Demanding Innovation

articulating polices for demand-led research capacity building

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Keynote Address

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Towards effective dialogue
the construction of policy dialogue in science and technology cooperation
by
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In the paper, an approach to link policy dialogue and science and technoloy policy agenda setting is outlined based on case studies in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda and Vietnam. The science and technology policies in these countries were analysed in terms of the policy dialogues that affected them. The authors argue that the diversity in the incidence and format of policy dialogue is both substantial and significant. However, deman-led policy formulation in the respective countries is, on the whole, quite weak. Yet the case studies show avenues for stakeholder participation under systems as different as in the Vietnamese centralised public administration and the Ghanean decentralised approach involving private sector ac tors and civil society representatives. The study paper concludes with set of recommendations to donors on how to implement policy dialogues in the arena of science and technology cooperation.

* Louk Box was leader of the Research and Technology Development (RTD) programme; Rutger Engelhard, programme associate at ECDPM; was the project's principal consultant and Carl Greenidge was Chairman of the Steering Group and Chairman of the ACP Informal Working Group of Experts on RTD.

The problem defined

Imagine – just imagine that you are in wonder-wonderland. You meet a good fairy who says: tell me what you want, and I shall give it if you tell me how to use it. You think and say: what I want is support for science and technology in poor countries. 'Wonderful' says the fairy from wonder-wonderland 'Why?' 'Well', you say, 'because the Human Developoment Report says so.'
'Indeed', says the fairy, 'that makes sense. I have just read it and if I recall correctly it argues in favour of technology as a powerful tool for human development and poverty reduction. Let's strike a deal: I shall give you one billion dollars if you tell me how to go about spending it.'

This dialogue between the fairy and yourself is neither real nor very effective. Or is it? Reading the report of the Sustainable Development Subcommittee of the ACP countries is almost like speaking with the fairy from wonder-wonderland. It states that the European Union intends to spend 1,8 billion Euros on support for research and technology felowships to ACP nationals wishing to do degree work in Europa and in their country of origin. The only tricky point is: how to divide these moneys on the basis of national, regional and global plans [1].

This paper provides an initial answer to the fairy's question and to the question of the ACP secretariat. It argues that case studies in ACP countries and elsewehere have shown that policy dialogues involving different stakeholders are an effective means. In addition such dialogues are based on solid scientific evidence from the general field of science dynamics. Clear recommendations are available on how to incorporate demand-led donor support, through the Cotonou arrangements for national and regional indicative plans. What is needed is the formalisation of proposals, such as those that have been drawn up by a group of ACP experts in a recent meeting at the University of Legon. These proposals refer to the application of a tool-box for effective policy dialogue within ACP states, their integration in national and regional indicative plans and the establishment of a light structure which supervises the dialogue process with the European Union. As such it may contribute to the topic of this conference on Demanding Innovation. Like the other main programme discussed at the Conference, the 'Comparative Study of the Impacts of Donor-initaited Programmes on Research Capacity in the South', it addresses the question on how to establish a framework for demand-led donor support to science and technology development. Whereas the programmes are primarily doing this within the context of the scientific community, the present paper addresses problems of demand-led support from the perspective of stakeholders from both science, government, business and civil society.

Concluding this introduction we note that this paper addresses the problem of how to involve different stakeholders in recipient countries in an effective policy dialogue on science and technology, in order to provide the basis for a policy dialogue with a donor (like the EU).

The approach: the method outlined
Before going into the method a brief history of the study. The European Commision, acting on a resolution initiated in the European Parliament by Michel Rocard, approved in 1997 a new Research and Technology Development (RTD) policy. The Parliament and the ACP-EU Assembly endorsed the new policy plans in 1999. The EC adopted two lines of action:

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[1] Projet d'ordre du jour de la 3eme reunion du sous-comite du developpement durable, Bruxelles (ACP Secretariat) September 2001: points 18, 6.

