

Pan Asia Networking External Panel Review

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Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Context of evaluation	3
1.2 Our approach and method	3
1.3 Challenges and limitations	4
2. Appropriateness of program prospectus implementation	4
2.1 The prospectus	5
2.1.1 <i>Prospectus overview: policies, technologies, effects</i>	5
2.1.2 <i>Coherence and appropriateness</i>	5
2.2 The evolution of PAN's strategies	5
2.2.1 <i>The PAN team's choices and priorities</i>	5
2.2.2 <i>Reflections on the team's strategic choices: timing, management, evaluation and thematic delivery</i>	6
2.3 Prospectus implementation: Tensions and further success factors	7
3. Quality of research outputs/publications	8
3.1 Our approach	8
3.2 Findings in more detail	9
3.2.1 <i>Projects have produced a balanced mix of different types of publications</i>	9
3.2.2 <i>Overall publications are of acceptable scientific quality in a narrow academic sense, but there are a few excellent contributions</i>	9
3.2.3 <i>Project outputs strike a good balance between striving for academic excellence and other quality criteria and research objectives</i>	9
3.2.4 <i>Accessibility and visibility remain important challenges</i>	10
3.2.5 <i>Research portfolio reflects commendable risk-taking and innovation</i>	10
3.2.6 <i>Strong markers of ideological independence and openness</i>	11
3.2.7 <i>Other outputs perceived as positive by stakeholders</i>	11
4. Significance and contribution of outcomes	12
4.1 Outcomes from final report	12
4.1.1 <i>Outcomes related to policy reform</i>	13
4.1.2 <i>Catalyzing ICT innovations for social benefits</i>	13
4.1.3 <i>Creating learning environments and capacity building in ICT4D</i>	14
4.1.4 <i>Contributing to strengthened gender integration in ICT4D</i>	15
4.2 Other outcomes and related issues	15
5. Strategic issues for the Board of Governors	15
5.1 Giving ICTs a strong presence across core areas of programming is more important for IDRC's mission and objectives than ever	16
5.2 Retaining a strong ICT competence hub is essential for innovation and cross-pollination	16
5.3 Cross-regional programming provides a fertile ground for fresh comparative perspectives- yet this should not detract from much needed focus on Least Developed Countries and marginalized communities	16
5.4 The range of viewpoints reflected in PAN's portfolio is commendable and a key asset for IDRC's reputation of independence and openness	17
5.5 The role of the private sector could be considered more strategically	17
5.6 Demand-driven research could be taken a step further	17
6. Conclusions	17

Executive Summary

1. This External Review was commissioned by IDRC in 2010 to review the current third phase of its Pan Asia Networking (PAN) Programme, which between 2005 and April 2010 had allocated \$31,886,517 to 81 projects (and 34 supplements).
2. Methodologically, six main approaches were used by the Panel systematically to garner as diverse and comprehensive information as possible: a review of PAN's core program documentation; 42 interviews with the PAN team, grantees and other stakeholders; reviews of all of the documentation associated with 35 of the projects and supplements from this phase; assessments of the quality of 40 research publications; an electronic survey; and an analysis of web statistics relating to PAN on IDRC's site.
3. There is strong evidence from grantees, stakeholders and the documentation reviewed that this third phase of PAN has delivered effectively on its mission of "*empowering communities to address their key development challenges through effective access to information and communication technologies*".
4. With respect to the implementation of the PAN prospectus the Panel notes that:
 - The flexibility and agility of the PAN team was widely respected and enabled it to support and implement appropriate and timely projects within the rapidly evolving ICT4D field;
 - The open, collegial and transparent management style within the PAN team enabled diverse approaches and expertise to be utilised to best effect in delivering the program; and
 - The PAN team established effective and supportive relationships with most of its grantees, partners and recipients.
5. In terms of the quality of research outputs and publications, the Panel concludes that:
 - Few publications reach highest levels of academic quality, but on average scientific quality of publications is acceptable, fulfilling the objective set by prospectus and demonstrating a marked improvement over the previous program cycle;
 - Publications typically score higher for quality indicators that go beyond measuring narrow academic excellence and include utility, readability and novelty value; and,
 - The overall mix of research strategies, topics and output formats is conducive to meeting broader objectives of quality, influence, ownership, capacity-building, and innovation, which are not easy to balance and are at times difficult to reconcile.
6. The Panel's key findings relating to the program outcomes are:
 - The Panel can largely substantiate what PAN found as its outcomes in the Prospectus Final Report(PFR), with some clarifications and remaining questions;
 - There is a continued need for a small grants program;
 - Capacity-building and networks have allowed PAN to deliver its core objectives;
 - Gender was at the forefront of the prospectus. Although it is not yet fully mainstreamed, greater emphasis was placed on gender by project teams towards the end of the period of time under review.

- There is concern about potential pressure to move projects away from lesser developed countries in order to find research partners more likely to generate timely and substantive outcomes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the evaluation

The International Development Research Centre's (IDRC's) Pan Asia Networking (PAN) program was originally conceived in 1994 in response to needs expressed by researchers and policy institutions in Asia. There were four initial focal points to the program: connectivity infrastructure, content development, communication and networking, and collaborative research on information and communication technology (ICT) policies. External reviews of the program were undertaken in [1999](#) and in [2005](#). In the light of the second of these and a regional stakeholders meeting in 2005, a new Prospectus for the third phase of PAN was produced in February 2006 to run until 2011. PAN's mission as expressed therein is "*empowering communities to address their key development challenges through effective access to information and communication technologies*". This vision is supported by targeted research support in three areas:

- *Building evidence and promoting dialogue to inform policies that enable knowledge societies in Asia;*
- *Applied research and piloting of innovative ICT applications for development; and*
- *Research and build capacity for understanding the socio-economic effects of ICTs on Asian communities.*

Between the start of 2005 and April 2010, within the current phase PAN had allocated \$31,886,517 in total to 81 projects (and 34 supplements), of which 54% was to technology projects, 22% to policy projects, and 18% to effects, with the remaining 6% to corporate and program initiatives.

Our external review was tasked with judging the strengths and weaknesses of the program in terms of four questions:

1. *To what extent was the implementation of the program's prospectus appropriate?*
2. *Overall, was the quality of the research outputs/publications supported by the program acceptable (given the context/intended purpose/etc.)?*
3. *To what extent are the program's outcomes relevant, valuable and significant?*
4. *What are the key issues for the Centre's Board of Governors?*

1.2 Our approach and methodology

The Panel (Annex 11) adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to address these questions, seeking in particular to explore what PAN team members, grantees, and other stakeholders had to say about their experiences of the program. In so doing, we sought to explore systematically as much diversity within the program as possible during the four-month period leading up to July 2010. Six main methods were used:

- Review of core program documents (Annex 8) provided by the PAN team, focusing especially on the Prospectus, the Prospectus Final Report (PFR), and existing external evaluations of elements of the PAN program;
- Interviews (see Annex 1) were conducted with 45 members of the PAN team, grantees, and other experts, mostly by phone and lasting approximately one hour;
- Reviews were undertaken according to an agreed template of all of the project documents of 35 of the 115 projects and supplements supported by PAN (Annex 3);

- Reviewing and scoring the quality of the 40 monographs and peer-reviewed journal publications produced by PAN staff and grantees (Annex 2);
- Web-based survey, for which 6 replies were received (Annex 4);
- Analysis of web-statistics relating to the PAN program provided by IDRC (Annex 10).

1.3 Challenges and limitations

Throughout, the Panel was very conscious of the challenges associated with differences in definition and understanding relating to some of the key issues under review. Five definitional issues stand out as being particularly problematic: research quality, relevance, significance, appropriateness, and the distinction between outputs and outcomes (for a detailed discussion, see Annex 14). As a general rule, though, the Panel was eager to understand how members of the PAN team, their grantees and other stakeholders interviewed conceptualised these issues, rather than seeking to impose its own interpretations upon them. The Panel is also conscious that the evaluation is based on a relatively swift review of largely secondary material. Whilst the robustness of the methods adopted (Annexes 1-4) gives confidence in the conclusions drawn, the Panel wishes to emphasize that these have not been verified from practical engagement on the ground with PAN's projects in Asia. Moreover, the framing of the terms of reference, with their emphasis on validation of the PFR, means that the Panel has not had the opportunity to interview as many people as it would have liked who have not been directly involved with the PAN program. This report therefore focuses primarily on the internal aspects of the program, and does not seek to reach broader conclusions as to the wider influence PAN might have had on the field of ICT4D more generally in Asia.

2. Appropriateness of Program Prospectus Implementation

Key findings

- The *flexibility* and *agility* of the PAN team was widely respected and enabled it to support and implement appropriate and timely projects within the rapidly evolving ICT4D field
- The *open, collegial* and *transparent* management style within the PAN team enabled diverse approaches and expertise to be used to best effect in delivering the program
- The PAN team established *effective* and *supportive relationships* with most of its grantees, partners and recipients

This section of the report validates (1) the coherence and appropriateness of the choices made and priorities set by the program to adapt and/or evolve its strategies from what was outlined originally in the prospectus, and (2) the strategic lessons the program drew from its experience. The Panel's overwhelming conclusion is that the implementation of the PAN Prospectus was indeed appropriate, and that the program adapted flexibly and with agility to evolving circumstances in the rapidly changing field of ICT4D, notably the increasing availability of digital infrastructures, dramatic growth of mobile technologies, and the social and cultural implications of new social networking environments.

2.1 The Prospectus

2.1.1 *Prospectus overview: policies, technologies and effects*

The Prospectus identified PAN's mission as being to empower communities to address their key development challenges through effective access to ICTs. It sought to do this through three key themes: building evidence and promoting dialogue to inform *policies* that enable knowledge societies in Asia; applied research and piloting of innovative ICT applications for development (*technologies*); and research and capacity building for understanding the socio-economic *effects* of ICTs on Asian communities (Annex 11). The three main means of delivering these directions were: supporting the development of research networks, building country programs and establishing competitive grants. The Prospectus provided a broad framework and vision for the program, and the team used this structure creatively to develop a coherent and appropriate program. This flexibility nevertheless means that it is not always easy to trace how aspects of specific funded projects actually delivered directly on particular aspects of the Prospectus.

2.1.2 *Coherence and Appropriateness*

For the purpose of this evaluation, and based on responses by interviewees with respect to PAN's work, the Panel focused particularly on the *management structure*, the ways in which *evaluation and feedback* mechanisms are incorporated into the evolution of the program, and the *methods* used to choose which projects were supported. With respect to appropriateness, the following themes are addressed: the Asian ICT context within which the program has evolved, the balance between PAN's portfolio of activities, decision making processes, and the risks associated with support for specific activities.

2.2 The evolution of PAN's strategies

2.2.1 *The PAN team's choices and priorities*

The Prospectus Final Report (PFR) emphasized that the PAN team largely followed the original thematic and program directions. Networks accounted for 54% of PAN's budget, country programs accounted for 10% and competitive grants 8% (with the remainder being shared between conferences, workshops and collaboration with other IDRC programs). Lack of an appropriate champion institution meant that the proposed Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) network was not formed, but two other networks (on privacy and censorship) were created that had not been directly planned for in the Prospectus. Country programs were cut back because it was recognised that delivery of the programs in Cambodia and Mongolia was more challenging than had been anticipated, and there were insufficient human resources within the PAN team (Annex 9) effectively to support such capacity development. Increased core funding from DFID led to greater emphasis being placed on research communications.

In determining the balance between policies, technologies and effects, the team sought to ensure that their work responded to the needs of researchers and policy-makers in the Asian context, focusing especially on South and South-East Asia. Given the delay between undertaking research and the results of that research influencing policy, there is evidence that much of the current policy impact of PAN's work reflects work done by partners that had already received funding under the previous Prospectus. The issue of attribution is an ongoing challenge in verifying impact. The Panel recognizes the difficulty

in tracing connections between funding streams and specific activities, but the short period of this evaluation did not allow attribution to be substantiated.

2.2.2 Reflections on the team's strategic choices: timing, management, evaluation and thematic delivery

The earlier part of the current program phase saw a *transitioning* of project choices as well as the expectations of grantees from previous PAN priorities to the new ones. This was particularly evident, for example, in the emphasis placed on gender mainstreaming and on the communication of research findings.

Almost all interviewees commented positively on the professionalism, commitment and knowledge of members of the *PAN team* (Annex 9). Grantees particularly praised the team's intellectual support, pro-active problem solving and refocusing of activities where necessary. As one particularly enthusiastic interviewee put it: "*IDRC is the best funder we've ever had. Not because they have vast amounts of money, but the leadership is a pleasure to work with and the framework so flexible, it allows you to find your own way*". The PAN team included people with a diversity of expertise. Team members commented especially positively on the collegial leadership style within the team, and its ability to utilise the diversity of opinions and approaches within the team to best effect in delivering its projects. Such diversity was crucial in ensuring that appropriate support and advice could be given to project leaders delivering such a complex and wide-ranging set of activities. Some interviewees expressed concerns about the dilution of management and control in large networks, particularly those where aspects of their research were subcontracted, and the responsibility for the project management rested with the main network partners rather than with members of the PAN team. Logistically, it was not possible for members of the PAN team frequently to visit all research partners in these large networks, and so the support and monitoring of their delivery had to rely on the main project grant recipient. Sub-grantees, who are often the main intended ultimate beneficiaries of PAN's work, occasionally mentioned that they too would have liked to have benefited more from the PAN team's direct expertise.

