FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN IDRC

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PART I

Introduction to the Framework

This Framework is based on a file review of capacity development in approximately 40 IDRC projects, covering a full range of sectors, regions and time periods from the early 1980s to the present.[1] Through the analysis of the aims, activities and results of the various individual and institutional capacity initiatives in these projects, a capacity development "map" was produced, aimed at enabling IDRC more effectively to see where and how it was, and could be, moving in terms of the capacity development aspects of its mandate.

This Evaluation Framework draws on the same analysis of projects and builds from that map. It is intended as a *generic guide* for the assessment of any capacity development activity or project component supported by the Centre; and for any form of assessment (formative or summative; monitoring or evaluation).

The Evaluation Framework thus provides an overall conceptual framework for assessing capacity and it includes the main elements which could be included in an assessment. The expectation of the Framework, then, is that it will be adapted and tailored to suit the terms of reference of the specific assessment task.

→ While all sections should, therefore, be *considered* in any assessment activity, the actual usefulness and answerability of specific capacity questions will depend on the purpose of the activity, the methodology used (e.g. file review, interviews, site visit) and the data available.

Toward this end, the main text of the Framework is comprised of two sections, followed by elaborative annexes.

- Part I of the Framework discusses issues particular to capacity development which need to be considered in designing an evaluation.

- Part II is the core of the Framework, presenting the various dimensions of capacity development which an assessment might explore and specific questions within each of these. It is divided into three "levels": description, results and analysis.

- The annexes provide fuller descriptions of capacity issues based on the earlier mapping exercise, intended as references for the Framework user in elaborating specific points as to the kinds of data and analysis which the

[1] Ten projects selected for the development of a "capacity development map" (2002) and 30 specifically for the current exercise (See Annex 1 for the selection process).

evaluation questions might be expected to produce. They also describe the processes through which the 40-file analysis and mapping were done.

Designing a Capacity Evaluation: First Steps

1. Determine the Definition and Focus of a Capacity Development Evaluation

This is a critically important first "first step", but not necessarily a straightforward or simple one, largely because capacity itself is not a single or simple thing.

In the context of IDRC, *capacity* refers generally to *the ability of individuals, communities and institutions to generate, use and promote knowledge in ways which support equitable and sustainable development*. Capacity *development* concerns *the intention to create and/or strengthen such abilities*. The difficulty in pinning either of these definitions down with sufficient clarity to measure their application, quality and impact is that they tend to be used in fluid, often vague and sometimes contradictory ways in the Centre – in policy statements, project documents and daily parlance.

Broadly, the specific capacities[2] which the Centre attempts to support can be grouped into five capacity categories[3]. Each completes the phrase: "as a consequence of the IDRC intervention, this participant or partner is *expected to be able to*…[4]

a) ***conduct*** *research;*
b) ***manage*** *research activities and organizations;*
c) ***conceive, generate*** *and* ***sustain*** *research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities;*
d) ***use/apply*** *research outcomes in policy and/or practice; and/or*
e) ***mobilize*** *research-related policy and programme at a systems level*[5]

These broad capacity categories (and perhaps evaluations will identify others) are *inter-related and mutually complementary*. Together, they constitute the various dimensions of

[2] Most comments and analyses in the Framework about what CD means, does and looks like in IDRC are based on the analysis of the 40 project files; with a few quoted from IDRC documents. In general, though, they are considered to be reasonably reflective of IDRC projects in general.

[3] The tasks of creating institutions and networks, as noted in the CAF/CD document are not included here because they are not the research capacities which IDRC seeks to develop. Rather, they are, respectively, the target of the capacity intervention and the mechanism for delivery of, and support to, capacity development. To the extent IDRC effectively supports capacities of and/or through institutions and networks, it can claim "good performance".

[4] One tricky aspect of evaluating capacity concerns what gets measured: the ability to do something, or the actual doing of it. Will the evaluation be satisfied that people know something new (that teachers can describe child-centred pedagogy) or must they show changed behaviour (that teachers use such pedagogy in the classroom)? This issue will be addressed in the Framework, but it is not an easily resolved one, especially for any post-hoc assessments which do not have access to the people who were expected to increase their capacity.

[5] See part 2, section 3 a) on capacity objectives, for a detailed listing of the types of capacities which make up these broad categories. Specific monitoring or evaluations could look for relevant examples of these as "expected and/or realized outcomes" of the CD dimensions of the project.

a full research enterprise i.e. the kind of *overall competency* which should be available within any country's research environment, to address any development problem or task. In few, if any, countries, sectors or time periods, however, will the full complement be "in place".

→ The task of the evaluation, then, will be to determine the availability, quality and reach of those capacities the Centre was seeking to develop through its support (who was to have them, where they were and what they were doing with them), and whether the appropriate resources were available to develop these capacities.

These capacity categories are also inter-related insofar as they are to some extent *hierarchical*. As listed here, each includes the notion of subsuming those preceding it.

→ This suggests, for example, that an evaluation to assess how well IDRC is "supporting the devolution of activities and/or functions to existing or newly created entities in the South"[6] – implying capacities to *mobilize research-related policy and programme at a systems level* – should include reference to whether there is evidence of institutional or programme strength in the other four capacities. A project aiming to build research *management* capacity should also be assessed for its attention to the individual or group's ability to *conduct* research.

Each capacity category includes the notion of *necessary conditions for getting there*. For example, in order for people to do something new, better or differently, it is usually necessary that they have a different (more accurate, complete or nuanced) understanding about themselves and of the situation. New scientific knowledge, as a capacity, likely needs to come before new research implementation behaviour.

→ It is important, then, that a capacity development evaluation focus not just on the final capacity objective e.g. that coastal fishers manage their stocks in an integrated way, but break that down into the various new *knowledge, values, attitudes and skills* which are inherent components of this outcome: did the project identify these, provide opportunities for them to be developed and enable their integration by all those expected to become new-style coastal actors?

Finally, each capacity category includes the notion of *degrees of quality*. Within each category, the level of competency will range from *basic* through to sufficient *competency for independent action.*

→ An evaluation of the Centre's effectiveness at "strengthening the capacity of recipient partner organizations…to communicate their research results to

[6] IDRC. January 9/04. "Corporate Assessment Framework 'Indigenous Capacity Building' Performance Area", pg 2.

promote evidence-based change", for example, would need to decide if success will be defined simply in terms of an organization being able to write and distribute better research reports; interpret and negotiate findings to policy-makers; or conceive and implement a programme of research in support of a policy change effort in collaboration with the policy system. It will need to decide a measure of sustainability: whether capacity will be judged on the basis of a one-off, project-supported communication, or a persistent, independent post-project behaviour.

2. Delimit the Definition of Capacity Development

Capacity and capacity development actions include a number of dimensions around which it will be important for an evaluation to set clear boundaries in terms of what it is looking for. It will need to ensure that the analysis is sufficiently comprehensive in covering the range of issues pertinent to capacity development as it appeared in the projects or programmes under review. At the same time, it will need to be sufficiently focused to produce useable information. While the balance will be different depending on the specific aims of each evaluation, it will typically be necessary to specify:

- Whose capacity is being evaluated: Are these the researchers, research managers, partners, users of the results or beneficiaries of the programmes coming out of the research – or a mix of these? Are they the individual scientists or is it the institution? Or is the interaction of the two important e.g. the capacity of the collective whole to conceive and do research?

- Whether outcomes or the processes of achieving them are the concern of the evaluation: Does the evaluation want to be able to assess the difference IDRC has made *to* the kind and quality of capacity available in some setting? Or does it seek to assess whether and what new knowledge *about* the capacity development process IDRC has generated through its activities?

- Whether the capacity categories in broad terms (often the stated concerns in a project) are the focus of the evaluation, or the various knowledge, attitudes and skills underlying them: In other words, how far into the level of capacity change does the evaluation want to go? How far is it able go, given its terms of reference?

- Whether the nature of the delivery mechanisms used to produce the capacity development outcomes are the focus of the evaluation: Does the evaluation care about *how* the project thought about, assessed and implemented the capacity activity? Or is it more narrowly focused on the outcomes alone? For example, is it assessing the validity of a participatory research design in enabling peace-building capacities, or only that cooperative behaviours emerged?

In summary, then, developing capacity is a complex undertaking, a combined result of helping people and institutions acquire a variety of new knowledge, attitudes and skills; with varying levels of competency; through a variety of learning experiences, from

simple exposure to new ideas through to sustained and facilitated study and mentored practice. The evaluation needs to be clear about what among all of these, and to what degree of detail, it wants to be able to comment.

3. Select Viable Cases

A critical part of this process of deciding what, among all of these above dimensions of capacity, it wants to assess, and how deeply it needs to go to do so, will be to determine the *availability of the data*. The evaluation must determine what kinds of data will be sufficient to make the evaluation case (e.g. statements of learning versus observations of learning in action), and ensure it has the documents, people and sites necessary to get them.

Ironically, as a research organization, gathering performance and outcome data on capacity development activities is not especially easy. Based on the experience of the file analysis leading to the development of this Framework, the reality is that assessment goals may have to be modest because data will often be difficult to find. While most IDRC projects incorporate a capacity development reference, and many include specific capacity development components,

- → the rationale and planned implementation of these capacity elements are not always – perhaps not even typically – made explicit in the actual input or outcome documentation of the project.

Thus, while capacity may have been addressed in the practice of a project, it is, more often than not, difficult to say so from the files. Common to most project documentation are limited and/or missing references to any policy or strategic plan which might have informed capacity development thinking or decisions; to a rationale for the selection of particular capacity activities or options considered; and to monitored indications of capacity inputs and outcomes.

In addition to these substantive file limitations, there are also physical ones. For many projects, relatively few narrative documents are available. What there are, are often sporadic in coverage in terms of analytical planning and progress reports dealing with capacity issues. For many, documents of any kind may have been fully or partially destroyed or, in some cases, in an inaccessible limbo between Ottawa and a regional office. For older projects, and even for some newer ones, relatively few materials are likely to be available electronically.

In any evaluation, whether a large-scale or narrow case study, documentary file review will be a necessary point of departure. It may also be the end point if the situation is such that only a file-based analysis is feasible. This could be the case, for example:

- where the overview is largely descriptive, scanning a broad theme (e.g. how capacity is described in farming systems projects) or a fairly concrete factor (e.g. budgets allocated to training) from a large number of projects;
- where projects are geographically dispersed and evaluation time and budget are limited; or
- where projects are older, making field-based and interview data nonviable.

Whatever the situation, the limitations of documentary evidence indicated above strongly warrant that any evaluation intended to produce a comprehensive and accurate understanding of IDRC capacity development actions and outcomes should proceed by stages.

→ Determine that *the minimum documentary requirements* for assessing the capacity performance of a project are available. These are:

a) a project proposal and, better still, proposal development correspondence;
b) a complete project summary/PAD with appraisal and project description;
c) an approved budget, indicating IDRC, recipient and other donors contributions;[7]
d) monitoring documents (trip reports, in-house assessments, emails from POs); and
e) a PCR, final technical report or evaluation.

If these project materials are not available, the project (or the selected sample of projects) should probably be discarded as a viable case for assessment. Working without this basic minimum will leave the evaluation with little information as to plans, definitions and rationales for capacity development actions. This will tend, in consequence, to *push the evaluation toward inferences* about the nature and extent of capacity components, inferences which may be inaccurate, and risk crediting the project with too little, too much or the wrong kinds of capacity development inputs, reach and outcomes. The limited quality and depth of reporting on capacity issues in many documents make such risks already high; it is important to have sufficient instances to assure internal validity.

→ Confirm the level of analysis required - e.g. project, programme or policy. Different levels of evaluation analysis imply a different range of materials being available.

- A *project-level* analysis, for example, is generally confined to the parameters of that activity, albeit with variations depending on whether research or capacity itself is the main purpose. Core documents at this micro-level are likely to be limited to the project files themselves, and should provide the basis of a reasonably coherent and indicative file-based capacity analysis.

- A *programme or policy-level* analysis, on the other hand, would require a wider perspective and a longer time horizon in order to capture the varying capacity gaps, strategies, providers and participants presumably implicated in the initiative.

[7] The willingness of IDRC, recipient and/or other donors to support CD through predetermined funding of activities -- training, networking, advisor time, is a strong indication of serious thought and commitment. Many projects appear to follow a more ad hoc, add-on approach which risks similarly ad hoc planning and tracking.

> Core documents here will need to include any which elaborate division/PI and wider Centre thinking during the period of the project and that of other external actors (donors, national agencies) as these might have affected the way/extent to which capacity was conceived, treated and tracked in programme/policy development and implementation[8].

→ Confirm the depth of insight sought. For example, will capacity be assessed in terms of what IDRC and participants *said* they should have done or did; what they *thought about* what their needed and achieved capacities were; what capacities were *displayed* and how effectively – or with what results?

Any depth of evaluative analysis can be valid. It depends on what the objectives of the task are. It also depends on whether data are actually available on which to base the degree of understanding sought and, as emphasized here, file reviews are clearly limited in this regard. These limitations are likely to be most significant for an evaluation which intends to analyze capacity development issues beyond the statement of input level to talk about outcomes.

They will be significant, for example, in moving beyond the finding that six community leaders were trained in PR methods, to confirm that they acquired new knowledge about community-based analysis, displayed analytical behaviours, and reflected their learning in more equitable land distribution.

They will certainly be significant in terms of the kinds of capacity dimensions with which the CAF evaluation exercise is concerned: how well the Centre has been supporting capacities in the South relevant to their managing the devolution of development research agendas, building relationships regionally and internationally, gaining support in achieving their goals and communicating research results in ways which promote evidence-based change.

Capacity evaluations on the dimensions suggested in these examples will require *looking for and assessing the often subtle influence on capacity of key development and management factors*. These would include the strategic "thinking behind" of capacity decisions; how selected mechanisms were linked to goals and objectives, and how well their implementation met expectations; and the nature and reach of outcomes from project, theme and Centre perspectives. These are issues not often captured on paper or even on email. They tend to evolve through personal communication, through decisions on where to travel, with whom to meet or who to link with whom.

Essentially, *such data are available only through interaction with projects and programmes themselves*, through interviews and observations of on-going or

[8] Note that "programme" is used here in the broad sense of a conceptual framework of some sort which guides project development and, depending on the tightness of the concept, assumes certain theoretical and/or methodological positions which are not always explicitly reiterated in each project, but which allow specific actions or resource applications. Thus, programmes include structural units (e.g. Economics), PIs (e.g. CBNRM) and "lines of research" (e.g. farming systems). It is important, then, that even when based on a project-level, the evaluation take into account the fact that some may be part of a larger programme whole and refer to the capacity implications of its policies and guidelines.

retrospective implementation. For these evaluations, cases should be selected for which the following criteria can be met:

- a thorough review of a reasonable body of project documents, as discussed above;

- a complementary review of CD-related policy and strategic documents from the Centre, division and/or programme more widely, including research and capacity analyses from other sources of experience and expertise; and

- in-depth interview data and field-based interaction/observation e.g. with former trainers, participants. This means selecting evaluation cases which are accessible, recent enough that key actors are available and for which the budget and schedule of the evaluation allow on-site visits.

