement[64].

DIIS

In Denmark, the Danish Institute for International Studies are leaders in terms of communication on issues of development and development assistance and bringing issues up for discussion. They provide weekly email newsletters presenting latest publications, seminar announcements as well as what they call "DIIS comments" – a blog-like media where researchers provide viewpoints and contributions to ongoing debates. Besides regular research publication by individual researchers, research groups and departments, DIIS has a Danish language quarterly periodical for international studies called "The New World". The material produced by DIIS is targeted at what could be labelled the "interested public", thus not addressing the wider public, however still accessible to both the interested newcomers and experienced professionals. Moreover, DIIS holds well-attended seminars on a wide range of topics within development and development assistance and featuring by leading researchers and practitioners as speakers.

Trends in external communication methodologies.
The OECD DAC Informal Network of DAC Development Communication (DevCom) is a forum for DAC donor staff within public affairs and communication departments, where issues and strategies for communication are discussed – and to some degree coordinated. In line with the trends described above, the members in this group meet informally (speaking personally rather than on behalf of their agencies), which spurs a more frank and fruitful debate[65].

A OECD DAC & DevCom commissioned study brings forward an interesting angle on communication of development results: "*As the paradigm shifts away from donors seeking to develop partner countries, towards partner countries leading their own development efforts with support from donors, communication should (…) reflect this shift*" [66]. In other words, this report suggests that more weight would be given to the partner countries' own communication efforts – possibly supported by donors, or at least harmonising their own communication efforts with those of partner countries[67]. This, however, touches upon a dilemma discussed above: the lack of data availability in most developing countries.

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[64] The Foreigner 2009 – Interview with researcher Asle Toje
[65] DevCom website:
http://www.oecd.org/document/13/0,3343,en_2649_34101_39307533_1_1_1_1,00.html
[66] da Costa (2009).
[67] As above.

2.4.2   *Communicating for Results (learning and knowledge management)*

Overall trends and debates

Communicating for results is a term used by da Costa (2009) covering what is often referred to as "Communicating for development" and "strategic communication". In this section, the mapping will focus on the knowledge sharing/management aspects rather than issues on knowledge "spreading" to partner countries. [68]

Some overall trends in communicating *for* development are of cause similar to those seen in communication *about* development, specifically more and more agencies and theorists realise, that effective communication in terms of knowledge sharing, is done informally. It is not the necessarily the resource-heavy ICT solutions or strategies that yields the greatest results, rather it is the trustful meeting between actors. Therefore many agencies are currently working with ways to build these stronger personal and institutional linkages and relations between actors. In terms of integrating research results in the policy dialogue, the same lesson is evident – messages has a much greater chance of getting across if they are conveyed by trusted messengers.

Development organisations are committed to improvement and work tirelessly on improving the link between evidence-based research-learning-practice but for some it has higher priority than others since it is costly and time consuming. DFID and CIDA invest considerably resources in this. An ODI study shows that informal networks (person to person communication) works well in transmission of learning.

Development agencies and internal communication trends

Since the 1998 World Bank Report *Knowledge for Development,* development agencies have invested heavily in knowledge management and most have formal knowledge management strategies and systems for knowledge sharing[69]. However, codifying the knowledge among programmes bears the dangers of universalising experiences and lessons that have been learned and then applying them to various incompatible situations. Therefore, knowledge sharing and institutionalising must consider ways of learning – situated learning – to take culture and circumstantial factors into account[70]. At the theoretical level there is a general agreement, that knowledge is best shared informally between actors with a relation and mutual trust[71]. These puzzling issues came out in interviews: when are lessons widely applicable and when are they country specific?, how is internal learning in organisations transferred between country level and institutional level?

Another general trend seems to be, that agencies approach issues of knowledge management through ICT systems in an attempt to create informal venues for knowledge sharing, but they experience, that the personal meeting continuous to be the most productive.

DFID

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[68] For resources and links on communication development strategies in the sense mentioned last, please see: http://www.rdfs.net/themes/communication_en.htm

[69] McGrath 2002.

[70] McGrath & King 2004

[71] Interview, Harry Jones, ODI; Keijzer, Ørnemark & Engel (2006); Nonaka & Takeuchi; 1995, Davenport & Prusak, 1998.

DFID has set up a Knowledge Sharing Strategy, which mainly focuses on ICT aspects: *"The purpose of DFID's knowledge sharing effort is to maximise our collective knowledge resources to help meet the MDGs and our PSA/SDA targets. The challenge is in two inter-dependent parts: (i) how we develop a learning culture; and (ii) how we share knowledge externally in ways that deepen and broaden our engagement with key development partners."* With this strategy the aim is to mainstream knowledge sharing in DFID and focus it on mission-critical information that reflects DFIDs 'Knowledge value system' – access to information from and about research is a key part of this. These systems are built on IT: InSight & Quest.

