

---

# **Evaluation of Danida supported Research on Agriculture and Natural Resource Management 2006-2011**

## **Annex G Emerging Issues Workshop Report**

Copenhagen, Denmark

8<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Emerging Issues Workshop

Workshop Report

By

J A Sutherland, C A Schwensen

A H Andersen, D Gabagambi

---

## Introduction

### Overview

In order to assess Danida's recent support to development research, as well as to provide recommendations which will feed into the current process of formulating an overall strategy for this support, Danida's evaluation department (EVAL) has commissioned an external evaluation<sup>1</sup>. The Evaluation has been limited to support provided for research within agriculture and natural resource management from 2006 to 2011, with an extended mandate for the Building Stronger Universities (BSU) initiative through to the present time.

The focus of the Evaluation is the various channels through which funds have been disbursed, including the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU), research networks, BSU and centre contracts with KU-LIFE.

The Evaluation has had extensive discussions in Denmark with stakeholders and has also visited two southern partner countries, Tanzania and Burkina Faso, for detailed interactions with stakeholders.

- Amongst the tools being used for the Evaluation by the Team are:
- Focus group interviews
- Site visits (Denmark, Tanzania and Burkina Faso)
- An Online Survey
- Desk analysis of reports and documentation
- Stakeholder group consultations (SWOT Workshops in Denmark, Tanzania and Burkina Faso)

### This Workshop

The current, one day Workshop, held in Copenhagen on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013, falls under the category of *stakeholder consultation* and has been designed to seek the opinions and analysis of senior, decision-making stakeholders on the *emerging issues* from the Evaluation's findings and analysis.

It will provide important feedback for the Evaluation in the preparation of its draft Report.

### Workshop Objective

The Specific Objective, or Purpose, of the workshop was to give senior stakeholders (see Appendix 1 for participant list) the opportunity to articulate their views on what are seen by the Evaluation as the principal *emerging issues* from an historical perspective, and also in the context of developing a new strategy for development research<sup>2</sup>, so that by the end of the Workshop the knowledge of key stakeholders on emerging issues from the Evaluation would have been strengthened.

This Objective was to be achieved by delivering two Results:

---

<sup>1</sup> A four-person International Team has been commissioned to make a detailed study of different funding mechanisms under Danida's support to agricultural research and natural resource management. The Team comprises John Sutherland [UK], Carsten Schwensen [Denmark], Anne Højmark Andersen [Denmark] and Damian Gabagambi [Tanzania].

<sup>2</sup> The Evaluation is to ...provide lessons learned and recommendations which may feed into ongoing discussions on how to improve support to development research, and more specifically into the current process of developing an overall strategic framework for support to development research... [from Evaluation Terms of Reference]

- Clarifications on Evaluation findings and emerging issues provided.
- Stakeholders' views and input on evaluation findings articulated and documented.

### Workshop Methodology

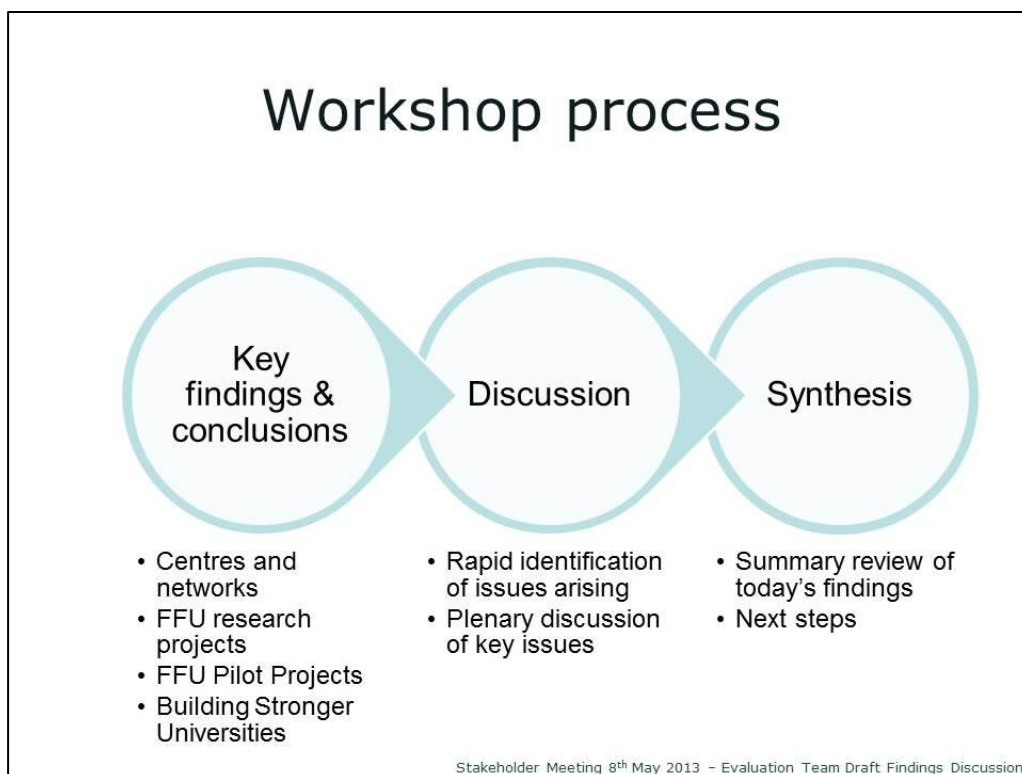
The Workshop was based around a mixture of presentation and professionally facilitated<sup>3</sup> discussions. The Programme is attached as Annex 2

