European Centre for Development Policy Management
Centre européen de gestion des politiques de développement

(How) can research help to promote trade and development?

Background note

By San Bilal and Niels Keijzer (ECDPM)

Conference
'Knowledge on the move: research for development in a globalizing world'
The Hague, February 27-28, 2008

February 2008

Table of Contents

Purpose and setting of this paper

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners whose work is dedicated to promoting international development will meet in the Hague on 27 and 28 February 2008 to reflect on the changing landscapes in the fields of development and research cooperation. Building on the recognition that the relative importance of research for development will continue to increase in today's globalising world, the participants of the conference will aim to contribute to rethinking the current positioning of research for development and discuss the principles and roles of research capacity development. In addition to more general discussions, the conference participants will zoom in to eight different concrete themes and aspects to provide further inputs to the conference recommendations.[1]

This paper aims to position the conference discussions on the theme of 'trade and development', a pertinent theme given the clear links between domestic interests and development goals, and the role that is played by research in relation to ongoing international reforms of trade relations. Furthermore, as the current development policy context is considering more support towards the productive sector (e.g. the focus on agriculture in the latest World Development Report) following a broader interpretation of the Millennium Development Goals, there may be an increased interest in research on the topic from policy makers. Consistent with the overall conference goal, this paper will contribute to take stock of recent experiences and conclusions of studies in the field of trade and development; help position the role of research in this topic as it is driven through networks, partnerships and other forms of social organisation; and comment on the development relevance and utilisation of research done in this context.

The authors acknowledge the limited time that will be available for participants to read these and other papers in advance of the conference, and have hence structured the paper in such a way that readers can get familiar with its main points and suggestions for discussion at the conference, which have been included in 'bullet point' form and have been placed in grey text boxes. These main points have been structured along the three main issues for reflection which were identified by the conference organisers, [2] and are presented in a forward-looking manner. Additional more detailed information is provided in the remaining part of the paper, which participants can familiarise themselves with depending on their interest and time available.

Introduction: from Washington Consensus to Doha Confusion?

Since several decades, fleets of researchers from different academic disciplines and parts of the world have dedicated their careers to studying either the phenomenon of 'trade' or 'development'. Given the many different and often openly conflicting narratives that have emerged from these two domains, it becomes clear that research concerning the relationship between trade and development should at least result in an equally diverse picture. In the short history of international development cooperation, policy makers have formulated and implemented policies to reinforce the productive links between trade and development. These policies have sometimes built on the results of research in this field, but have also often disregarded or ignored relevant evidence during its formulation phase, or were implemented in a manner that was inconsistent with formulated goals. Policies to promote trade between developing countries, or between developing countries and developed countries, are consequently often presented like "context-independent grand solutions", while in reality they would only work under certain conditions in interplay with other favourable conditions and interventions.[3]

[1] These eight areas concern: (1) Trade and development; (2) Climate, energy and environmental care; (3) Science, technology and innovation, with attention for food security and sustainable agriculture; (4) Health systems and health contexts; (5) Peace, security and governance; (6) Migration in an urbanizing and globalizing world; (7) Human rights, including women's rights; and (8) Research communication.

[2] These three issues being (a) Research Arenas: International Research Partnerships; (2) Research practices: Embedding Research in Society; and (3) Research Capacities: Capacity Building for Relevant Research.

[3] One example is 'Foreign Direct Investment'. The successful attraction of FDI by developing countries has often been considered as essential for development, but in reality this is much more complicated, to the extent that in some cases FDI can in fact hamper development. For info see Quack, E.J. (2008), 'Foreign investment disputed' in The Broker, issue 6: http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/

A lot has been written about the international policy context and resulting trade-related development interventions, which have aimed to advance single solutions or 'blue-print' trade liberalisation approaches, often related to the strong vested interests of the involved stakeholders. The structural adjustment policies and the spread of the Washington Consensus are strong images that are indicative of ruling policy narratives that disregarded the diversity in the developing world and denied the existence of possible alternative 'pathways' to development. Since the Doha Development Agenda, this consensus has become more and more contested at a wider scale, and mainstream development policy making is increasingly susceptible to the idea that a liberalisation agenda has to be accompanied by a coherent and tailor-made package of trade related assistance in order to lead to economic growth and reduction of poverty. However, beyond this recognition at the general level, progress in developing and implementing successful trade related assistance has remained extremely patchy, whereas the liberalisation agenda continued to be steamrolled ahead. In the European Union, this lack of calibration of trade and development can be further explained by the fact that the European Commission, as per Article 133 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, has an exclusive responsibility to negotiate trade agreements between the EU and third-countries. Development Cooperation is, however, a shared competence between the Commission and the Member States, which has led to a much more fragmented picture. In such a dispersed policy landscape, where EU development policy making is not always more than the sum of its parts, and increasingly ambitious international development goals, the scope and potential for research is apparent.