However, when interviewing ODI researcher Harry Jones, who is currently analysing the knowledge sharing experiences in DFID, it became clear that in DFID the general notion also exists: the best knowledge sharing is informal.

In line with this, Harry Jones & Enrique Mendizabal in their draft report on knowledge management experiences in DFID, present the findings from interviews with DFID-interviewees, who commonly express scepticism towards the effectiveness of the ICT solutions and a common understanding, that the interpersonal knowledge sharing is definitively the most effective and the most used: *"The perception was that there are some good areas of the intranet and some good examples but their quality was highly variable and with all of these, the general feeling was that you generally only get information from them if you already know what you are looking for."* Then, later: *"The interviews strongly suggest that learning takes place primarily through interpersonal networks and contacts, usually within DFID as the first port of call, or within the country or epistemic community for CO staff."* [72]

WB

The Development Communication Division (DevComm) in the WB, supports the Bank's mission of reducing poverty by providing clients with strategic communication advice and tools towards more effective use of communication, as part of development projects (including: strengthening clients' ability to listen to their constituencies and negotiate with stakeholders; empowering grassroots organisations to achieve a more participatory process and undertaking communications activities that are grounded in public opinion research). Under DevComm, the Strategic Communication Learning Programme(SCLP) was started in 1998. It offers courses and workshops in communication to Bank staff and client country counterparts. The courses use a variety of formats for delivery: face-to-face, distance learning, e-learning and blended learning. The mapping did not go into details with this topic.

CIDA

CIDA´s staff shares factual information about their programs/projects through their Agency Information System (AIS). Through various tools (i.e. a project browser and disclosure reports), this information is extracted from the AIS and shared with the public. Furthermore, the AIS are used for extracting information that will be part of DAC-reports and the like.

As far back as in 1999, the Government of Canada committed to become "*known around the world as the government most connected to its citizens, with Canadians able to access all government information and services on-line at the time and place of their choosing.*" The website "Government online" was created and here citizens could find information on everything that the

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[72] Jones and Mendizabal (2010 Draft).

government spends money on – including aid projects[73]. Recently CIDA has embarked on a broader initiative "Knowledge the driving force @ CIDA", this takes in monitoring, evaluation and research and aims to strengthen the institutional learning from these functions. This initiative is under development and not yet published on the website.

USAID

USAID has a section on their website specifically dedicated to their knowledge management programme: "*USAID created the Knowledge Management Programmeto connect people with what and who they need to know to "work smarter" in concert with others to accomplish USAID's mission. KM helps people adapt to rapidly changing events, policies, and strategies by making information and experience easy to find and use for informed decisions and actions.*"[74]. USAID's Knowledge Management Programmeis based in the Management Bureau and a Knowledge Management Reference Group is made up of representatives from USAID Bureaus. The reference group meets on a monthly basis with sub-working groups meeting throughout the month. The purpose of the USAID KM Reference Group is to obtain Agency-wide input on USAID's Knowledge Management Program. The following is an illustration of the USAID strategic Knowledge Management framework:

Source: http://www.usaid.gov/km/km.html
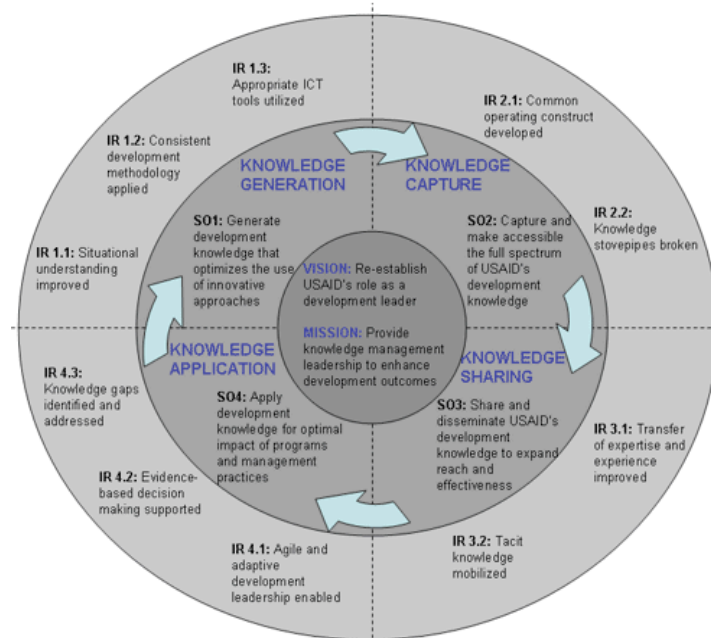
The Knowledge Management Programme provides a couple of services in order to fulfil their mandate to provide USAID staff and partners with the knowledge and the contacts that will enable them to be more effective in their aid administration. One is the so-called "Knowledge Management services" which aims to move USAID from a "need to know"-culture to a "need to share"-culture and provides guidance and facilitation on knowledge management issues and initiatives. The other is a library, which is primarily thought as a resource for staff and partners but it is also open to the public.