The rigour with which the team visited and reviewed projects was notable, and this careful *monitoring* enabled them to support and steer projects back on course where necessary. The openness and honesty of commentary within the Rolling Project Completion Reports was outstanding, not only enabling the Panel to have deep insights into the processes with which the team addressed emergent issues, but also providing a real guarantee that IDRC's funding was being carefully nurtured. This rigour also enabled PAN to take the calculated risks necessary to ensure an innovative program. The external evaluation on networks was used by PAN to place greater emphasis on issues of network sustainability, through funding capacity development for evaluation, research mobilization and communicating for influence. Other external evaluations have only recently been completed, and have not therefore had significant influence on the direction of the program, albeit they have the potential to do so.

With respect to IDRC *mainstreaming issues of gender and partnership*, the Panel notes:

- The external gender evaluation was positive about the inclusion of gender issues in the 10 projects that it considered. However, in a small number of projects reviewed

by the Panel there was little evidence that gender issues had been sufficiently considered; in some cases gender seemed very much to have been an after-thought added late on in the development of the project; and

- The term partnership is used rather loosely across the different projects, with there being little evidence of a systematised approach to partnership models and structures being incorporated across PAN projects. IDRC's Donor Partnership Division has a systematic approach to partnerships with donors. Given the emphasis placed by the PAN team on partnerships, we were surprised not to find a clearly articulated and documented approach to delivering ICT4D initiatives successfully through partnerships. The team and project leaders might like to draw together their conclusions on this subject in a report that would enable their experiences to be shared and emulated more widely.

The Panel was also concerned that the Project Approval Documents frequently stated that there were no ethical issues worthy of consideration in implementing ICT4D projects. Most projects would have benefited from greater attention to the ethical dimensions of what they were seeking to do. Ethical considerations, at the very least concerning the changed balance of power that ICTs might introduce in a community, or the cultural impact that a project could cause through negative unintended consequences, should be considered. There is an in-built assumption in most project proposals that the introduction of ICTs is necessarily a good thing. This is a moral judgement. For some, ICTs might actually be bad. The key point we are making is that these proposals should at least say something on the ethical dimensions of the initiative being proposed.

2.3 Prospectus Implementation: Creative Tensions and Further Success Factors

During the review period, the PAN team grappled with three creative tensions:

- Balancing the delivery of *high quality research* and *the implementation of 'development' practices* is challenging. Supporting various activities, ranging from highly focused academic research projects to more general capacity development and networking projects, the PAN program broadly got this balance right.
- Another tension evident in the program was how it sought to balance *diversity and depth of capacity development in research*. The extent and diversity of the projects supported was impressive. While the PAN team is confident that it was able to manage this wide range of activity effectively, some concerns were expressed by interviewees about the balance between the depth and diversity of the interventions. The PAN team was aware of the difficulties in supporting too many country initiatives, and this was one reason why these were cut back during the Prospectus period. However, working with less-experienced researchers in some of the projects required considerable amounts of time, and some of our interviewees would have liked more direct assistance from the team.
- A third tension concerns the balance between supporting *established individuals*, and providing capacity development for new, *less experienced researchers*. A key reason why PAN was successful was that it often worked with known capable individual and institutional partners. This saved considerable time in partnership building, and also increased the likelihood of success, but it does give rise to challenges in attributing causes of outputs. There is nevertheless also evidence that the team took carefully

judged risks, and was able to respond to funding requests from previously unknown researchers and practitioners in the region.

Three additional factors were seen as being critical to the success of PAN:

- Influential PAN projects sought to involve policy makers in the earliest stages of activity. This helped to ensure swift conversion of research findings into policy practice, as with LIRNEasia and PANDora.
- Grantees greatly valued the opportunity to network face-to-face with those involved in other PAN projects, as in the Penang conference in 2009. The opportunity to meet people in person generated considerable interaction, and interviewees mentioned potential future collaborations that resulted from that event. This was particularly valued, because few projects reported success in mastering digital networking technologies during the implementation of their actual projects.
- Effective building of trust and respect, within the team, between the team and grantees, and with external stakeholders was critical to the success of PAN.

3. The Quality of the Research Outputs / Publications

Key findings

- Few publications reach highest levels of strictly academic quality, but on average scientific quality of publications is acceptable, fulfilling the objective set by prospectus and demonstrating a marked improvement over the previous programming cycle
- Publications typically score higher for quality indicators that go beyond measuring narrow academic excellence and include utility, readability and novelty value
- The overall mix of research strategies, topics and output formats is very conducive to meeting broader objectives of quality, influence, ownership, capacity-building, and innovation, some of which are not easy to balance and at times difficult to reconcile

In accordance with the TOR this section focuses on assessing to what extent the overall quality of the research outputs / publications can be considered acceptable, given context, intended purpose, and other relevant qualifying factors.

3.1 Our approach

The Panel's assessment is primarily based on an in-depth reading of all 40 peer-reviewed journal articles and monographs produced by PAN grantees and staff from 2006 to date as listed in Annex 3 of the PFR.¹ The Panel developed eight key indicators to assess the quality of the conceptual framework, methodology, and analysis, the novelty value, utility, citation count and readability of the research contribution, and, where applicable, the quality of the publication type. To triangulate and refine our analysis the Panel also included questions on perceived quality of research outputs and outcomes in its interviews and reviewed key outputs in the purposeful sample of more than 35 PAN projects including related project documentation such as rPCRs that contained particularly rich and useful information. The latter two strategies helped us identify additional outputs beyond publications and those mentioned in the PFR.

¹ The Annex lists 42 publications; this however included one publication that the team could not procure in a timely fashion and one poster presentation that was not assessed.

3.2 Findings in more detail

3.2.1 Projects have produced a balanced mix of different types of publications

Research approaches range from conceptual explorations that open a conversation on under-explored issues or contextualise a specific discussion for Asia, to comparative macro-indicator analyses that help elucidate differences within and between countries in Asia. The mix also includes systematic literature reviews and case study syntheses to consolidate and condense evidence for broader consumption, as well as a substantial number of case studies. The diversity of approaches indicates a welcome openness to different ways of contributing to scientific knowledge production. The emphasis on case studies is in our view justifiable since they serve very well to produce credible, legitimate evidence with a potential to inform policy-making at a local level.

3.2.2 Overall publications are of acceptable scientific quality in a narrow academic sense, but there are few excellent contributions

Some publications exhibited weaknesses in conceptual framework, methodological rigour and analytical strength. Placing some of the contributions more firmly in the existing literature and moving beyond descriptive analysis could have helped improve their quality. However, on average, the 40 reviewed publications received a score between acceptable and good for all core academic quality criteria, an assessment that was also corroborated by the opinions of many interviewed stakeholders. These 40 publications are likely to represent the top research outputs of PAN projects, since they passed the publication mark – an assumption confirmed by both the PAN team and our review of other project materials. Against this backdrop, it is important to note that only a few of these pieces earned truly excellent marks on core academic-excellence indicators. At the same time, the achievements in strengthening academic quality are still significant and should not be underestimated, considering that the previous PAN programming period yielded very few publications in peer-reviewed journals. Our interviews also indicate an emphasis on mentoring and peer-input and review in several projects, which we believe contributed to the soundness of methods and evidence. Citation counts on *Google Scholar* as a proxy for recognition in the broader academic community averaged 5.5 with wide variations between 0 and 29 citations. Since some publications are very recent this number can be expected to increase over time, yet may not go up steeply for some contributions that are appropriately of interest to a very specialised and/or localised community.

3.2.3 Project outputs strike a good balance between striving for academic excellence and other quality criteria and research objectives

The Panel wishes to emphasize very strongly that academic excellence is only one factor to be considered in judging overall research quality. This view is also reflected in the methodology for our assessment and it is shared by many key informants who pointed out that quality for them includes „usefulness’. PAN’s publication output scores higher on these other important quality criteria with ratings for novelty, utility and readability approaching the rating „good’. It is important to note that academic excellence and usefulness or policy influence are difficult to reconcile and often trade-off against one other; this is similar to the trade-off between academic excellence and capacity building. These multiple trade-offs were emphasized by almost all interviewed stakeholders. Given the acceptable scores on academic quality, the „good’ scores on broader quality criteria,

and the substantial achievements on other objectives described in this review the Panel concludes that PAN has managed these multiple trade-offs well and achieved a good balance in what are often competing objectives. Putting an even stronger focus on research excellence in a strictly academic sense may therefore not be desirable since it may undermine achievements on other output quality criteria and research objectives.

3.2.4 *Accessibility and visibility remain important challenges*

Accessibility and visibility of research outputs are preconditions for wider recognition, usefulness and sustainable policy influence. The Panel therefore welcomes IDRC's more recent requirement that its grantees give IDRC a usage license for the outputs they produce and deposit a copy of the publications in IDRC's digital library. Efforts by PAN to encourage publishing in open-access journals are also commendable. However, we also found that not all publications are available in the digital library, that the library is difficult to browse, and that it is not the most intuitive location that potential users may turn to in the first place. The Panel discovered that a sizeable portion of the key publications are behind a pay-wall and thus very difficult for researchers and other users, particularly in developing countries, to access. The Panel recommends that PAN consider a requirement for all grantees to make available on their own websites a pre-publication version for all publications, a practice that is acceptable to almost all publishers and does not preclude publication in peer-reviewed journals. Our review also indicates that PAN and its grantees are using a wide variety of other research dissemination channels, including websites, blogs (e.g. LIRNEAsia, APC), Second Life and various multimedia formats. While ascertaining the efficacy of these instruments was beyond the scope of this review, the Panel welcomes this embrace of, and experimentation with, alternative dissemination channels. The synthesis articles that PAN has produced are particularly useful for academics, policymakers and practitioners, both for better contextualising findings, assembling them into further-reaching insights, and making them accessible to a broader audience. More of these are desirable and could be commissioned with scholars in partner countries as part of broader research capacity-building efforts.

3.2.5 *Research portfolio reflects commendable risk-taking and innovation*

PAN research activities and outputs touch upon a wide range of topics in the field of ICT4D. The overall portfolio combines a focus on the more conventional yet important (e.g. localisation, ICT in rural development, regulatory reform) with welcome attention to the more experimental, emergent and marginalised (e.g. the potential of ICTs to help give a collective voice to sex workers, the psychological effects of Internet use, wifi activism, piracy cultures). This wide range facilitates cross-fertilisation and makes it possible to pick up on emerging issues at an early stage', when the window for using evidence to frame the policy debate and achieve policy influence may be still be wide open. The Panel notes concerns about PAN spreading itself too thinly across a wide spectrum, and potential trade-offs between breadth and depth of topical focus. There are, however, also indications that PAN's programming is flexible enough to terminate avenues for research that do not live up to their promise without too much sunk investment (i.e. after a scoping exercise) and to scale up funding and go deeper where the potential is borne out. Provided this flexibility can be sustained and is effectively deployed it can justify a continuation of broad topic scope in programming and help PAN fulfill its incubation function in areas that may not be covered by more conventional research.

3.2.6 Strong markers of ideological independence and openness

Research is not value free, but PAN's research outputs demonstrate a clear and effective commitment to ideological independence and openness. The spectrum of viewpoints espoused by different research publications is broad and accommodates many different values and ideological perspectives, from a preference for free-market mechanisms to critical engagements with the potential negative side effects of ICTs. Some outputs and publications, particularly in the earlier phase of PAN, had more focus on policy influence than deep analysis. Yet, viewpoints and values in the publications reviewed do not appear to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the evidence and analysis. All this indicates that PAN deserves its reputation for independence, openness and credibility, an observation that was also shared by several key informants and that is without doubt one of the most valuable assets and key elements of success for IDRC.

3.2.7 Other outputs perceived positively by stakeholders

In the course of the review the Panel has also identified other outputs which do not lend themselves to evaluation according to our publication scoring matrix, including blogs, multimedia products and knowledge sharing events. Unfortunately, resource and time constraints did not allow the Panel to examine the quality of these additional outputs with sufficient rigour. As a result, the Panel must confine itself at this point to flagging some of these additional outputs that have been referred to in positive terms by key informants. These include a documentary movie on open source software, blogs and other multimedia products that provided additional outlets to promote and publish research, various well-received capacity-building exercises, mentorship arrangements and workshops -- in particular a major conference in Penang to bring together a large number of PAN partners, which was widely received as useful and inspired new collaborations including one between e-health and privacy grantees. Depending on one's definition of outputs one might also consider including networks and software implementations as outputs, but the Panel chose to discuss these in more detail in the outcomes section.