Moreover, the position paper that has been elaborated by the organisers of the Knowledge on the Move conference highlights that the increasing internationalisation of research causes research to become 'uprooted' from its societal context. At this important point in time, where the EU and the countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific are working towards fundamentally changing (and negotiating) their trade relations, the need for independent research on trade and development could not be more clear. The conference position paper warns that the internationalisation of research may pull away the attention of researchers in developing countries from their own local development priorities to an agenda that is set by the centres of excellence in the North. In the sections on networking and capacity building we will discuss this issue in further detail.

A joint evaluation which focused on coordination of trade capacity building in partner countries emphasised that building the trade capacity of a partner country or region requires a systemic, coherent approach to coordination – an approach that addresses the multi-sectoral dimensions of trade policy and development in the context of poverty reduction strategies, national development plans and donor plans/ programming and monitoring and evaluation. It defined this 'systemic approach' as an approach to promoting trade capacity that integrates four building blocks:

1. Trade policy: a supportive macro-level or legal and regulatory framework;
2. Appropriate institutions;
3. The capacity of developing countries and regions to negotiate;
4. Strengthening of the productive sector.

Current interventions in the area of trade capacity however do not reflect this systemic approach and do not reflect the understanding that none of these four building blocks are essential, but all are necessary. The need for a systemic approach in the field of trade would further be justified by the many diverse and technically complex trade regulations and mechanisms, and the complex institutional set-up through which these are designed and governed: whereas other development sectors often feature a clear interlocutor in the developing country government (e.g. the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture), a multiplicity of actors with fragmented responsibilities is involved in trade, not just the Ministry of Trade (ADE 2007: 32, 33).

Such a specific background would clearly argue in favour of a strong, integrated and concerted multi-disciplinary partnership approach to research in the area of trade and development. In the following sections, we will examine some examples of these approaches, and propose some general conclusions and ideas for further discussion.

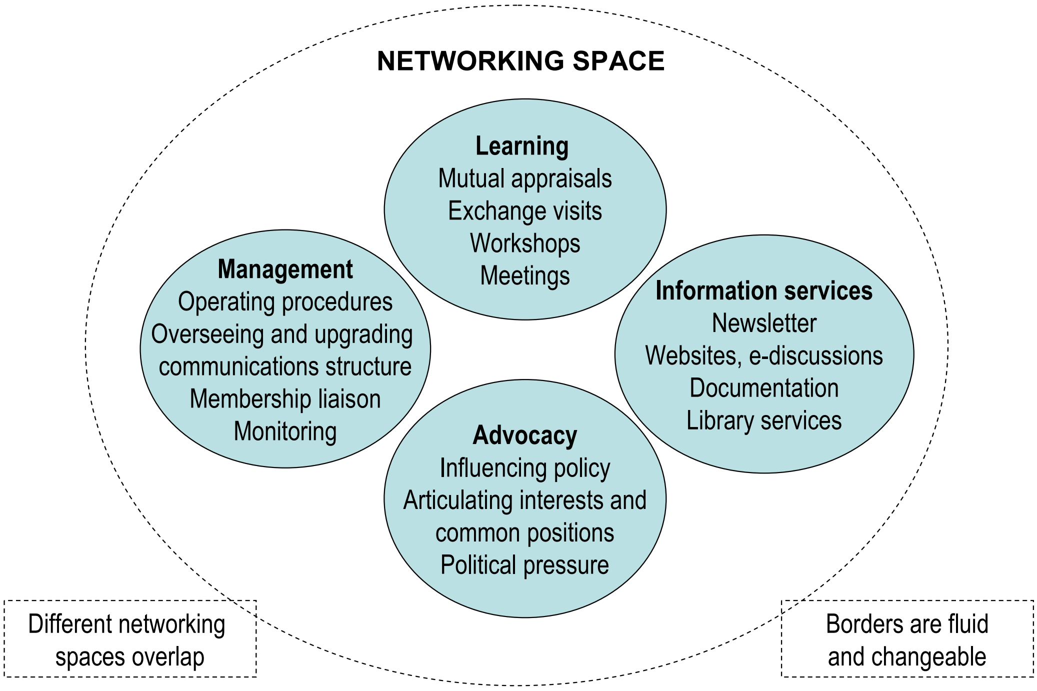
1) Research Arenas: International Research Networking

For the purpose of this paper, we understand the term 'partnerships' as comprising a continuum ranging from more structured, formalised approaches to more informal networking approaches to research cooperation (e.g. a one-off study including European and African experts). These forms of cooperation can include researchers of different disciplines, policy makers, Civil-Society Organisation representatives and other actors. The below box introduces some principles and ideas behind networking, in order to more clearly distinguish it from more formal approaches to partnership.