A final point with reference to *projects and programmes which are expressly designed as capacity development undertakings* e.g. research awards, small grants, training-of-trainers activities[9]. Generally, these should be considered as distinct types or sets of Centre supported initiatives, and evaluated as such in terms of whether and how they met:

(i) the broad Centre CD purposes for which they were funded e.g. assessing whether small grants mechanisms actually produced cost-effective, sustainable capacity which IDRC-supported research programmes were then able to use; and/or

(ii) the criteria of "good" capacity development with respect to adult learning principles, means-ends congruent design, learner-centred methods etc.

Questions which would address both issues are included in the Framework, the same as might apply to any project. Again, it will be a matter of selecting those which best answer the specific objectives of the evaluation. It is important to note, however, that simply because these projects are *sold* as CD activities they are not necessarily going to realize either the Centre's capacity development purposes or meet good CD standards. In this respect, the analysis and conclusions may well come down harder on these projects where they appear to fall short of CD expectations.

[9] They would include most, if not all, the projects developed by the Fellowships and Awards Division (FAD).

Part II

Framing the Evaluation Questions

Part II of the Evaluation Framework contains the core areas within which capacity development activities and their results should be assessed; along with suggested questions to help guide the data search – questions to be asked of projects, their managers and participants, whether through file review, interviews or observation.

The Framework questions are divided into three broad categories[10]: descriptive and analytical.

- "Level A" concerns data the evaluator reads, sees and hears about project design and implementation. Questions in this section, therefore, ask what the managers, participants and documents said and did with respect to capacity decisions, actions and outcomes; and, if possible, their explanations.

- "Level B" concerns the results of design and implementation aimed at capacity. Questions in this section therefore, ask what evidence there is, from participants or documents, that something changed in terms of capacity. This section is also essentially descriptive, but it is presented separately from data about intentions, design and implementation, in order to emphasize the need to ask discrete questions related to concrete results.

- "Level C" concerns what it all means, the analytical sense which can be made of the descriptive data. They ask the why, how and with what implications of the capacity outcomes realized; the way they were realized; and where they fell short of, or turned out differently from, the plans. Analyses based on this section, then, are built around explanatory factors, those conditions considered important to making capacity interventions "successful".

  → From the perspective of individual and institutional learning, and of IDRC's development mandate, these factors try to answer questions of "how well", "how effectively", "with what effect" and "for whom" capacity activities took place.

The rationale for using these three levels is essentially *procedural, not substantive*. It recognizes the normal stages of research: first collecting the descriptive data, and then

[10] Neither the category or level of question necessarily implies a judgement i.e. that a project was good or bad in terms of a capacity development activity, or that some projects failed in capacity terms where others succeeded. While the answers to the questions might be used this way, the focus of the Framework is on enabling evaluations to indicate the *degree and kind* of capacity development activity, the *nature* of capacity outcomes, and the *factors explaining* both.

analyzing these in terms of their meanings and implications for the actual issues the evaluation is seeking to explore and understand.

This layout, by definition, produces some apparent redundancy among themes and questions, but actually asks the evaluation to deal with the same data in different ways. The *first level* questions ask simply about what was planned, done and produced; the *second level* questions ask what changes resulted and the *third level* questions ask why and what it all means.

There is some redundancy also in that the Framework makes two assumptions: first, that there are *relatively few underlying themes* which need to be dealt with in assessing capacity development in the Centre; second, that these need to be explored and understood from different angles. The four themes underlying the Framework are:

- how capacity development is officially and operationally defined in the Centre;
- how capacity development is actually done by the Centre;
- what factors, including CD policy or the lack of it influence the kind, quality and effectiveness of capacity development activities the Centre supports; and
- what difference Centre capacity development activities are making to realizing its own development research mandate and its partners' development goals.

All of the core areas and specific questions essentially go back to these four. Each evaluative exercise needs to consider the relative importance of each (or perhaps others?) to its own purposes, and then follow the elements of the Framework in the order and to the extent they serve to address them.

LEVEL A: DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW OF CD THINKING AND ACTIONS

The following series of questions is intended to guide data collection on what was said in documents and interviews, and/or what was observed in on-the-ground activities with respect to:

→ The intentions and actions of capacity development initiatives, or the capacity development dimensions, of a project and programme.

1. Capacity Context: Centre Policy Guidance and Support

Questions here concern what the *policies* were at the time of the project which might have influenced the place of capacity development in project development and design. Centre policies are important in establishing – and thus understanding - the context in which capacity development[11] happens or does not happen in a project, and how. They promote or guide, discourage or preclude attention to, and resources spent on, capacity. In this, policies, or the lack of them, influence capacity outcomes.

It is important to note that these may not be policy or policy debates explicitly dealing with capacity. For example, Centre thinking with respect to research utilization, grant size, cooperation with Canadian researchers, funding of NGOs, networks, what constitutes legitimate research, or even programme-management ratios – all of these can affect whether and how IDRC officers think about and deal with capacity development. This is a policy environment which needs to be built into any evaluation – and vice-versa.

From the opposite side also, it is important that projects make reference to Centre or division/PI policy in relation to their CD planning and action. Otherwise, it is difficult for IDRC corporately to make claims about its capacity results and how it has realized them. A project making reference to a CD policy both confirms the presence and legitimacy of that policy and, in effect, serves progressively to create and refine that policy, from the bottom-up[12].

→ Umbrella Questions:

1. *How did the project frame its goals and design with respect to the wider "policy environment" of the Centre, to policy priorities or discussions in general terms?*

[11] For ease of reading, the abbreviation CD will for the most part be used in the remainder of the Framework, except where the reference is to *capacity* alone in which case it will be written out.

[12] It is interesting to note in this respect that the PS/PAD appraisal does not include a required capacity section. While the PCR does have such a requirement, the absence of an initial explanatory justification weakens IDRC's ability to look for and track achieved capacity goals. The point here is that if CD explanations are not required or are not predicted in the conception, planning and articulation of results, there is little to suggest capacity outcomes will be systematically addressed in action, monitoring or measurement of "success". There will be no assumptions to test or benchmarks to reach.

2. *How did the project frame its CD activities in terms of Centre or programming policy[13]?*

3. *How did the project articulate its own policy framework with respect to capacity development?*

- Was Centre or programme policy on capacity development referred to in the proposal or PS, as providing a justification for the project or those components dealing with capacity development?

    - If yes, what specific guidance from the policy was used to inform the capacity development objectives, choices of modality and mechanism* or resources used in the project? (*see discussion of modalities and mechanisms page 20-21)

    - If not, did the programme or Division under which the project was funded have any policies related to capacity, either directly or indirectly, which might have been relevant to the project? In other words, was there a gap in policy use?

        - For example, were there indications that the POs looked for guidance?

        - Were there signs that they struggled in some way with how best to approach capacity gaps?

- Were any other non-CD policies used to justify or guide project design and/or actions[14]?

2. Capacity Context: Analysis and Planning

To understand how CD has been incorporated into projects, and why it has produced positive, negative or neutral outcomes, the evaluation needs to understand how the capacity dimension was analyzed and planned – as displayed in project development and approval documents and, if possible, interviews. For example: are there explicit and in-depth analyses of where, why and how capacities were needed or what they would look like? Is there evidence that options, strategies and methods for developing these were considered? Are there defined schemes or plans for mapping progress?

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[13] Looking especially at projects falling within programming/PI areas like CBNRM, MINGA, FSR which have as their programmatic point of departure a policy framework which assumes capacity but may/may not be very explicit in all documents.

[14] This kind of information is important to collect because it will be useful later in Level C questions, for analyzing whether the project missed or made the most of such opportunities to justify getting into (unplanned) capacity actions. For example, one project justified using a small grants and co-operative design via the Centre policy of "encouraging and supporting sustainable, multi-stakeholder, community-focused and multidisciplinary research". In fact, such a design is especially appropriate as a nonformal CD mechanism, but the documents did not make it clear that the project developed a coherent strategy to implement capacity action specifically aligned to the arrangement -- a theme for an interview-based evaluation usefully to follow-up.

It seems self-evident that little of lasting value, in either research, or capacity results, will happen if there are no plans for making them happen. This will usually require some reference to capacity development as a field of theory and practice; to a conceptual framework or set of assumptions as to what capacities are in the context of the project and how specific mechanisms are expected to produce specific learning outcomes[15].

An evaluation may be able to infer that capacities were improved in a project if the CD activities were planned, even if few performance or outcome data were collected. It will have little reason to make such an inference if nothing had been planned i.e. simply on the basis of its capacity objectives. The evaluation, therefore, needs to collect data both on (i) whether CD analysis and plans were done; and (ii) how complete and technically competent they are.

As noted in Part I, analysis and planning for capacity at the level of written documents tends to be minimal, and described more in terms of activities to be done than details of why they were done, how they were done, who did them, or for whom they were done. The exceptions, to some degree, are purposively capacity building projects (e.g. small grants), but here, too, analysis can be weak and planning more in terms of what was done, rather than how it was done.

→ *Umbrella Questions:*

1. *How did the project conceptualize and prepare its capacity development elements?*
2. *What types and sources of analysis did it draw on or undertake to frame its CD activities?*
3. *What planning was done to link the analysis to mechanisms and resources?*

a) **IDRC Lessons Applied**

Was an assessment of in-house IDRC capacity development experience, resources or lessons learned included in conceptualizing and/or designing the project?

- Did the project reference any lessons from previous IDRC capacity experience, from its own programme or Division or from the Centre more generally?

[15] This need not be a major reference to be useful as data. For example, one project to reduce child mortality noted the importance of linking technical research knowledge to practitioners' ability to use it, as a relatively simple, but very critical, assumption about facilitating behavioural change. From that, it sought to understand both the dissemination and receiving ends of the process, and then planned ways of facilitating appropriate capacities for each. This included an action research design involving both Health and Social Sciences and multiple donors: IDRC for the research, others for training.

- Was any attempt made to build on other IDRC capacity initiatives in terms of identifying strategies for capacity?

- If yes to either of these, how were these lessons described? Were there any references to how they influenced design decisions, actions and resources used in focusing the CD, or in the way the activities were designed? Were any problems, or particularly useful linkages, noted?

b) **Capacity Analysis**

Is there any indication that the capacity development aspects of the project were based on a realistic assessment of capacity within the organizations with which the project was working, or that it was set within some particular conceptual or explanatory framework; or drawing on learning principles or ideas of "best practice" in terms of what capacity is and how it happens?

- Did the rationale and initial planning for the project include attention to capacity development needs and opportunities as a specific issue?

- How was the conceptual framework or the concepts behind capacity development described in relation to the research needs and objectives of the project?

- Within such a capacity framework, and linked to the concepts, was an assessment of existing capacity in the research team, institution, sector or region used/undertaken in the development of the project?

- If there was no framework, was an assessment done anyway? If so, did the analysis produce explicit conclusions about necessary action, which specifically referenced capacity in terms, for example, of:
    - Improvements in knowledge?
    - Changes in attitude?
    - Changes in policy?
    - Changes or strengthening of skills or behaviours?

- If a capacity scan or assessment was done before or during the project, did it review key issues?

    - For example, was there an assessment of the knowledge and/or ability of the specific organisations or groups involved in terms of managing, conducting and/or disseminating results of the research, or of using those results?

    - Did it examine options for generating capacity, or strengthening the needed capacities?

- Were learning principles linked to particular implementation mechanisms and methods (e.g. learner-centred), and are there data to indicate what specific actions in the project plan would be undertaken based on these principles?

- Were these principles and proposed actions then linked to details of how, for whom and what kinds of learning outcomes were expected?

  → For example, did the capacity assessment make a case for using specific types of mechanisms to achieve capacity goals?

    a) *formal mechanisms* (graduate degrees, training of trainers, etc),

    b) *nonformal mechanisms* (structured mentoring, facilitated study visits, seminars, workshops or attachments) or

    c) *informal mechanisms* (unstructured mentoring, non-facilitated study visits or seminars, internet links, distribution of documents, PO comments or interventions, or conferences).

- Did the assessment examine comparative costs, risks and benefits of different options, in terms of the results expected?

- Did it examine what the needs, options and risks were for sustaining, or institutionalizing these capacities?

- Did the assessment examine the options and risks of different actions, or modalities (formal, nonformal or informal) in terms of the prevailing environment: development, topic/sector of research, institution or culture?

- Did the capacity assessment assess the practicality or difficulty of integrating capacity development objectives into the real work of the researchers, practitioners or policy users, given:
  - The kind of learning required?
  - The difficulties of facilitating appropriate learning?
  - The kinds of training or advisory supports which might be feasible?

- Did the assessment consider what research-related initiatives other agencies, domestic or international, were supporting, and what this support implied in terms of challenges, opportunities for collaboration, complementarity or additional funding?

Note: The analysis of learning needs related to development priorities, and of best ways of acquiring that learning, can in itself be a capacity development exercise where the prospective learners are ones who are doing it i.e. assessing the situation and themselves, and identifying expected changes in both. This is essentially the conceptual framework of the participatory research methodology underlying programmes like CBNRM and MINGA; to some extent it is reflected in on-farm research among others. Towards capturing this form of capacity development in a project, the evaluation needs to look at

- were the assessment data originally from the project proponents themselves, collected by IDRC or derived from other analyses? In other words, how participant-oriented were they?

3. Capacity Design - Objectives

The questions so far have asked about the capacity development activities of the project or programme from the perspective of policy, conceptual/analytic and planning contexts. These contexts, then, were the point of departure. This next set of questions concerns more specifically the **nature, target and expected outcomes** of the capacity development activities supported by the project, including how these "fit" into, and their relative priority in, the overall project[16].

Working through the issue of how central the capacity development objectives were to the project, is important in an evaluation because it helps to force the search for precise data about what the purposes of the CD dimension were; what was involved in terms of modalities and mechanisms, and the allocation of human and budgetary resources for these; and how the project expressed its CD activities in terms of results.

→ *Umbrella Questions:*

1. What specifically did the project intend by its capacity interventions?

2. What differences did the project expect to make, in the immediate and longer terms, as a result of its CD inputs?

3. How wide or narrow, generic or specific, was its CD "net" in terms of individuals, groups or institutions to be reached?

4. What place did capacity development have in the project as a whole, especially vis-à-vis research - primary, intermediate, incidental or a combination? What indicators can be used to make this determination?

[16] In this, questions may lead to the same data, but perhaps refine them. As noted earlier, however, reordering the sequence of questions is possible and it may suit some evaluations to start with this section. Also: because project documents tend not to make capacity development rationales and activities especially explicit, the evaluation will probably need to make inferences about many of the issues and questions below. Given the importance of getting at these data, therefore, every effort should be made to include interviews wherever possible.

a) Type of capacity objective: primary, intermediate, incidental or mixed

A first task in terms of situating capacity and capacity development in a project is to determine whether it was a ***primary, intermediate, incidental or mixed objective***. These categories are not always going to be stated explicitly in the project, but will need to some extent to be "read into it" in terms of what kinds and degrees of change were expected/implied.

- Was capacity development the *primary objective* of the project?
  - Did IDRC expect to see, be held accountable and accept credit for significant capacity change outcomes?
  - Did these capacity outcomes, as opposed to answers to research questions, constitute the "success" of the project? This will be the case for most small grants or institutional development projects, for example. It may also be the case for projects such as those under CBNRM or MINGA where researchers and communities are expected to be willing and able to integrate science with social practice to create a sustained new way of managing relations and resources.