1. supporting policy reform and capacity building in RTD in ACP countries, with special attention to çreate a facilitating environment for science and higher education, including universities; and
2. strengthening research collaboration between European scientific community and its partners in developing countires.[2]

In addition, the Parliament asked the Commission to establish a 'European Foundation for the long-term support of research [..] in developing countries with a view to improving knowledge on the environments, resources and societies of those countries.[3]

The Commision wished to start a policy dialogue with its partners in the South. Given the interest by Norway and Switzerland, these non-Member States were also involved in the process leading up to the policy dialogue. Some experiences were already available, both at the level of the countries from the South, and at the level of European donors. For example a Comunication of 1997 to the European Council and Parliament listed some of the lessons learned in this form of international cooperation, like:

- the lack of policy frameworks for RTD in ACP countries, muting the impact of dispersed, but often excellent RTD work;
- absence of policy visions on behalf of ACP and European governments or indeed the Commission;
- the rare involvementt of stakeholders in the setting of resarch-policy agendas;
- the lack of tested methodologies to promote effective research colaboration; and
- the weak impact of North-South research on general international co-operation and development.

This led to the adoption of four principles which would need to be followed, being
1. *partnership,* at both policy and operational levels;
2. *differentation,* taking into account the diversity of need in and co-operation arrangements between countries*;*
3. *intergrated approach* to solving specific problems; and
4. *mainstreaming of STD* as an integral part of all development policies and programmes.[4]

On the basis of these principles, a policy-research programme was designed which would aim at policy recommendations to the ACP and the EU Member

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[2] Council Resolution on RTD in the context of the EU's development co-operation policy, point 8 dated 5 July 1997.
[3] Resolution A-0098/99 para 8 dated 9 March 1999; and Resolution ACP/EU 2749/99/fin para 8, dated 1 April 1999.
[4] See for an extensive discussion on these development; Bijker, W. et al (2001) **RTD through EU-ACP Policy Dialogue, Scientific Background, Methodology and Toolbox** , University of Maastricht, Maastricht.

States on how to structure their policy dialogue. In addition, the programme aimed at presenting and testing a methodological tool-box for such policy dialogue. The proposed policy-research was co-sponsored by the Netherlands Government. It was commissioned to ECDPM, which involved Maastricht University for the methodological part – on request of the Netherlands Government. The study started in 2000, and resulted in close collaboration with national teams in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda and Vietnam. At this place we would like to thank all involved for their excellent work, and we are very grateful that almost all the collaborators could join this seminar on Demanding Innovation. We also thank the respective ACP member states, the Regional organisations of Caricom and Comesa, as well as the Netherlands Government and the European Commission for their trust in our work which we now terminate at this seminar.

The method, in conclusion, consisted of the following:

1. *Design of case study methodology and absorbtion of the lessons learned*: a participatory methodology was developed on the basis of available literature in the field of Science, Technology and Society Studies (STS);
2. *Test of the methodology by national research teams* in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda and Vietnam;
3. *Evaluation of the methodology by researchers and policy makers in Europe* (through the EU Informal Expert Group on RTD) and the ACP (through a newly constituted ACP Informal Working Group on RTD) and the resulting report in the Legon Statement.
4. The *redrafting of the methodology*, resulting in a tool box ***Research and Technology for Development (RTD) through a EU-ACP Policy Dialogue: scientific background, methodology and toolbox,*** prepared by Wiebe Bijker and his team at the University of Maatstricht; and
5. The *development of action plans* by researchers and ACP & EU policy makers and the review of the results obtained (this Conference on Demanding Innovation).

Results: case studies compared
What have we learned from the case studies, which is of interest to the present Conference? Briefly, the main results are as follows:

- *policy dialogues differ* greatly between countries and need to be embedded within a local institutional structure: there are no universal recipees, yet dialogues can facilitate the linkage between S&T policies and general development policies. Policy dialogues are efficient and effective means, and can follow a simple outline allowing for both national adaptation, and international comparison.

- *stakeholder involvement* needs to follow existing structures: the creation of new or special structures may prove to be short-lived. Policy dialogues are stronger to the extent that they can muster support from recognised bodies (in the public and private sectors or indeed in civil society and academia). At the level of EU cooperation with the South, civil society and academic representation is now part of the regular consultation proces.

- *recipient national governments* often lack the capacity or the political will to set the priorities: this generates a dependence on special interest groups and on donors. The policy dialogues raised interest among governments in the case countries. This, however, is not enough: mainstreaming in national priority setting is needed through continuous pressure by the involved stakeholders.