Box 1: What is networking?

There are many reasons why formal and informal networking takes place. Although the learning function of networks may only be one such reason – others being advocacy, influencing policy decisions or gaining access to financial resources – one could argue that human interaction around issues and evidence always leads to some sort of learning. This is particularly the case when networks are issue-driven rather than coordination-focused, and when structures are fluid and open rather than rigid and confining. To explore the learning function of networks, it is therefore more interesting to look at the networking process rather than at networks themselves as the ultimate outcome of human interactions around evidence and knowledge.

According to Bohm's definition, dialogue – an essential part of networking – emphasises questions, enquiry, the uncovering of one's own assumptions and those of others, and a collective search for truth (GTZ Mapping of Dialogue, 2006). Networking is more than mere dialogue, however. It also encompasses more action-oriented elements such as policy influence, advocacy, negotiations, a search for common positions and social change.



Almost all networking is characterised by four types of activities: learning, information exchange, advocacy or advancing interests and positions, and network management (see Figure 1).
Most learning-oriented and issue-driven networks have fluid borders: membership is open (i.e. the network is easy to join and leave) and issues and members overlap with other networks. For example, various members of an advocacy network of civil-society organisations focusing on human rights may belong to another network dealing with gender equity and women's rights.
It has been claimed that it is this inter-linking that truly fosters the cross-fertilisation of ideas and sector-wide learning. Nevertheless, this fluidity may appear chaotic to development partners willing to engage in and support networking for development. There is also a danger of a few strong organisations or individuals dominating several inter-linked networks, thereby 'ring-fencing' policy articulation in a certain field.[4]

Source: Keijzer, N., Engel, P., Ørnemark, C. 2006. *Networking for Learning: the human face of knowledge*

[4] Lessons drawn from practical experiences with network assessments and the inclusion of non-state actors in policy dialogue in Kenya (C. Ørnemark, 2003-2006).

management? ECDPM Policy Management Brief 18 Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management. www.ecdpm.org/pmb18

Existing practice indicates that many initiatives towards promoting research cooperation on trade and development have been relatively ineffective, especially those linking European researchers with those working in developing countries:

1. First of all, due to (perceived) differences in capacity between Northern and Southern Researchers, Northern researchers sometimes prefer not to commit to cooperation on an equal footing with their Southern counterparts, but rather prefer to keep main responsibility of the academic outputs of the cooperation.
2. Beyond the issue of academic quality, cooperation is often dominated by the Northern partners (and their agenda), which could in certain instances be explained by a felt pressure to deliver outputs, or increased interest in partnering by the North.
3. Many partnerships are essentially project-based, and cooperation does not go beyond the assignment, e.g. the conduct of a joint study or the organisation of a conference.
4. The Southern contributions to a research partnership are sometimes mainly on the level of individuals, not institutions. As a result, the partnership may not be well-rooted in the South, and it can require much time and effort to respond when some of these individuals move on to a new position or institutional home.
5. The capacity buildings components of initiatives often remain ineffective, as most interest and attention goes to ensuring the quality of the actual research and publication process.

It should be noted that despite the altruistic motives that underpin many formal and informal collaborations, some Northern researchers might be less geared towards tackling some of the above problems, especially when the current status quo is in their interest. An interesting case where such resistance was encountered was the Multi-Annual Multidisciplinary Research Programs (MMRPs). These research programmes, managed autonomously by Southern partners, provided long-term support for demand-driven, location-specific, multidisciplinary research for sustainable development (Bautista in Engel and Keijzer 2006). The programmes were supported financially by the Netherlands and aimed at contributing to the sustainable development of the respective countries. Strengthening of national research capacity was an important dimension in these programmes. The dialogue on this approach, which was informally titled ‘reversed programming’, was met with resistance from a number of Dutch researchers, who were sceptical about moving into this demand-led direction. They believed that Southern research lacked the capacity to operate the programmes independently. Many also actively lobbied for continued access to DGIS research funding in order to maintain control on funding and prioritization (Engel and Keijzer 2006).