- Was capacity development an *intermediate objective* in the project?
  - Was it the means for achieving the primary research objectives for which IDRC expected to be held accountable and accept credit?
  - In this case, if learning failed to happen, would the main task/goal of the project still have been realized in the best way possible, or if not, in some acceptable form?[17]

- Was capacity development considered an *incidental objective* for the project?
  - Was it expected to happen also/only as a consequence of the project, as a competently designed, well-managed and interactively monitored research exercise?
  - Was it the intention of learning-by-doing stated/implied e.g. researchers, managers and/or beneficiaries gathering insights or improving their knowledge and skills simply through their participation or exposure?

- Was capacity development a *mixed objective* from a corporate perspective?
  - Was it, for example, expected to be the primary outcome of one component of the project, becoming then the intermediate objective of that project over the longer-term programme? For example, officers of ARCIS were to be able to create, manage and implement information training and

[17] A project to create an Essential National Health System, for example, implied the need to build capacities among national health workers and community members to analyze, collaborate and negotiate. Without this learning, the structure of the "system" might be established, but it is questionable whether or how it would be functional.

dissemination activities, capacities which would eventually be the basis for creating a centre of information communication excellence in Africa.

- Was there any evidence of confusion in terms of the capacity development versus research priorities?
    - Was there a described link between capacity and research objectives e.g. how one was to lead to the other, and through what channels?

    - Were there indications of competition in terms of timing and resources needed/available for each?

In ***what capacity categories*** was the project aiming to create or improve knowledge, attitudes or skills? How were these changes described in *results-oriented terms* of what they would actually look like? At what *level of complexity* were these capacities *expected* to be acquired e.g. basic technical skills versus capable of independent action?

- To conduct/do research:
    - i.e. the technical, disciplinary and/or sectoral knowledge, mastery of research methods and analytical skills appropriate to conducting both immediate and evolving research investigation.

- To manage research activities or organization:
    - i.e. the professional knowledge and practical experience of management principles, processes and procedures within the research context appropriate to conceiving, initiating, facilitating implementation and ensuring monitoring of a research activity, programme or institution.

- To conceive, generate and/or sustain a research programme:
    - i.e. sophisticated and comprehensive disciplinary, sector or problem area expertise;
    - experienced-based knowledge of the field appropriate to engaging with, inventing and exchanging new ideas and to generating research;
    - capacities to reconceive development problems to account their interaction with other problems/sectors, and present them beyond the immediate moment and/or local conditions;
    - able to perceive the importance of the specific issues within a holistic context.

- To mobilize research-related, policy or programmes at a systems level:
    - i.e. knowledge of the research area in relation to development problems/issues, risk-benefit implications at national, regional and/or global levels;
    - professional and practical knowledge of policy systems and processes appropriate to mobilizing and facilitating application.

  - The most *institution-intense* capacity category, including abilities to think and act on organizations as systems, and individuals as part of coherent groups, and to work collaboratively on common goals.

- To use or to apply research outcomes in policy or practice settings:
  - for researchers, professional knowledge of factors underlying communication and adoption of innovation and management of change, of the nature/implications of research outcomes in terms of potential risks and benefits, constraints and opportunities for users; helping others to engage with this process.

  - for users (practitioners, policy-makers, villagers), knowledge of the substance, processes and/or technologies involved in the research, its underlying justification and rationale, theory and assumptions and its potential risks and benefits, appropriate to applying it in policy or practice.

Who were the ***targeted learners of the project***, those expected to learn/change as a result of or through its CD and research interventions? The answer to this is not always self-evident. In many cases, while direct beneficiaries/participants are individuals, these are actually a conduit to some broader CD target e.g. a wider practitioner community, an emerging community of scientists, a new research institution or a "research system".

- Were capacity objectives focused at the level of the *individual, group* (community organizations, farmers), the "*sector*" (often the focus of support in networks or small grants), or *institution* (was the task essentially an institution building one)?

- Was there more than one primary "learner target"? If so, were they addressed on their own, or was one a *means* or first-stage to another (e.g. training of trainers or curriculum developers in a longer-term sector-building programme)?

- On what basis were learners selected: their current or expected social or research role, an existing capacity gap?

- What was the link between the capacity development objectives e.g. what people were expected to learn, and the final expected outcome or impact of the project -- assuming the knowledge or skills acquired were not the project's or Centre's *development* goal?

4. Capacity Design –Linking Objectives to Implementation

A) Modalities and Mechanisms

At a broadest level, capacity development is achieved through the learning opportunities which are arranged by the project. These occur in one of three modalities:

1. Informal learning is spontaneous and can be very valuable. It is also unpredictable in terms of what is learned and how sustainable the learning is.

   - Informal learning occurs in basically *unstructured* situations where opportunities to learn are *made available*, but are not specifically labelled as facilitated learning events. Activities are not specifically tailored to individuals. Informal learning is difficult to measure; and hard to lay claim to or to track with respect to advancing project or Centre development goals. Because of this, and because of the short periods these activities take, they are rarely monitored and probably not rigorously evaluated, because they are not seen as having major objectives. Learning outcomes are not typically captured or reported, and therefore in most cases there will not be documentation to support IDRC claims of results.

   - Informal "learning-by-doing" research is a common, often implicit, expectation of IDRC projects. It may be happening with good results for the individuals concerned, but is rarely efficient or accountable as a strategy from the Centre's perspective.

   - The use of such a modality may indicate that capacity development itself was only a minor concern for the project.

2. Nonformal learning is planned and facilitated in some way, though in non-academic, usually non-certified ways; typically short-term and task specific. The better it is planned, the better its outcomes can be as a cost-efficient, learner-oriented approach to realizing project and Centre capacity objectives.

   - The Nonformal Capacity Modality is comprised of activities structured as deliberate learning events, and with significant learning goals, but without the expectation or requirement of standardized, long-term curriculum, entry requirements or completion requirements.

   - Content is geared toward the specific learners or groups of learners targeted, and the content and methods in general should be learner-centred. That is, they should be interactive, flexible, context-specific in terms of culture, language, age and gender of participants. Quality of inputs and outcomes for nonformal learning is assessed on the basis of meeting learner and organizational needs and goals (that is, criterion-referenced) rather than some external measure (norm-referenced). The activities should be

monitored and rigorously evaluated in terms of immediate and longer-term learning objectives.

- These are facilitated learning opportunities. The influence for which IDRC activities could lay claim should therefore be captured and documented

3. Formal academic learning is highly planned and systematized addressing usually longer-term and higher-order capacity objectives. The formal modality is focused primarily on activities undertaken in formal training institutions, schools or a university setting.

- This requires an established curriculum, teachers or instructors who are in some way certified and learners who meet specific admission and exit (graduation) criteria.

- Motivation, duration and control issues are significant. Motivation for participation is driven by learners' own professional advancement interests, as much as by the research needs of IDRC.

- It is often not cost-effective in time or budget and can be difficult to influence, the provider and learner determining the programme in the long run, not IDRC. Usually managed by granting institutions, criteria for progress and outcomes are much less under the control of either IDRC or project managers than is the case for the nonformal modality.

- Learners' programmes may last beyond the framework of the project, though may fall within the duration of a PI development strategy.

→ *Umbrella questions:*

1. *How did the project articulate, in its design (if it did), the links between activity inputs and capacity outcomes?*

2. *What modalities did the project specify, if any, in the project design, to achieve its purported capacity objectives?*

    a) *Informal modality:* Did the project design specify any informal mechanisms? Examples may include, but are not limited to:
        - → Unstructured mentoring
        - → Non-facilitated study visits
        - → Non-facilitated seminars
        - → Internet links for individuals to explore without facilitation
        - → General distribution of documents
        - → Monitoring comments from Programme Officers

→ Conferences.

b) *Nonformal modality*: Did the project design specify any nonformal mechanisms? Examples may include, but are not limited to:
   - → Structured mentoring
   - → Facilitated and focused study visits
   - → Facilitated seminars and workshops, short and punctual, on project-specific issues
   - → Structured attachments.

c) *Formal modality:* Did the project design specify any formal mechanisms, especially for long-term capacity goals? For example:
   - → Certificate programmes
   - → Diploma programmes
   - → Masters and doctoral degree programmes
   - → Training of trainers programmes.

B) Resource allocation

Both general and specific references to capacity development in projects are fairly common in projects. So, too, are references to informal and nonformal mechanisms to achieve them; mentoring and workshops, for example. What is less common, but which needs to be taken seriously, is the ***specific allocation of resources*** *(people, time, budget)* ***to support specific capacity development objectives***. The real priority assigned to capacity development may be reflected in amount and tailoring of resource allocations.

→ Umbrella question:

What relative priority is given to capacity development in allocation of resources in project design documents?

- How were resources matched with the stated capacity objectives in the project's planning and execution?
  - Were there *budget* items which matched in rough terms the intentions of project designers for capacity development through the different modalities used? For example, were resources (money, space, personnel) allocated *in the design* for training, field trips, coordination, mentoring, monitoring, degree programmes?
  - Were resources *specified* in terms of target learners and outcomes expected?

- Was *time* specifically allocated for each of the capacity objectives and their support activities in the design documents?
    - Were the difficulties of achieving capacity development reflected in schedules in the design?
- Were specific *people,* their facilitating capacities and time specifically identified and scheduled in the design?
- To what extent was it expected, in the design, that *IDRC staff* would provide the CD input?

5. Implementing and Managing Capacity Activities

The Framework now moves from intentions to implementation. While it is useful for an evaluation to know whether and how planners matched capacity objectives in a projected way to one of the modalities listed above, in *practical* terms what most project documentation should also provide is information about what specific *mechanisms* (mentoring, study visits, formal training) were *actually used* to achieve specific capacity objectives; and how these were managed.

a) In general, capacity mechanisms can be seen as fitting roughly within one of the three modalities as indicated in point 4, above.[18] What is asked for here is a *description of what these actual activities were* – a collection of basic data of what was done (without, at this stage, commentary or assessment on merit or implications).

→ *Umbrella questions:*

1. *What mechanisms did the project actually use, as it moved towards achievement of capacity objectives?*
2. *Did the mechanisms, as used in practice, match those initially proposed?*

- Was it necessary to change the types of activities used to develop capacity?
    - If changes were made from those originally proposed, were these changes caused by external factors, or by internal assessments of what was needed?
- Were the capacity activities implemented during the project (training, research networking, conferences, etc.), justified by the project in reports, as being related to specific learning needs?

[18] While Annex 2 organizes mechanisms by the capacity objective, Annex 3 provides more examples of how mechanisms would match capacity modalities.

- Is there enough information from reports, interviews or observations to know if adult learning principles were applied and consistency between mechanism and expected outcomes was maintained during implementation of capacity activities?

    - → Capacity goals matched with appropriate mechanisms
    - → The learners' needs and situation accounted for
    - → Conducive learning environment created.

b) Managing research capacity development, and the capacity to manage research, are two sides of the same coin for IDRC. Both are important in terms of the Centre's realizing its overall mandate of supporting indigenous development research, and of ensuring sustainability of the outcomes of that research. *Assessing how management of the capacity tasks happened* in a project is a key aspect of understanding the nature of its outcomes (or lack of them). *Assessing how well IDRC is supporting, strengthening and evaluating its impact on, developing country research management capacity* is a key aspect of understanding its wider corporate effectiveness[19].

→ Both of these are especially crucial for those countries and/or development themes where there is not a well-established institutional or professional base for research and where the Centre, therefore, assumes a major responsibility for building them through the types of projects it decides to support.

Evaluating simultaneously in this way the management of capacity development, and the capacity development of research managers, is complicated; like opening a series of Russian dolls with each nested level affecting and affected by the other. How many layers, and what degree of management sophistication is involved, will depend on the nature and objectives of the project or programme being assessed.

Generally, however, all projects should be assessed in terms of a core set of *management tasks and, by implication, management capacities* which need to be unpacked and reviewed[20]:

- management of project operations by the project leader or team;
- management of the team by the oversight/recipient agency;

[19] Most, if not all, IDRC projects have enhancing research management capacity as an implicit objective to be realized through the research experience. Few aim expressly at generating such expertise *per se*, institution development, TOT and some of the larger participatory action-research initiatives most notable among those which do. Evaluations of these projects certainly, and all projects generally, need to assess the extent to which effective research management happened or was generated, through whom and with what influence on research outcomes.

[20] These tasks need not all be done by different people, depending on the nature of the project. The more participatory an activity, the more the management roles are presumably shared. This does not necessarily eliminate the different tasks, however. If no one is managing some task, it suggests the full potential of the project may not be realized.

- management of the research enterprise within a sector or development "problem" area by the institution, the policy-community, the sector;
- management of the project/programme/enterprise as a whole by IDRC, including implementing teams/institutions.

→ *Umbrella questions:*

1. *What were the various research management responsibilities in the activity, at project, programme and/or institution development levels? Were they already available, or were they created or supported in some way by the Centre?*
2. *How explicitly and comprehensively were these articulated, their adequacy assessed and plans for their support made?*
3. *What mechanisms were used to support development of management capacity at the various levels and how were they framed with respect to immediate and longer-term goals?*

- Were management capacities distinguished as a category in the project/programme at all?

- Were there clear differentiations made between capacities needed and available for managing the administrative aspects of the project agenda, the conceptual and methodological aspects of the research (project or enterprise), and the "capacity-for-capacity development" aspects (for planning, monitoring and generating appropriate knowledge and skills to suit the evolving project/programme)?

- A number of criteria underlie strong research management capacity, and can be used as a guide in assessing this dimension of a project (though many of them, unfortunately, are subtle and often need to be assessed by inference). For example, for each management level, did managers:
    - have academic background and conceptual capacities consistent with thinking, planning and assessing at fairly abstract levels; to see the relationship between the specific research issues and their wider implications, to think both inside and outside the box in guiding the team in conceiving research issues and presenting them within and beyond the immediate moment and local conditions?
    - display the values, attitudes and skills of persistently and consciously seeking information, analyzing situations, taking decisions and assessing their implications?
    - ensure and negotiate research activities appropriate to available and potential human and infrastructure resources?
    - accurately identify all technical and fieldwork research requirements and oversee project execution?
    - facilitate internal co-ordination and external liaison, building a research-friendly project or organization culture and securing stable income?
    - consistently generate, guide and use monitoring and support responsive adaptation?

6. Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity

Whether and how well monitoring and assessment happen in project implementation are important effectiveness factors in all interventions. They are especially so in capacity development because the real substance and value of these activities are usually not readily visible, often below the surface, or after the fact, of the training or exposure experience. It cannot be assumed, for example, that because an activity happened (e.g. that a study visit was undertaken) that the expected learning took place to the expected level. Nor can it be assumed that because participants expressed satisfaction with a training opportunity, reported new insights or articulated new information, that sustainable learning-for-change actually happened.