4. The Significance and Contribution of Outcomes

Key Findings

- The Panel can largely substantiate what PAN found as its outcomes in the PFR, with some clarifications and remaining questions
- There is a continued need for the small grants program
- Capacity-building and networks have allowed PAN to deliver its core objectives
- Gender was at the forefront of the prospectus, and later in the review it became more central, although it remains not yet fully mainstreamed
- There is concern about potential pressure to move projects away from lesser developed countries in order to find research partners most likely to generate timely and substantive outcomes.

4.1 Outcomes reported in the program final report

The PFR focuses on four outcome areas: influencing the reform of ICT policies, catalyzing ICT innovations for social benefits, capacity building in ICT, and contributing to strengthened gender integration in ICT4D. As prescribed by the TOR, the Panel assessed the significance and contributions of outcomes as presented in the PFR. The Panel sought to verify PFR outcomes through interviews with grantees, stakeholders, evaluators, and extensive document review (Annexes 1-8). The TOR requests outcomes be discussed with respect to relevance, value, and significance, and the Panel strove to maintain a sense of internal logic in relation to these concepts by asking interviewees to define these notions before discussing outcomes. Interpretations varied; most often, relevance, value and significance were identified as “usefulness” in terms of purpose and audience. It is the Panel’s assessment that program outcomes are relevant, significant and valuable across three of the project areas, with more measured achievements in gender integration.

4.1.1 Outcomes related to influencing ICT policy reform

Influence on telecommunications policy reform has been one of the strongest areas of PAN outcomes, at least in terms of explicit causality, specifically from the work of LIRNEasia. Through interviews, the Ofir evaluation of LIRNEasia, and other document reviews, the Panel was clearly able to substantiate the achievements presented in the PFR about LIRNEasia’s influence on the policies for Sri Lanka’s mobile phone taxation scheme and Indonesia’s leased Internet lines. According to many informants, however, LIRNEasia, is a special case given the organizational culture, the numbers of people devoted to working almost exclusively on policy issues, the specific policy arena in which they work, and the strong personality at the center of the group. While LIRNEasia successes are notable, the Panel urges PAN not to set LIRNEasia as a standard for outcomes, since their achievements would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

PAN’s work on intellectual property rights (IPR) suffered from difficulty finding appropriate research partners. PAN eventually worked with Consumers International on IP and World Intellectual Property Organization issues, and the Panel verifies that PAN-supported research was utilized by Mongolia and India. While the significance of these outcomes is more limited than LIRNEasia’s work, PAN emphasized difficulties related to the newness of the research area in the region and diverse cultural contexts. It is reasonable to assume that the longitudinal approaches taken by PAN in the past with respect to cultivating research partners and incubating networks would eventually reap rewards in this area; given the future reorganization, it would be sensible to retain those longitudinal strategies, perhaps cross-regionally, in order to achieve policy influence.

The PFR discusses two advocacy areas that to some extent represent approaches from an earlier phase of PAN. Two longstanding relationships – with Internet activist Onno Purbo and the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) – have for some time produced valuable outcomes congruent with PAN objectives. These relationships are grounded in PAN’s tradition of working with change makers regardless of their participation in traditional academic conversations.

4.1.2 Catalyzing ICT Innovations for Social Benefits

PAN successfully supported the development of technological innovations and the cultivation of a learning environment that could sustain continued technological innovation. LIRNEasia's methodology for developing an early warning system generated tangible policy outcomes, and PAN Localization has affected government adoption of standards and localization capacities. It also provided a platform for regional specialists funded by PAN to take an active role in international standards-setting initiatives such as ICANN's recent adoption of multiple character-set urls. The PFR remarks on testing of ONI's circumvention tool, Psiphon, as part of their outcomes in this area; however, experts in the area of circumvention tools pointed the Panel to a perspective on Psiphon that instead emphasized a gap between Psiphon's reputation and its actual functionality and utility on the ground, particularly in light of the increasingly sophisticated and robust field of circumvention tools.

The PFR claims that the PAN R&D and ISIF small grants competitions do not result in directly measurable social or technical impact, primarily by generalizing and interpreting an evaluation of these grants in the health field that showed disappointing results. Based on a combination of external interviews and the Panel's analysis, however, PAN and IDRC should consider the small grants program as a "high risk, high impact" program, similar to the ones that granting agencies such as the US National Science Foundation adopt for emerging, cross-disciplinary areas, where risky investments potentially generate high impact. In addition, a small grants program can help overcome some of the limitations identified in the network projects that fund smaller research subprojects (see 4.1.3.). These small grants programs are 4-5% of the overall budget, and they might productively be seen as a kind of angel investment fund moving forward. Especially in the technology field, much innovation is generated from grassroots environments that lack traditional expertise. While the networks might be seen as an appropriate substitution for a free-standing small grants program, networks are still institutions with the normalizing and flattening characteristics of all institutions. A separate small grants program would serve a different audience and function.

4.1.3 Creating Learning Environments and Capacity Building in ICT4D

Overall, the Panel's review largely parallels the sections of the PFR, but in this section it departs slightly from that organization. Specifically, the PFR discusses networks in the context of *creating a learning environment for ICT innovation*. However, based on the conclusions of the Wilson-Grau Network evaluation and discussions with the PAN team and the IDRC Evaluation Unit, the Panel addressed the substantial Networks initiatives in relationship to capacity building. There is no doubt that networks supported by PAN (L10N, PANACeA, PANdora) have a positive impact on individuals, organizations, and the region. The bodies of knowledge and expertise that reside within these networks can be pointed to as one PAN's significant achievements, one that has impact regardless of whether one classifies these as outputs or outcomes.

A considerable amount of PAN's effort has gone into the **network modality**. Overall, the networks have created relationships that generate higher quality research and scaffold relationships with policymakers. In interviews almost all grantees associated with network projects emphasized the network's role in strengthening their work by providing peer review, collaborations, and regular face-to-face meetings. However, the networks are not

without their challenges. Grantees and the PAN team alike identified several systemic issues with networks, including difficulties grouping unfamiliar colleagues onto research projects, setting shared expectations of work habits across multiple cultural contexts, and managing widely divergent capacity across a network. In addition, there were mixed experiences among grantees regarding the ease with which networks were able to replace non-productive members or add new contributors. Also, digital networks have been challenging; grantees might benefit from strategic consideration of emerging computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW) research. Solving persistent online communication problems is difficult, but attention to specific communication needs of different groups may help.

Some more recent projects have tried to address weaknesses in the network approach, particularly those associated with working with established partners. For example, SIRCA appears to be a hybrid grants/network model that leverages pre-existing relationships and well-defined mentorship models and combines them with openness to new entrants provided by a grants competition. The Panel was also intrigued to hear the SIRCA model is being considered for wider implementation since our research indicates the project's strong mentoring, along with blind review and other models from traditional academic formats, is leading to the strong research publications IDRC seeks. While SIRCA seems to adopt a new approach to deal with identified issues, other recent projects appear to find it difficult to overcome known challenges. For example, in the privacy and PAN-GOV (which explores the different ways ICTs can be used for governance) networks, it appears that despite efforts to broaden the participant base, the networks may have ended up with a heavy presence of known partners with a previous track record. This pattern highlights one of the problematic incentives that the Panel identified, which favours work with known entities and more developed countries over risk-taking, since such an approach increases the likelihood of rapid, reportable outcomes. While this may be a legitimate way to ensure low risk grants management in network modalities, it also highlights the importance of a complementary, more open small grants program (see above).

Network sustainability was raised by the Wilson-Grau network evaluation, several PAN team members and grantees; in response to this evaluation, the PAN team provided new programming to make networks more sustainable, including workshops on communicating effectively with policymakers, capacity building for self-evaluation, providing structures for networks to grow organically and add productive members, and fundraising. Given the usefulness of program evaluations to direct productive changes of direction, it is surprising that most individual projects do not conduct external evaluations. The Panel supports recent moves by PAN to provide grantees with tools to conduct their own project evaluations.

PAN had also hoped to develop trans-disciplinary ICT4D methods and research tools. As acknowledged in the PFR, this objective was not met, but this is an extremely difficult area to address. PAN might have partnered strategically with others trying to accomplish similar goals. The panel encourages PAN to explore partnerships, potentially with the private sector. While traditional partnerships with industry can result in a clash of objectives, some organizations' learning arms dovetail with PAN's goals.

4.1.4 Contributing to Strengthened Gender Integration in ICT4D

The prospectus goal that all projects include a gender analysis was not substantiated from the interviews conducted with grantees and reviews of project documentation. There is wide variation in the extent to which gender was incorporated. According to interviews with experts in gender and ICT not associated with the PAN prospectus, the Gender Evaluation Methodology is well known in the larger community. Overall, it is evident that the PAN team takes gender seriously, and there was more focus on gender in later stages of implementation; however there is variation in the extent to which projects incorporate gender-based analyses.

4.2 Other Outcomes and Related Issues

As mentioned earlier, the Panel noted a shift in PAN's approach towards more emphasis on traditional notions of academic or research excellence. In the policy sphere this could result in turning focus away from individuals or organizations with useful positioning or visibility (i.e. Purbo) and more towards projects likely to have an effect through credible research results. At the same time, PAN team members emphasized that they were interested most in research that was "credible based on what their peers consider credible". This begs the question of who are the peers. The Panel encourages PAN and IDRC to consider a range of communities as users of the work they fund. Both academic and policy work can be seen as "good work." However, both can also be challenging to achieve in least developed countries (LDCs).

From interviews with PAN team members, the Panel detected concern about a potential shift towards funding activities in more developed countries in the hopes of seeing more rapid effects as a result of investment, whether through quick wins on policy influence or high quality peer reviewed academic publications. The data on funded projects is inconclusive, and it is not clear to the Panel if this is an articulated policy. While such an approach may indeed provide more visible outcomes and impressive metrics, the Panel cautions against moving away from support to lesser developed countries. Outcomes might take longer to produce, but it is crucial to find the right balance between producing outcomes and operating in places that can most benefit from research partnerships.

5. Strategic issues for the Board of Governors

Six strategic issues arise from the Panel's review.

5.1 Giving ICTs a strong presence across core areas of programming is more important for IDRC's mission and objectives than ever

Given the organizational juncture that PAN and programming on ICT4D at IDRC has reached, the Panel wishes to emphasize strongly the importance of ICT-focused research. All Panel members take a very critical scholarly perspective on the actual role and impact of ICTs, so the following remarks are not merely self-serving. ICTs have reached a level of diffusion in developing countries that shifts the opportunity curve and brings about deep transformational changes – good and bad – across key areas of development from empowerment and accountability to poverty reduction, economic opportunity, innovation and environmental sustainability. As of 2010, it is impossible to think about governance and policy influence without considering how standards of political accountability and landscapes of political contestation shift under the influence of

new media from Afghanistan to Vietnam. It is impossible to research and support empowerment and poverty reduction without appraising the role of mobile phones or networked forms of collective action. It is impossible to unearth the conditions for stimulating innovation and successful research on key problems in development without tracing and appraising the seismic shifts towards open publishing, open innovation ecologies, and collaborative knowledge-building that new ICT tools and applications continue to drive. As a consequence, building a strong ICT component into IDRC's other programming areas is essential and offers opportunities for insights and innovations in view of empowering through knowledge. Mainstreaming ICT4D can also offer opportunities to bring in new partners and break down some persistent communication silos across program areas. The Panel's analysis indicates that PAN made great strides in this regard, but more can and must be done to expand and diversify the pool of partners that it works with.

5.2 Retaining a strong ICT competence hub is essential for innovation and cross-pollination

An important caveat applies to this mainstreaming approach: in our view it is impossible to nurture a vibrant, innovative ICT knowledge base for development without bringing dispersed streams of experience with ICT in different programming areas back together. Comparing, synthesizing and leveraging what has been learnt and is being done with ICT across thematic areas is essential for cross-pollination and leveraging evidence for continuing innovation. At the same time, many important ICT policy issues such as privacy, censorship, or digital intellectual property rights have implications across different application areas but merit a consolidated research approach. Only such a hub and spoke architecture and strong linkages among components will allow IDRC to stay on top of what ICT contributes to development research and impact. Our interviews and analysis of research outputs demonstrate very clearly that IDRC has developed real expertise in ICT4D and established a formidable reputation as a trusted knowledge partner in this area. It would be unfortunate if mainstreaming ICT means this expertise and reputation is eroded or results in ICT becoming an afterthought in other projects, a real risk given the experience with gender-mainstreaming in many organizations.