The financing of North-South research networking has also proved problematic, particularly if partners were committed to move beyond individual projects and assignments to more integrated, multi-annual approaches. Besides, the roles of financial providers, managers and operators are often intertwined, which may affect the outcome of the research on trade and development (Baser and Bilal 2003: 3). Furthermore, even though support to research has been excluded from the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity Division of Labour, future interventions to support research in the area of trade and development may be more aligned to country systems and may be attempted through joint-donor programmes.[5] Given that the ‘EU Strategy on Aid for Trade’, which was adopted on October 15 2007 and commits the EU to increase its annual spending on trade-related assistance from 2010 to €2 billion, EU Member States may also have more practical considerations to further explore possible coordinated approaches in this field.[6]

A couple of lessons and recommendations are proposed for further discussion at the conference relating to ‘**Research Arenas: International Research Networking’**:

a. There is a need to sustain support for networking, and to find a way to ensure the partnerships and networks become more accountable on ensuring the quality of the ‘process-aspects’ of the cooperation, rather than their outputs.
b. To avoid a pressure to deliver on results that can be detrimental to the quality of the cooperation, the funding arrangements should not be driven by rigid timelines, but should rather be relatively open-ended. Furthermore, it should be considered how

[5] See page 12 of the Code of Conduct for the reference to research. The Code of Conduct can be downloaded here: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09558.en07.pdf

[6] The EU Aid for Trade Strategy can be accessed here: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st14/st14470.en07.pdf

representatives from all sides of the partnership could get a stake in the daily management of the initiative.

c. Organising temporary (e.g. six months) exchange of staff or creating joint fellowships can help to ensure that the initiatives becomes better rooted and also goes beyond individual to institutional involvement. Moreover, it can contribute to joint-learning and capacity development.

d. Furthermore, the capacity development objectives can be better attained once Northern researchers go beyond working with the best performing, well recognised researchers in the South, to including a broader group of researchers and practioners.

The following box introduces the objectives and methodological approach of a propose North-South Network on Trade and Development, which would take the above lessons into account.

Box 2: Networking for Trade and Development : The North-South Network

There is an urgent need for more trade-related capacity-building as well as increased involvement in such activities of academic and policy-oriented institutions in ACP and Europe, through the strengthening of North-South training and research networks. Many trade-related capacity-building activities have been addressed at short-term training courses for ACP students and practitioners. But many stakeholders point to the need for a more strategic framework within which real analytical capacities can develop which can contribute effectively to policy-making and development practice. Such a framework should foster research results to be used by policymakers and the research community to be enriched by direct contact with policy issues.

Taking the above into account, and benefiting from their respective areas of expertise and existing work programmes, the parties agree to establish such a strategic framework: a ***North-South training, research and policy Network on trade and development***. In the process of establishing such Network, the involved organisations have committed to promoting their cooperation and collaboration in teaching, research and policy-oriented activities.

The long term goal of the Network is to contribute to creating in ACP countries a cadre of professionals able to provide sound policy advice on trade and development matters, through the strengthening of linkages and interaction between the ACP and European training, research and policy communities in the area of development and trade.

In order to achieve its aim, the Network will pursue the following specific objectives:

- to create a North-South training, research and policy Network on trade and development, bringing together universities and policy-oriented institutions from European and ACP countries;
- to build the capacity of ACP researchers, lecturers and specialists in governments and non-government organizations, through both academic and on-the-job training;
- to facilitate dialogue and exchange of information between researchers in Europe and ACP countries, through joint research programmes, staff exchanges and other common initiatives;
- to contribute to better informed decision-making processes in Europe and ACP countries, through mechanisms for feedback and dialogue between researchers and policy makers;

Approach and methodology

These important objectives call for a wide range of activities in terms of capacity development, joint research initiatives and engagement in policy debates. With the long term goal of promoting ACP countries' ability to formulate well informed trade and development strategies through a cadre of local experts, the parties establishing the Network will adopt a flexible methodology, to be reviewed yearly, ensuring the link between the academic and the policy worlds, with a combination of: direct training for trainers; development of training materials; organization of summer schools; conducting joint research and exchanging experts; publishing of research papers that feed the policy processes; providing on-the-job training to ACP students to enable them to put the academic training to use.

This will be achieved through a step-by-step approach on the basis of the value added that each institution can bring to the Network. Membership of the Network is open and any organization with demonstrated expertise in training, research or policy-oriented activities in the field of trade and development can join.

More information: http://www.acp-eu-trade.org/index.php?loc=nsn/

2) Research Practices: Embedding Research in Society

In recent years, different bilateral and multilateral development donors have become more interested in providing funding to enable more effective communication of research and to stimulate evidence-based policy making. However, the practice of policy making within these same agencies has not necessarily evolved, and in many cases the agencies are both engaged in reducing and consolidating the perceived gap between research and policy making. As argued by Michael Marmot in a different context, *"( ) people's willingness to take action influenced their view of the evidence, rather than the evidence influencing their willingness to take action".* Therefore, he concludes that it is perhaps better to speak of 'policy-based evidence' rather than 'evidence-based policy'.[7]

In many developing countries, policy makers have also not succeeded in developing good relations with the national academic community. Thandika Mkandawire has argued that, following the completion of the indigenisation of the civil servants after independence, and claims from the World Bank that investments in higher education gave low returns, there has been widespread neglect of national institutions of learning. Furthermore, repressive regimes in some African countries left virtually no room for intellectuals to occupy space, and coupled with a reliance on foreign expertise, national researchers often moved to more consultancy-focused activities for third parties. Finally, some researchers simply did not want to be relevant to those regimes (Mkandawire 2002).