While these are probably necessary conditions leading to good capacity development, they are not sufficient. It is critical to the ultimate effectiveness of a capacity activity, the quality and sustainability of the learning, that monitoring enables project implementers, and IDRC, to see beyond the activity to *track the difference* the activity is making. In addition, the extent to which evaluation or monitoring was conducted on capacity issues is an indicator of what priority was attached to capacity development in the project.

→ Umbrella Questions

1. *What were the overall monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the project and how were the capacity development components integrated into these?*

2. *How were the specific CD activities monitored, by whom and for whom (who were the users of the monitoring data)?*

3. *What forms of progress evaluations e.g. annual, mid-term, Outcome Mapping were planned/used?*

4. *Were there indications that M&E led to changes in CD activities, in themselves or in relation to the overall project?*

- Was monitoring and evaluation specifically planned and budgeted for in the proposal?

- Were the original capacity objectives specifically monitored or evaluated?

- If capacity objectives themselves were specifically monitored, how was this done?

    - Were IDRC Programme Officers involved in monitoring?

        - If so, was this a formal arrangement acknowledged in the design or planning documents, or did it emerge to meet needs during the project implementation?

        - How frequently did Programme Officers monitor capacity issues?

    - Were participants (mentors, coordinators, etc.) specifically designated to monitor capacity development?

        - Was this specified in design or planning documents, or did it emerge during project implementation?

- If monitoring and evaluation of capacity were *not* conducted during and after implementation, had it been originally planned?

    - If monitoring or evaluation of capacity was in fact planned, why was this not implemented?

- Did monitoring or evaluation assess the *quality* of activities or methods related to capacity objectives?

- Was participatory monitoring or evaluation of capacity used?

    - If so, how was it organized, and what training of participants – on methods of participatory monitoring or evaluation - was involved?

- Was the validity of *initial assumptions* about capacity (found in the proposal, in a capacity assessment) tested or assessed?

    - If these original assumptions about capacity were tested, were the assumptions reconsidered and what if any difference did this make to project implementation?

- Was trainee or participant learning measured? If so, by what means?

- Did monitoring or evaluation assess the quality of the fit between activities and desired capacity results? Did it, for example look at the types of capacity results desired, and the appropriateness of the mechanisms or the general modalities (section 4, above)?

- Did monitoring or evaluation assess the relevance of learning outcomes to the desired results?

- Did it assess the factors which helped or hindered the achievement of capacity results?

- Did it assess the relative cost-benefit of the capacity intervention activities?

LEVEL B: DESCRIBING RESULTS

1. Capacity Results

In results-based or outcome mapping terms, it is not sufficient to talk simply about whether the project's capacity development activities (inputs) were completed. It is crucial to identify *what changed* in terms of knowledge and attitudes, policies or practice, of "the behaviour, relationships, activities or actions of the people, groups and organizations[21]" with whom the project is involved and hopes to influence. Most, if not all, IDRC projects track research results. Many fewer track those results concerned with *capacity* in these "what changed" terms – even where capacity development is cited in the project documents and discussion as an important element of the intervention.

If capacity is seen as an important objective of the project, then these capacity results should be reported. Indeed, how comprehensively, coherently, clearly and regularly project implementers and IDRC looked for results will in large measure be another indicator of how seriously they took the capacity development task in the first place. In many cases, this reporting will not have happened. It will be a major task of the evaluation to search out results and interpret/assess their nature, level of importance to the overall purpose of the project, and sustainability.

→ *Umbrella Questions*

1. *What were the capacity results or outcomes achieved, and for whom, in this project, as these were linked to planned objectives - or as unanticipated achievements of the project?*

2. *How comprehensive do capacity results appear to be in terms of depth of learning/change and sustainability of the new knowledge, attitudes or behaviours; and in terms of reach- i.e. the scope of people or institutions changed?*

3. *How much confidence can be put in the capacity results reported in terms of quality and validity of indicators and measures, details of documentation, merits of the "claim" (what the project actually did versus other causal factors)?*

Capacity results can occur among researchers or research organizations, or among people (such as policy makers or farmers) who apply research results. Many reports for projects where capacity is an intermediate objective do not describe capacity results in any convincing detail at all. Credible capacity results should specify changes that occurred and link the changes to project activity.

- Do reports – from monitoring, mid-term or final evaluation - actually describe capacity results?

[21] Earl, Carden and Smutylo. 2001. Outcome Mapping. IDRC. Pg 1

- If so, what evidence is there of the generic capacities of new knowledge, attitudes and behaviours? For example, capacity outcomes in terms of:

  a) Changes in *knowledge* about conducting, managing, conceiving or applying research, or evaluation, creating systemic research capacity, or about a particular sector.

     - Changes in knowledge among participants about *what* is happening in a situation.

     - Changes in knowledge about *why* things happen – data from studies which can tell researchers or practitioners about the cause of problems.

     - Changes in knowledge about *how* to do something – theory of research practice, new management approaches, agriculture or health innovations.

     → What data support claims of knowledge results and link these results to capacity development activities of the project?

  b) Changes in *attitude or motivation* about the research problem, the research or evaluation priorities or methods, about approaches to research management, about conceiving or applying research, or creating systemic research capacity - or changes in attitude among policy-makers about issues related to the project.

     - What attitudes or motivations were changed?

     - Why was this considered useful in the broader context of the project?

     → What data support claims for attitude change and link these results to capacity development activities of the project?

  c) Changes in *policy or decision-making*, about conducting, managing, conceiving or applying research, or about creating systemic research capacity, or broader policy affected by the research.

     - What policy changes took place? This could be at a broad level, by ministers or governments, or at the level of decision-making within an organization or even a social unit such as a family or village, if participatory research is involved.

     → What data support claims for policy or decision-making changes and link these results to capacity development activities of the project?

  d) Changes in *practice*: the demonstrated ability to do something in a new or better way.
     - Data collection/data analysis.

- Problem solving, or critical thinking.
- Model building, theory testing.
- Management.
- Other examples of the application of research-generated knowledge to practice (includes end-users).

→ What data support claims for changes in practice, and link these results to capacity development activities of the project?

- If capacity results were achieved, but they cannot be linked to the capacity development activities of the project, what exogenous factors affected capacity?

LEVEL C: ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF CD THINKING, ACTIONS AND RESULTS

Capacity development is intrinsic to all IDRC projects insofar as they are expected to contribute to the *sustainably enhanced* development status of the people and societies who are the partners, implementers and beneficiaries of their research activities. Enhancing development implies enabling change; doing so sustainably, implies learning.

In this sense, all project designs should take into account *the existing capacities of all those who are supposed to be affected by the project* at three points:

- at the outset of conceptualization and design;
- at the end of the intervention; and
- progressively, at all points in between.

→ What a project, and by extension the Centre, can say about the effectiveness and impact of its capacity development activities will be a function of what has been done to affect the capacity status at each of these points.

The ultimate task of the evaluation, then, is to sort out *what capacity really means as an intrinsic dimension, and what the status of capacity development is as a specific planned goal*, of the Centre. This requires a thorough analysis and realistic interpretation of:

- how issues of capacity and capacity development are reflected at the front-end of a project (policy and environmental analysis, planning, design, resource allocation), during implementation (delivery, monitoring, adaptation) and in terms of consolidation (support to application, institutionalization); and

- the factors which enabled and/or impeded capacity development planning, actions and results.

The following series of themes, with a few focusing questions, is intended to guide this analysis. It is based on the data collected through the Level A and Level B questions, but forces the evaluation to interpret, assess, draw links and make judgements. Most of the data for Level A and Level B can, and probably will, come from documents. Much of the thinking for Levels C will need to include interview data from the project participants and IDRC officers involved.

1. Sustainability

A sustainable capacity is that new knowledge, way of thinking, or practice which is *applied and adapted iteratively and cumulatively over time* to enhance quality of life and permanently alter development status for the better. Such a capacity is the ultimate criterion of IDRC mandate success. In this sense, sustainability is a *cumulative factor* in terms of assessing the goals, processes and results of an IDRC capacity development

activity; a function of the degree to which all CD planning, management processes and activities made learning outcomes more likely to endure.

Sustainability is, therefore, difficult to assess because the parameters of CD are broad and its outcomes, in many respects, nebulous. A judgement on sustainability can best be made by looking back perhaps over a decade of continuing support in a field of research investigation tied to development practice; preferably in a single geographic setting. Judging sustainability of a single project, or even a longer-framed programme, on the basis of "trained people" or "stronger institutions" is tenuous. That said, sustainability can be inferred as being *more or less likely* where the assessment of other key quality and effectiveness factors is positive:

- where the project could reference Centre policies which directed, encouraged and enabled its CD components to be taken seriously as an area of professional theory and practice;
- where it had technically competent human resources to conceive and manage it;
- where its design and delivery of activities were demonstrably relevant, appropriate and cost-effective, in the local context;
- where there was clarity and agreement on its capacity goals, and congruence between these and the resources and interventions meant to realize them; and
- where monitoring and evaluation were sufficiently rigorous to allow stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses and adapt implementation accordingly.

Especially at the level of institutions and sectors, *research management capacity in a development context* is a necessary condition for sustaining development research as an enterprise and, aligned with that, sustaining the applied results of that research. According to one tracer study of IDRC project leaders, the creation of capacity for research management was the most important overall goal and outcome of the Centre's interventions. Research management capacities are needed, at least to some degree, to enable:

> (i) bringing to bear the professional knowledge and practical experience of general management, of research at a fairly senior level and of development, and integrating all of these in their own work and that of the research team overall;
> (ii) ensuring that sufficient and increasingly sophisticated, energizing and politically astute attention is paid to maintaining relevant and appropriate levels of expertise and infrastructure resources; and
> (iii) building local ownership, convincing both research producer and user stakeholders that they can determine by and for themselves the development problems, priorities and solutions important to the community.

In all of this, research management underlies sustainability where people and organizations (research centres, networks, NGOs) have capacities of "learning how to learn", not just for themselves, but in terms of those whom they are guiding through the processes of research production and use. Managers need to be able to deal with researchers, partners and the user community *as adults who are learning*, as they attempt

to explore and explain what are, presumably, often contentious development issues and generate recommendations for new policy or practice.

Analysis Questions

- ➔ *Drawing on the cumulative analysis of the factors below, or others, to what extent did the project meet sustainability criteria?*
- ➔ *Were strategies for institutionalizing the capacities adequately examined, developed and implemented, taking into consideration the difficulties of integrating capacity development objectives into the real work of the researchers, practitioners and/or policy-makers?*
- ➔ *Was research management effectively and consistently considered and supported in terms of strengthening an appropriate mix of knowledge and behavioural competencies? Not necessarily "taught", were steps taken to gradually internalize them through facilitated practice e.g. through mechanisms emphasizing tailored reflective action through face-to-face peer communication, networking exchange, on-site mentoring or short-term placements with effective projects and organizations?*

2. Factors Influencing the Extent and Quality of Capacity Development Results

For an evaluation of capacity development to be useful to IDRC in determining its future policy and actions in the area, it needs to provide a clear picture of not simply *what* a project has done and achieved (or not), but also *why*. This next section considers some of the main *explanatory factors* which might help both the evaluation and the Centre to understand the various conditions which facilitated, impeded and gave a particular direction to the capacity development actions of projects. This discussion of factors should also help ensure that the evaluation is transparent, by providing the "thinking behind" the analysis, conclusions and recommendations it presents.

Any number of factors could be used to frame a discussion of "reasons why" capacity development actions and results occurred as they did in a project. It will be important for the evaluation to select factors which best explain the specifics of the data it generated. Seven factors are suggested here, however, as a basis on which to begin because they:

- Are generic enough to suit most evaluations of development projects and programmes; and
- Have proved consistent and fairly powerful explanatory tools in the analysis of projects reviewed for this Framework and the earlier capacity "map".

2.1 Enabling CD Policy and Human Resources Environment

Policy is important as an "enabling environment" factor in explaining the range, types and reach of capacity outcomes realized by an individual project, or set of projects. The

lack of an expressly proactive and well-publicized capacity development policy in the Centre may fail to encourage or guide strong CD action. So, too, might the presence of policies requiring strict adherence to initial plans, pre-set schedules or detailed budgets; effective capacity development actions are ones which are flexible and responsive, able to be tailored and adapted to shifting learner and learning environment characteristics.

Alternatively, the presence of a proactive CD policy, one which recognizes and builds on the foundation of capacity development theory and best practice, can serve to legitimize time spent in planning for capacity action, justify the risks of its often long-term and not very visible "products", encourage commitment of PO time and resources to monitoring and adapting capacity activities and, potentially, generate and accumulate in-house capacity expertise by promoting, training and hiring for it.

A second dimension of an enabling CD environment concerns the quality and appropriateness of the human resources available *for incorporation* into a project. Assessing the effectiveness of capacity development project activity requires assessing what the Centre and its partners brought to the exercise. This includes whether IDRC and/or the project had people with the professional expertise in the field of learning and CD needed to recognize the need for preliminary capacity analyses or scans, as well as to design, deliver and monitor a well-conceived programme of relevant capacity building intervention.

Analysis Questions

➔ *To what extent were the capacity development dimensions of the project -- informal, nonformal or formal – conceived, designed and implemented within an acknowledged Centre and/or programme policy framework?*

➔ *Were the appropriate human resources available in or to the Centre, and were they effectively used or supported in conceiving, developing and implementing the CD dimensions of the project?*

Issues to Consider

- *Evidence that the project took into account capacity-related policy requirements in thinking through a coherent capacity development strategy and design; or, if not, whether there were such policy references in play during the period of project development which might have applied.*

- *Evidence of other capacity-friendly policies of the Centre or programme being used – or missed – in strategic or design decisions e.g. those related to networking, small grants mechanisms, staggered phases.*

- *Evidence of the project being impeded by a lack of explicit CD policy, or of deficiencies in existing policies; or, on the other side, of the*

project being facilitated by a lack of explicit CD policy i.e. that there were no impediments to action through restrictive policies.

- *The presence and quality of any capacity-focused conceptual analysis or assessments done to detail capacity strengths, challenges and needs of the project.*
- *Whether the project justified any of its design or implementation arrangements and costs (money, time, intellectual input of staff etc) in terms of capacity development policy or best practice experience; and how these arrangements were framed.*
- *Evidence of specific professional CD/learning competencies being brought to bear in developing and monitoring the capacity components of the project, whether from inside IDRC or from outside experience/ expertise.*
- *If any attention was given to ensuring the facilitative expertise, as well as the knowledge base, of people and organizations used as learning event designers, trainers, mentors or monitors.*
- *The extent and depth to which capacity issues were reflected in the sector analysis, development discussions or trip reports of IDRC officers e.g. if CD was on the professional radar of the project.*

2.2 Relevance

Relevance concerns the degree to which an activity is consistent with the priorities of those involved with, or affected by, it. In this respect, it is related to the concept of ownership: people are more likely to engage in, take responsibility for, and assume the right to adapt an initiative when they see it as somehow moving their own agenda forward. This is certainly the case where learning and learners are concerned; changing capacities is an inherently personal process.

Relevance also concerns the instigators, designers and implementers of capacity development activities. The more clearly IDRC in general, and IDRC in the context of a project, understands why particular capacities are important to strengthen in terms of its concept of development, and for advancing its research agenda, the more attention and resources it will apply to getting CD interventions right.

