

# IDRC Strategic Evaluation of Capacity Development

"Doing things better? How capacity development results help bring about change"

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## Preface

Over the past several decades, IDRC in line with many development agencies, organizations and donors, has grappled with the issue of how to assess capacity building initiatives. Many of these agencies have struggled with how to articulate and document the complex array of results of their capacity building activities. Part of this difficulty lies in the fact that there are few reviews of how development agencies construct the concept of capacity building in order that they may systematically look at how this construction leads to results. While there is a great deal of information regarding development projects that have attempted to build capacity, there is a dearth of information regarding how development agencies approach the concept of capacity building. In response to the above considerations, since 2005 IDRC's Evaluation Unit (EU) has been conducting a strategic evaluation to investigate the Centre's contributions to the development of capacities of those with whom the Centre works<sup>1</sup>.

The strategic evaluation has focused on the processes and results of IDRC support for the development of capacities<sup>2</sup> of its southern partners – what capacities have been enhanced, whose, how, and how effectively. The strategic evaluation is composed of five phases.<sup>3</sup> The first phase defined what the Centre means by 'building' or 'developing' capacities and sharpened our understanding of how and with whom IDRC supports capacity development. The second phase developed a set of typologies to assist IDRC staff and partners in conceptualizing, planning, monitoring, and evaluating capacity development at the individual researcher, organizational, and network level. The third phase elaborated a list of 'good practices' that capture some of the key elements of IDRC's support that staff and partners view as being critical to building research capacities. Phase 3 also produced the working definition of capacity development at IDRC which we use in the introduction to this document. The fourth phase provided the Centre evidence of how IDRC develops 'complete capacity' to carry out research related activities within organizations, focusing on the development of six organizational case studies, a cross case content analysis (CCCA) and a series of papers focusing on monitoring and evaluating capacity development and on aggregate results.

The main purpose of this paper is to take stock of some of the most significant results emanating from IDRC-supported programmes, in recent years in the area of organizational capacity development, and feeding into the consultation process for the formulation of IDRC's next Corporate Strategy Program Framework (CSPF) for the 2010-2015 period. This paper also serves to better inform IDRC program officers (PO's) and senior management of the some of the key results that the Centre is achieving in the area of organizational capacity development.

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<sup>1</sup> IDRC Strategic Evaluation of Capacity Development: Taking Stock of Major Results in Organisational Capacity Development. Terms of Reference, May 2008

<sup>2</sup> Many in the international development community use the term "capacity development" rather than "capacity-building". The latter is often seen to mean that capacities are assumed to be absent, or that the process is one of moving from one level of capacity to the next, whereas "capacity development" acknowledges existing capacities, and the political dynamics of change. In this document, both terms are used somewhat interchangeably as "capacity-building" is the term most frequently used in IDRC parlance.

<sup>3</sup> All materials produced thus far can be consulted at: [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-70623-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-70623-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