Trends in internal communication methodologies.

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[73] http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/apropos-about/fi-fs/ged-gol-eng.html
[74] http://www.usaid.gov/km/km.html

There is a move towards network-thinking and ways to build stronger institutional relations, in order to accommodate informal knowledge sharing, which has shown to be the most effective.

Double-loop learning instead of single-loop learning: Not only looking at how action and policy can be informed by previous lessons learned and experiences but also looking at how the interaction between all actors can spur debates and discussions that will then in turn build new knowledge.

Some agencies (USAID, AusAID, LADB) have very specific requirements for evaluations in terms of including dissemination procedures – a form of dissemination strategy is required for every evaluation[75].

The recent theoretical contributions around knowledge brokering emphasise that the engagement between those that produces the knowledge and those intended as users is paramount. Issuing reports and distributing them is not the way complex knowledge is shared effectively[76]. Literature from the past decade around learning mechanisms has focused on the importance of building institutional linkages and relations, facilitating interpersonal mechanisms for learning[77]. Recognising that the issues of international development are complex and benefits from all kind of knowledge input (from tacit knowledge to thorough academic research results) underlines the importance of having learning mechanisms in place that provide room for informal discussions, debates and analysis that are developed in interaction with other actors[78].

In an article titled *Knowledge Sharing in Development Agencies: knowledge fortress or knowledge pool?* (2003) Geoff Barnard warns about the dangers of becoming too focused on internal knowledge sharing in the individual agency and thereby neglecting knowledge sharing with external actors and partners. Barnard suggests a different approach to knowledge management, where the knowledge sharing is placed outside the agency, which can accommodate the "knowledge fortress" pitfall and open up for more sharing with external actors by "pooling" knowledge for utilisation by all[79]. Such an approach will of cause require that none of the involved actors have strong feelings of ownership over ideas, that there are common understandings of quality and standards of knowledge,

2.5 Bridging the gap – views on organisational aspects

Main Findings:

- *A closer relation between research and development practice requires the support of an organisational set-up tailored for the purpose, i.e. generating robust knowledge in research communities, channelling this to practitioners and external stakeholders*
- *Focus on results and management for results require major changes in business processes*
- *There are trade-off for the organisational closeness between research functions and aid administrations. Closeness gives increase use of research results, distance gives more independence but less use of results.*
- *Defining the questions annual and commissioning a study to be written in a user friendly language and the disseminated to practitioners is practiced by the Danish Evaluation Institute.*

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[75] USAID 2010: 25
[76] Michaels 2009.
[77] Ferguson, Mchombu and Cummings 2008.
[78] Jones and Mendizabal (2010 Draft).
[79] Banard 2003

Interviews stressed that there is the need for suitable organisational set-ups to bridge the different disciplines of results orientation and especially to include research results into programming and practical approaches of development organisations. Focus on powerful communication of documentation also requires organisational set-ups that are suitable, i.e. for instance with a capacity to act swiftly on rising opportunities.

2.5.1 Mandates and organisational views on related connected to the (in)dependence of evaluation functions

In the interviews there were reflections in several organisations with regard to the dependency and independence of evaluations: The external watchdog setup in the UK and the change of the evaluation function within DFID has stirred international discussions. It was also said that in cases where the mandate of evaluation function becomes too detached from the aid administration organisation, the uptake of results is difficult. It is in this light that SIDA has placed the evaluation function closer to operations.

With regards to the organisational aspects of research, there was a general assessment that the independence of researchers are key and they should therefore sit in think tanks or higher learning institutions or similar. However, it was pointed out that it is difficult to contract researchers and receive deliveries that can be transformed into operational decisions, and it is also difficult to have researchers deliver on time – research simply has a different time frame. Universities especially tend to "swallow" research funds in the way that terms and agreements are subject to changes in the course of implementation.

In the World Bank DRG, it was suggested that, if a bilateral wants to effectively use research on aid it should be considered to establish a "chief economist function" internally. This would be a very senior function, which has the weight within the organisation to take on "unpopular" findings, as well as somebody with an academic network who can commission research from universities and think tanks and know the landscape well enough to steer through this and avoid pitfalls.

2.5.2 DFID's goes the whole way and changes the organisation to suit the emphasis on link between research and practice

DFID spends considerable resources in the establishment of an organisational system of "research uptake" i.e. the intake and use of research results to inform and provide evidence for policy making (discussed in the research section). This move is inter alia based on findings in an ODI's analysis of DFID learning[80], which found that DFID is good at internal learning in terms of having policy and decisions informed by analysis and evidence. However, when it comes to the aspects of learning at staff-level, staff are not using and acting upon recommendations and lessons from evaluations (and research) to a degree that they are satisfied with: "*there is concern that general lessons from country programme evaluations are lost and that there are insufficient incentives for follow up*". Likewise, learning at the organisational level - drawing on experience about what has gone on in past DFID work, or capitalising on knowledge, information and experience which has been generated in the organisation or elsewhere also has a long way to go: "*there is an overarching perception that DFID continually 'reinvents the wheel', which may be caused by a high*

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[80] Jones & Mendizabal (2010)

turnover and poor institutional memory, and a lack of linking and coordination between decentralised work."