Following a general introduction and overview, core findings under four headings were presented, and the *strategic* and *operational* issues that the Evaluation believes arise from these were shared. Structured and facilitated discussion then followed, with additional analysis by participants and explanation by the Evaluation, as necessary. The four key headings were:

- Centres, Networks and Minor Studies
- FFU Competitive Research Fund Projects
- FFU Pilot Research Cooperation Programme Projects ((Pilot Projects)
- Building Stronger Universities

A Final session drew together the various strands that provided additional evidence and input into the Evaluation report. The approach is shown diagrammatically at

**Figure 1** Emerging Issues Workshop – Structure and Approach



Due to the limited time available, and the potential for extensive discussion, the Facilitator provided participants with four key principles to make best use of time. These may be summarised as:

<sup>3</sup> An external facilitator, Dane Rogers from ITAD Ltd, with experience of Danida and its operations, was appointed to guide proceedings and provide a mediating role in discussions.

- 
- *Management by exception* – Focus on those things where there was least agreement rather than discuss every finding and conclusion; address the most important issues
  - *Strategic approach* – Focus on the major elements and *big picture*, rather than the finer detail
  - *Evidence-based* – Retain an evidence-based approach and avoid simply stating opinions or anecdotes; elaborate any evidence that supports the issues raised
  - *Consensus building* – Set aside personal interests and retain objectivity, trying to understand each other's point of view even if we disagree

The tight timeframe for each session was also structured, with guidance from the Facilitator:

- Presentation of findings and emerging conclusions by evaluation team (10 minutes)
- Buzz group discussion on each table of 4-6 people, based on issues arising, summarised onto cards (10-15 minutes)
- Concurrent sorting and grouping of cards by facilitator to identify issue 'clusters' (20-25 minutes)
- Plenary discussion on key issues arising (20-30 minutes)

The Output from these discussions and sessions is summarised in the following section.

## Workshop Outputs and Process

The workshop process was supported with *PowerPoint*<sup>®</sup> presentations, and the final version of slides used is attached as a separate, *pdf* file and contains further information. In the following sub-sections, a brief summary of the main conclusions by the Evaluation are followed by the output from the *Buzz-Groups* (taken from the coloured sticky notes written by them) in Table-form, and the responses to the *Queries and Issues* by the Evaluation is given in the text. The comments and discussion were noted by the Evaluation and appear in the Final Report, as and when, appropriate.

### Centres and Networks

Funding to Centres provided long-term investment and the basis for current links and personal collaboration in focussed areas. As a mechanism for capacity strengthening in focussed areas it was effective, however the Centre modality as a north-driven, infrastructure and skills development initiative, is no longer an appropriate mechanism for supporting southern research capacity.

The three networks (as DDRN) became an important *information hub* promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue, meetings and *networking*. The opportunity for utilising DDRN/DWF capacity in research communication and multi-stakeholder dissemination has not been taken up by BSU and effective networks appear to need a fairly tight focus and be demand-driven, and are not the same as *information-dissemination hubs*.

The Output from the Centres and Networks Session, is shown at Table 1.