5.3 Cross-regional programming provides a fertile ground for fresh comparative perspectives – yet this should not detract from much needed focus on LDCs and marginalized communities

Cross-regional collaboration has already led PAN to embark on important comparative work with BRIC countries. Yet, these new opportunities, which many other organizations have also begun to exploit, should not detract IDRC from retaining a strong focus on the least developed countries and most marginalized communities. Building empowerment through knowledge might face the greatest challenges in such environments, yet it also offers the greatest rewards and value for these communities. Our analysis has found a number of formidable PAN research projects that embody this spirit and laudably tread where few others dare. Yet, we also discerned some more recent dynamics in the broader programming environment that may distract from such a focus. Pressure to produce and demonstrate quick wins may further amplify this challenge to retain a focus where IDRC's impact could be most needed and eventually add most value.

5.4 The range of viewpoints reflected in PAN's portfolio is commendable and a key asset for IDRC's reputation of independence and openness

PAN's programming accommodates a remarkable diversity of ideological viewpoints, from free market supporters to critical scholarship on globalization and gender. This diversity is an essential driver of IDRC's reputation for independence, and many stakeholders highlighted this in their perceptions of PAN's work. Enabling such a spectrum of viewpoints and open spaces for experimentation through small grant programs could serve as a model for broader IDRC programming strategies.

5.5 The role of the private sector could be considered more strategically

At the moment PAN seems to view private sector actors mainly as funding partners. The program might benefit from a broader, more strategic and creative appraisal of business as a potential target audience for policy influence, a potential ally in advocating on specific policy issues, and as a source for and collaborator in producing empirical evidence, developing innovations, training and capacity-building.

5.6 Demand-driven research could be taken a step further

Setting locally-driven research agendas is a key pillar of IDRC's mission, and involving policymakers in the design of research has been pointed out by some PAN team members and grantees as essential for relevant research and policy influence. Yet, PAN and perhaps other IDRC programs might also want to explore other demand-oriented arrangements for research. The model of research helpdesks might be worth considering. The home institution of one of the reviewers, for example, operates a very successful research helpdesk in the area of governance and development policy for international aid donors. This helpdesk responds to queries with a guaranteed turn-around time and provides an effective way to get sound research findings to policy makers and potentially other stakeholders when and where they need it, thereby maximizing the potential for policy influence. Helpdesks also provide an interesting vehicle to cultivate relationships with policymakers, serve as detectors for emerging demands, and potentially contribute to the sustainability of research outfits in the longer term, if service funding through beneficiaries can be secured. It might be worth exploring the possibility for established IDRC partners, networks or even IDRC program teams to adopt such a helpdesk model in specific areas of competence and for specific target audiences in the policy community.

6. Conclusions

The Panel's review of the PAN program is largely positive. The prospectus was implemented in a coherent and appropriate manner. The outputs are numerous and, while they range in quality, they reflect a varied grant making focus and the effective mix of research and advocacy activities that PAN has fostered. The outcomes have been significant, and they have reflected traditional research and policy programs, vibrant and wide-ranging networks and the more risk-taking PAN funding streams. Our review has balanced evidence from multiple sources while facing time and resource constraints; more detail on these constraints are discussed in Annex 14.

There are significant challenges in balancing the tensions of research and development, but the PAN team is generally thoughtful and careful in grappling with these tensions. As

IDRC moves forward with programming that includes technology and society issues, we encourage an approach that considers the unique aspects of ICTs as a component of the development landscape. Cross-fertilization across domains has contributed to PAN's success, and it is imperative that integrating programming such as PAN's into verticals does not lose the richness of cross-domain exchanges. ICT innovation occurs according to somewhat distinct processes; development programming around ICTs tends to reflect those distinct processes. It is the Panel's hope as PAN-related projects shift to new communities within IDRC that the unique culture that has incubated ICT innovation and ICTs in development practice will also find new communities and colleagues within the organization.

PAN External Review Panel Report

Annexes

Annex 1: Description of Interview Methods

Semi-structured key informant interviews with a purposeful sample of PAN grantees, staff and outside experts represented a key pillar of the Panel's review strategy.

Development of tailored interview scripts

The interview questions were based on the four main review questions of the TOR. The Panel developed one general set of core questions for all interviewees and specific questions for different target groups (PAN staff, grantees), complemented by detailed prompts for many of the questions to ensure consistency across the interviews.

The goal of the interviews was to learn more about the core questions of Prospectus implementation, research outputs, outcomes, and to give respondents an opportunity to reflect on their experiences to assist the review panel with generating suggestions for the Board of Governors. The Panel was especially interested to learn about research outputs that did not fall into traditional publication categories and would therefore be likely to be missed in a standard bibliography. In addition, the Panel sought to capture a range of opinions on what outputs individuals considered most valuable or significant (see Annex 2. Interviews with stakeholders outside the PAN community were conducted as open-ended, prompt-based interviews tailored to the specific area of expertise of the stakeholder.

Selection of interviewees

PAN provided the Panel with:

- a) a list of 21 key informants (mainly grantees) for the seven key research finding and outcome areas set out in the PFR;
- b) a larger, overlapping, list of more than 70 project partners; and,
- c) a list of authors of all peer-reviewed publications or monographs produced in the prospectus review phase to date.

The Panel used these lists as a basis to compile a purposeful sample of preferred interviewees that included:

- all key informants
- all project partners who are personally known to the Panel, in order to increase the chance for candid feedback and trusted conversations
- all PAN staff, including the IDRC Director of the Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) program area
- experts who have undertaken major and more recent evaluations of components of the PAN programming (gender, networks, LIRNEasia)
- representatives of DfID as a key PAN donor and funding partner

Additional potential interviewees from the longer partner and author list were added to the pool according to the following criteria:

- fair sub-regional representation
- balanced coverage of all research and outcome areas outlined in PFR
- defensible gender balance

This resulted in a pool of 45 preferred interviewees who exhibited the following characteristics (excluding PAN staff, PAN evaluators, DfID staff and IDRC interviewees):

GENDER	
M	23
F	12
REGION	
South East Asia	9
South Asia	6
Global	13
West Asia (incl. Pakistan)	3
Australia / Pacific Islands	1

Finally, the Panel sought to extend this pool further by talking to individuals not associated with PAN and who were not grantees, but who were stakeholders or researchers likely to have encountered PAN outputs in the course of their professional lives. The focus was placed on selecting additional external stakeholders of which two were selected from selected policy areas and processes in which the PFR reported particularly salient outcomes and policy influence, including:

- Policy cluster: intellectual property advocacy, wifi policies
- Technology cluster: localization work, anti-censorship technologies
- Effects, capacity building cluster: gender and ICT, and SIRCA mentorship program

These “outside the PAN community” interviews were aimed at providing valuable context and, although they formed a small percentage of our overall interview activity, they gave the evaluation team a perspective not available through the other research activities. Efforts were made to select female experts, in order to enhance the gender balance of the overall pool.

The remaining 35 individuals listed on the longer project partner list were contacted via an online survey (see Annex 4)

Interview process

The pool of preferred interviewees was informed by IDRC about the review and asked for cooperation. The Panel contacted potential interviewees by phone and email, often following up twice or three times where no response was received. The overall response rate was satisfactory resulting in 39 interviews being conducted, primarily via phone or Skype. Interviewers took notes as they conducted the interview; these transcripts were then posted on our internal project wiki for access by the other Panel members. Interviewees were ensured that personal attribution or circumstantial identification through information provided would only be included in the review write-up if authorized by the interviewee. See Annex 6 for full list of interviewees.

Reproduction of interview script

Core script that will be used with grantees, PAN team members, and other stakeholders for PAN work/outputs

Section 1: The extent to which the implementation of the PAN Prospectus was appropriate

1. [For grantees] Briefly describe the goals of your project. Did those goals change throughout the course of the project? If so, why and to what extent?
 - a. *[It will be useful to compare respondent's goals to the goals as articulated in the project documents]*
2. [For grantees] To what extent do you think your project goals were met?
3. [For grantees] Was there anything particularly helpful that was provided by PAN? Were there any challenges or constraints posed by working with PAN. (Examples would be especially helpful.)
 - (a) *[Prompts for the interview team]:*
 - (b) *Were there clear and properly aligned expectations for you and PAN on what your project was meant to achieve?*
 - (c) *Were PAN funding, deliverables and timeline for achieving those deliverables realistic and aligned?*
 - (d) *Did you receive sufficient support from the PAN team along the way both in terms of input to the substance of the project as well as in terms of managing the administrative requirements that came with the grant?*
 - (e) *Did PAN connect you with interesting ideas, resources, experts that you had not been aware of before and that proved beneficial to your project? [including networking opportunities]*
4. [For grantees] Were there project evaluations conducted during the course of the grant? If so, did those evaluations affect the shape of later project stages? For example, were there changes in work plan, personnel, populations with whom you worked, etc.? Please explain.

- a. *[Some respondents will be saying 'no there were not']*
- 5. [For grantees and PAN members] How appropriate do you consider the overall implementation of the PAN prospectus to have been?
 - a. *[This may result in an "I don't know" response]*

Section 2: The quality of research outputs

- 6. [For grantees] Of what quality do you consider the research outputs produced by your project to be? Why?
- 7. [For PAN team or IDRC staff] Of what quality do you consider the research outputs produced by PAN to be? Why?
- 8. For PAN team or IDRC staff] Which outputs from your (or other) /PAN-funded projects have you found most useful and why? *[Keep in mind that this question could be asked of a grantee or a stakeholder in the larger community who might reasonably have used PAN-funded research outputs but wouldn't have produced any. We might find that all identify three or four key PAN outputs, and that would be useful]*
- 9. [For PAN members] How would you assess the quality of the research outputs produced by grantees in the three thematic areas? [Policy, Technology, Effects] The theme of Gender? Is the quality consistent? What criteria do you think are of most importance in evaluating the quality of PAN's research outputs? Are these criteria consistent across the three thematic areas? If not, how do they differ?

Section 3: Program outcomes

- 10. [For PAN team or IDRC staff] In your experience of PAN, what do you consider the most important outcomes of the programme to be?
 - a. *[Make sure we capture what their experience of PAN is]*
- 11. [For Grantees and PAN members] What program outcomes do you think are most significant or valuable and why?
 - a. *Valuable/significant. We need to know how they are defining these categories. Prompt them to answer 'why' something counts as either valuable/significant, etc. «We're interested in how you define that'*
- 12. [For grantees] Did Pan support promotion of your research and communication with policy makers. Was a promotion strategy built into the project (and costed) from the beginning?
 - a. *Prompts for interview team: Have you presented your research at conferences? Have your findings been communicated to policy-makers? (Have you testified, been invited to give advice? Published summaries, op-eds of findings beyond the paper itself? How have you, or how might*

you in the future, make your work more visible to policymakers? How successful do you feel your presentations to policymakers are?

13. [For grantees associated with Network projects] How beneficial was the PAN Network you've been involved with? How effective do you think the network outcomes were?

Prompts for interview team:

- a. *Did the network expose you to new ideas, partners you did not know before etc.? Would you characterize the network as largely homogenous with a core set of questions or heterogeneous with more branching questions?*
 - b. *Would you describe the network as „top-down‘ with a fixed agenda set by the convener or some lead group of organisations or as „bottom-up‘ with the focus and activities shaped by a large group of active members?*
 - c. *Did the network grow or evolve over time? Was there a shift in membership composition, focus and if so why?*
 - d. *Was the network well-managed? Were expectations clear? Does participation come with a high administrative burden?*
 - e. *Would you describe the network as dynamic with a high level of active participation by most participants? Do you feel the activity level has dropped over time? Was there active moderation to prompt participation? Do you feel the network generated significant achievements? if so can you give examples?*
 - f. *What do you think the main beneficial outcomes of the network were? Do you feel the network generated significant achievements, if so can you give examples?*
14. [For Grantees and PAN members] How effective do you think PAN was at capacity development? Why?

Section 4: Key issues for IDRC’s Board of Governors

15. If you could suggest three key things from your experiences with PAN that IDRC’s Board of Governors should know, what would they be?

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

[Board is responsible for high-level decisions such as approving programs. It also influences strategic direction at program and institutional level.]

16. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the implementation of PAN that you feel would add to our evaluation?

Annex 2: Description of Publication Output Methodology and Summary of Assessment Scores

Approach

The Panel's assessment is primarily based on an in-depth reading and review of all the 40 peer-reviewed journal articles and monographs produced by PAN grantees and staff from 2006 to date as listed in Annex 3 of the PFR and reproduced here as Annex 7.¹ Two publications from the list could not be procured, and so the final number of publications reviewed was 40.

Following a review of research quality criteria in the related literature we identified a set of 8 key indicators to assess the quality of the conceptual framework, methodology and analysis, as well as the novelty value, utility and readability of the research contribution, and – where applicable – the quality of the host publication the research piece appeared in.

For each of these criteria the Panel developed a five-point ordinal scoring system with a verbal description for each quality level tailored to the specific criteria in descending order (see the scoring table below).

Recognising that it is difficult to capture a nuanced assessment in a simple numerical way we amended the scoring with more detailed written annotations. Each of us reviewed one third of the publications. The collaborative development and discussion of the scoring system ensured a level of consistency in the scoring across evaluators. We conducted the scoring exercise based on our professional judgment as ICT4D experts as well as our experience as editors and/or peer reviewers of academic and policy publications (see the biographical statements in Annex 11 for more details).