Beyond these more specific cases, a number of general 'causes for disconnect' between policy makers and researchers can be identified. Among the researchers, this concerns:
1. Researchers are sometimes insufficiently networked with other institutions. As a result, debates often remain internal to the academic community.
2. Researchers sometimes fall short on policy recommendations, by insufficiently explaining the policy relevance of the findings.
3. Furthermore, if the use of research findings by policy makers could be described as 'moving from dilemma's to decisions', then researchers could make parts of their work more geared towards 'decision-making', rather than being more ambivalent about what could be concluded from their findings. One way would also be by ensuring that there's two-way communication: not only from researchers to policy makers, but also the other way around (in different stages of the research).[8]
4. Despite the previous points, a great deal can still be improved in the packaging and communication of the results of research;
5. Research has often served mainly to legitimise government agendas, as researchers did not 'want to bit the hand which fed them' and ensured that their research did not fundamentally challenge key government perceptions on the direction of its policies.
6. It should also be noted that most of the funds that are currently available for research communication are used for the purpose of communicating the results after the research is finished. However, insufficient funds are invested during the design stages (e.g. to inform policy makers and ensure that the research topic is of relevance to them) as well as during different stages of the research itself.
7. Finally, in many developing countries there has been a 'crowding out' effect among the national academic community, which led to a very small number of internationally well-recognized experts that are in high demand among policy makers and donor representatives, and a majority of researchers whose expertise remains unused.

When zooming to the policy makers, a number of issues can be noted:

---

[7] See http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/328/7445/906

[8] Source: contribution by Peter Ballantyne to a Pelican Initiative discussion on the gap between research and policies, February/March 2007: http://www.dgroups.org/groups/pelican

1. Policy makers can sometimes be *a priori* dismissive towards the idea of relevant inputs coming from the research community, under the assumption that their work is mostly useful within the research community itself, and instead may prefer to rely on external consultants.
2. Policy makers may have little available time and budget available to consult and follow the work of the research community, and their management may not even reward them should they attempt to do so.
3. Some Policy Makers do not want to be challenged, and thus may be very selective in what kinds of researchers and research work they consult.
4. Institutional mobility and a lack of institutional memory further compounds the problem. In many cases departments may lack the capacity to formulate questions.
5. The below box identifies a few additional factors from the context of policy-making on ethno-political conflicts.

Box 3: 'Mind the Gap: Policy Development and Research on Conflict Issues'

Available at: http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/policy/rip/RIP.pdf

This report, which has been written by Cheyanne Church for the International Centre of Excellence for Conflict and Peace Studies (INCORE) examines how government civil servants use research in the policy process relating to ethno-political conflict. It is one of the rare empirical studies that are available which examine the links between policy makers and researchers.

Some of the key findings of the report concern the following:
– The policy makers interviewed for the study were not expected to stay current with the latest research;
– 25 percent of the policy makers that were interviewed had never looked outside their own institution for research findings;
– It was argued by them that they only needed a general awareness of current issues and developments, and needed to be able to find out about specifics when requested.
– Those who did feel the need to keep up with research did so because department heads or ministers had expressed this as a performance expectation (e.g. DFID senior management, 2002). Even when this expectation exists, time- or motivation-related aspects may hinder compliance;
– Half of the policy makers who were required to use research also acknowledged that genuine strategic policy development through research is rare.

Interestingly, the study also concludes that policy makers rely mostly on personal contacts (both inside and outside the organisation) for identifying the research that they need. Following this main preference of identifying relevant information through networking, they also rely (in order of preference) on journals, events, internet, and books.

Although the above points relate to differences in priorities and interests between policy makers and researchers, studies on research partnerships also indicate that there can also be differences of opinion between researchers from the North and the South, or among these groups. These differences can for instance emerge during the agenda setting phase of the research partnership, as has been documented in a review that was commissioned by the RAWOO of the way it had initiated two North-South Research Partnerships:

> *"In the framework programme, the Ghanaians proposed to address management problems in the health system. Some Dutch scientists voiced critique on this prioritisation of Ghanaian research, as well as on the inclusion of applied research. Dutch researchers seemed initially interested in the functioning of health 'treatments', rather than the health 'system' and particularly in the more fundamental vector/illness related research. It proved very difficult to assimilate these two preferences. In some ways, the HRP was ahead of its time; proposing for interdisciplinary research that today has been fully accepted in the Netherlands, but at that time was still rather controversial. As a result, some of the more fundamental vector/illness orientated researchers bowed out and more development, management orientated Dutch researchers stayed or climbed*

on board during the programming exercise" (Engel and Keijzer 2006: 12, 13)

In the context of trade and development, such differences of opinion as regards the agenda setting also often emerge. One example is for instance research that focuses on those sectors of the economy that are more dependent on external inputs and expertise, as opposed to existing production methods that are more self-reliant (e.g. traditional fishing methods). The research and capacity-building agenda focus on trade-related and in particular so-called Singapore issues by the EU has also been denounced by several in the context of the Doha Round and the ACP-EU negotiations on economic partnership agreements.