**Table 1** **Output from Centres and Networks Session**

Centres and Networks – Clusters			
Issues - Queries	Relevance	Effectiveness – Efficiency	Impact – Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the centres really “non-competitive”?</li> <li>• The centres were more focused on “development” than on “research”</li> <li>• If the centre-approach is no longer appropriate, what should be the alternative?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is still relevant to train technical educators (but not in a centre modality)</li> <li>• Keep small, close and subject specific, this is what makes centres and networks relevant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find mechanisms ((not necessarily very structural) to support and continue institutional and/or personally motivated networks</li> <li>• Lack of connection between BSU/networks, lack of Institutional transition. There is a need to make connections horizontally between institutions.</li> <li>• The centres were effective – what are the positive parts/results to be carried on?</li> <li>• The centres created a lot of competence – has thought been given on how to capture/use the capacity?</li> <li>• Networks not just info hubs – also supported innovative ways of working together</li> <li>• Lack of strategy for institutionalization and mainstreaming from the outset</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Danida strategy</li> <li>• Long-term investment</li> <li>• Limited evidence for impact and outcomes</li> <li>• Limited take up of information from the network by the embassies</li> <li>• Discontinuation of initiatives when transitioning from centres/networks to BSU</li> </ul>

*Queries and Issues* – The Centres were described as *non-competitive* because the funding was allocated to them, and they self-assessed their own performance against targets in order to secure the release of successive tranches of funds. Centre staff, themselves, described their own roles as that of *educators* rather than *researchers* although following the merging with universities this focus changed.

Without a clear strategy for development research, it is difficult to identify the most appropriate model, however a mechanism built on south-driven demand which develops institutional capacity might be the best option. This is in fact the concept behind the BSU.

### **FFU North-driven Projects**

This funding instrument offered an attractive modality that functions well ((within scope of Calls) in relatively closed institutional environment, *but* may not be the most appropriate modality in current development context as it is North-driven, based on a Thematic approach, tendency for *upstream* research and with limited institutional anchorage, being based on personal connections.

The Output from the FFU North-driven Projects Session is shown at Table 2.

Table 2

## Output from FFU North-driven Projects Session

FFU North-driven Projects – Clusters			
Issues - Queries	Relevance	Effectiveness – Efficiency	Impact - Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it North driven?</li> <li>• Has it become worse?</li> <li>• What can link North-South better?</li> <li>• Definition of the “appropriate model” – on what basis?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themes not selected in a participatory process with South partner countries</li> <li>• North driven research is not always a bad idea e.g. controversial research (politically sensitive)</li> <li>• What are the positive features of FFU to be continued if no longer “appropriate”</li> <li>• Dilemma (political): Define areas where Danish resources are most relevant and where South would benefit more from other environments</li> <li>• Research is mostly peer to peer everywhere and can this be institutionalized at all?</li> <li>• Need for containing of the themes of calls in order to maintain/further develop expertise/competences relevant for development assistance</li> <li>• Need for research capacity maintenance in North for development assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of horizontal integration across modalities – e.g. FFU link with BSU</li> <li>• Need for coherence between FFU priorities and Danida / programme priorities and funding mechanisms</li> <li>• More focus required (geographic and/or thematic)</li> <li>• Limited support / opportunities for linking research with development at project level</li> <li>• Lack of Danish embassy facilitation of FFU projects in South partner countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is impact in terms of effect on peoples’ lives – very difficult...</li> <li>• Lack of institutional memory</li> <li>• Division of funds into distinct modalities – lack of impact</li> <li>• Limited institutional anchorage. Personal relations can be positive as a gateway for future cooperation</li> </ul>

*Queries and Issues* – This group of projects, funded through the FFU on a competitive basis, was determined by Danida themes and priorities and projects were developed by Danish institutions. The situation has not really changed, it is simply the case that the mechanism is relying (or has relied) on the initiatives and ideas of Danish researchers operating on the basis of Danish and Danida priorities and strategic themes.

Communication North-South and South-North is improving, but could be further enhanced by the establishment of institutionalised mechanisms which encourage and support the sharing of ideas and information. For example, annual, in-country meetings of project staff (as is already done with the South-driven projects).

### FFU South-driven Projects

A new approach which supports the development of southern project cycle management skills *but* still uses same research paradigm as the North-driven modality. It is, however, more attractive to southern than northern partners and creates strong ownership particularly in south.

The Output from the FFU South-driven Projects Session is shown at Table 3.