The Research Uptake Team in the Research & Evidence Division takes on the challenge to change the situation sketched above. The team members act as "knowledge brokers", transferring knowledge between research and the policy-teams. This team receives a list of all research carried out and then links the people working on the area to the relevant research results or communities. This system works well, as these professional advisors have in their incentive structure to keep up with research.

2.5.3   Organisational set-ups to optimise researchers approach to aid administrators

ODI/RAPID
The RAPID programme at ODI has developed an analytical framework to help optimise researchers' approach to aid administrators. They describe 3 core elements in the successful transfer of knowledge from researchers to aid administrators[81]:
1) Understanding of the background and context that the policy area exists in – everything from key stakeholders to the nature of "proof" that is required. Possibly even other messengers that can assist in getting the message across.
2) Develop a strategy: Find policy windows; identify political resistance and alliances that might be useful.
3) Be entrepreneurial: Build strong institutional and/or personal relations with the target unit or person.

This is explained by the finding, that the possibilities for policy-communities to take up research findings are shaped by three overall factors: the political context, the evidence and the interrelationships between researchers/messengers and receivers/policy community. These factors then interact within the sphere of a fourth factor as pictured below in "The Rapid Framework":
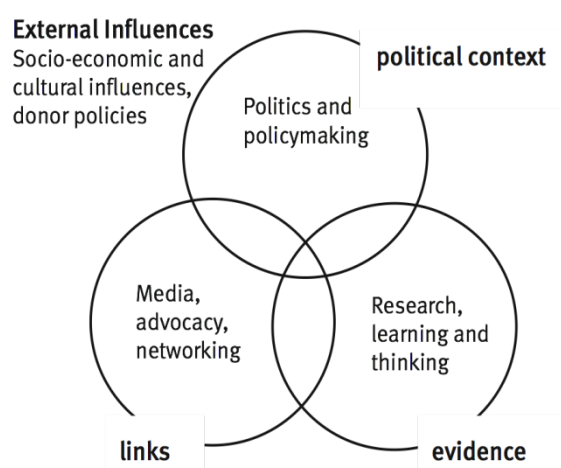
Source: Young & Court 2004: 2.

The traditional way of thinking about knowledge sharing and learning, is to look at it, as a process of seepage: a report with either new research results, or a new law is issued and distributed to the communes and the expectation is then that it will from there be

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[81] From Young & Court 2004

distributed to the individual institutions and further to the implementers (in their case –
the educator). This seepage is presumed to happen without the information changing –
any change is considered a "mistake".

The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)
The Danish Evaluation Institute, EVA constructed the following triangle and has been
working on methods and ways of strengthening the connection and communication
between each element in it:

Error! Reference source not found.

Evaluators

Researchers

Implementers
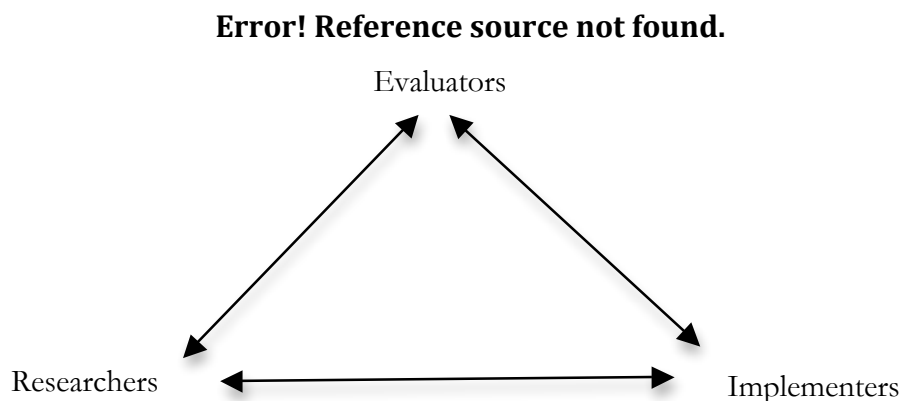
Each year EVA purchases a map of Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Finish research
within this area (adhering to certain standards for research), which they then use to issue
an annual report[82]. In this report, the findings of some of the research are presented in a
language that is accessible to the practitioners[83] and relate to their everyday reality and
challenges. At the end of the report, a brief presentation of each piece of research with
clear and accessible classification and references to their relevance.