A couple of lessons and recommendations are proposed for further discussion in relation to **Research Practices: Embedding Research in Society**:

a. Ways should be explored to ensure that the interaction between policy makers and researchers goes beyond assignments;
b. Policy Makers should invest in communication themselves, whilst acknowledging the rapidly changing policy environments, by regularly updating researchers on their information needs;
c. Staff exchanges or joint-appointments between universities and ministries could be further explored as a way to reinforce relations and facilitate networking.
d. Broadening networks to include other actors besides researchers and policy makers (e.g. representatives from the private sector, labour unions and civil society) can be important to help foster informal working relations between those actors that may only meet during formal public events.
e. Finally, it may be useful to consider adding a 'research component' to an existing or considered larger programme that targets to develop the capacity of the wider sector, rather than formulating separate programmes that target researchers.

Concerning point e. on adding research components to larger trade capacity building programmes, one example of such an integrated approach is described in the following box.

Box 4: A multi-stakeholder approach: the Africa Trade and Poverty Programme

The aim of the Africa Trade and Poverty Programme – to bring social sector specialists and economists together to look at trade and poverty – was innovative. This was done at a time where the development community tended to dismiss suggestions that trade could play a role in reducing poverty. The idea of mainstreaming trade policy into poverty reduction strategies was thus new and controversial. By taking an approach which was meant to focus on capacity development, the programme was also breaking new ground. Most trade projects have focused more on satisfying immediate demands for short-term strategy development and negotiation expertise than on the longer-term needs to build up a domestic competence to address trade issues over decades.

Translating these innovative aspects into operational realities has proven to be a challenge, but it was shown that it can be useful to clearly identify what is meant with 'capacity', and consequently what the initiative is aiming for. The Tanzania Trade and Poverty Programme (TTPP) defines the concept as the *"capacity to formulate, negotiate and implement trade reform strategies that are inclusive and pro-poor "*. The project documents suggest that this includes a number of specific elements or skills including:

- Ability to analyse linkages between trade, poverty and environmental sustainability
- Ability to understand and analyse impact of trade reform on constituencies
- Ability to formulate and negotiate trade policies
- Ability to enter meaningful dialogue
- Ability to monitor impact of trade policies on constituencies

- Ability of constituencies to influence trade policies
- Ability to reflect trade issues better in central planning and budgetary processes

Source: Baser, H. and Bilal, S. (2003) 'Independent Report on the ATPP' Maastricht: the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

3) Research Capacities: Capacity Building for Relevant Research

More than twelve years ago, the Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council (RAWOO) was requested by Jan Pronk, Minister for development cooperation, to make recommendations for a future policy aimed at strengthening research capacity in developing countries. The advisory report that was submitted by the Council subsequently recommended for the promotion of a broad, coherent approach to capacity-building which centres on three levels within the research system: the training of researchers (micro level), the building up and strengthening of institutes (meso level), and the creation of conditions in society and government which are favourable to research and its use for development (macro level). At these three levels, the RAWOO report subsequently identified a number of key ingredients:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Box 5: Key ingredients for a coherent approach to research capacity building</th></tr>
<tr><td>Individual researchers:
o capacity to formulate a research problem and to carry out the entire research cycle (where necessary, in cooperation with the users of the research results)
o appropriate qualifications through further academic training (MA and PhD)
o motivation, and the opportunity to undertake research
o external contacts (national and international), networks, and membership in professional associations
o access to information (libraries, databases, etc.) and scientific equipment.</td><td>Institutions:
o the development of research policy; the development and management of research projects and programmes (priority- setting, research coordination, monitoring, and the publication and dissemination of results)
o the acquisition and management of research funds
o the training of researchers, and staff development
o the provision of adequate incentives and working conditions for researchers (time, financial resources, salaries, libraries, laboratories, equipment, funds for travel, etc.)
o a network of external contacts, which provide links to other research centres, funding agencies, voluntary organizations, businesses, government bodies, etc. monitoring and evaluation.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Enabling environment:
o commitment at the national level to a policy and a set of measures aimed at promoting and maintaining research capacity, including adequate and sustained funding of institutions and programmes
o mechanisms for steering research towards topics that are of relevance to the economic, social, cultural and political development of a society, and possibilities for various groups to articulate their interests
o links between research, policy, and practice (involvement of research users in prioritizing, implementing and disseminating research)
o a professional environment, including formal associations, standards, mobility, incentives, and a research tradition.</td></tr>
</table>