- *donor governments* are not aware of each others programmes: neither the UN, nor the EU Member States or the recipient governments have been able to coordinate the often disparate activities. Donor representatives present at an evaluative workshop showed interest in a framework for a S&T Policy Dialogue as a vehicle to exchange information.

- *policy dialogues* in all countries provided an avenue for involving different stakeholders (through their existing structures), enabling national governments to develop capacity and political will, and permit donor agencies to link their activities (if they so desire) .

- *Institutional capacity development* needs to follow the work in the case studies by both broadening the number of countries involved (repeating the case study methodology) and deepening the policy dialogue (by articulating national and regional priorities).

Discussion: what do we need to do better?
The RTD policy dialogue programme was only a start, giving a first answer to the questions raised by the Europan Commission on the basis of the Resolution by the Parliament. The accomplishments of the programme are still largely at the level of a tool-box, which has shown its value in the limited number of case-countries. It proved to be much harder to translate government interest into government policy priority and agenda setting. This is the key issue in the coming years.

At the Legon Workshop in early 2001, a *Statement on Science and Technology for Development in ACP countries* was drawn up, which argued that 'a technological divide increasingly seperates rich and poor nations. Economic development is most likely to occur in societies that succeed in linking their knowledge base to innovation systems. The developing countries have a long

history of research collaboration with Europe; the European Commision is presently formating an S&T development policy to strengthen such partnerships. Policy dialogues involving different stakeholders are crucial to the development of (the corresponding) research agendas.'[5]

The participants at the Legon Workshop (including researchers and policy makers from both the South and Europe) agreed to 10 action points resulting from the workshop. They agreed to distribute the Legon Statement and resolved to lobby with the appropriate regional organisations, national authorizing officers and EC Delegations to ensure inclusion of S&T in the National Indicative Plans. It is rather disheartening to note that few such plans attach priority to S&T. In addition CTA was requested to function as a focal point for an ACP Informal Working Group on S&T and EC DG Dev was requested to finance an international information centre on S&T. The EU Informal Exoert Group on RTD will meet en marge of this Conference and we hope to hear news from the Commission on the funding of the Information Centre. The Swedish Government was encouraged to prepare a conference on Advanced Knowledge Systems in Development Cooperation, which we understand is still on the books and which could take the conclusions of the present Conference one step further. ECDPM was advised to revitalise the RTD Think Tank and focus one edition of its *Capacity.org* on resarch capacity building. This happened and three editions of the Think Tank were made. The future of the Think Tank, however, is uncertain and it would be good if this conference could decide on its future.

So the results are mixed. We have been able to achieve a number of things we set out to do, strenthening the case for demand-led RTD policies. Yet much remains to be done. If the good fairy from wonder-wonderland does stick to her promise to deliver 1.8 billion Euros for the support of research fellowships, she will wish to know HOW she has to go about spending it. We have tried to outlinhe that case studies in five Southern countries indicate that research policy and agenda priority setting can be effectively based on policy dialogues involving different stakeholders. In other countries, the same methodology can be applied. The tool-box is ready to be opened.

Conclusion: five steps for action
What can we do next? We propose five simple steps, which could result from this Conference:

step 1: integrate the conclusions of the RTD programme and its recommendatuions regarding policy dialogues into general conclusions of this Conference. Link the methodologies for demand- led S&T development and publish the findings.

step 2: formalise the relations with both ACP Secretariat and other bodies to be involved in the implementation of the European Forum on Research and

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[5] Legon Statement on Science and Technology For Development in ACP Countries

Development or any other proposal as it may come about in the coming months. Involve the EU Infomal Expert Groups on RTD and the ACP Informal Working Group, and their representatives from European and Southern countries.

step 3: request institutions like ECDPM and a Southern partner to maintain an information mechanism, such as the RTD Think Tank to provide the emerging knowledge network of all particpants to this Conference and others with up-to-date information.

step 4: repeat case studies and apply the tool-box, involving researcherds from the existing RTD team (from the five case study countries and the University of Maastricht).

step 5: publish regular policy briefs on the demand-led science and technology policies in a collaborative effort involving the participants to the present Conference and others.