With regard to the connection between Evaluations and Practitioners, EVA is inspired
by Michael Quinn Pattons concept of *Utilisaton-Focused Evaluations[84]*. The main objective
here has been to do evaluations with outset in the realities of the practitioners and their
expressed needs and problems, instead of a focus defined from "above". These are also
the principles that guide the new way SIDA is approaching evaluations.

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[82] These reports or magazines is called "Bakspejlet"
[83] In the field of pre-school teaching and pedagogy, the practitioners is often not very keen on reading long
reports in theoretical language. Hence, EVA has had an important role in "translating" the research-
findings into everyday language and relating it to the everyday problems and realities of the educators.
[84] Patton: "Utilisation-Focused Evaluation" (Sage, 2008, 4th Edition)

Section 3. CONCLUSIONS

Overall trends

The overall trend is results-orientation and an enhanced focus on public diplomacy and ways of showing "what works and what doesn't work" in development assistance. It is no longer acceptable to focus merely on the inputs and contributions, ministers and parliaments push for evidence, facts and figures on attribution and outcomes/impact.

The mapping has presented how a handful of aid administrations and think tanks tackle these new winds blowing, and how the functions of research, evaluation, monitoring and communication practices are combined in new ways – with a general trend that functions become more complementary and the link between research and practice (evaluation, monitoring and implementation) is being narrowed. This also implies that methodologies and approaches are blended in new ways, and tools to promote better methodologies are widely shared.

Research and aid administrations

Policy makers and aid administrations lean increasingly towards research findings on the role of aid and if "aid works". The mapping showed that these broader debates are influencing the thinking of policy makers and aid administrators. As was said in an interview, aid administrators are constantly aiming to become better at their jobs and they are looking for betters approaches and answers.

Aid administrations commission research – especially at the level of approaches, themes and sectors to inform their portfolio but it was not evident that the larger macro-questions were asked in commissioned research.

There is an interest to link research results on topical issues of development closer to practice. In SIDA it is found that research findings increasingly inform policies. The problem is obviously the different lead-time between research and operations but the trend towards better evidence does give research a platform as a contributor to development approaches.

DFID invests heavily in research aiming at directly supporting the portfolio and the utilisation of research findings; hence, 10% of each research programme must be aimed at optimising the utilisation of it (research uptake). The increased utilisation of research and the fact that the research uptake is measured is a very visible way of demonstrating the increased importance of solid evidence, as a basis for operational choices. It was underlined that it takes a major and serious effort to strengthen the linkages between research and aid administrators. As one interviewee from DFID said: "you must never underestimate the amount of time you have to spend on changing mindsets".

Although the World Bank also works to improve effectiveness and has tuned its operations towards results, the Development Research Group maintains its focus on topics of development. As said in the interview: research needs to be driven by questions and questions to be asked have to be the prerogative of the 'chief economist' function, i.e. have some independence.

In USAID research programmes are monitored and evaluated on impact, quality, participation, coordination (with the scientific/research and donor community) and investment along with operational programmes. USAID works in partnerships with various higher education institutions. It does not seem as if USAID supports research related to the macro-questions of development. As said in the interview: Research is worthwhile when trying to answer the macro-level questions. But what really changes minds is the micro-level questions – it is at micro-level that change practice - when evidence is proven.

Research and think tanks

Think tanks represent the "supply side" and seem to be suitable vehicles for development research. The number of think tanks is increasing and there is a substantial number both in the North and in the South. They claim to be independent but typically receive funds from donor agencies. Some of the think tanks cover very broad topical areas (i.e. ODI), others have a more narrow focus (i.e. DCED, UNU-WIDER). The think tanks mapped, focus on issues of how and if aid works and develops methodologies and approaches which aim to give practitioners robust evidence to base further qualitative improvements of development portfolio. Think tanks both have their own research agendas and works on commissioned tasks. The latter risks incrementalism and could question impartiality, although this was claimed not to be the case. The AERC does not focus on development assistance, it is concerned with the broader development challenges on the African continent and find question of development assistance to be of secondary importance to their research agenda.

Trends in evaluation

Most development agencies have internal evaluation departments with independent status. The UK is now setting up a watchdog function externally to oversee all activities, including commissioned evaluations. This department will report to Parliament on aid effectiveness and strengthen accountability towards the public. This process seems to counteract the tendency of development assistance professionals to operate in a "closed community".

Some agencies see evaluations of the portfolio rather than academic research as more important when it comes to evidence of what works and what does not work but the trend for the evaluation departments is to apply more scientific methodologies such as impact evaluation methodologies in the evaluations they commission.

Impact evaluations are given considerable attention internationally. Several interviewees said that these evaluations are valuable because they dig deep and strengthen evidence on the attribution of aid. Critics say that they are expensive and often too narrow.