Capacity development activities are, therefore, stronger in terms of realizing better quality and more sustainable outcomes where they are, and are seen to be, relevant to the values, priorities and needs (for knowledge, skills, actions) of those expected to engage with and support them; that is, the stakeholders.

Analysis Question

➔ *In what ways were the initial assumptions, conceptualization and design, and the subsequent implementation, of the project relevant to both the broad development priorities, and the specific project capacity priorities, of the various stakeholders involved with/affected by the project?*

Issues to Consider

- *To what extent assumptions about the contribution of the project's capacity activities in advancing the sustainable development, research tasks, and institutional strengthening priorities of the various stakeholders were validated; that the capacity activities, as they were implemented, produced the levels and kinds of changes in capacity expected.*

- *How explicitly the relevance of capacity development objectives and outcomes was tied to established sustainable development principles and priorities of the Centre, the programme, the project team*.

- *How explicitly capacity goals and activities were tailored to address the expressed or implied priorities of those involved, as researchers, research users, community participants.*

- *How frequently or extensively capacity activities were adapted, and different ways found, to ensure continued relevance of capacity focus/learning activities to the variety of people involved, especially where new systems or structures were being put in place requiring changes to ways of thinking, interacting and working.*

- *Indications of capacity development gaps: instances where the goals of the project implied capacities which would need to be developed, but where these were not addressed in implementation.*

2.3 Appropriateness

Appropriateness as used here concerns the extent to which a CD strategy or activity was the best one for realizing the learning objectives or outcomes sought, in the location, and for those people and institutions concerned. The more appropriate i.e. the better the match, the more likely the capacity development initiative is to realize positive results. In this sense, appropriateness has several dimensions.

- It is a *matter of context*: were the right things done given the prevailing conditions – social, political, economic, institutional or policy systems? Problems in training "packages" moving successfully from region to region are often explainable in terms of this factor, as failures of tailoring goals and activities to the situation.

- It is also a *technical question*. How good was the match between the *"means"*: the modality, mechanism or method used, and the *"ends*": the new or changed knowledge, attitude, policy or practice expected to be seen at the end of the

project. For example, were study visits to Thailand an effective mechanism for building the capacity of coastal farmers in Cambodia to negotiate resource use, given what is known about how adults who are largely illiterate learn in cross-cultural settings[22]?

- Appropriateness is also a question of "*is this action enough*?" e.g. was it realistic to expect a completely new way of integrating national and local health care stakeholders into a "system" through occasional meetings and workshops?

- Appropriateness is finally a matter of the *mandate, approach and capacity of the facilitating agent* e.g. was a Canadian university team the best choice for intervening at a micro-level of socio-cultural change to address the capacity-to-manage objectives of fisher communities in the Caribbean?

The capacity map[23] discusses strengths and weaknesses of the various informal, nonformal and formal degree capacity development modalities and the mechanisms used within them. The map also discusses a large number of specific mechanisms, drawn from practice over many years and commonly used for capacity development in IDRC projects. It organizes the list of mechanisms[24] in terms of how they are used to achieve the five general types of IDRC capacity development goals discussed in part 1 of this document:

- The capacity to conduct research
- The capacity to manage research
- The capacity to conceive and generate research
- The capacity to use research results
- The capacity to create or mobilize research links to systemic policy/promote systems change

In this section, the evaluator is asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the mechanisms which were actually used for capacity development in the project, and to assess their utility for achieving the capacity goals of the project. From the project reports, the evaluator should describe which of these (or others, not listed in the map) were used in each project. Any one project may use several of these mechanisms, depending on what the capacity objectives were.

Analysis Question

➔ *What do the nature, range and reach of capacity outcomes in terms of changes in knowledge, attitudes, policy or practice, as reported and inferred, indicate about the appropriateness of the capacity development* ***objectives*** *and* ***activities*** *selected and the way they were implemented?*

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[22] This is a different issue than relevance, for example, where the question might be whether learning to negotiate with power structures was an effective way to improve their abilities for natural resource management -- to a large extent a philosophical or even socio-political issue.
[23] See Annexes 3 and 4 for some relevant excerpts from the map.
[24] Annex 2.

Issues to Consider

- *How closely capacity objectives and interventions were tailored to the conditions (readiness, interests, resources) of the country, sector, organizations or groups which are the focus of the project.*

- *How clearly and effectively capacity objectives, activities and outcomes were framed and implemented in terms of principles and best practices of adult learning, community development or social change.*

- *How explicitly capacities of end-users, and capacities for the ultimate end-use of the project overall, were taken into account in conceptualization and design (mechanisms and methods) of the project in terms of enabling and mobilizing application and consolidation of capacity.*

- *How specifically mechanisms were planned to match the capacity objectives. For example: knowledge change through lectures, conferences, small group sessions; new research or practice abilities through facilitated opportunities actually to conduct research, to collect and act on information, to negotiate with neighbours over resources.*

- *Whether the availability of resources appeared to influence the choice of mechanism.*

    - *Whether the various types of resources allocated, (money, personnel, time, etc) in general were commensurate with the approximate importance assigned to capacity development in the project*

- *If and how external schedules, or the overall research agenda of IDRC or of other agencies affected the choice of mechanisms.*

2.4 Cost-Effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness as used here is more important as an issue of judgement than of resources as such. It is to a large degree a matter of perception: whether the time and energy given to a CD component or activity (negotiating, planning, implementing, administering and/or monitoring it) were seen at the time, and can be assessed after the fact, as being worth the effort. Were the inputs well-balanced in terms of the progress made and outcomes realized? This does not mean there should not be an assessment of literal costs vis-à-vis results: supporting three local PhDs versus one international one for the same price should be clearly justified in a project in terms of quality and relevance factors.

That said, most decisions are not this (relatively) clear-cut. Any capacity strategy, modality and mechanism needs to be assessed in terms of whether it had "enough" perceived value, with "sufficient" positive, cumulative and sustainable results, that the

nature and amount of resources spent on it could be considered worth the cost, in and of themselves and vis-à-vis other project activity (e.g. research).

In this sense, the question of cost-effectiveness is complicated in being a function of whose opinions are sought, and what relative weight they are given. This is where factors such as policy and relevance matter. It is also a function of learning theory and best practice. This is also where the appropriateness factor matters.

To continue the above case in point: graduate degree training tends to be considered cost-effective in a policy context favouring long-term, discipline-based research capacity and institution building; less so in a context promoting shorter-term inter-disciplinary, community-based and leverage-oriented projects. It is also considered cost-effective under certain conditions:

- to the students, if they can study what they choose and apply their learning to professional advancement;
- to receiving institutions, if sufficient costs are covered and advisors are enabled to link their own research to the project;
- to sending institutions if students come back to work with the right (relevant) education; and
- to IDRC if all of these conditions come together, in a timely way, to advance an emerging development sector in a region of its own programme priority.

Where the cut-off points are with respect to meeting these conditions and still being considered cost-effective, will inevitably be a matter of negotiation within IDRC and the project. Whether and how well such negotiation happened is a key question for the evaluation analysis.

Analysis Questions

➔ *How well did IDRC itself, the recipient/partners or intended beneficiaries of the project ensure, and how systematically did they confirm, the cost-effectiveness of the capacity development elements of the project, on an overall and individual activity basis?*

➔ *What was the apparent cost-effectiveness of the capacity intervention activity from the perspectives of: who benefited, who paid (in money, effort and opportunity costs e.g. of PO time for project development, monitoring, networking), what or who was left out because one type of intervention was provided instead of others [e.g. networking and not institutional development or workshops] and what the effect was on the wider research agenda?*

Issues to Consider

- *That the project was planned and monitored in terms of cost-effectiveness considerations and measures.*

- *That the money, time and human resources spent on the capacity activities appeared to be worthwhile in terms of outcomes.*

- *That the planning was comprehensive enough to ensure the appropriate modality and mechanisms were used and the resources available to implement them, examined comparative costs, risks and benefits of different options, in terms of the kind of learning required, the kinds of training or advisory supports which might be feasible and results expected.*

- *That adequate consideration was given to complementary capacity development initiatives other agencies, domestic or international, were supporting, and how this was used [or not] in terms of meeting challenges and making use of opportunities for collaboration, complementarity or additional funding.*

- *That the strengths and weaknesses typically attributed to different modalities and mechanisms proved to hold true in the case of this project.*[25].

2.5 Clarity and Agreement on Goals and Strategies

The clearer the goals and objectives of a capacity development intervention or activity are, and the more fully they are agreed upon by all those responsible for implementing and using intervention, the more likely it is that positive progress will be realized. It is especially important that prospective learners are consciously involved; learning happens most effectively and sustainably when it is intentional, tailored by/to learners' needs and interests.

Vagueness about what is actually to be learned, and to what level of expertise, makes it difficult to design appropriate actions, and even more problematic in terms of monitoring and adjusting them. It makes it more likely that capacity and other activities of the project will work at cross purposes, or in parallel rather than complementary directions, thereby diluting or undermining effectiveness. It is especially important to be clear as to what the expected learning/capacity outcomes are where they are expected somehow to facilitate or elaborate the more prominent research objectives; it is often the case that learning takes longer than planned, or can go in unexpected directions.

Analysis Questions

➔ *Was the project sufficiently clear about its emphasis on CD relative to its research or other objectives, as measured by negative or positive implications for implementation and results?*

[25] See list in Annex 4

➔ *How effective was the project in terms of making conscious and consistent efforts to work toward clarity on capacity goal definitions, to find realistic levels of agreement on these*[26]*?*

Issues to Consider

- *Evidence of any confusion or conflict as to whether capacity was the purposive "bottom-line", the aim of the project to build a comprehensive capacity base, parallel to and interactive with the research; or capacity was at the service of the research, happening in a light-handed way as a support to the research, on an as/when needed basis.*

- *The significance of any signs of disagreements, confusion or, on the other hand, agreement among stakeholders (IDRC, project team, target learners) about the CD goals, objectives, expected outcomes.*

- *Actions taken to help make things clearer, especially to confirm with participants/learners about objectives, processes and outcomes.*

- *Indications of the project making effective adjustments to capacity plans in light of increasingly clarified goals during implementation.*

- *Indications and implications of the project having to compromise any of its other, especially research, objectives in order to incorporate capacity development objectives and tasks.*

2.6 Internal Coherence: Linking Policy, Planning and Implementation

Capacity development implementation will be more effective, and outcomes stronger, the clearer, more consistent and comprehensive *the lines of logic* are between the environment in which it is situated and the stages of its evolution: between the CD policy of the Centre or programme; the analysis of capacity needs/priorities; the specific capacity objectives of the project and the plans to realize all of these; the human and infrastructure resources provided. Establishing and maintaining coherent and interactive connections implies giving time and attention to clarifying and finding viable levels of agreement on objectives; identifying and tailoring the necessary resources; assessing risks and ways to avoid them - or at least mitigate their impact; and defining benchmarks and scheduling points of reviewing progress against them. All of this also suggests the project will track its CD actions, to know why and how they are succeeding or falling short, and from there any need for adaptations recognized and corrective actions taken.

[26] This question is more likely to be relevant the less formalized the learning is e.g. the more integral the capacity objectives are to the research e.g. CBNRM, FSR and in nonformal workshops versus formal education. Most PhD students know why they are there; workshop participants may not be as clear.

Identifying and describing any logical links which are made, noting the lack of them and eventually assessing their quality and scope, will be an important theme running through any evaluation.

Analysis Question

➔ *How explicit and logically inter-connected were the various capacity development dimensions of the project, both as defined at the outset in the planning and design, and as managed through the course of implementation [i.e. how were initial CD policy references and concepts linked into strategic, design and resource decisions and, from these, into actual capacity activity implementation]?*

Issues to Consider

- *Where there were expressly capacity-related or capacity-friendly policies, how effectively they were integrated into the substance of the capacity actions of the project.*
- *How the results of any capacity assessments or scans undertaken were reflected in subsequent capacity development planning, implementation and measurement of outcomes.*

2.7 Informed Action: Monitoring and Evaluation of CD

As noted above, the better informed managers -- and research teams, partners and IDRC -- are about what is happening in an intervention, the more able they will be to strengthen those strategies and activities which work; to take corrective action on those which do not; and make adaptations as actions proceed or environments change (or as better information about the nature of those environments comes available). Informed action is a consequence both of effective monitoring and of longer-term assessments of the capacity development dimension of the project as a whole and of specific components within it.

Analysis Questions

➔ *How effective (e.g. regular, comprehensive and learning-theory based) were the monitoring of capacity development activities in the project, considering the relevance, appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of the various modalities, mechanisms and methods used?*

➔ *What kinds and levels of data were generated/results reported through monitoring: completed activities, numbers reached, certificates received or levels of participant satisfaction versus actual changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, instances of incidental learning, consolidation or institutionalization?*

Issues to Consider

- *By whom and how regularly the monitoring specifically of capacity issues was done.*

- *Whether initial CD objectives changed or new ones were added as the project progressed, the quality and relevance of any new arrangements and the basis on which this happened (e.g. purposively, based on the monitoring and analysis, or by default).*

- *The extent to which the following indicators of quality with respect to capacity development were reflected through the monitoring or evaluations the project undertook:*

    - *Validity of initial assumptions of priorities, gaps and strategies for building capacity;*
    - *Quality of the fit between the specific capacity objectives and the activities used to achieve them;*
    - *what the trainees/participants learned*, *as they and others perceived it* ;
    - *relevance of the learning outcomes to what trainees needed to do, and to what they were expected/expecting to learn;*
    - *factors helping and/or hindering the learning and its application;*
    - *cost-benefit of the capacity intervention activity from various stakeholder perspectives;*
    - *quality and duration of benefits from CD activities to different stakeholders.*

ANNEX 1: SELECTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE 30 PROJECTS

a) Initial Cut of 150 Research Projects from all IDRC since 1985 Project Abstracts

A list of all IDRC Research Projects since 1985 was generated from EPIK, the Centre's corporate database. The product of this was a list of 4,764 grouped by the date at which they were approved (1985-90; 1991-2000; 2001-04), and the region in which benefits were intended. Projects were sorted in descending order according to dollar-value. Table 1 summarizes the number of projects from each of these categories, and the proportion of the total.

Table 1: Numbers of IDRC Research Projects: 1985-2004

Region	Period	Number projects	% by region	% Total
Africa	1985-1990	769	42.91	16.14
	1990-2000	827	46.15	17.36
	2000-2004	196	10.94	4.11
	TOTAL	**1792**	**100.00**	**37.62**
Asia	1985-1990	628	55.58	13.18
	1990-2000	398	35.22	8.35
	2000-2004	104	9.20	2.18
	TOTAL	**1130**	**100.00**	**23.72**
LAC	1985-1990	688	53.46	14.44
	1990-2000	492	38.23	10.33
	2000-2004	107	8.31	2.25
	TOTAL	**1287**	**100.00**	**27.02**
Other	1985-1990	179	32.25	3.76
	1990-2000	304	54.77	6.38
	2000-2004	72	12.97	1.51
	TOTAL	**555**	**100.00**	**11.65**
	Total	4764		100

It was known that 150 abstracts would be the total number reviewed, so it was necessary to determine how each region and each time period would be represented within this 150. Towards this purpose, the percentages from the list of all projects were used as guide. The percentages and numbers of projects selected from each category are listed in Table 2. The grey cells indicate percentages from the master list (drawn from Table 1). The rows to the right of the grey cells summarize percentages of the total sample agreed on for each region and time period, and numbers of projects therefore included in the sample.