To triangulate and refine our analysis we also:

- included questions on perceived quality of research outputs and outcomes in our more than 30 interviews with PAN grantees, key informants and PAN team members (see Annex 1 for full questionnaire).
- reviewed key materials for a purposeful sample of more than 30 PAN project (see Annexes 3 and 5 for details).

Both interviews and the project documentation review also helped us identify additional key outputs beyond publications and outputs mentioned in the prospectus review.

While we assessed the quality of individual outputs we also regarded it as important to take a look at the bigger picture and consider some additional parameters such as methods mix, balance and spectrum of topics that would speak to the overall quality of the body of knowledge and the broader set of outputs produced.

¹ The Annex lists 42 publications; this however included one publication that the team could not procure and one poster presentation that was not assessed.

Assessment criteria and summary assessment of research quality:

	Conceptual framework Understanding of relevant ideas in existing literatures; conceptual/theoretical framework	Rigour Clarity and rigour of empirical methodology / analytical rigour of review papers ²	Analysis Shaping of aim and analytical strength; avoidance of mere description	What's new Innovation and novelty; how much it adds to knowledge	Utility Findings likely to be of use to relevant stakeholders/ intended audiences ³	Readability Ease of comprehension and written style	Where published Type and quality of publication in which output appears	Acceptability Recommendation concerning acceptability for publication in a <i>major international journal</i>	Citations Google Scholar citations ⁴	Overall Overall judgement
	5 = comprehensive/ aware of most relevant material 4 = good, but partial 3 = adequate but key material missing 2 = poor/ fails to address much literature 1 = unacceptable	5 = excellent rigour; clearly expressed methods 4 = good, and well described 3 = adequate 2 = lacking in sufficient rigour 1 = unacceptable	5 = excellent, adding to understanding 4 = Sound analytical framework 3 = adequate analysis 2 = largely descriptive 1 = No real analysis	5 = significant addition to knowledge 4 = adds something valuable 3 = adds small amount 2 = largely derivative 1 = adds nothing new	5 = very relevant 4 = quite relevant 3 = limited relevance 2 = largely irrelevant 1 = potentially damaging	5 = lucid and enjoyable to read 4 = generally well written 3 = style adequate 2 = not well written 1 = very poorly expressed	5 = major international journal, or book 4 = international journal or significant book chapter 3 = national journal/book chapter 2 = web-based or working paper 1 = unpublished conference paper or other output	5 = accept 4 = minor revision 3 = major revision 2 = resubmit 1 = reject	(Number of citations)	5 = excellent 4 = good 3 = average 2 = poor 1 = very poor
Average score	3.53	3.53	3.26	3.75	3.98	3.90	3.97	3.47	5.47	3.63
N	40	40	40	40	40	40	32	36	38	40

² Recognising a diversity of types of research output. This criterion, though, is primarily intended to reflect the quality of rigour in the paper, whatever its type.

³ Recognising that there are many different types of audiences: academics, policy maker, civil society, private sector, technical community...

⁴ Recognising the great problems associated with such citation indices, but this evidence has already been prepared by the PAN Team and so it makes sense to use it

Annex 3: Description of Project Review Methodology

A sample of projects was systematically reviewed so as to gain deeper understandings of the practical implementation of projects funded by PAN, the changes in direction of such projects, the internal review mechanisms through which they were reviewed, and details of other research outputs such as conference presentations resulting from the projects.

Members of the Panel had also been allocated a sample of research publication outputs (Annex 2) and people to interview (Annex 1), and this element of the review therefore provided a third way to interrogate PAN's work. Consequently, it was decided to divide the projects between reviewers based on content themes that would cut across the basic structures of policies, technologies and effects, as well as networks, country programs and grants. Through using such a sampling strategy, members of the Panel were therefore able to gain an overview of the many different approaches through which PAN sought to deliver on its mission.

Sampling strategy

It was agreed to try to sample approximately one third of the 115 projects (81) and supplements (34) that had been funded by PAN between 2005-6 and 2009-10. An overview of these projects and supplements suggested that three broad thematic clusters could be identified: projects around democracy, privacy and governance; health projects and those that used mobile technologies; and those that focused on aspects of rural development. Each member of the Panel read the documentation pertaining to one of these clusters. The Panel deliberately did not seek to replicate the work of the comprehensive external evaluations already undertaken on networks, gender and policy, since it was able to benefit from their conclusions. The Table below summarises the distribution of these projects and supplements in terms of budget, location, period, and main outcome areas relating to the PAN Prospectus. This Table indicates that a broad diversity of projects was examined, and this therefore gives the Panel confidence that the conclusions drawn are indeed robust and reflect the diversity of projects supported by PAN.

Note: Numbers indicate both projects and supplements	BK (mobiles and health) (12)	DZ (democracy, privacy, governance) (12)	TU (rural) (11)	Total (35)
Budget				
> \$1,000,000	1	2	2	5
\$500,000-999,999				
\$250,000-499,999		1	2	3

<\$250,000	11	9	7	27
Location				
Asia/South Asia	9	7	5	21
Bangladesh			1	1
Cambodia			1	1
Global	3	5		8
India			1.5	1.5
Pakistan			2	2
Sri Lanka			0.5	0.5
Period				
2005-6			5	5
2006-7	2	3	1	6
2007-8	4	4	3	11
2008-9	4	2	2	8
2009-10	2	3		5
Main outcome area⁵				
1 Research	3	2	1	6
2 Capacity				
3 Policy		1	1 ⁶	2
4 Technology				
5 Network	1			1
6 Gender			4	4

Systematic Review Template

In order to be as systematic as possible in reviewing these projects, the Panel constructed a Template (see below) to capture the essence of the projects and the information that it was seeking to gather from them with respect to the overall objectives of the evaluation. This template concentrated on: (1) the policies, technologies and effects, disaggregated by objectives, activities, outcomes and partners; (2) research outputs, in terms of publications, conferences/events, policy interventions and other outputs; (3) the relevance to the PAN vision, in terms of the communities that were empowered, the key development challenges, and the ICTs that were used in delivering these; (4) the outcomes relating to policies, technologies and effects; (5) delivery on IDRC's gender strategy; (6) delivery on IDRC's partnership strategy; (7) observations from any external evaluation; (8) any additional comments; and (9) the documents that were examined.

⁵ Where identified as such on matrix of PAN projects supplied by IDRC to the evaluation team. Note that only 13 out of the 35 projects were so identified, and the other projects reviewed did cover all aspects of the intended outcomes.

⁶ Note – this is identified as “5 Policy” on the Matrix, whereas 5 is actually Network, and 3 is Policy – so it was listed under Policy.

Project Title:			
Name(s) of Principal Investigator(s):			
Budget:	Allocated:	Spent:	
Timing:	Start Year:	Finish Year:	
Summary of themes, objectives and approaches (insert notes in each block about how the project has contributed to these – leave blank if not relevant)			
Policies	Technologies		Effects
Objectives	Objectives		Objectives
Research Activities	Research Activities		Research Activities
Expected outcomes	Expected outcomes		Expected outcomes
Partners involved	Partners involved		Partners involved
Research Outputs			
Publications	Conferences/ Events	Policy interventions	Other outputs

Relevance to PAN vision: To what extent has this project contributed to the vision of “Empowered communities who have addressed their key development challenges through effective access to information and communication technologies”			
Which communities were empowered?	What were the key development challenges?	What ICTs were used to deliver this, and how?	
Outcomes relating to policy:⁷ To what extent has this project delivered on these outcomes?			Score (5 high; 1 low)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A body of evidence that serves to instigate change within the telecommunications policy and intellectual property policy spheres • The creation of networks of researchers and grass-roots activists, active in building evidence and promoting dialogue on key policy issues in the area of access to connectivity (telecommunications) and access to knowledge (IPR); • Enhanced dialogue between the key policy stakeholders in the area of telecommunications policies and IPR; • Increased awareness of policy-makers and ICT practitioners of issues related to barriers to access to knowledge and the potential of alternatives to traditional copyright mechanisms; and • Changes in policies related to intellectual property and connectivity (access to networks and knowledge). 			
Outcomes relating to technologies:⁸ To what extent has this project delivered on these outcomes?			Score (5 high; 1 low)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A body of evidence that serves to better understand which technological innovations are best suited to contribute to the solutions of the development problems in the areas of health, education, governance, and livelihoods; • The creation of thematic networks of researchers and ICT practitioners in health, education, governance; and livelihoods that are active in sharing knowledge and developing innovative ICT applications in these areas; 			

⁷ From p.17 of original Prospectus

⁸ From p.23 of original Prospectus

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of innovative ICT applications that help solve development challenges; • Increased ability of researchers and practitioners in Asia to find solutions to the existing health, education, governance, and livelihood challenges through the use of ICTs. 	
<p>Outcomes relating to Effects:⁹ To what extent has this project delivered on these outcomes?</p>	<p>Score (5 high; 1 low)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better understanding, through the development of a guidebook or a similar output, of the most appropriate research methodologies for understanding the interaction between ICTs and development; • Increased capacity of Asian researchers and ICT practitioners in the area of ICT for development research; • Increased knowledge of the positive and negative effects ICTs are having on Asian communities; • Mitigation techniques and maximizing strategies for limiting the harmful effects of ICTs while ensuring the positive effects of ICTs can reach wider beneficiaries in Asia. 	
<p>Comments on relevance to IDRC’s gender strategy</p>	
<p>Comments on relevance to IDRC’s partnership strategy</p>	
<p>External evaluation Has an external evaluation been conducted? Yes/No Pertinent comments from existing evaluation reports</p>	
<p>Any Additional Comments</p>	

⁹ From p.26 of original Prospectus

Documents examined:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

In hindsight this Template was too restrictive, and many of the Panel's most important observations were contained in the section for additional comments. In part, this was because the Template was constructed based around the original PAN Prospectus, as in traditional output to purpose reviews, whereas as noted in the body of this evaluation report, the program evolved in a much more flexible way. Indeed, the PAN Prospectus Review document is not structured directly as a response to the original Prospectus, in part also because of comments from the Evaluation Unit as what appropriately counted as an outcome. Moreover, not all grantees were familiar with the Prospectus, and therefore wrote their reports and commentaries according to very different structures.

The Panel is nevertheless confident that by reading and recording its observations on documentation associated with 35 of the PAN projects, our judgements recorded in the body of the evaluation are grounded in a rigorous understanding of what PAN achieved.

The documents examined

There was considerable diversity in the number and extent of the documentation associated with each project. In summary, such documentation fell mainly into the following broad categories:

- Project approval documentation
 - PADs
 - Budgets
 - Memoranda of grant conditions
- Internal monitoring and evaluation documents written by PAN team
 - Field visits and trip reports
 - Reports
 - Rolling PCRs
- Examples of project outputs
 - Publications
 - Conference papers
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Policy briefs
 - Flyers
 - Websites
- Project reports written by grantees
 - Original proposals
 - Interim Reports
 - Technical Reports

- Terminal Reports
- External Reports

In this context, it is salient to note that many of the technical reports were very lengthy, with some being more than 20,000 words long. The Panel believes that the time invested by grantees in writing such reports might often be better spent in producing high quality research reports of various types for wider disseminations, and that these outputs could then be appended to shorter formal reporting requirements for IDRC.

Annex 4: Description of Online Survey Methodology

An online survey was produced in order to gather responses from grantees who were not selected for interviews. The survey was built in Survey Monkey, using questions drawn from the original interview script (Annex 1). The survey was reduced to four main questions to correspond to the four questions of the TOR. Each question had a number of sub-questions.

The survey was originally sent to 35 potential respondents. Since the request was sent from a gmail account which potentially might have been flagged as spam by some respondents' email accounts, notice of the survey was subsequently resent. The Panel eventually achieved six responses for a response rate of 17%. However, not all the recipients of the survey request were core PAN grantees; some were joint projects with other IDRC units. At least one contacted IDRC with confusion about the request.

Of the six respondents, we found their answers congruent with the overall interview results. In particular, respondents reported largely meeting project objectives and also a positive relationship with the PAN team.

Most survey questions required an open-ended response. However, some questions that were designed to learn more about the kind of outputs outside traditional publications requested a Yes/No answer (see section 3.7 for more information on the kind of other outputs the Panel tried to assess). The responses to those questions are summarized in the charts below.

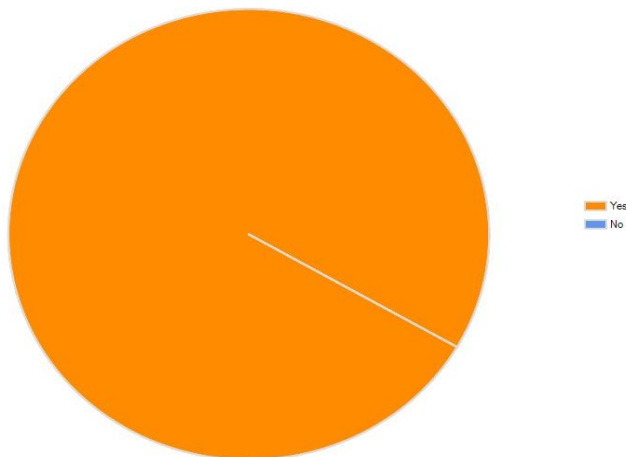


Figure 1: Have you presented your PAN supported research at conferences?