The World Bank aims to mainstream impact evaluations in the portfolio as part of a standard monitoring and evaluation procedure, this is also links to the knowledge agenda. This is an interesting but also intellectually demanding initiative, which requires long-term commitment and a major capacity building component.

It was also said that evaluations do not answer the macro-questions. One agency strongly advocated for attention to the micro-level in evaluations, it was argued that it is the concrete situations that change minds and practice. Overall the emphasis on methodologies such as impact evaluations shows the trend of a closer link between research and evaluation – the interest is to be able to present robust evidence.

Dissemination and utilisation of evaluation findings continue to be a challenge, however there is a general trend both in theory and practice towards user-oriented evaluations emphasising internal learning. One overall trend in evaluation practice in organisations is to respond to the weaknesses above and enhance the utilisation of evaluation findings. This is rooted both in demand for aid effectiveness and the increasing political demand for results and documentation.

Most agencies (here among DFID, USAID, UNDP, ADB) issue meta-evaluations each year – either by topic or by country – which sum up the most significant findings over the year. These meta-evaluations are one of many efforts towards utilising findings and getting the results communicated wider.

Trends in monitoring

With the Paris Declaration and focus on local ownership and joint programming, the challenge of monitoring has become even more pronounced as it is data and monitoring systems of the recipient country, which is the centre of monitoring. The aid administrations in this process can continue their business as usual, i.e. the monitoring of inputs – but the outputs, outcome and impact is the role of the recipient. In this respect several aid agencies increasingly focus on supporting statistical functions (DFID) and building capacity for monitoring in recipient institutions, i.e. both within governments but also independent think tanks, higher learning institutions and NGOs.

Trends in communication

There are two lines of communication occurring in every aid administering agency: Communicating to the external stakeholders about results and development (public diplomacy) and then communicating to internal stakeholders with the purpose of enhancing results and development (learning).

All mapped agencies talked about those two functions as intimately tied together – drawing on the same information and to some extend using the same channels. However, although they were identified right away, they were also causes of endless work, discussion and deliberation as none of the two are easy task to complete.

The paradigm of communication is changing, from being characterised by a process of information flowing from actor a to actor b. Information is now flowing in network structures between actors. People no longer receive information with the same orthodoxy as previously – even if it flows from professional authorities – instead they listen to the messengers that they already trust and have a relation too, their professional authority being secondary. This is a tremendous challenge in terms of communication as it requires innovative thinking in terms of tools and methods but at the same time it challenges the possibilities for communicating substantial subjects and causalities. For instance, communicating messages about development and development assistance is not easily done via Facebook if the messenger wants to get complex issues across beyond headline-stories of hungry children in Africa. The same winds are blowing in terms of internal knowledge sharing and learning, agencies are struggling with their knowledge management strategies and organisational setup. DFID has extensive ICT systems to accommodate learning and sharing but still as an ongoing ODI assessment preliminarily concludes, the most effective knowledge sharing is the informal meeting between colleagues who already has a positive relation.

Organisational views

The rapid programme at ODI has found that the possibilities for policy-communities to take up research findings are shaped by three overall factors: the political context, the evidence and the interrelationships between researchers/messengers and receivers/policy community.

DFID spends considerable amount of resources in what they define "research uptake": The intake and use of research results to inform and provide evidence for policy making. In the DFID Research & Evidence Division there is a so-called Research Uptake Team – members of staff acting as "knowledge brokers", transferring knowledge between research and the policy-teams. This team receives a list of all research carried out and then links the people working on the area to the relevant research results or communities.

Section 4. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

For

Preparation of new international oriented Danish research programme:

Research and Communication for International Development

1: Background

The Government white paper "Denmark 2020 – knowledge, growth, welfare and prosperity" from February 2010 included a new international oriented research programme on development assistance. The results of each development project will be documented, communicated, and utilised in relation to future activities. The objective of the programme is to conduct research and document what works and what is achieved with the development assistance. The work should be done in collaboration with international experts, universities and successful private agencies.

The new programme will include substantial elements of communication and will stimulate debate in the public e.g. through articles, blocs, seminars and debates. The new programme will mainly base its work on existing documentation and to a limited degree independently collect new research data. Existing methods of evaluation will be used.

The initiative will be divided into 3 steps:

1) Initial mapping study of current experiences and good practises.

2) International conference in the autumn 2010 where the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study and the new program will be presented. The conference will be held in Copenhagen.

3) In 2011 – the new programme will be initiated.

The new programme will initially be a 3-year program with a yearly budget of approximately 10 million DKK.

The current ToRs are covering the first step and the planning and implementation of the conference.

2: Objective

The objective of the mapping exercise is to provide the MFA with guidance and a basis for decision on the future focus, content and partners in the new research programme.

3: Outputs

Draft report with an overview of existing Danish and international experiences on documentation and communication on the effects of the development assistance.

An international conference where the draft report will be presented.