Table 2: Number of Projects selected from each region and Period				
Region	**Period**	**% Projects total**	**% of sample of 150 projects to include**	**# projects to include in sample**
Africa	1985-1990	16.14	18	27
	1990-2000	17.36	18	27
	2000-2004	4.11	4	6
	TOTAL	**37.62**	**40**	**60**
Asia	1985-1990	13.18	13	19
	1990-2000	8.35	9	14
	2000-2004	2.18	3	4
	TOTAL	**23.72**	**25**	**37**
LAC	1985-1990	14.44	14	21
	1990-2000	10.33	9	14
	2000-2004	2.25	2	3
	TOTAL	**27.02**	**25**	**38**
Other	1985-1990	3.76	3	5
	1990-2000	6.38	5	8
	2000-2004	1.51	2	2
	TOTAL	**11.65**	**10**	**15**
		0		
	Total	**100**	**100**	**150**

Projects were selected systematically (with random starting point) from each of the categories in the master list, using the number with which they appear in the list as their identifier. Since the list was sorted in descending order according to dollar value, this meant that the selection included projects of varying size.

Once a complete list of 150 projects was compiled, abstracts were downloaded from IDRC's IDRIS database. These 1-2 page descriptions include the tombstone data of projects (e.g., funding amounts, recipients, project number, program officer) as well as a narrative summary of the project's main intentions and results. In some cases, abstracts were unavailable for projects that were selected, and in these instances, projects immediately adjacent to the selected project in the master list (either immediately above of below) were selected instead.

Once a full set of project abstracts were gathered, these were printed and put in a binder for the consultant to review. Table 3 at the end of the annex shows the list of sample projects.

c) Selection of the Reviewed Projects

A set of 150 abstracts, divided into four sets (Asia, Africa, Latin America and "Other") and three funding periods (1985-1990, 1990-1999, and 2000-2004) were received from IDRC. Each of the 150 abstracts was reviewed in terms of the extent to which the intention and/or results of the project appeared to indicate a capacity development dimension, and rated on a 5-point scale:

5 - the project itself was a CD one e.g. small grants for young education researchers
4 - significant CD dimension
3 - medium CD dimension
2 - minor CD dimension
1- no CD apparent at all

As expected, this proved a somewhat arbitrary rating approach, dependent on typically brief project descriptions and post-project summaries, where there was one. The macro-thesaurus descriptors did not prove an especially reliable guide in this process.

Although it was indicated in the TORs that 20 files would be reviewed, it was subsequently and jointly agreed by the consultant and the Evaluation Unit that a sample of 30 would be selected first, the PS/PAD for these reviewed, and then a further selection of 20 made once the level of CD and availability of data were more accurately determined. In the event, because of the fairly large number of files where data on CD are limited, or where full files are unavailable (e.g. have been destroyed or are in a regional office and not ready accessible, all 30 selected files were reviewed *to the extent possible* within the time limits of the assignment.

Subsequent tasks all focused on trying to display the projects in ways that made selection more "visible". Toward this end, as much information as possible about the projects was put into short "codes" on a chart which is now available from the Evaluation Unit, but which is not provided here. First, on the lists provided by IDRC, each set of abstracts was numbered consecutively across the three funding periods. This number, plus the funding unit, became the "code" for each project in the various charts used to process the final selection of 30. Where the chart itself did not indicate the funding period, the project codes were also colour-coded (blue-1985/90, pink-1990/99, green-2000/04). "Region" was not indicated in the codes, but on the respective charts. For example, then, 5 afns: 4 under the Asia column would indicate an early AFNS project given the small number (actual file: 850136) with a CD rating of 4.

A series of charts were developed in working through a reasonably logical and transparent way to display the projects and, from there, make a selection.

a) As noted above, the first chart (files: "tabs-Africa, tabs-Asia, tabs-lacro") available from the Evaluation Unit, numbered all the abstracts by region and summarized the main descriptors of each: project number, funding level, title, funding unit, CD rating (1-5), type of recipient, any particular comment and general type of methodology. In the end, funding level, recipient type and methodology were not used to select the final 30 to keep the criteria in limits and because they were not considered especially informative at this first-cut stage. The latter two may be useful in actual evaluations and future case studies. Experience suggests there is no obvious relationship between total money spent on a project and the presence, quality or outcomes of capacity activities (though there may well be a relationship between these and the percentage of money spent within a project on CD).

b) The second chart, again available from the Evaluation Unit (files: "chart-Africa, chart-Asia/other, chart-lacro") combined all 150 projects, displaying them by region, funding period, capacity level and budget range to give a sense of the spread. After this point, only projects with a 3-5 rating were considered, along with criterion of "reasonable spread" in terms of time period and funding unit, leaving a new N=70.

c) The third chart also available from the Evaluation Unit ("chart-CD level") displayed these 70 projects together, by region, era and CD level. Again, it tried to give a sense of project spread to allow a selection which would reflect the range and avoid ending up with something like "all SS projects in Asia, during the 1985-90 era". Although some attempt was made to analyze the groupings, not much more than a functional use could be made of the chart. While it was tempting to try to identify patterns of some kind, the way in which the original set of abstracts was selected, the minimal data on which their ratings were based and the less-than-reliable basis as to what the rates meant (e.g. how much more capacity was attempted in a 3 than a 4) made this untenable. It was, however, reassuring to have something in almost all cells from which to draw the final sample.

d) The fourth chart available from the Evaluation Unit (file: "chart topic") grouped these 70 projects by region, period and by topic or theme. These last were identified somewhat arbitrarily on the basis of the kinds of issues typically related to capacity in IDRC projects. They also covered in general the 5 CD categories of the CAF. This grouping was an effort to begin to establish a basis for later analysis into the selection process. – and another dimension on which to make a final selection of 30. Where the project related to more than one theme, it was included in all (making the total on this chart larger than the N=70).

> A decision was made at this point to exclude FAD projects on two grounds: (i) by definition, these were all capacity development projects and so unfairly competitive with research projects which might not be chosen; and (ii) it is suggested that FAD and its projects warrant looking at in detail, eventually, as a separate case study.

e) The fifth chart (file: selections) shows the finally selected 30 projects. These were determined to be a reasonable reflection of region, era, funding unit and theme/topic. The projects on this chart were then translated back into their file numbers and submitted for IDRC approval.

c) <u>Analysis of the Projects – Production of the File Review Findings</u>

An analysis of this non-random sample of 30 IDRC projects, listed in table 4 below, was done, based on the Capacity Map produced in 2002 (drawn from the CD experience 10 AFNS projects in ASRO). This Map was written essentially as a planning guide for the Centre in developing capacity activities in and for projects. Thus, while analytical

questions for the 30-project review were derived from these planning guidelines and criteria, these had to be rephrased from an evaluative perspective. Approximately 40 questions, grouped under 8 categories, were applied to each set of file documents. The resulting raw data for each of projects were then summarized under a final 5 capacity themes: policy; goal categories; expectations and results; modalities and mechanisms; factors influencing activities and outcomes. It was on the basis of both the experience of the review process and the summarized thematic data that this current evaluation framework has been generated.

It is important to note that this review was *based completely on the project documentation available* over a short time frame. No interviews were undertaken. Only a few documents were provided from regional offices.

Table 3: Original 150 Selected Projects

Area	PROJECT_#	$	yr appr	TITLE
AFRICA				
1985-90				
AFRICA	850151	937,248	1986	Small Population Research Grants - Development and Urban Policy (West Africa)
AFRICA	871035	497,500	1988	Agrogeology Tanzania - Phase II
AFRICA	890271	403,200	1990	Soybean Utilization (IITA) – Phase II
AFRICA	841025	355,000	1985	Economic Strategy (Tunisia) - Phase II
AFRICA	841040	315,000	1985	Moroccan Swelling Clays
AFRICA	870261	276,300	1988	Triticale (Syria)
AFRICA	880397	248,420	1989	Schistosomiasis Control: A Community-Based Approach (Zimbabwe) - Phase II
AFRICA	880333	230,900	1989	Research and Training in Population and Development (Egypt) - Phase V
AFRICA	881012	216,000	1989	Geotechnology (Conakry / Guinea) - Phase I
AFRICA	880305	199,100	1989	Postharvest Grain Systems (Tanzania)
AFRICA	890221	180,450	1990	The Family House: A Public Health Soap Opera (Egypt)
AFRICA	860129	163,921	1987	Schistosomiasis (Sierra Leone)
AFRICA	890290	146,600	1990	Ecology of Leishmaniasis Infection (Jordan)
AFRICA	880244	130,000	1989	Research Methods Focusing on Gender Issues - Phase III
AFRICA	870257	115,300	1988	Sorghum Utilization (Tanzania) - Phase II
AFRICA	880074	103,000	1989	Cooperatives (Burkina Faso)
AFRICA	860331	94,800	1987	Handicraft in the Urban Areas of Kara and the Savannah (Togo)
AFRICA	860327	90,000	1987	Adolescent Fertility, Traditions and the Law (Senegal)
AFRICA	881023	80,900	1989	Village Hydraulics, Extension and Community Participation
AFRICA	840326	74,200	1985	Common Law and the Congolese Family (Congo)
AFRICA	890182	66,845	1990	Household Health Care Utilization and Expenditure in Rural Kenya
AFRICA	850219	58,200	1986	Training Course: Insect Pest Management - Phase I
AFRICA	850295	48,800	1986	Educational Reform (Togo)
AFRICA	840239	41,475	1985	Training, Placement and Performance of Technical High School Teachers (Ethiopia)
AFRICA	850163	34,300	1986	Refugees (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland)
AFRICA	840199	26,802	1985	Reading Competence of Secondary School Students (Tanzania)
AFRICA	840292	16,615	1985	Anopheles Identification (Zimbabwe)

Table 3: Original 150 Selected Projects

1991-00				
AFRICA	4380	1,188,211	1999	Southern African Landmine Assessment, Monitoring and Information (SALAMA) Program - Phase II
AFRICA	910029	615,600	1992	Social Forestry (Kenya)
AFRICA	65231	496,810	1998	Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Éducation (ROCARE) Ph III
AFRICA	928151	447,364	1993	International Conference on West African Integration
AFRICA	100280	418,700	2000	Biotransformations (Maroc) II
AFRICA	911022	370,800	1992	Microwave Extraction of Flavours and Fragrances (Zimbabwe)
AFRICA	928466	327,880	1993	Technology Applications (Zimbabwe)
AFRICA	100206	299,575	2000	Electronic Delivery of Agricultural Information to Rural Communities in Uganda
AFRICA	100163	272,300	2000	Formal to Participatory Plant Breeding: Improving Barley n the Rainfed Areas of Jordan
AFRICA	3529	249,165	1997	Niassa Environmental Research and Sustainable Development Program -preparatory phase
AFRICA	60075	245,300	1999	Impact of Urbanization on Land Use and Local Communities in the West Bank
AFRICA	910316	235,390	1992	Central Africa Educational Research Awards
AFRICA	928461	221,900	1993	Socio-economics of Rootcrops (Rwanda)
AFRICA	910107	205,595	1992	Population Education Program - Phase II
AFRICA	901006	194,044	1991	Environmental Issues in Uganda (Small Grants) - Phase I
AFRICA	910190	173,150	1992	Communication and Information Aimed at the Rural People of Cameroon - Phase III
AFRICA	4607	158,000	1999	Disseminating Research Outputs on the Web
AFRICA	2595	149,000	1996	Indoor Air Pollution and Lung Disease in Women (Turkey)
AFRICA	910194	140,000	1992	Ethnoveterinary Practices (Nigeria)
AFRICA	900146	125,000	1991	Africa Regional Center For Information Science (ARCIS) - Phase I
AFRICA	920903	113,150	1993	Canadian Research Consortium on Southern Africa - Phase I
AFRICA	910077	96,809	1992	School Chalk (Tanzania)
AFRICA	412	85,000	1996	Starting from Strengths: Working with communities to care for AIDS Orphans (Malawi)
AFRICA	910115	71,167	1992	Scholarly Publishing in African Universities (Ghana)
AFRICA	900347	55,668	1991	Vegetable Research and Development (Tanzania)
AFRICA	900310	43,571	1991	Formulation and Writing of Research Proposals (Africa)
AFRICA	910298	31,000	1992	Socioeconomic Impact of Selected Ministry Projects (Ghana)
2000-04				
AFRICA	102079	653,280	2004	Alliance/IDRC Competitive Grants for GEH Research in Eastern & Southern Africa
AFRICA	102252	450,080	2004	Improvement of Banana & Natural Resources Management via Participatory Development
AFRICA	102019	340,000	2004	Human Risks and Benefits of Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture and Livestock Production
AFRICA	100887	251,500	2001	MIMAP-Maroc, Phase II
AFRICA	102078	165,200	2004	Towards a governance institute on politics, health and society in Africa
AFRICA	101494	66,500	2003	Reconstructing a Palestinian Village: the Case of Lubya
ASIA				
1985-90				
ASIA	890047	646,650	1990	Information Management Training Series
ASIA	860214	417,000	1987	Infant and Child Mortality (Southeast Asia) - Phase II
ASIA	850136	333,000	1986	Cropping Systems Outreach (IRRI) - Phase III
ASIA	850266	273,700	1986	Aquatic Weeds (Thailand) - Phase II
ASIA	880030	244,737	1989	Fish Nutrition Network (Asia)
ASIA	860179	224,000	1987	Oilseed Processing (Pakistan)