## Acronyms used

APC	Association for Progressive Communications
CADU	Université Cheikh Anta Diop
CAF	Corporate Assessment Framework (IDRC)
CAM	Cambodia
CB	Capacity Building
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCCA	Cross Case Content Analysis
CD	Capacity Development
CES/AEA	Canadian Evaluation Society and the American Evaluation Association
CFRP	Community Forest Research Project (Cambodia)
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIES	Peru Economic and Social Research Consortium
CPADO	Community Protected Area Development Office (Cambodia)
CSPF	Corporate Strategy Program Framework (IDRC)
EU	Evaluation Unit (IDRC)
FABIS	Faba Beans Information Service (ICARDA)
GEM	Gender Evaluation Methodology (APC)
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
LENS	Lentil News and Information Services (ICARDA)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MU	Makerere University
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems (ICARDA)
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NREM	Natural Resources and Environmental Management
OCB	Organizational Capacity Building
OD	Organizational Development
OSI	Open Society Institute
PC	Precondition
PO	Program Officers (IDRC)
PPB	Participatory Plant Breeding (ICARDA)
TOC	Theory of Change
UCAD	Université Cheikh Anta Diop
WARO	West Africa Regional Office (IDRC)
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>FRAMEWORKS AND LOGIC FOR DERIVING MEANING FROM RESULTS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	CATEGORISING ORGANISATIONAL CD RESULTS – APPLYING A THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC) .....	3
	TAKING STOCK OF RESULTS—SUMMARY OF OUTCOME TYPES AND KEY ASSUMPTIONS .....	7
<b>III.</b>	<b>BRIEF SYNOPSES OF THE SIX ORGANIZATIONAL CASES .....</b>	<b>10</b>
	ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS (APC) – GLOBAL .....	10
	UNIVERSITÉ CHEIKH ANTA DIOP (UCAD/CADU) — DAKAR, SENEGAL .....	10
	CAMBODIA MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT (CAM-MOE) — PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA .....	11
	PERU ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (CIES) — LIMA, PERU .....	11
	INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE DRY AREAS (ICARDA) – ALEPPO, SYRIA .....	12
	MAKERERE UNIVERSITY (MU) – KAMPALA, UGANDA .....	12
<b>IV.</b>	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING (OCB) RESULTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
	RESULTS LINKED TO PRECONDITION (PC) “A”: ORGANIZATIONS, NETWORKS, INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER KEY ACTORS IDENTIFY, ANALYZE AND ADDRESS DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER .....	13
	RESULTS LINKED TO PC “B”: RESEARCH IS BROADLY CONCEIVED AND EFFECTIVELY APPLIED .....	15
	RESULTS LINKED TO PC “C”: KEY ACTORS SELF ORGANIZE AND ASSUME LEADERSHIP AND AUTONOMY .....	16
	RESULTS LINKED TO PC “D”: RESEARCH CAPACITIES EXIST IN KEY ACTORS .....	16
	RESULTS LINKED TO PC “E”: KEY ACTORS HAVE THE CAPACITIES TO SUSTAINABLY RESPOND TO DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES THROUGH RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES .....	17
<b>V.</b>	<b>OBSERVATIONS ON IDRC ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING RESULTS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
	WHAT IDRC’S APPROACH TELLS US .....	20
	<i>AN IMPLICIT TOC EXISTS, AND GUIDES PROGRAM DESIGN AND EXECUTION</i> .....	20
	<i>A SOPHISTICATED CD APPROACH EXISTS, WHICH USES MULTIPLE INTERVENTION TYPES AND STRATEGIES</i> .....	21
	WHAT NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED IN IDRC’S APPROACH? .....	22
	<i>A MORE EXPLICIT TOC IS NEEDED</i> .....	22
	<i>ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR STRENGTHENING</i> .....	25
	CONCLUDING THOUGHTS .....	27
<b>VI.</b>	<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>28</b>
	ANNEX 1—IDRC CAPACITY BUILDING MEANS AND ENDS .....	28
	ANNEX 2—RESULTS FILTER .....	29
	ANNEX 3—PRIMARY SOURCES FOR INTERPRETING RESULTS .....	31
	ANNEX 4—“CAPACITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE” FRAMEWORK .....	32
	ANNEX 5— OUTCOME TYPES FROM THE “CAPACITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE” FRAMEWORK .....	33
	ANNEX 6—DELIMITING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL .....	34
	ANNEX 7—BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	36

## I. INTRODUCTION

***For IDRC, Capacity Development is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their ability to identify and analyse development challenges, and to conceive, conduct, manage and communicate research that addresses these challenges over time and in a sustainable manner.***

The historically long relationship between IDRC and its partner organisations, including the six partnerships examined through the case studies of the Strategic Evaluation, is important. IDRC's investment has inevitably produced results at different levels over time, and the results take on different meanings depending on the lens through which they are viewed. Individuals with improved capacities for conceiving of research in a more holistic manner will continue to apply and develop those capacities further in the diverse settings in which they work, within and outside their current organizations. Organizational sub-units (such as departments or thematic research teams) with new or improved procedures for review and quality control of research, or for procurement and financial accountability, will continue to benefit from those increased "codified" capacities. Project teams that have disbanded after their purpose was completed leave legacies of increased impact and learning due to capacity building processes that were applied during the project period. Organizations that have qualitatively changed the way they approach their work—e.g. becoming more activist, better grounding specific research in broader development realities, improving strategic thinking, broadening intended scale, etc.—will leave a differentiated impact on the communities they serve, even as their ways of operating and interacting with their ecosystems continue to evolve.