Source: RAWOO (1995) *Supporting Capacity Building for Research in the South. Recommendations for Dutch Policy*. The Hague: RAWOO Advisory Report: http://www.rawoo.nl/pdf/capadvweb.pdf

North-South Research Partnerships that have been initiated in different sectors have often tried to marry quality- and capacity development related objectives within the same programme. However, practice has often showed that the quality-related aspects are often more concrete than the capacity development objectives, and that quality objectives often take prevalence. This is a clear Catch 22 situation, as it needs to be understood that it is very difficult in practice, if not impossible, to give equal attention to trainings and academic excellence within the same intervention.[9]

Furthermore, past experiences indicate that more could be done to ensure that the research agenda is sufficiently demand-driven, even in the case of programmes that are solely capacity development oriented. Although in many times research capacities develop in a 'learning by doing' manner, it is still worth to jointly develop and agree on result-oriented goals for the capacity development intervention.

With regards to the comments made in the previous section, sufficient investments need to be made into *ex-ante* research communication during the formulation of the capacity development programme. A key element of this communication effort should be a thorough mapping to identify the key areas to work with (and perhaps avoiding to only select the 'usual suspects'). How difficult this can be in certain circumstances is illustrated by this case from Malawi:

> '*The [Government of Malawi] also faces general problems of low motivation and weak incentives, particularly for junior staff. In addition, there is limited institutional capacity on trade issues within and outside government in the country. For example, although there are several academic institutions covering economic policy eg. the Agricultural Policy Research Unit at Bunda College, the Malawi Institute of Management and Chancellor College there are no academics working specifically on trade. The private sector has also not traditionally been active in trying to influence trade policy. The Chamber of Commerce is not perceived to be representative of different interests and many sectors have not seen it as a vehicle for influencing* (Kelly and Bilal 2002: 4)'

Given that capacity development is a long-term, non-linear process, it should be underlined that these programmes cannot be hurried. In the context of trade and development, however, the solid time and financial investments that are necessary for successful research capacity development initiatives however presents a problem. Whereas well-functioning training and research institutions, ministries and strong private sector organisations can take years to establish and deliver tangible results, trade negotiations are today's rather than tomorrow's urgency. This fact of life forces both donors and recipients to concentrate funding on backstopping activities, for instance by bringing in Western expertise and consultants to carry out part of the work. Such backstopping activities may however prove problematic in the long term, as domestic capacity to adequately implement its provisions may not be developed (Bilal and Szepesi 2006). It is thus good to ensure that programmes to support researchers in developing countries are sufficiently relevant for policy makers, but it should at the same time be ensured that the research agendas are not *de facto* hijacked by short term interests which may hamper a country's long term scientific development.

Box 6: Agenda setting: what can be learned from Trade Capacity Building initiatives?

Solignac Lecompte (2001) has noted four different ways in which TCB assistance can be biased:

a. **Negative discrimination**: donors may be reluctant to provide assistance in areas they perceive as being detrimental to their own interests;
b. **Positive discrimination**: donors may be tempted to 'positively discriminate' in favour of TCB which they see as generating benefits for their own economies and firms;
c. **Tied aid**: 'classical' aid-tying issues arise in the case of activities that are designed to promote trade and investment links with the donor country but are presented as development projects;

[9] See for example Engel. P. and Keijzer, N. (2006) 'Research Partnerships: Who Decides? Review of a design process' www.rawoo.nl

d. **Buy-off**: the support offered by donors for enhancing the recipient's analytical and negotiating capacity in certain areas may alter the latter's goals and incentives, for example, by opening negotiations on issues where the recipient would normally consider itself not ready or willing to open negotiations.

Other observers situate the problem of biased assistance in a broader context, and argue that the attention to capacity developments serves to get 'buy in' of developing countries into the ever-expanding agenda of bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations. Capacity development programme may thus be proposed by industrialized countries whenever developing countries complain that they can not keep up with an ever-widening WTO or regional negotiation agenda.

Source: Bilal, S. and Szepesi, S. (2006) 'Capacity Building for Trade as a Global Public Good'. In: Secretariat of the International Task Force on Global Public Goods (2006), *Expert Paper Series Four: International Trade*. Stockholm, Sweden. See also: http://www.gpgtaskforce.org

A couple of lessons and recommendations are proposed for further discussion in relation to **Research Capacities: Capacity Building for Relevant Research:**

a. Research initiatives should offer ample space for result-oriented capacity development goals, which should preferably be met by means of separate interventions to avoid conflict with goals associated with academic excellence.
b. Developing country governments should receive specific support to help them develop long term research agendas in the context of trade and development, to avoid an overemphasis on short term, technical (external) inputs.
c. Capacity development goals should not be output- but rather outcome-oriented. As such, clear process-indicators could be formulated to enable partners to monitor progress over time.
d. Any prior assessment of capacity needs among trade and development researchers should not be responded to by an externally-set training programme. Regardless of the level of capacity and integration in the field, key stakeholders should be actors in developing their capacity rather than merely as recipients of external technical expertise. This will also require the major stakeholders to become more pro-active and take greater responsibility for the project, but will also necessitate grantees to show patience as the process may take longer than they would like it to take.