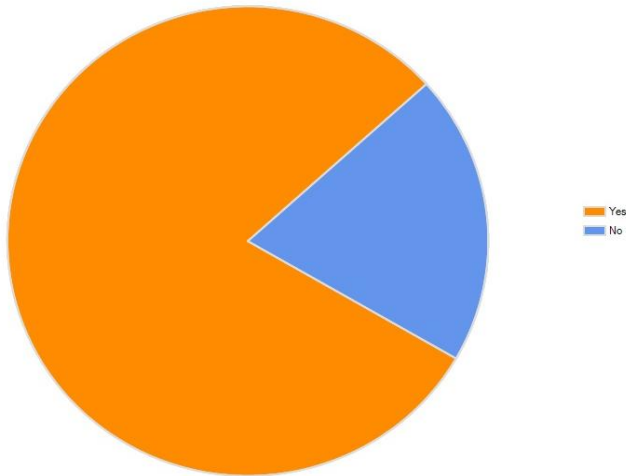


Figure 2: Have you been invited to give policy advice based on your research?

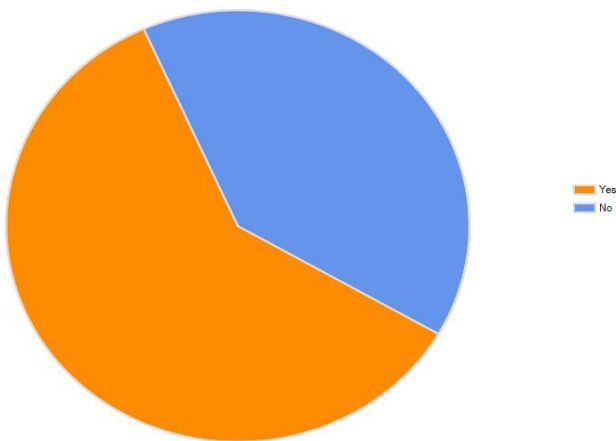


Figure 3: Have you published summaries, or op-eds of findings for a broader audience beyond the paper itself?

Annex 5: List of Projects Reviewed

Project Number	Project Title	Reviewer	Theme
101054	ICT for Rural Development in Mountainous and Remote Areas of Northern Pakistan	TU	Rural
101221	Electronic Networking or Rural Asia/ Pacific Projects	TU	Rural
102340	Impact of ICTs on Poverty Alleviation in Rural Pondicherry, India	TU	Rural
102649	Impact of ICT Carried Livelihood Information on Rural Communities in Bangladesh	TU	Rural
102793	Most Effective ICT Tools Used by NGOs to Reach Grassroots Women in Asia	TU	Rural
103013	Community Driven Universal Access Solutions in Cambodia (cUAPc): Pilots for Policy Research/ Informatics for Rural Empowerment and Community Health (iREACH)	TU	Rural
103232	Adaptation and Livelihood Resilience	TU	Rural
103360	Project Planning for Regional Health and ICT Research Network	BK	Health
103680	OpenNet Initiative- Asia: Project Investigation, Partner Recruitment and Proposal Development	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
103790	Mother and Child Health International Network	BK	Health
103873	Participant Support in the iCommons Summit	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
104104	Internet Governance Forum Youth Panel	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
104161	PAN Asian Collaboration for Evidence-based e-Health Adoption	BK	Health
104331	ENRAP III	TU	Rural
104332	OpenNet Initiative (ONI)- Asia Digital Censorship and Surveillance in Asia	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
104333	Towards Détente in Media Privacy	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
104351	Moving the FOSS Agenda for Health	BK	Health
104390	The Gender Divide in Rural Pakistan	TU	Rural
104591	Emerging Dynamic Global Economies Network: Global Economic Governance Programs	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
104874	Scoping Research on Issues Related to Psychology in ICTs in Asia	BK	Health
104895	Disseminating Research Findings	BK	Health

	about Telehealth in Developing World		
104911	Scoping Research on Digital Piracy Issues in Asia	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
104927	Privacy and the IS in Asia	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
104935	PANeGOV: Understanding Democratic eGovernance in Asia	DZ	Democracy, Privacy, Internet Governance
105078	MobileActive08: Unlocking the Potential of Mobile Technology for Social Impact	BK	Mobiles
105130	Evaluating a Real-Time Bio-surveillance Program: A Pilot Project	TU	Rural

Annex 6: List of Interviewees (n=45)

Interviews with PAN Grantees and Key Authors: (n=25)

Interviewee	Interviewer	Project Number
Shahid Akhtar	DZ	103015, 103698, 102651, 101223
Erwin Alampay	TU	103720
Z. Batbold	TU	104919
Tian Belawati	BK	103011
Gloria Bonder	BK	102197
Bernadine Dias	TU	104481
Anriette Esterhuysen	TU	105259
Nancy Hafkin	BK	
Gus Hosein	DZ	104927
Sarmad Hussain	BK	103669
Ang Peng Hwa	BK	104921
Vigneswara Ilavarasan	TU	104170
Parminder Jeet Singh	TU	105778, 103941
Lee Loh-Ludher	TU	
Shalini Kala	DZ	ENRAP Program
Shariq Khoja	BK	104161
Emmanuel C. Lallana	TU	104935
Jeremy Malcolm	DZ	102562
Naveed Malik	BK	102791
Ricardo Ramirez	BK	104932
Rohan Samarajiva	TU	104918
Karin Astrid Siegmann	DZ	104390
Dirk Slater	DZ	105928
Pan Sorasak	TU	103013
Ananya Raihan	BK	102649

Interviews with External Experts/ Evaluators: (n=7)

Interviewee	Interviewer	Role
John Baggaley	BK	External Expert
David Grimshaw	TU	DfID/ External Evaluator
Regina Hechanova	DZ	External Expert
Zenda Ofir	DZ	PAN Evaluator
Onno Purbo	BK	External Expert

Neena Sachdeva	TU	PAN Evaluator
Ricardo Wilson-Grau	BK	PAN Evaluator

Interviews with PAN Staff: (n=7)

Interviewee	Interviewer	Role
Michael Clarke	DZ, TU, BK	Director of Program Area, IDRC
Laurent Elder	DZ, TU, BK	Team Leader, PAN, IDRC
Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah	TU	Former PAN staff
Maria Ng	BK	PAN staff
Ahmed Rashid	DZ	PAN staff
Phet Sayo	TU	Pan staff
Chaitali Sinha	BK	PAN staff

Interviews with External Experts outside PAN (n=6)

Interviewer	Role
BK	Anti-censorship tools expert
BK	Anti- censorship tools expert
BK	Anti- censorship tools expert
BK	Gender and ICT expert
BK	Gender and ICT expert
DZ	Intellectual property advocacy

Annex 7: List of Papers Reviewed

Publication Reviewed	Panelist	Citations
1. Akhter, S. & Arinto, P. (eds). (2009). <i>Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2009-2010</i> . Ottawa: IDRC/Sage Publications. (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-137877-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)	BK	0
2. Alampay, E. (ed). <i>Living the Information Society in Asia</i> . Ottawa: IDRC/Institute of South East Asian Studies (Singapore). http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-137700-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html .	TU	15
3. Alampay, E. (2008). Filipino Entrepreneurs on the Internet. <i>Science Technology & Society</i> , 13(2):, 211-231.	DZ	2
4. Alampay, E. (2006). Beyond access to ICTs: Measuring capabilities in the information society. <i>International Journal of Education and Development using ICT</i> , 2(3). http://ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/viewarticle.php?id=196 .	BK	25
5. Alampay, E. & Hechanova, M. (2010). Monitoring Employee Use of the Internet in Philippine Organizations. <i>Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries</i> , 40. http://www.ejisdc.org/ojs2/index.php/ejisdc/article/view/648 .	DZ	0
6. Amarsaikhan, D. et al. (2007). Online Medical Diagnosis and Training in Rural Mongolia. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 195-211.	TU	0
7. Baggaley, & J. Belawati, T. (eds) (2009). <i>Distance Education Technology in Asia: Past and Present</i> . Lahore: Virtual University of Pakistan. Available http://intranet.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12640051831127392[1].pdf .	BK	2
8. Baggaley, J. (2007). Distance Education Technologies: An Asian perspective. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 125-131.	TU	1
9. Baggaley, J., Batpurev, B. and Klaas, J. (2007). The World-Wide Inaccessible Web. 1: Browsing speeds; and 2: Internet routes. <i>International Review of Research in Open & Distance Learning</i> , 8(2), 1–10. http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/438/930 .	DZ	5
10. Chib, A., et al. (2008). Midwives and mobiles: using ICTs to improve healthcare in Aceh Besar, Indonesia. <i>Asian Journal of Communication</i> , 18 (4): 348-364.	BK	0
11. Czincz, J. & Hechanova, R. (2009). Internet addiction: Debating the diagnosis. <i>Journal of Technology in Human Services</i> , 27, 1-16.	DZ	0
12. de Silva, H., & Zainudeen, A. (2008). Teleuse at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Beyond Universal Access. <i>Teletronikk</i> , (2), 25-38.	TU	2
13. Dougherty, M. (2006). Exploring new modalities: Experiences with information and communications technology	BK	4

interventions in the Asia Pacific region. Bangkok: UNDP: APDIP.		
14. Durrani, H & Khoja, S. (2009). A systematic review of the use of telehealth in Asian countries. <i>Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare</i> , 15: 175–181	DZ	1
15. Elder, L. & Clarke, M. (2007). Past, present and future: Experiences and lessons from telehealth projects. <i>Open Medicine</i> , 1(3). http://www.openmedicine.ca/article/view/191/98 .	TU	5
16. Gamage, S. & Samarajiva, R. (2008). Internet Presence as Knowledge Capacity: The Case of Research in Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure Reform. <i>Information Technologies & International Development</i> 4(3), Spring/Summer: 89–96. http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/304/136 .	BK	2
17. Gurumurthy, A. & Menon, N. (2009). Violence against Women via Cyberspace. <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> , XLIV, (40).	DZ	0
18. Heeks, R. & Molla, A. (2008). <i>Compendium on Impact Assessment of ICT-for-Development Projects</i> . Available at: http://www.cipaco.org/sources/idrc-ia-for-ict4d-compendium.pdf .	TU	3
19. Hoe, N.S. (2006). <i>Breaking Barriers: The Potential of Free and Open Source Software for Sustainable Human Development</i> . Ban19. gkok: UNDP-APDIP ICT4D Series.	BK	6
20. Hussain, S., Gul, S., Waseem, A. (2007). Developing lexicographic sorting: An example for Urdu. <i>Transaction on Asian Language Information Processing (TALIP)</i> . 6, (3).	DZ	0
21. Huyer, N & Hafkin, N (2007). <i>Engendering the knowledge society: Measuring women's participation</i> . Montreal, Canada. Available at: http://www.orbicom.ca/ .	TU	5
22. Jaimai, P., Tsolmon, Zundui, Altangerel Chagnaa, and Cheol-Young Ock. (2007) <i>PC-KIMMO-based Description of Mongolian Morphology</i> . <i>International Journal of Information Processing Systems</i> , Vol. 1 (1), pp. 41-48.	BK	1
23. Jamtsho, S. & Bullen, M. (2007). Distance Education in Bhutan: Improving access and quality through ICT use. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 149-161.	DZ	5
24. Latchem, C. (2007). A Framework for Researching Asian Open and Distance Learning. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 133-147.	TU	0
25. Libero, F. (ed). (2008). <i>Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007-2008</i> . Ottawa: IDRC/Sage Publications. http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-116715-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html	BK	12
26. Libero, F. et al (2007). Uses of the Cell Phone for Education in the Philippines and Mongolia. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 231 – 244.	DZ	11
27. Loh-Ludher, L. (2007). The Socioeconomic Context of Home-Based Learning by Women in Malaysia. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 179 – 193.	TU	2