Table 3

## Output from the FFU South-driven Project Session

FFU South-driven Projects – Clusters			
Issues - Queries	Relevance	Effectiveness – Efficiency	Impact - Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the modality work?</li> <li>• Driven by institutions / ministries or by researchers?</li> <li>• What would be the optimal research paradigm?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vehicle for new collaborators, initiated by the South Partner</li> <li>• South driven approach – new administrative challenges within Danida</li> <li>• Part of the South driven model could be used in North driven – the process of meeting potential research partners through a facilitated process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge of having many different modalities at play – but also not expect one of them to solve all problems</li> <li>• Lack of transparency on how DK researchers are linked with South researchers (by DFC?), on which basis?</li> <li>• How to strengthen the interest of Danish partners, what is the underlying problem?</li> <li>• Increases South ownership but as the input requirement from Danish partners are pressed, there is little Danish ownership</li> <li>• PhD – improve incentives, create possibilities for double degrees</li> <li>• Research management/admin in South partner institutions need to be strengthened</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for longer time and more resources for building relationships in pilot projects – time between concept note and proposal</li> <li>• Need for longer project periods – capacity building takes time!</li> <li>• Institutions are not informed about projects, only researchers are – Institutionalisation?</li> </ul>

*Queries and Issues* – A description of the modality was given for those unfamiliar with its operation. Southern institutions in Tanzania, Ghana and Vietnam develop concept notes which address their own priorities, and advertise in Denmark for Danish institutes to join them in developing full project proposals which are then submitted to FFU for approval and funding. The process is driven from the South, by researchers based in southern institutions, ideally addressing key institutional and national priorities.

The optimal research paradigm will depend on the strategy developed by Danida in consultation with stakeholders, however current thinking on development research favours a holistic and value-chain based approach which encompasses a broad-base of stakeholders including researchers.

### Building Stronger Universities

The Evaluation only considered two of the four platforms, and looked in detail at functionality in Denmark and Tanzania. The basic concept of BSU, of an institutional strengthening process driven by southern organisations and utilising appropriate Danish expertise, is sound although operationalisation has encountered some difficulties.

There has been limited southern ownership of BSU Phase 1 and the few BSU initiatives that have been implemented so far, have not been effectively institutionalised, with limited integration into the institutional planning of Southern Universities. Despite the importance of the modality there are only low levels of visibility in the South and the funding level is relatively low/institution compared with inputs from other development partners. The current (Phase 1) coordination and administrative arrangement do not appear to be appropriate for the aims of BSU.

The Output from the *BSU Session* is shown in Table 4, and clusters were limited to a number of questions and issues, and a discussion linked to *Relevance*. This is a reflection of the early stage that this modality is currently at, with only just over 12 months of funded activities at field level.

**Table 4** **Output from the BSU Session**

<b>Building Stronger Universities – Clusters</b>	
<b>Issues - Queries</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationale behind co-financing from Danish universities</li> <li>• The dilemma of BSU: For Danida BSU is institutional capacity building, for researchers it is research that counts.</li> <li>• Keep in mind that BSU has only run for two years. Relationships take time to establish.</li> <li>• Complex governance structure in North.</li> <li>• Bridging between different modalities (BSU/FFU/pilot) – how?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSU is a long-term investment</li> <li>• BSU – what about others (e.g. institutes or research centres)? What are mechanisms for integrating other institutes?</li> <li>• Differentiated approach necessary, depending on needs/preferences of partner institutions in South</li> <li>• BSU is part of South institutions strategic goal – addressing a real need.</li> <li>• More focus on South-South cooperation necessary</li> <li>• BSU is indeed South driven</li> </ul>

*Issues and Queries* – The issue of *co-financing* originated from the Rectors’ Conference, and was agreed with Danida. The issues that this has caused at departmental level in the Universities, is dealt with in the Evaluation Report. The complex governance structure was also agreed and again is the subject of discussion by the Evaluation.

Other issues relating to BSU relate to incentives (in both North and South) and the need for it to be anchored in institutions rather than with individuals. On the question of linking the different modalities, the need here is for a simple, but comprehensive communication strategy, which brings stakeholders together with minimal resource costs.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

### Workshop Conclusions and Summary

Participants agreed that the Workshop had provided them with insights into the *emerging issues* identified by the Evaluation, and appreciated the opportunity that they had had to comment on, and discuss several important issues.

The importance of participants’ inputs into the process was acknowledged by the Evaluation and the comments and discussion points were noted and will be addressed as appropriate in the preparation of the final report.