Table 3: Original 150 Selected Projects

ASIA	870093	198,600	1988	Asian and Pacific Skill Development Information Network (APSDIN)
ASIA	840228	174,775	1985	Diarrhea/Health Education (Philippines)
ASIA	870127	154,300	1988	Bamboo Information Centre
ASIA	850216	128,330	1986	The Management of Household Fuel in Rural India: The Role of Women
ASIA	880079	105,285	1989	Process Improvement Brass and Bronzeware Foundries (Northern Thailand)
ASIA	890277	93,790	1990	MINISIS Resource Centre (China) - Phase II
ASIA	890131	81,600	1990	Banana Post Harvest Technology (Philippines)
ASIA	870325	73,500	1988	Integrated Support for Research Management Centre (Philippines)
ASIA	841011	64,242	1985	Training in Science Broadcasting (Asia)
ASIA	840048	55,400	1985	Bamboo Preservation (Indonesia) - Phase II
ASIA	890108	46,937	1990	Women's Radio (Philippines)
ASIA	840106	36,000	1985	Agrarian Law and Rural Development (Indonesia)
ASIA	880145	18,920	1989	Training for Trainers – CIPS
1991-00				
ASIA	4373	785,060	1999	Food Security/South Asia: Enhanced Community Capacity to Generate Knowledge/ Influence Policy
ASIA	928303	500,000	1993	Himalaya Eco-rehabilitation
ASIA	921008	377,836	1993	Biosorbents: Use of One Waste Product to Clean Up Another (China)
ASIA	40326	323,603	1996	Natural Resources Management Network (Vietnam)
ASIA	921301	275,433	1993	Botanical Pesticides (Thailand / University of Ottawa) - Phase II
ASIA	3398	247,057	1997	PAN Bhutan
ASIA	3846	226,689	1999	MIMAP: Rural Poverty Monitoring (Vietnam)
ASIA	391	194,570	1994	Strategic Interventions for Accelerating the Pace of Decline in Infant Mortality and Fertility (India) - Phase II
ASIA	900074	168,372	1991	Farm Forestry Training Program (China)
ASIA	928022	149,930	1993	Environmental Education in China
ASIA	55	137,460	1994	Natural Resources Management Information for Development Workers (Bangladesh)
ASIA	900093	104,005	1991	Community Health Practitioners (Korea)
ASIA	4108	85,200	1998	Policy Planning and Policy Analysis, Cambodia
ASIA	910196	63,170	1992	Improved Milk Production (Viet Nam)
2000-04				
ASIA	101605	529,280	2004	Enhancing CBNRM Research and Networking Capacity at NUOL
ASIA	101012	348,500	2003	Enhancing Agro-Pastoralist Livelihoods in Yunnan, China
ASIA	101511	234,993	2003	Research on Developing Parameters for Strengthening Medicinal Plants - based Livelihoods in Indian HIghlands
ASIA	100811	77,553	2001	Community-based Water Quality Monitoring and Drinking Water Management: A Pilot Project in Select Wards of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Nepal
LAC				
1985-90				
LAC	890190	629,125	1990	Seismic Hazard (Latin America and the Caribbean)
LAC	870251	440,000	1988	Local Governments in Medium-Size Cities (Latin America)
LAC	870120	366,700	1988	Rental and Shared Housing (Latin America)
LAC	881056	306,567	1989	Groundwater Management (La Plata)
LAC	851015	264,765	1986	Blast Furnace Slag (Argentina)
LAC	880318	240,000	1989	REDUC Network: Management and Technology Support

Table 3: Original 150 Selected Projects

LAC	881024	214,676	1989	Plankton Ecology (Dalhousie/Chile)
LAC	840216	182,560	1985	Sexually-transmitted Diseases (Cuba)
LAC	880230	152,010	1989	Community Control of Acute Respiratory Infections (Cuba)
LAC	870144	130,700	1988	The Grocery Basket in Bolivia
LAC	871036	107,600	1988	Pine Tannins as Anticorrosives (Chile)
LAC	860329	96,390	1987	Training: Technology Transfer and Adaptation - Phase II
LAC	870050	90,530	1988	Impact of New Communications Technologies (Peru)
LAC	840094	82,300	1985	Energy Implications of Industrial Development Strategies (Chile)
LAC	880278	72,500	1989	Educational Efficiency and the Teaching-Learning Process
LAC	860016	64,955	1987	Leishmaniasis (Mexico) - Phase I
LAC	860290	56,760	1987	Social Effects of Community Education in Indian Populations
LAC	880213	49,425	1989	Biological Control of Malaria (Peru) - Phase I
LAC	880078	40,000	1989	Political Culture and the State in Central America
LAC	880097	28,405	1989	Women's Political Participation
LAC	880223	15,100	1989	Native Fruits (Colombia)
1991-00				
LAC	4336	644,865	1999	Community Based Coastal Resources Management (Caribbean)
LAC	910200	450,000	1992	PRACIPA Network (CIP) - Phase III
LAC	900217	361,731	1991	CIMDER (Colombia) - Phase III
LAC	1022	303,530	1995	Mercury Contamination Risks (Brazil) - CARUSO ph I
LAC	3958	255,000	1998	Technology Transfer - B.T. Pesticide (Mexico)
LAC	900266	241,500	1991	Knowledge for Development: Adolescent Health, Sexuality and Pregnancy
LAC	100095	216,140	2000	Financing Municipal Health Systems and Equity (Brazil)
LAC	302	192,370	1994	Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas
LAC	300	159,400	1995	Globalization, State Power and Social Policy (IHRDD and UWO)
LAC	920228	140,950	1993	Malaria Surveillance (Brazil) - Phase II
LAC	383	110,897	1994	Health Policy in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico) - Phase I
LAC	900045	84,500	1991	Juveniles Documentation Network (Latin America)
LAC	900098	63,765	1991	Essential National Health Research (Mexico)
LAC	920600	37,500	1993	Creole Communication Training (Saint Lucia)
2000-04				
LAC	100730	449,600	2001	Small Grant Program: Fondo Mink'a de Chorlavi
LAC	101984	229,420	2004	Research for the definition and promotion of a strategy for rural development and transformation in post-conflict Guatemala
LAC	101749	116,770	2003	Community Justice and Conflict Management in Colombia
LAC	100503	60,100	2001	AGUILA Executive Secretariat and Evaluation
Other				
1985-90				
Other	860228	400,000	1987	Research in Human Reproduction (Global) - WHO
Other	861036	235,100	1987	Policy Implementation in Adult Education (Canada/Tanzania/Mexico)
Other	870196	125,000	1988	Grant to the International Foundation for Science
Other	850318	72,750	1986	Professor Y. Nayudamma Memorial Fellowship
Other	870056	25,733	1988	The Hague Academy of International Law Scholarships

Table 3: Original 150 Selected Projects

1991-00

Other	3252	1,083,395	1997	Finance and Changing Trade Patterns in Developing Countries
Other	100310	475,000	2000	Environmental & Social Performance Indicators and Sustainability Markers in Minerals Development: Indicators of Health and Well Being (Phase II)
Other	50184	300,010	1997	Methods and Tools for Policy Assessment
Other	1269	240,360	1995	Gender and Information Technology (APC Women's Networking Support Program)
Other	2947	177,690	1996	Integrated Voice and Data Network (IVDN) - CGIAR
Other	921103	133,500	1993	Eco-Labelling and Trade (Global)
Other	2055	100,000	1995	IDRC Project Leader Tracer Study "Where Are They Now" 94-0810
Other	900054	70,824	1991	Development Market Research Network (Global)

2000-04

Other	102129	561,250	2004	NSI-IDRC Partnership (2003-2006)
Other	101457	147,110	2003	Aquatic Biodiversity Support Project

TABLE 4: FINAL PROJECT SELECTIONS BY FILE NUMBER AND TITLE

ASIA	840048	$ 55,400	1985	Bamboo Preservation (Indonesia) - Phase II
ASIA	850136	333,000	1986	Cropping Systems Outreach (IRRI) - Phase III
LAC	860290	56,760	1987	Social Effects of Community Education in Indian Populations
ASIA	860214	417,000	1987	Infant and Child Mortality (Southeast Asia) - Phase II
ASIA	870325	73,500	1988	Integrated Support for Research Management Centre (Philippines)
LAC	880230	152,010	1989	Community Control of Acute Respiratory Infections (Cuba)
AFRICA	880333	230,900	1989	Research and Training in Population and Development (Egypt) - Phase V
AFRICA	881012	216,000	1989	Geotechnology (Conakry / Guinea) - Phase I
LAC	890190	629,125	1990	Seismic Hazard (Latin America and the Caribbean)
LAC	383	110,897	1994	Health Policy in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico) - Phase I
AFRICA	900347	55,668	1991	Vegetable Research and Development (Tanzania)
AFRICA	901006	194,044	1991	Environmental Issues in Uganda (Small Grants) - Phase I
AFRICA	910316	235,390	1992	Central Africa Educational Research Awards
ASIA	4108	85,200	1998	Policy Planning and Policy Analysis, Cambodia
ASIA	4373	785,060	1999	Food Security in South Asia: Enhancing Community Capacity to Generate Knowledge and Influence Policy
LAC	4336	644,865	1999	Community Based Coastal Resources Management (Caribbean)
AFRICA	412	85,000	1996	Starting from Strengths: Working with communities to care for AIDS Orphans (Malawi)
LAC	900098	63,765	1991	Essential National Health Research (Mexico)
AFRICA	910190	173,150	1992	Communication and Information Aimed at the Rural People of Cameroon - Phase III
LAC	900266	241,500	1991	Knowledge for Development: Adolescent Health, Sexuality and Pregnancy
LAC	920600	37,500	1993	Creole Communication Training (Saint Lucia)
AFRICA	900146	125,000	1991	Africa Regional Center For Information Science (ARCIS) - Phase I
ASIA	101012	348,500	2003	Enhancing Agro-Pastoralist Livelihoods in Yunnan, China
ASIA	101511	234,993	2003	Research on Developing Parameters for Strengthening Medicinal Plants - based Livelihoods in Indian HIghlands

TABLE 4: FINAL PROJECT SELECTIONS BY FILE NUMBER AND TITLE

Other	102129	$561,250	2004	NSI-IDRC Partnership (2003-2006)
AFRICA	102078	165,200	2004	Towards a governance institute on politics, health and society in Africa
AFRICA	102252	450,080	2004	Improvement of Banana and Natural Resources Management Through Participatory Development Communication (Phase II)
ASIA	101605	529,280	2004	Enhancing CBNRM Research and Networking Capacity at NUOL
LAC	100730	449,600	2001	Small Grant Program: Fondo Mink'a de Chorlavi

Annex 2: Capacity Development Mechanisms for the Five Capacity Categories

The following mechanisms are, for the most part, drawn from IDRC practice – albeit selected on the basis of those which, in principle, would be most appropriate for the kind of learning intended. They are listed generally from low to high in terms of the level of learning expected to be realized. How well any one of the activities achieves the objectives is a function of appropriateness of methods and quality of implementation.

1. *The capacity to conduct research is realized through*
    * distributing sector or issue-specific technical materials, newsletters to keep especially more isolated, junior scientists in touch
    * supporting researchers to join networks
    * organizing exchange visits with peer researchers
    * organizing general issues workshops, seminars
    * organizing project-specific working group meetings
    * supporting attendance at available short-courses
    * facilitating study/site visits to scientists/related research activities
    * providing on-site/field-work training
    * organizing short, punctual training on project-specific issues
    * creating cross-project attachments for methodology training
    * supplying fulltime advisors for institutional development
    * creating small grants mechanisms for supervised research and peer exchange
    * establishing and/or strengthen capacity of training-of-trainers programmes

2. *The capacity to manage research is realized through*
    * providing PO/consultant feedback on reports
    * providing one-off/occasional technical advisors-as-monitors
    * providing long-term mentors/fulltime advisors for institutional development
    * organizing networks of research managers to exchange best-practice
    * arranging attachments for managers to different types of research projects
    * creating/supporting short-course training on research management issues

3. *The capacity to conceive and generate research is realized through*
    * providing opportunities to selected individual entrepreneurs or catalysts in a sector/theme to participate in conferences, post-graduate upgrading, attachments to international expertise
    * providing full-time senior and/or counterpart advisors
    * supporting co-operative projects, with long-term/tailored “resource advisors”
    * supporting sustained, professionally-relevant network linkages
    * supporting networks-of-networks to cross-fertilize research issues/paradigms
    * creating research training programmes/institutions in selected fields/themes
    * promoting multi-disciplinary research expertise through creating/supporting long-term training programmes
    * funding graduate/post-graduate education, with contract to return to sending institution and/or sector
    * providing thesis support for research in programme areas or sectors

4. *The capacity to use research results -- in policy-making and implementation, programme development and management, development/sector practice, and facilitate contributions to other research activities is realized <u>for researchers</u> through*

* facilitating networking between researchers and users
* supporting researcher field-visits to sites of practice, using ethnographic and participatory analysis methods
* providing short- and longer-term training on the theory and practice of utilization/user focused research
* supporting case writing workshops with diverse project researchers to explore/share lessons learned on methods for moving research to application
* using case materials in network dissemination and training
* facilitating pilot projects/case studies to test action/applied research approaches
* providing training for researchers/research managers in how to support *user systems* e.g. helping extension officers and supervisors to assess/improve their handling of farm innovation practices and interaction with farmers

And <u>for users</u> through

* supplying extension materials on research results/guidelines for application
* supporting media outreach linked to support for practical application
* supporting practitioner peer exchanges
* organizing study visits and follow-up with application/practice opportunities
* organizing/facilitating network meetings between researchers and practitioners
* providing activity-based workshops, use of case studies with role-play and on-site technical assistance
* organizing formal application-oriented short courses for users
* supporting and mentoring participatory research
* facilitating on-site research e.g. on farm, in community, in bureaucracy
* creating/supporting permanent field or outreach centres (selected NGOs, co-ops) to facilitate mentoring/training of practitioner/users by mid/senior level researchers
* facilitating development/strengthening of user associations/co-operatives

5. *The capacity to create or mobilize research links to systemic policy/promote systems change is realized through*

* supporting coordinated publishing/dissemination of science policy, research-practice materials
* providing on-site science/research-related advisors (e.g. to ministries, delivery institutions)
* developing/strengthening research institutions, think-tanks, forums
* building/reinforcing networks of research, policy and/or practitioner communities and facilitate their network collaboration and management skills

* *establishing information/data collection, management, distribution and exchange capacities for the region in selected sectors and methodologies*
* supporting training, action research and attachment opportunities focused on barriers to, and strategies for, institution and systems level innovation e.g. policy-making, bureaucratic behaviour, implementation monitoring

Annex 3: Examples of Capacity Development Mechanisms, in Formal, Nonformal and Informal Modalities

The following mechanisms are/have been fairly common across IDRC projects. Items (a) and (b) are typically the *formal modality;* the rest generally *nonformal*. Where they are *informal*, they are generally weaker as learning events.

a) ***Creation of Graduate or Certificate Programmes*** Placed in regional academic, research and/or technical institutions, these programmes aim at contributing both to project or programme research capacity through the individuals taught; and to organizational strengthening of the institutions which design and deliver them. Also referred to under the rubric of training-of trainers programmes, the intent is to build up the supply-side of the research capacity development enterprise. They aim to ensure sufficient and continuous local professional research and disciplinary expertise, well-managed programmes (degree, courses), and materials to sustain and strengthen some aspect of the research community. There is little doubt that such capacity is necessary if IDRC is to deliver on its development mandate. There seems generally greater doubt as to whether or how it should, or can, effectively create, nurture or sustain it.

b) ***Graduate Training*** Support to masters and doctoral degrees is obviously most suited to the goals of conceptualizing and directing the research process, and to the higher levels of learning for independent action in all categories. While many of the strengths of such support can also be realized through other -- possibly less expensive and risky -- capacity activities, such as sustained participation in well-designed and substantively targeted networks or attachments, to do so requires people coming to them with considerable independent and self-confident capacity already in-hand; people ready to engage with the relatively non-facilitated learning opportunities they provide. Graduate training is appropriate where this core readiness needs to be created.

c) ***Institutional Development*** Aimed at strengthening research institutions, these capacity activities are intended to underpin research capacity in a sector/issue over the long-term. As a capacity initiative, institutional development requires a comprehensive, holistic perspective, even if the IDRC intervention itself is more narrowly focused. A key criterion for institutional development, then, is that all education, training, information management and communication actions be *integrated, coherent, consistent and mutually complementary*.