Final report, not exceeding 25 pages, excluding annexes with information from the mapping exercise and the meetings.

4: **Scope of work**

The scope of work will include:

1. Describe the general existing Danish and international knowledge and experiences with documentation and communication on the effects of development assistance and make a distinction between impact, outcome and output levels.
2. Describe the existing Danish and international knowledge and experiences with documentation and communication within the following 5 specific areas mentioned in "Freedom from poverty Freedom to Change. Development 2.0.": freedom, democracy and human rights; growth and employment; gender equality; stability and fragile states and, environment and climate and make a distinction between impact, outcome and output levels.
3. List and assess the methodologies used for documentation and communication initiatives.
4. Describe the perceived documentation and communication needs of various target groups in Denmark.
5. Identify good practises and the possible Danish comparative advantages in documentation and communication.
6. Draft report with finding, conclusion and recommendations.
7. Assist in the planning and implementation of the international workshop.

5: Method of work

Part of the work will be done as a desk study in Denmark and with consultations with Danish stakeholders.

Consultations with bilateral and multilateral donors will be held, including World Bank, DFID, SIDA, CIDA, and relevant UN agencies.

Consultations with research partners in the South can also be held.

6: Timing

The final draft report will be forwarded to MFA no later than August 13 2010. Final report will be forwarded to MFA before September 13 2010.

The conference in the autumn will be hosted by MFA – approximately – September 27 2010.

7: Team

Anne-Lise Klausen, team leader, external consultant to MFA, responsible for the report.

Natascha Linn Felix, external consultant to MFA

Anne-Lise Klausen will have total of 15 days for the work in Denmark and 7 days for travel and consultations with partners abroad, excluding travel.

Natascha Linn Flex will have a total of 25 days for the work in Denmark and 2 days for travel and consultations with partners abroad, excluding travel.

The work will be supported by a resource group in the MFA, TSA who will act as resource persons and the reporting will be done to that group.

8: Documentation

Freedom from poverty. Freedom to Change. Development 2.0., 2010

Part of "Denmark 2020 – knowledge, growth, welfare and prosperity, p.37".

Note of April 21 2010.

Report from Danish Universities on "Building stronger Universities", September 2009.

Evaluering af oplysningsvirksomhed om udviklingslande, 2008

Evaluating aid effectiveness in aggregate: a critical assessment of the evidence, 2010

The Challenge of Assessing Aid Impact: A Review of Norwegian Evaluation Practice, 2008.

9: Workplan

1: Current experiences and good practices with research and communication for international development. The main questions of the exercise is to map how current experiences and lessons in development agencies and other key institutions working on development issues harness valuable experiences of themes and approaches in their development assistance (documentation practices, and research on what works and what does not work (are some topics more likely to be documented than other topics ?).

Secondly, is such documentation at the level of outputs, outcomes and impact - and the combinations of these levels and what are the experiences and practices with the different levels.

Thirdly, how is such knowledge (evidence based) and research organized (within the agency, in which department, outsourced and then to which partners) and communicated (through which methods and what methods/practices are considered successful) to different stakeholders of development communities understood in the broad sense. Themes will follow the 5 themes in the new Danish development strategy "Freedom from poverty Freedom to Change. Development 2.0."

Approach is to do the mapping by organization (i.e. Danida, Sida, Cida, DFID, Multilaterals, and sample of international NGOs and think tanks).

2: Meeting with reference group (end of June)
3: Interviews (travel early mid July)
4: Mapping part 2 (early August). Revisit aspects not covered in depth in mapping 1 and mapping of issues arising from interviews.
5: Draft (early and mid August)
6: Final report (September)
7: Organize international conference

June 17 2010

Darriann Riber
Chief Technical Adviser
TSA
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Annex 2: Quick glance of findings per sub-section

Research trends
- There is a trend that aid administrations seek evidence and documentation through research – particular to answer the questions of aid effectiveness.
- The link between aid administrations and research on aid effectiveness is often in the form of partnerships with (inter) national, independent institutions and think tanks (often commissioned work or research initiated by the institution and then financed from aid budgets.
- One pitfall is the risk of "incrementalism" when research is too closely linked to the aid administration - main reason to keep the research at arms length (and possibly not finance "aid works research").
- The communication links between researchers and aid administrators is weak, encumbering the mutual learning process.
- Indications that organisations focus on building up research communities in the South through assistance to access tools and methodologies (the "wholesale approach").
- DFID goes an extra mile in linking research with practice and has instituted a major organisational change, ODI has several initiatives working on these issues.