Conclusion: Research on trade and development in the context of regional integration

One of the key outputs of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union in 2007 was a two day EU-Africa Summit, which took place on December 8-9 2007 in Lisbon. During the Summit, a joint EU-Africa Strategy was adopted which commits both continents to a renewed long-term political partnership.[10] Whereas the strategy clearly reaffirms regional integration in Africa as a priority, it appears to be contradicted by recent developments in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations where both the EU and non-LDC ACP countries worked around the clock to avoid any trade disruption and the loss of preferences for these countries at the turn of the year. This de facto differentiated treatment between LDCs and non-LDCs can have direct consequences for existing African regional integration processes. In all ACP regions, the signing of interim agreements with individual members of an EPA grouping is proving divisive; even in SACU, one of the oldest customs unions in the world, cracks have already appeared. A more pragmatic approach could have been to continue negotiations and conclude some months into 2008 (Berg, de 2007: 21).

[10] The Africa-EU Strategy can be downloaded here: http://www.eu2007.pt/NR/rdonlyres/D449546C-BF42-4CB3-B566-407591845C43/0/071206jsapenlogos_formatado.pdf

This situation, however problematic, again emphasizes the importance of North-South and South-South research cooperation on trade and development. As trade is considered to be the ‘salt’ of regional integration, it is more than clear that there is a need for researchers from different parts of this world to regroup and make their ways into the kitchen.

References:

Aide à la Decision Economique (ADE) (2007) *Joint evaluation of coordination of trade capacity building in partner countries*, Studies in European Development Co-operation Evaluation No 5, Amsterdam: Aksant Academic Publishers. Also available at www.three-cs.net

Baser, H., Bilal, S. (2003) 'Independent Report on the ATPP' Maastricht: the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

Bergh, M. de (2007) 'EPAs and the EU-Africa Strategy: (in)coherence?' in: Trade Negotiations Insights Volume 6. Number 8 / December 2007 & January 2008. www.acp-eu-trade.org/tni

Bilal, S., Szepesi, S. (2006) 'Capacity Building for Trade as a Global Public Good'. In: Secretariat of the International Task Force on Global Public Goods (2006), *Expert Paper Series Four: International Trade*. Stockholm, Sweden. See also: http://www.gpgtaskforce.org

Church, C. (2005) 'Mind the Gap: Policy Development and Research on Conflict Issues', Londonderry: International Centre of Excellence for Conflict and Peace Studies (INCORE).

Engel. P., Keijzer, N. (2006) 'Research Partnerships: Who Decides? Review of a design process' The Hague: RAWOO

Keijzer, N., Engel, P., Ørnemark, C. 'Networking for Learning: the human face of knowledge management?' Maastricht: ECDPM Policy Management Brief 18. www.ecdpm.org/pmb18

Kelly, L., Bilal, S. (2002) 'Malawi Trade Policy Project. Project Completion Review.' London: Department for International Development (DfID)

Marmot, M. (2004) 'Editorial: Evidence based policy or policy based evidence?' BMJ 2004;328:906-907 (17 April) http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/328/7445/906

Mkandawire, T. (2002) 'Non-Organic Intellectuals and "Learning" in Policy-Making Africa' in Wohlgemuth, L. and Carlsson, J. [ed.] (2002) *Learning in Development Co-Operation*. Stockholm: Expert Group on Development Issues (EGDI)

RAWOO (1995) *Supporting Capacity Building for Research in the South. Recommendations for Dutch Policy*, The Hague: RAWOO Advisory Report: http://www.rawoo.nl/pdf/capadvweb.pdf

Solignac Lecomte, Henri-Bernard (2001), "Building capacity to trade: a road map for development partners - insights from Africa and the Caribbean", ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 33, July. www.ecdpm.org/dp33

Contacts: San Bilal, sb@ecdpm.org and Niels Keijzer nk@ecdpm.org

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY MANAGEMENT (ECDPM)

Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
NL-6211 HE Maastricht
The Netherlands
Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00,
Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02

Rue Archimède 5,
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel +32 (0)2 237 43 10,
Fax +32 (0)2 237 43 19

More information: info@ecdpm.org **www.ecdpm.org** **www.acp-eu-trade.org**