28. Naseem, T., Hussain, S. (2007). A Novel Approach for Ranking Spelling Error Corrections for Urdu. <i>Language Resources and Evaluation</i> , 41(2): 117-128.	BK	1
29. Orbicom (2007). <i>Emerging Development Opportunities: The Making of Information Societies and ICT markets</i> . Montreal, Canada. Available at: http://www.orbicom.ca/ .	DZ	(No citation information available)
30. Rashid, A. & Elder, L. (2009). Mobile Phones and Development: An Analysis of IDRC-Supported Projects. <i>Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries</i> , 36(2): 1-16. http://www.ejisdc.org/ojs2/index.php/ejisdc/article/view/529/265	DZ	3
31. Rashid, A. & Rahman, M. (2009). Making profit to solve development problems: the case of Telenor AS and the Village Phone Programme in Bangladesh. <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i> , 25(9-10): 1049-1060.	TU	0
32. Ramos, A. et al (2007). ICT-Enabled Distance Education in Community Development in the Philippines. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 213-229.	TU	3
33. Rao, N. & Raman, N. (2009). <i>ICT4D: Learnings, Best Practices, and Roadmaps from the PAN Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme</i> . Singapore: AMIC & Nanyang Technological University.	BK	(No citation information available)
34. Samarajiva, R. and Zainudeen, A. (eds) (2008). <i>ICT Infrastructure in Emerging Asia: Policy and Regulatory Roadblocks</i> . http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-117916-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html .	BK	29
35. Samarajiva, R & Gamage, S. (2007). Bridging the divide: Building Asia-Pacific capacity for effective reforms. <i>The Information Society</i> , 23(2), 109-117.	TU	14
36. Samarajiva, R. (2006). Preconditions for effective deployment of wireless technologies for development in the Asia-Pacific. <i>Information Technologies & International Development</i> , 3(2): 57-71. http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/224/94 .	DZ	6
37. Scott RE, Khoja S, Ramos AJ, Cheah M, Dapaah KF, Elder L. (2007). A Pan-Asian research network for evidence-based adoption and application of e-health. <i>Journal of Telemedicine & Telecare</i> , 2007;13(Suppl. 3): S3108.	BK	(No citation information available)
38. Sinha, C. (2009). Effects of Education and ICT Use on Gender Relations in Bhutan. <i>Information Technologies and International Development</i> , 5(3): 21-34. http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/379/175 .	DZ	0
39. Smith, M. & Elder, L. (2010). Open ICT ecosystems transforming the developing world. <i>Information Technologies & International Development</i> , Spring.	TU	0
40. Valk, J., Rashid, A., & Elder, L. (2010). Using mobile phones to improve educational outcomes: An analysis of evidence from Asia. <i>International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning</i> , 11(1): 117-140. Available at:	DZ	0

http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/794		
41. Vuth, D. et al (2007). Distance Education Policy and Public Awareness in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam. <i>Distance Education</i> , 28(2): 163-177.	TU	3
42. Wootton, R et al (eds) (2009). <i>Telehealth in the Developing World</i> . Ottawa: IDRC, Royal Society of Medicine Press. (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-136734-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).	BK	12

Annex 8: List of Program Documents Reviewed

Program Level Documentation Reviewed	Panelist
Program Documents	
Prospectus 2006-2011	All
Workplans 2005/2006-2009/2010	All
Strategies and Approaches	
PAN Prospectus Consultation, Siem Reap Cambodia	All
Communicating for Research and Influence	All
PAN Country Programming Strategy Memorandum	All
Program and Project Evaluation and External Reviews	
PAN External Review 2005	All
Formative Evaluation of PAN's Networking Approach	All
Evaluation on Policy Influence: A Case Study on LIRNEasia	All
Formative Evaluation on Gender Integration	All
PAN R&D Grants Evaluation 2006	TU
Knowledge Networking for Rural Development in Asia Pacific Region (ENRAP II) Evaluation Report	DZ
Project Planning for PAN Regional Health & ICT Research Network: Review and Evaluation of Existing Project Outputs	DZ
Project Planning for PAN Regional Health & ICT Research Network: Consultant's Report	TU
Digital Review of the Asia Pacific (DIRAP) Evaluation Report 2006	BK
Capacity Development for Research: Strategic Evaluation (Organizational Case Study of the Association of Progressive Communications)	BK
Major Conference Reports	
PAN All Partner's Conference (Penang Malaysia) 2009 Report	All
Reports to External Donors	
Second Technical Report to DFID 2008-2009	All

Annex 9: PAN Team Members 2006-2010

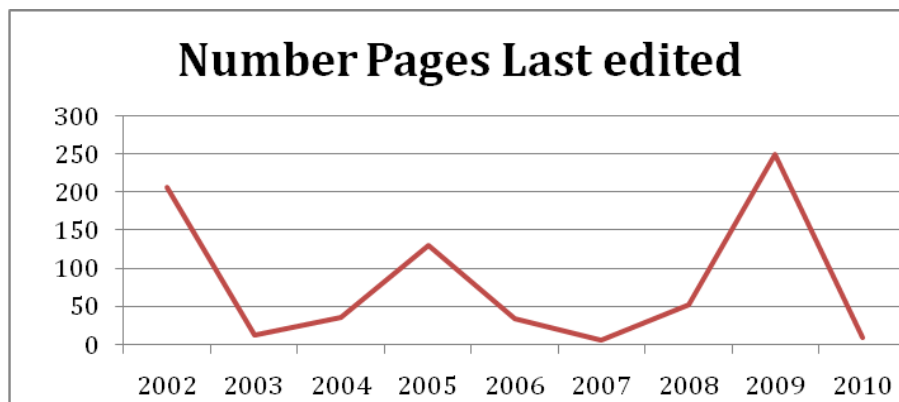
Position	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Team Leader (Ottawa)	Laurent Elder				
Program Officer (Singapore)	Maria Ng				
Program Officer (New Delhi)	Frank Tulus	Phet Sayo			
Program Officer (Ottawa)	Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah			Chaitali Sinha	
Research Officer (Ottawa)	Chaitali Sinha			Ahmed T. Rashid	

Source: Laurent Elder, 2010.

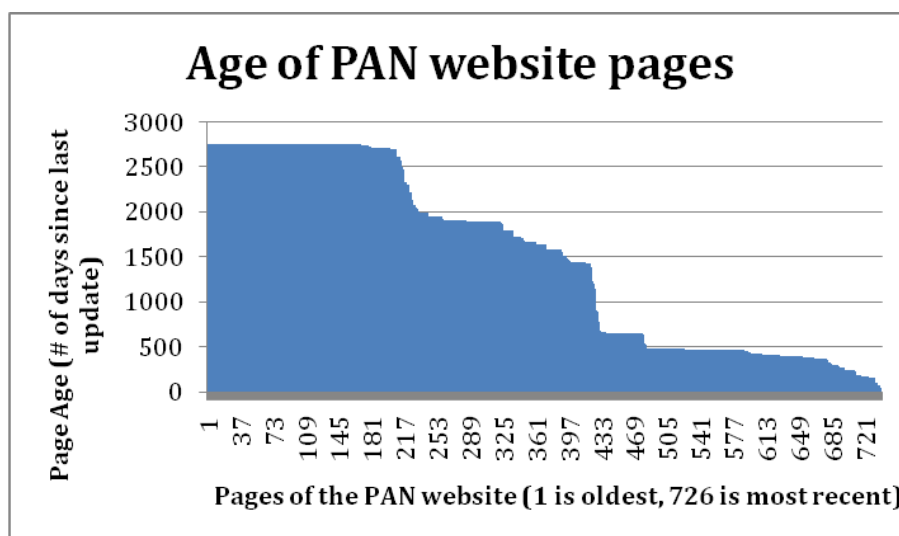
Annex 10: Summary evidence of IDRC's PAN web-site materials

As part of our background research, we were interested in how PAN's digital environments were being used, in part to see how much use people were making of the PAN site to find information, and in part to try to get some evidence with which to judge the PAN team's claim to international leadership in the field of ICT4D. The following Charts and Tables provide a very broad overview of such access, although as with all such data they should be treated with considerable caution. The Panel is grateful to Matthew Walton at IDRC for generating this information.

Data on PAN all web-site traffic (based on server logs)



This Chart suggests that there were three peaks of activity in page editing – in 2002, 2005 and 2009. These appear to coincide with preparations for the end of program evaluations.



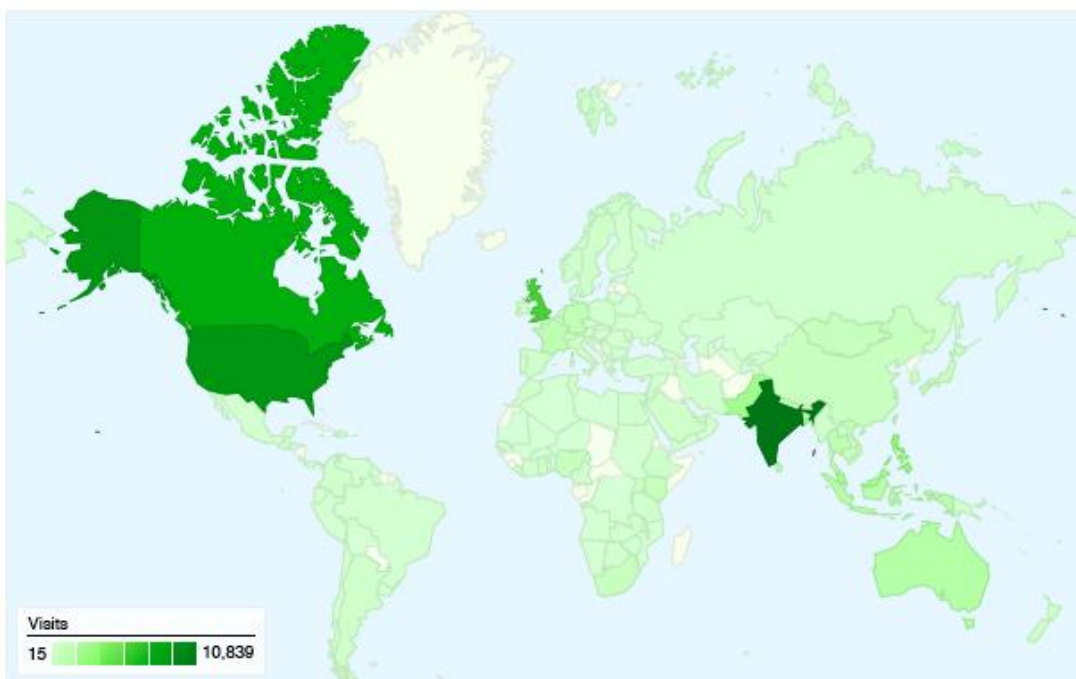
Overview of Access to PAN Asia segment of IDRC's web-site 2007-2010

www.idrc.ca
Map Overlay

Apr 17, 2007 - Jan 1, 2010

Comparing to: Site

This report is based on sampled data.



69,175 visits came from 148 countries/territories in the "PAN Asia" segment

Total visits	69,175
Pageviews	351,873
Average Pageviews	5.09
Time on site	3 mins 38 secs

This means that there are approximately 70 visitors a day with each visitor spending only just over three and a half minutes on the site. Whilst the Panel has no comparative figures for other IDRC programmes, this appears to be quite a low visitor rate.

The most popular pages visited in the Pan Asia segment were:

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-1-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html (IDRC Home Page; 9,199 pageviews – 2.61%)

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-30321-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html (IDRC's research programs and projects; 8,293 pageviews – 2.35%)

http://www.idrc.ca/panasia/ev-9929-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html (Flood 98 - Bagladesh - Photo Gallery; 7,075 pageviews – 2.01%)

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-4509-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html (Pan Asia Networking; 6,263 pageviews – 1.78%)

http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-54473-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html (Funding Opportunities; 4,045 pageviews - 1.15%)

The Table below provides a breakdown of visits for the most popular visitor countries:

Country	Number of visits	Pages/Visit	Average time on site
India	10,839 (16%)	4.32	3:50
United States	8,980 (13%)	3.38	2:24
Canada	7,450 (11%)	8.67	5:28
United Kingdom	5,466 (8%)	7.71	2:51
Philippines	2,938 (4%)	3.84	3:02
Pakistan	2,233 (3%)	4.43	4:57
Malaysia	2,048 (3%)	3.33	3:19
Bangladesh	1,686 (2%)	7.46	5:12
Australia	1,515 (2%)	3.60	2:33
Indonesia	1,280 (2%)	3.18	4:34

This highlights that, while people from India (including, presumably, IDRC staff based there) accounted for 16% of visitors, people in four „developed’ countries outside the region (USA, Canada, UK and Australia) accounted for 34% of visits. All remaining countries within Asia each had 4% or less of the visitors. This suggests that the IDRC site is not being particularly widely used in the region, let alone other parts of the developing world, for accessing information about PAN activities. Researchers and practitioners in Asia and Latin America have much to learn from PAN’s successes, and the team might like to explore ways through which the IDRC site could be used more effectively to share research findings more globally.

To gain an understanding of how much people were using the IDRC site to access the publications that the Panel was invited to read (Annex 7), information for 7 such publications was found, and pertinent data are indicated in the Table below.