This means accounting for, and to a greater or lesser degree directly supporting, capacity development activities for all five categories of research action. It includes capacities needed both for immediate research tasks, sectors and issues, and for the longer-term, toward sustaining high calibre research programming and a critical mass of senior level scientific expertise. While IDRC may not want to support activities in all categories e.g. it may not decide to fund PhDs or senior managers, it is important to ensure the capacities of both levels are available and encouraged e.g. by supporting networking and peer exchange/attachments. This requires IDRC being clear about its own intentions for long-term involvement.

d) ***Consultant Advisors/Mentors*** These are intended to provide technical support to specific aspects of the research process, supplement local technical expertise and facilitate access to a wider knowledge/skills contact base. They work best where the advisor has sufficient (often considerable) capacity and time to interact flexibly with the institution and learners to provide step-by-step learning-oriented needs analyses, design activities with them, monitor and report back on strengths and weaknesses, suggest new directions. These arrangements are inherently limited. As non-neutral outsiders, advisor/mentors are "in" the setting, but not "of" it. They bring their own knowledge, skills and priorities and so can affect the thinking, action and attitudes of those they advise in unexpected, not always positive, ways. To quote one advisor, "IDRC and recipient's project managers must remember that we are temporary facilitators who cannot replace or fully represent either (of them)".

Long-term mentoring, as a specific sub-category, provides continuity of advice in a range of capacity categories: research planning, fieldwork design, data collection/analysis skills, research management, evaluation, HRD assessment, administration and liaison. The mentor can train junior researchers, link fieldworkers to regional counterparts, guide researchers/managers in developing programmes of work/further phases, catalyze research designs/methods innovation.

e) ***Programme Officers as Advisor/Mentors*** This is typically part of the PO role, and the justification for hiring professional, often senior, researchers and sector specialists as project developers and managers. This capacity action works best where there is an overarching capacity development policy, with strategies, resources and recognition, for the task.

f) ***Networks and Networking*** Good examples of both a mechanism and a method, networks inter-link knowledge and people for the purposes of creating, strengthening, sustaining or extending research-related capacities, and mobilizing resources. They are strongest as capacity activities where they act to facilitate lateral and vertical cross-fertilization of ideas, practical experience and lessons learned; and where all members have clear, committed capacity objectives and tasks, and each expects to realize benefit from the effort. This implies networks having good co-ordination and facilitation, to focus, design and sustain good quality learning activities.

As a specific sub-category, a *regional network-of-networks* can be effective in supporting local, country-specific networks, enabling the information exchange, workshop and other capacity opportunities to be "stepped-down" in successive stages so that they are closer to the reality of researchers and potential users -- addressing issues of specific linguistic, political, cultural, and perhaps environmental concern; enabling lessons learned to be shared with colleagues within their own contexts. This type of *nesting of networks* can also enable linking research institutions, both North-South and South-South.

g) ***Study Visits*** These are typically intended to provide the opportunity for researchers and research user/practitioners to experience an innovation first-hand; to see

what others with similar mandates, goals, constraints and/or backgrounds are doing to perhaps better effect. They are most likely to achieve effective learning where they follow the principles of any other nonformal learning event. Visitors may well become informed/aware of new ideas by simply being there. They are unlikely to become sufficiently committed to the new behaviour unless they actually have a chance to engage.

h) ***On-Site Research*** These activities (on farms, in communities or ministries) are intended primarily as a means of improving the validity and reliability of results through applied or action research, by including a capacity development component aimed at enabling users to act as researchers. Most involve basic training for practitioners to systematically implement the experimental application, and collect and record resultant data. More sophisticated training enables practitioners to help design the application, adapt it during application and analyze outcomes. All of these activities are better as long-term capacity initiatives where they aim at this second level of independent action and follow-up beyond the time-frame of the research project to support adapted application of the new ideas and skills.

Not all (perhaps not most) of these activities have capacity development *per se* as an objective, however. The goal is not generally to create more capable practitioners (though this is a complementary benefit probably worth planning for and assessing more than it is – especially where high-order learning is concerned). The issue of practitioner learning is important, nevertheless, for the quality of the research itself, since the more the practitioner is able to influence the application of the methodology (not just apply it), the more s/he becomes part of the process – and thus an independent variable who needs to be factored into any measure of results and any dissemination of the "innovation**".**

i) ***Participatory Research*** This is a special case of capacity through, and capacity to do, research. It engages researchers with practitioners and integrates research into practice. "Capacity" in PR refers not so much to developing skills in research, as to researchers becoming better able to facilitate community participants to use research skills to, in turn, strengthen their own life development capacities e.g. marginalized communities becoming better at self-governance, resource management, family and community decision-making, conflict negotiation. In other words, capacity development with respect to participatory research aims to create researchers who are able to use the PR methodology with local communities; and to create communities which are empowered through use of PR as a learning methodology to analyze, interpret, assess and be articulate about their life situations.

Many of the actual capacity activities within a PR framework are the same as those of other research approaches: training in conceptualizing problems in researchable terms and/or in strategies of data collection through on-site training modules, workshops, networking, study visits. The critical distinction of the PR methodology, and so of training for its application, are that:

- users/stakeholders have equal or greater input into the problem-definition, parameters, methods and use of the research as the "official" research team;

- the facilitating team is competent in facilitative/adult learning practice as well as research methods;
- the progress of the activity serves first the needs/priorities of the learning community and then the questions of the researchers;
- the particular non-linearity and unpredictability of PR are recognized by flexibility of the project team in adapting focus and resources to evolving conditions; and
- serious attention is given to the *ethics of intervention* because community-focused analysis through PR inevitably threatens community status quo.

For IDRC, the challenge of maintaining an effective and appropriate balance among the capacity and research demands in PR projects is inherent in the design itself: one of intentionally attempting to integrate the dual objectives of development (i.e. strengthening community knowledge, skills of analysis and ability to make sound decisions) and of research (e.g. how to enable sustainable livelihoods within environmental management). IDRC support to PR has recently begun to build its understanding of participatory research *per se* as a learning and change process through PIs such as MINGA and CBNRM.

j) ***Small Grants Mechanisms*** Where these are designed as capacity development vehicles, small grants can effectively blend support for undertaking co-ordinated, supervised research, at whatever level of sophistication is targeted, with the opportunity for peer exchange, either with other grant-holders and/or mechanism supervisors e.g. senior researchers, funding agency officers.

Annex 4: Strengths and Limitations of Selected Capacity Mechanisms

Creation of Graduate or Certificate Programmes

Strengths

(+) can be made locally relevant, affordable and consistently available and adaptable to changing regional training priorities;
(+) can be pivotal to initiating, building and sustaining regional research capacity in areas and topics important to IDRC and local priority programme areas;
(+) can produce high benefit in sustaining technical and research capacities initiated through research activities in otherwise weak research environments;
(+) provides opportunities for collaboration across Centre priority areas - research, evaluation, dissemination, gender;
(+) can increase the cost-effectiveness of initiating programmes of research, helping progressively to improve the quality and reliability of research and training methodologies.

Limitations[27]

(-) requires a long-term commitment to a research theme to justify their high cost and labour-intensive characteristics;
(-) is a relatively high risk undertaking for IDRC, and efforts are wasted where there are shifts in Centre research priorities, country disruptions, changes in provider interests;
(-) demand considerable CD-related analysis and planning skills on the part of IDRC and partners to ensure scope, focus, level and duration of training vis-à-vis research concerns are right, to assess host institution and staff capacity, and to design content, methods, participant selection criteria.

Graduate Training

Strengths

(+) sustains creativity in research thinking, in both the improved discipline-based knowledge graduates gain and in their ability to acquire, invent and exchange new ideas;
(+) produces strong, durable proponents/implementers of research and, with appropriate content, can advance policy/practice applications;
(+) facilitates understanding the place/importance of specific research and development issues, on their own and as parts of a wider whole.

Limitations

(-) as a supply-driven activity, good matches are difficult to make between learner, IDRC programme and available degree contents;
(-) the longer and more sophisticated the graduate programme, the more high risk it becomes in terms of both predicting the validity of, and managing, the initial matching;
(-) low reliability and not much negotiating room for IDRC - quality and use made of degrees are ultimately up to the students and how well they succeed in/use their learning;

[27] Those marked (-) indicate potential risks and difficulties. In most cases, the limitations can be mitigated by doing more and/or doing it better etc.

(-) high transaction costs, given the labour-intensive preparation (matching/selection) and monitoring demands (where application to the field is expected);
(-) high opportunity costs for IDRC, institution and learner which may not be mitigated by application of learning where IDRC priorities change or the researcher does not remain in the field.

Institutional Development

Strengths

(+) creates the potential for building a sustained, equitable partnership between IDRC and the recipient institution, giving IDRC a legitimizing anchor in a region/sector;
(+) increases the potential and scope of research-to-practice reach through a more stable, consistent research base allowing for more comprehensive user-oriented designs and methods;
(+) can create a strongly sustainable base for both medium-term research priorities and flexibility for the longer-term evolution of that agenda.

Limitations

(-) has high up-front costs in professional time for requisite baseline institutional assessments, organizational development strategies and monitoring plans;
(-) has heavy up-front training demands, especially in a weak research organization or system;
(-) requires long-term IDRC commitment to sustained institutional and programme linkages, and a readiness to accept uncertain planning trajectories and iterative inputs and outcomes;
(-) intervention-specific benefits are hard to track because of the complex of elements typically involved and large numbers of external variables beyond project and/or institutional control.

Consultant Advisors/Mentors

Strengths

(+) where rationale and terms of reference are explicit, and knowledge and skill sets relevant, they can provide well-tailored, flexible, person-person learning opportunities especially appropriate to information and awareness raising, catalyzing interest, extending space for taking the risk of new research directions;
(+) can form the basis of a capacity development resource person network around core themes or methodology-specific knowledge and skills;

Limitations

(-) unless tied to a network or umbrella project, can be too erratic to allow for sufficient consistency and depth for substantial skills (e.g. at the level of behaviour change) learning;
(-) often labour-intensive for IDRC in finding, contracting and monitoring the right advisor, one with the right blend of technical expertise and skills for facilitating adult learners;

(-) on-site mentoring has high direct and opportunity costs, making it difficult to place quality expertise over long-time frames;
(-) can be difficult to balance priorities of the learners with those of the advisor terms of reference (which are not usually learner-set), risking over-balancing attention to IDRC programme objectives, production of administrative reports and responsiveness to external demands.

Programme Officers as Advisor/Mentors
Strengths
(+) can provide well-targeted, flexible technical assistance;
(+) can effectively identify research capacity "gaps" in-progress and organize timely, cumulative and iterative actions;
(+) enable links to other capacity development opportunities in IDRC and with its associates -- researchers, other projects, networks -- as well as supplying the technical and financial resources to facilitate them.

Limitations
(-) often too brief and sporadic as points of contact with researchers to do much real capacity development;
(-) weak where POs have limited expertise in learning theory and practice (few are hired with, or given professional development to acquire, capacity development expertise).

Networks and Networking
Strengths
(+) where more passive/loosely structured (occasional meetings, unstructured study visits to member sites), can be a cost-effective way to create awareness, elaborate information/knowledge bases, catalyze change by sharing examples of innovations tried, insights gained;
(+) where more facilitated (co-ordinated/secretariat, workshops, links to courses, attachments), can generate learning of new knowledge, skills, attitudes across sectors and disciplines; or across theory, policy and practice;
(+) can be a wide-reaching, cost-effective way to provide systematic mentoring, coordination, monitoring and some evaluation across similar projects, toward creating a thematic base;
(+) can mobilize interest in new, more inclusive and interdisciplinary research approaches, especially among senior scientists;
(+) can sustain research capacity, enabling the "research-developed" countries of a region to "stay linked with and helpful to the less developed ones" -- and thereby contributing to the generation of further projects; and
(+) can provide a "profile" to researchers who become better noticed, with increased potential for funding from other donors or national governments.

Limitations
(-) are unlikely to create capacity to move research innovations forward for the broader research community unless complemented by on-site, sustained -- probably formal -- capacity activities;

(-)are high-maintenance the more they are facilitated -- more costly in budget/time for co-ordination, methodological support, access to information, general guidance and encouragement, assistance in the technical development of proposals, organization of workshops and training programmes.

Study Visits

Strengths

(+) can challenge unreflected assumptions, catalyze new ideas, and provide (usually limited) hands-on experience – all within a relatively risk-free, and risk-reducing environment;
(+) as peer arrangements (farmer-farmer, researcher-researcher) can be excellent occasions for motivating the willingness and courage to try to new things;
(+) can be especially relevant and sustainable as capacity activities where linked into network arrangements which enable good initial matching of host and visitor, iterative planning, support to the host as a facilitator, and post-visit peer contact.

Limitations

(-) are labour/expertise intensive when organized as coherent learning events, requiring relevant "matching" (e.g. the gap between host and visitor is large enough to challenge, small enough to bridge), and both hosts and visitors being helped to clarify and agree on core learning goals (not just show-and-tell actions), articulate practice-related questions and answers, and use a common language (type/register), and sufficient, flexible time;
(-) difficult to manage as learning events in requiring capable facilitation to maintain a sense of mutual learning/benefit and common understanding, continuous checking on progress toward objectives, appropriateness of methods and actual outcomes realized;
(-) ineffective when they are one-off activities, with no follow-up of learner groups to help them adapt and/or consolidate their experience to home situations or disseminate the learning and its implications to stakeholders and others in the community or home institution affected by the innovation.

On-Site Research

Strengths

(+) provides good opportunities to improve researchers' understanding of, communication with, and chance to influence, the real life of the development problem under investigation;
(+) is often associated with peer exchange, one of more powerful methods to facilitate practitioner learning where the match is good and sufficiently sustained;
(+) where appropriately planned/implemented, can have lasting benefit in enabling practitioners to apply an experimental mindset to *all* of what they do (as producers, managers, community members);
(+) can form an important bridge between research and research utilization.

Limitations
(-) is labour-intensive, especially where it provides effective follow-up (one-shot sessions often produce initial failure, discourage persistence or diligence, and can disincline practitioners to engage in future analysis-for-change efforts);
(-) learning can be too limited/superficial to be sustained past the project, wasting a potential development opportunity.

Participatory Research

Strengths
(+) can be dramatically effective in integrating the processes of research as a way to enable learning for enhanced life-management and empowerment i.e. the ultimate linking of research and practice;
(+) can generate new knowledge from new perspectives without the boundaries of disciplinary or sector thinking;
(+) is the most sustainable kind of learning insofar as it engages people in an examination of, and effort to change, their core thinking and behaviour.

Limitations
(-) is a high risk exercise for vulnerable communities where intervening researchers undermine existing knowledge and behaviour through initial support to community analysis, but then fail to follow-up with continued to support to communities in dealing with the implications of the change;
(-) requires researchers with considerable research, facilitation and communication skills, strong sector and community change knowledge base, a long-term, highly flexible institutional agenda and resource base, and solid research-development ethics.

Small Grants Mechanisms

Strengths
(+) brings new/junior researchers into the field of practice in supervised ways;
(+) can advance research agendas through a series of mini-research projects aiming to strengthen capacity in a specific sector or issue, or in a new methodology.

Limitations
(-) heavy time and labour inputs are required at the up-front design stage;
(-) high expertise and management costs are required throughout to ensure adequate selection, technical support and monitoring.