Evaluation trends

- Most development agencies have internal evaluation departments with independent status.
- The UK is now setting up a watchdog-function externally to oversee all activities, including commissioning evaluations. This will also report Parliament on aid effectiveness and strengthen accountability towards the public.
- All agencies consider evaluations of the portfolio of high importance when it comes to collecting evidence of what works and what does not work. The trend is to apply more scientific methodologies such as impact evaluation methodologies.
- Impact evaluations are given considerable attention internationally. They are costly and major undertakings, but they dig deep and provide stronger evidence on the attribution of aid. Critics say that they are too expensive and often narrow.
- The World Bank aims to mainstream impact evaluations in the portfolio as part of a standard monitoring and evaluation procedure, this is also links to the knowledge agenda.
- Overall the emphasis on methodologies such as impact evaluations shows the trend of a closer link between research and evaluation – the interest is to be able to present robust evidence.
- Evaluations are "closer" to portfolios than research, but evaluations do not answer the macro questions. One agency strongly advocated for attention to the micro-level in evaluations, because it is the concrete situations that change minds and practice.
- Dissemination and utilization of evaluation findings continue to be a challenge, however there is a general trend both in theory and practice towards user-oriented evaluations emphasising internal learning.

Monitoring trends

- The data sets for monitoring are often limited by general data availability and robustness in developing countries; the Paris Declaration principles have magnified this.
- Aid administrations and think tanks focus on capacity building of statistics and monitoring in developing country institutions
- Management for results has its limitations in a political environment, in its pure form it requires an organisation with a limited mandate.
- A drive for results based management and monitoring for results also emphasises internal learning.

Communication trends

- There are two lines of communication going on in organisations: Communicating to the external stakeholders about results and development (public diplomacy), and then communicating to internal stakeholders with the purpose of enhancing results and development (learning).
- All mapped organisations talked about those two functions as intimately tied together – drawing on the same information and to some extent using the same channels.
- Ways of communicating about results is currently being reformed with the many new channels available (such as social forums online). However, the challenge is to be able to communicate the substantial issues.
- There is a general lack of confidence in ways of communicating to the 'wider public' on substantial topics beyond "hungry children".
- Development agencies generally feel the knowledge sharing (research-practice-evaluations) could be strengthened, and many have introduced procedures and formal arrangements to accommodate this.
- Knowledge management and knowledge sharing are difficult to formalize – knowledge is most effectively shared informally.
- Synthesising knowledge from research, practice and evaluations to strengthen aid effectiveness bears great wins as well as trade-offs.

Organisational views

- A closer relation between research and development practice requires the support of an organisational set-up tailored for the purpose, i.e. generating robust knowledge in research communities, channelling this to practitioners and external stakeholders
- Focus on results and management for results require major changes in business processes
- There are trade-off of the organisational closeness between research functions and aid administrations. Closeness gives increase use of research results; distance gives more independence but less use of results.
- Defining questions to be synthesised on an annual basis and commissioning a study to be written in a user friendly language and then disseminated to practitioners is done by the Danish Evaluation Institute.

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Annex 4: List of interviews

Martin Ravallion, Director, Development Research Group.	World Bank
Cheryl Grey, Director, Independent Evaluation Group.	World Bank
Nidhi Khattri, Senior Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Group.	World Bank
Yogita Mumssen, Senior Infrastructure Economist, Global Partnership on Output Based Aid.	World Bank
Patricia Veevers-Carter, Programme Manager, Global Partnership on Output Based Aid.	World Bank
Lars Yohannes, Global Partnership on Output Based Aid.	IFC
Gerry Britan, Deputy Director for Monitoring and Evaluation.	USAID
Ruth Levine, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Policy, Planning and Learning Bureau and Office Director for Monitoring and Evaluation.	
Jack Molyneaux, Director, Impact Evaluations	MCC
Bruce Currie-Alder, IDRC Policy Planning Group	IDRC
Robert Sauder, Director, Policy research Division and Helena Kolozetti	CIDA
Lars Engberg-Pedersen, Senior researcher, Head of research unit on Politics and governance	DIIS
Finn Tarp, Director of UN University-WIDER, Helsinki, Finland	UNU-WIDER
Jim Tanburn, Director	DCED
Ole Winkler Andersen, Head of Evaluation	Danida
Margrethe Holm Andersen, Deputy Head	

of Evaluation

Charlotte Henriksen, Strategic Communication Department.	Danida
Peter Ellehøj, Deputy head, Quality Assurance- Development Cooperation	Danida
Harry Jones, Research Officer with the RAPID Programme	ODI, RAPID programme
Tony Killick, Senior Research Associate	ODI
David Peretz, Head of IACDI	IACDI
Tomas Kjellquist, Director - Department Research Cooperation	Sida
Kerry Albright, Research Uptake Team	DFID
Paul Hailston, from the team developing the idea of new Independent Watchdog Institution.	DFID
Eva Pallesen[85], Special adviser	Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut (EVA)
William Lyakurwa, Executive Director	African Economic Research Centre

Annex 5: Agency presentations (separate)

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[85] This was an informal talk about EVA's experiences with the topics discussed above – not a formal interview.