Number of visits and entrances to PAN publications hosted on IDRC’s website, as at May 2010

Publication	Visits	Entrances
Akhter, S. & Arinto, P. (eds). (2009). <i>Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2009-2010</i> . Ottawa: IDRC/Sage Publications.	1309	639
Liberio, F. (ed). (2008). <i>Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007-2008</i> . Ottawa: IDRC/Sage Publications.	2389	937
Samarajiva, R. and Zainudeen, A. (eds) (2008). <i>ICT Infrastructure in Emerging Asia: Policy and Regulatory Roadblocks</i> .	2920	1092
Wootton, R et al (eds) (2009). <i>Telehealth in the Developing World</i> . Ottawa: IDRC, Royal Society of Medicine Press.	4076	2826
Alampay, E. (ed). <i>Living the Information Society in Asia</i> . Ottawa: IDRC/Institute of South East Asian Studies (Singapore).	999	295
E-Commerce in the Asian Context: Selected Case Studies (2005), R. Lafond & C. Sinha (eds) < http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-72689-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html >	1468	546

Experiences and lessons learnt from telemedicine projects supported by IDRC (2009), L. Elder & M. Clarke	541	265
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Note:

The column for entrances suggests that visitors were specifically seeking this publication when entering the IDRC web-site

Whilst the Panel has no comparative figures for other IDRC program publications, this indicates that there is indeed interest in PAN's publications accessible through the IDRC site. The Panel would encourage PAN, and indeed IDRC more generally, to ensure that all publications resulting from grants should be made available in this way. This would greatly facilitate researchers and practitioners gaining access to the diversity of valuable research outputs from projects.

A final exploration of PAN's influence more widely through the Internet was undertaken by reviewing some web searches. These revealed the following interesting observations:

Through Google – a search on “ICT4D Asia” (which listed 414,000 results) on 23rd July 2010:

- PAN funded programs were featured individually quite prominently. LIRNEasia was 6th, AMIC was 12th, and SIRCA was 17th. This is an important outcome of the programme.
- The most highly ranked of IDRC's PAN program pages (http://www.idrc.ca/panasia/ev-94703-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html) featured directly as the 26th most popular page, although its small grants programme was mentioned 11th as part of IDRC's ICT R&D Program page.
- The most popular listed “ICT4D Asia” pages were produced by UNDP's APDIP program (<http://www.apdip.net>); other highly ranked organisations featuring more prominently than PAN included infoDev (<http://www.infodev.org>), the World Bank (<http://blogs.worldbank.org/edutech/>), UN-APCICT (<http://www.unapcict.org>), and GKP (<http://www.globalknowledgepartnership.org>)

Through Cuil – a search for “ICT4D Asia” generated 12,470 results on 23rd July 2010:

- IDRC's PAN program did not feature in the top 20 results
- The organisations listed most highly were One World's Digital Opportunity Channel (<http://www.digitalopportunity.org>), ICT4D South Asia (<http://southasiaict4d.wordpress.com/>), the ICT4D Collective (<http://www.gg.rhul.ac.uk/ict4d/ict4dbook.html>), APDIP (www.apdip.net/projects/dig-rev/info/vn), Digital Review (<http://www.digital-review.org>), UN-APCICT (<http://www.unapcict.org>) and ICTlogy (<http://www.ictlogy.net>).
- LIRNEasia featured 6th on the list

Although these are snapshots, and the PAN team has been very focused in ensuring that it is the partners who should get the credit for the work they do in ICT4D, the Panel was a little surprised that IDRC's PAN program itself does not feature more prominently

in such searches, given the claims made about its leadership in the field. Many of PAN's most prominent partners are funded by a diversity of organisations, and it is thus extremely difficult quantitatively to attribute the precise effect that PAN's funding has had. Thus, LIRNEasia's site (<http://lirneasia.net/about/>) notes that "Currently, the majority of LIRNEasia's programs are funded by the [International Development Research Centre](#) of Canada (IDRC) and the [Department for International Development](#) of the UK (DFID). In addition, LIRNEasia has received project contributions from [Telenor Research and Development Centre Sdn. Bhd.](#), Malaysia (TRICAP). LIRNEasia has previously received funding from [info Dev](#), a [World Bank](#) unit that has partnered with [LIRNE.NET](#) since 2001, the [Canadian International Development Agency](#) (CIDA) and the [ICT Agency of Sri Lanka](#) (ICTA)." The issue of attribution is explored further in Annex 14.

We emphasize that these data present only a partial overview, but they do shed some light on external access to information about PAN that was helpful in shaping our views.

Annex 11: PAN Panel Biographical Statements

Beth Kolko is Professor of Human Centered Design & Engineering at the University of Washington, Seattle where she heads the Design for Digital Inclusion Lab. She is also a Faculty Associate at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. She received her PhD in Rhetoric and began her academic career in the humanities; she made the shift to engineering ten years ago in order to apply cultural theory to technology design. Since 2000, she has conducted longitudinal work on the impact of information and communication technologies in Central Asia, work that for the past eight years has been funded by the US National Science Foundation. Through this project and others she has conducted fieldwork in over 20 countries. She has developed technologies for mobile phone-based social recommendation systems and grassroots public transportation information systems for use in low-resource environments, and she is currently at work on a simple, low-cost, portable ultrasound for midwives. She is the author or editor of three books and has published over 50 articles and chapters. She is on the editorial board of several journals and has reviewed for journals and conferences for two decades. She has consulted for multiple organizations including The Asia Foundation, USAID, Grameen Technology Foundation, UN Foundation, and Internews.

Tim Unwin (born 1955) is Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, UNESCO Chair in ICT4D, Director of the ICT4D Collective and Professor of Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London. From 2001-2004 he led the UK Prime Minister's *Imfundo: Partnership for IT in Education* initiative based within the Department for International Development, and from 2007 he was Director and then Senior Advisor to the World Economic Forum's *Partnerships for Education* initiative with UNESCO. He was previously Head of the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London (1999–2001), and has also served as Honorary Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) (1995-1997). His research has taken him to some 25 countries across the world, and he has written or edited 15 books, and more than 200 papers and other publications. Over the last decade his research has concentrated especially on information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D), focusing particularly on the use of ICTs to support people with disabilities, and to empower out of school youth. His latest collaborative book, entitled simply *ICT4D*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2009. He also serves as Academic Advisor and External Examiner for the Institute of Masters of Wine.

Dieter Zinnbauer works for Transparency International (TI), an NGO that is present in more than 100 countries to fight corruption and promote good governance. Dieter has served as Chief Editor of the Global Corruption Report, published by Cambridge University Press, from March 2007 until February 2010 and now co-ordinates TI's work on emerging policy issues and innovation. Prior to joining TI Dieter worked as policy analyst and research co-ordinator for a variety of organizations in the field of development, democratization and technology policy, including UNDP, UNDESA, and the European Commission. Dieter has an MSc in Economics from the University of

Regensburg, Germany, a PhD in Development Studies from the London School of Economics. He currently serves as referee for a couple of academic journals on ICT4D and has held post doctorate fellowship positions with the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs in New York, Oxford University, the US Social Science Research Council and the London School of Economics.

Annex 12: Summary of PAN Prospectus approved by IDRC's Board of Governors, 2006

Themes	Policies	Technologies	Effects
Objectives	Understanding which policies are most appropriate for creating knowledge societies in Asia	Learning from technology pilots to improve connectivity and develop appropriate development applications	Building research capacity in Asia to better understand the socio-economic effects of the information society on different user communities
Research Activities	Regional research networks, policy dialogues that support building evidence for influencing and informing policy on access to networks and knowledge	Action research pilots and technological R&D in the areas of health, education, governance, and livelihoods through either small grants programs or country pilots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing appropriate methodologies for understanding the positive and negative impacts of ICTs • Training in appropriate methodologies • Undertaking socio-economic impact studies
Expected Outcomes	A body of evidence, increased dialogue and awareness that serves to instigate change within the telecommunication policy and intellectual property policy spheres	A body of evidence that serves to better understand which technological innovations are best suited to solve development problems in the areas of health, education, governance, and livelihoods; Development of innovative ICT applications that help solve development challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better understanding of the most appropriate research methodologies for understanding the interaction between ICTs and development • Increased capacity of Asian researchers and ICT practitioners in the area of ICT for development research • Enhanced knowledge of the positive and negative effects ICTs are having on Asian communities

Source: *Pan Asia Networking (PAN) Prospectus Review 2006-2011*, IDRC, 1 April 2010.

Annex 13: Terms of Reference for the External Review

The Review Panel was asked to judge the performance (strengths/weaknesses) of the program in terms of:

1. *To what extent was the implementation of the program's prospectus appropriate?* In particular, it was asked to validate the coherence and appropriateness of (1) the choices made and priorities set by the program to adapt and/or evolve its strategies from what was outlined originally in the prospectus, and (2) the strategic lessons the program drew from its experience.
2. *Overall, was the quality of the research outputs/publications supported by the program acceptable (given the context/intended purpose/etc.)?* The Panel was asked to assess the main research outputs/publications produced by a sample of completed projects in order to judge the overall research quality and the significance of the research findings to the field of study/research area.
3. *To what extent are the program's outcomes relevant, valuable and significant?* The Panel was asked to verify the significance and contributions of the outcomes reported in the program final report according to research partners, research users, and other influential stakeholders, and also to document any important outcomes (positive/negative, intended/unintended) that were not noted in the program final report.
4. *What are the key issues for the Centre's Board of Governors?* This requested that the Panel identify any issues for consideration by the Centre's Board of Governors, particularly in terms of niche, gaps in evidence, gaps in outcomes that could have been expected, whether problems stemmed from theory of implementation failures, issues for future programming, recommendations linked to findings, emerging questions, etc.

Annex 14: Limitations of the Study

The Panel faced a number of challenges throughout this review. Throughout, we were very conscious of problems associated with differences in terminologies and understanding relating to the key issues with which we were grappling. Five stand out as being particularly significant:

- *Research quality*: there are many different types of research, for each of which the quality criteria are varied; we sought explicitly to champion such diversity in our evaluation;
- *Relevance*: as far as possible, we sought to explore relevance in terms of the contribution that an intervention could make to the lives of people living and working in Asia, and especially to poor people and marginalised communities;
- *Significance*: again, we were told by many respondents that this term should be considered primarily in terms of the needs of Asian researchers and communities;
- *Appropriateness*: in judging this, we focused both on appropriateness to IDRC's core mission of using science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic and environmental problems they face, as well as the needs of people in the countries where PAN was working; and
- *Outputs and outcomes*: we chose to interpret outputs as the specific deliverables of a project, such as research publications, whereas we see outcomes as being more systemic changes resulting from these outputs.

Throughout, we were eager to understand how members of the PAN team, their grantees and other stakeholders interviewed conceptualized these issues, rather than necessarily imposing our own interpretations upon them. We are conscious that our evaluation is based on a relatively swift review of largely secondary material, and whilst we are confident in the comments we make, we wish to emphasize that these have not been verified from practical engagement on the ground with PAN's projects in Asia.

Moreover, the *timing* of this review, one year before completion of the PAN program means that projects initiated more recently have not yet had time to come to fruition in terms either of policy influence or of widespread dissemination of research findings.

Annex 15: Acronyms

APC	Association for Progressive Communications
APDIP	Asia Pacific Development Information Programme
BK	Beth Kolko
BRIC	Brazil, India, Russia and China
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSCW	Computer Supported Cooperative Work
CUAPC	Community Driven Universal Access Solutions in Cambodia
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DZ	Dieter Zinnbauer
ENRAP	Knowledge Networking for Rural Development in Asia/Pacific Region
FOSS	Free and Open Source Software
ICANN	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICT4D	Information Communication Technology for Development
ICTA	Information Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
iREACH	Informatics for Rural Empowerment and Community Health
ISIF	International Society of Information Fusion
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LIRNEasia	Learning Initiatives on Reforms for Network Economies
MSSRF	MS Swaminathan Research Foundation
ONI	Open Net Initiative
PAD	Project Approval Document
PAN	Pan Asia Networking
PANACeA	Pan Asian Collaboration for Evidence-based e-Health Adoption and Application

PANdora	Pan Asia Networking Distance and Open
PAN-gov	Pan Asia Network on Governance
PFR	Prospectus Final Report
rPCRs	Rolling Project Completion Report
R&D	Research and Development
SIRCA	Strengthening ICT4D Research Capacity in Asia
TI	Transparency International
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRICAP	Telenor Research and Innovation Centre Asia Pacific
TU	Tim Unwin
UN-APCICT	United Nations-Asian Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Annex 16: Acknowledgements

This External Panel Review (EPR) would not have been possible without the enthusiastic engagement of all members of the PAN team, and the guidance and advice provided by the IDRC Evaluation Unit, especially Sarah Earl. We are particularly appreciative of the willingness of all those we interviewed to contribute fully of their time, and share with us their insights into the work of the PAN programme during the review period. The patient and unstinting support of our Assistant, Emily Taylor, was invaluable in ensuring that we adhered to our timelines, and we are most grateful to her for all that she did to facilitate and contribute to our work. Thanks are also due to Marije Geldof for helping with the identification and delivery of documentation for this review.

Beth Kolko, Tim Unwin and Dieter Zinnbauer
Ottawa, 23rd July 2010