The timetable following the Emerging Issues Workshop was:

23<sup>rd</sup> May, submission of draft report to EVAL

- 30<sup>th</sup> May Reference Group Meeting to discuss Draft
- 7<sup>th</sup> June Submission of amend Draft to EVAL
- 11<sup>th</sup> June Comments on Draft to Evaluation
- 14<sup>th</sup> June Submission of report to Danida for Quality Assurance and Compliance



---

## Appendix 1 Workshop Participants – Emerging Issues Workshop, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013

---

Name	Title	Institution
1. Susanne Lildal Amsinck	BSU Platform Coordinator (Environment and Climate)	Aarhus University. Department of Bioscience.
2. Ole Winckler Andersen	Head of Department	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Evaluation Department.
3. Lise Andreassen	International Coordinator	ICROFS
4. Tove Degnbol	Head of Department	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Technical Advisory Services
5. Bréhima Diawara	Director	IRSAT, Institut de Recherche en Sciences Appliquées et Technologies, Ouagadougou
6. Miriam Feilberg	Network coordinator	Danish Water Forum
7. Pernille Friis	Research Project Administrator	Danida Fellowship Centre
8. Lars Graudal	Head of research	Forest and Landscape Denmark
9. Christian Pilegaard Hansen	Associate Professor	Copenhagen University. Forest and Landscape.
10. Nanna Hvidt	Director	Danish Institute for International Studies
11. Bente Ilsoe	Research Project Administrator	Danida Fellowship Centre
12. Søren Jeppesen	Associate Professor	Copenhagen Business School. Department of Intercultural Communication and Management
13. Sié Kambou	Senior Researcher	Centre National de Semences Forestières, Ouagadougou
14. Flemming Konradsen	Professor, Deputy Head of Department	Department of International Health, Immunology and Microbiology
15. Joseph Kuzilwa	Vice Chancellor	Mzumbe University, Tanzania
16. Flemming Larsen	Head of Geochemical Department	Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland
17. Lone Lindholt	Senior Technical Adviser	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Technical Advisory Services
18. Henrik Secher Marcussen	Professor	Roskilde University. Department of Society and Globalisation
19. Jayro Matovelo	Deputy Vice Chancellor	Sokoine University of Agriculture

---

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Institution</b>
20. Lasse Møller	Chief Technical Adviser	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Technical Advisory Services
21. Henrik A. Nielsen	External Consultant	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Evaluation Department
22. Kåre Lehmann Nielsen	Associate Professor	Aalborg University. Department of Biotechnology, Chemistry and Environmental Engineering
23. John Elmerdahl Olsen	Professor	University of Copenhagen. Department of Veterinary Disease Biology, Veterinary Clinical Microbiology
24. Lars Christian Oxe	Senior Technical Adviser	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Evaluation Department
25. Anne Sørensen	Former network coordinator	Former coordinator of NETARD
26. Torben Birch Thomsen	Associate Professor	University of Copenhagen. Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, Section of Geography
27. Arne Wangel	Associate Professor	Technical University of Denmark. Department of Management Engineering
28. Esther Waweru	Assistant Coordinator	ICROFS
<b>Evaluation team</b>		
John Sutherland, Team Leader		
Carsten Schwensen, Deputy Team Leader		
Damian Gabagambi, Tanzania		
Anne Højmark Andersen, Burkina Faso		
<b>Workshop Facilitator</b>		
Dane Rogers, Managing Director, ITAD		

---

## Appendix 2

## Indicative Workshop Timetable

Evaluation of Danida Supported Research to Agriculture and Natural Resource Management

Emerging Issues Workshop – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Timing and content are *indicative* and will be managed to reflect needs of participants

0830-0900	1. Arrival and Registration of Workshop Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breakfast and Coffee</li></ul>
0900-0915 Presentation	2. Welcome and Evaluation Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By Lars Christian Oxe, Danida EVAL and John Sutherland, Evaluation Team Leader</li></ul>
0915-0920 Presentation	3. Workshop Objective, Output, Methodology and Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By Dane Rogers, ITAD, Workshop facilitator</li></ul>
0920-0930 Presentation	4. Centres, Networks and Minor Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Findings – DAC Criteria</li><li>• Conclusions</li></ul>
0930-1000 Facilitated Discussion		
1000-1030	Tea/Coffee	
1030-1050 Presentation	5. FFU Research Fund Projects (Non-PRCP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relevance and criteria for selection</li><li>• Basic vs Applied research</li><li>• Management and administration</li><li>• Findings – DAC Criteria</li><li>• Conclusions</li></ul>
1050-1130 Facilitated Discussion		
1130-1140 Presentation	6. FFU Pilot Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evolution of project selection</li><li>• Partner selection</li><li>• Findings – DAC Criteria</li><li>• Conclusions</li></ul>
1140-1230 Facilitated Discussion		
1230-1330	Lunch	
1330-1345 Presentation	7. Building Stronger Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Findings – DAC Criteria</li><li>• Conclusions</li></ul>
1345-1430 Facilitated Discussion		
1430-1500	Tea/Coffee	
1500-1530 Facilitated Discussion	8. Summary of key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Synthesis of key issues</li><li>• Consensus building</li><li>• Next steps</li></ul>