The key question for this paper is rather simple, although answering it may prove more challenging: how do we know if individual and cumulative capacity building results are ***effectively*** helping IDRC achieve its mission? IDRC has worked hard to explore this during the Strategic Evaluation, and more widely via its Corporate Assessment Framework (CAF). This process has examined capacity development from multiple angles and levels, including individual researchers, "societal" level research consumers, and networks of individuals and organizations. The unpacking of experiences and results, the development of typologies and frameworks, the examination of corporate intentions and the mapping and development of new thinking and strategy have all been an attempt to answer this question, and forge a new, more coherent direction for a theme that is central to IDRC's identity.

In preparing this paper, we were tasked to focus on one particular aspect of the results from IDRC's capacity building programmes; the key outcomes achieved at the ***organizational*** capacity development level, and how the Centre's way of working with partners contributed to these outcomes. The focus on the organizational level is deliberate. IDRC's main entry point for capacity development is the individual researcher or group of researchers, and as such, it is fair to say that the majority of results upon which this strategic evaluation has so far reported have been at the individual level. However, IDRC understands that researchers are always connected to others within the research *problématique* or system, including: other individuals, organizations, and/or networks. Only through examining the dynamics and evolution of how all the involved parties and communities work together to respond to development challenges, will we better understand how IDRC supports *the capacity to do research-related activities*. As such, there is a growing interest in the Centre as a whole to better understand how IDRC has supported research capacity development at the ***organizational level***.

IDRC's efforts to develop and use frameworks to guide its capacity building efforts intentionally and purposefully marks it out as a front-runner in relation to other development cooperation institutions. As several recent reports have shown (e.g. Baser and Morgan, 2008, Taylor and Clarke, 2008), terminology for capacity development is often vague and inconsistent, and related concepts are cloudy and ill-defined. Theoretical understandings of change processes are rarely articulated. IDRC has made a significant effort to articulate its understandings of capacity development with the intention that this

should inform its ways of working. Part of the purpose of the Strategic Evaluation has been to reveal the extent to which this intention has translated into reality, and by taking stock of actual results, we hope that we have contributed to this understanding.

Throughout, the paper attempts to view capacity building results through the lens of what they mean to IDRC. This is based on its current thinking on capacity development, with an eye towards its intentions for the future, as reflected in corporate documents. It analyzes both what the results reveal and what they do not, about IDRC's emerging practice. Finally, it provides some ideas for consideration by IDRC that may be of value for future thinking as it enters the next phase of strategy development.

## II. FRAMEWORKS AND LOGIC FOR DERIVING MEANING FROM RESULTS

As mentioned in the preface, the purpose of this paper is to take stock of some of the most significant organizational capacity development results emanating from IDRC-supported programmes in recent years. As a core assumption (see box 1) IDRC has made the case for knowledge and the capacities required to put that knowledge to good use in the pursuit of sustainable and equitable development. IDRC's funding and programming have clearly supported this, and its results logically fall within this very broad realm. However, to distinguish relative importance, relevance and effectiveness of IDRC's organizational CD results we need to know first what IDRC is specifically trying to accomplish—i.e. we need some basis on which to analyze whether a particular result or set of results is actually significant.

### Box 1: Core assumption

Sustainable and equitable development, poverty reduction, and the realization of human rights all require improved **access to knowledge and an increased local capability to generate, interpret, and apply knowledge**. The expansion of local capability to generate, interpret, and apply knowledge contributes to the creation of a facilitating and enabling environment for economic growth, social progress, and greater human freedom. Indeed, the relationship between development, human rights, and knowledge is mutually reinforcing. (IDRC, 2005: S3-2)

For example, what does a change in reputation of a research partner signify— i.e. what makes it relevant as a CD result? How about increased participation in networks? More effective management of research? Application of research for advocacy purposes? Many of these CD results are generically desirable, but how desirable are they according to what criteria or comparisons, and **how effective are they in helping IDRC achieve its mission?**

IDRC's corporate documents, multiple case studies and existing IDRC frameworks do provide many reference points that allow us to relate results to corporate intentions on capacity building impact and approach. We can compare results to those objectives if there is clarity about what IDRC's CD objectives are, whether explicitly stated, implicitly apparent, or both.

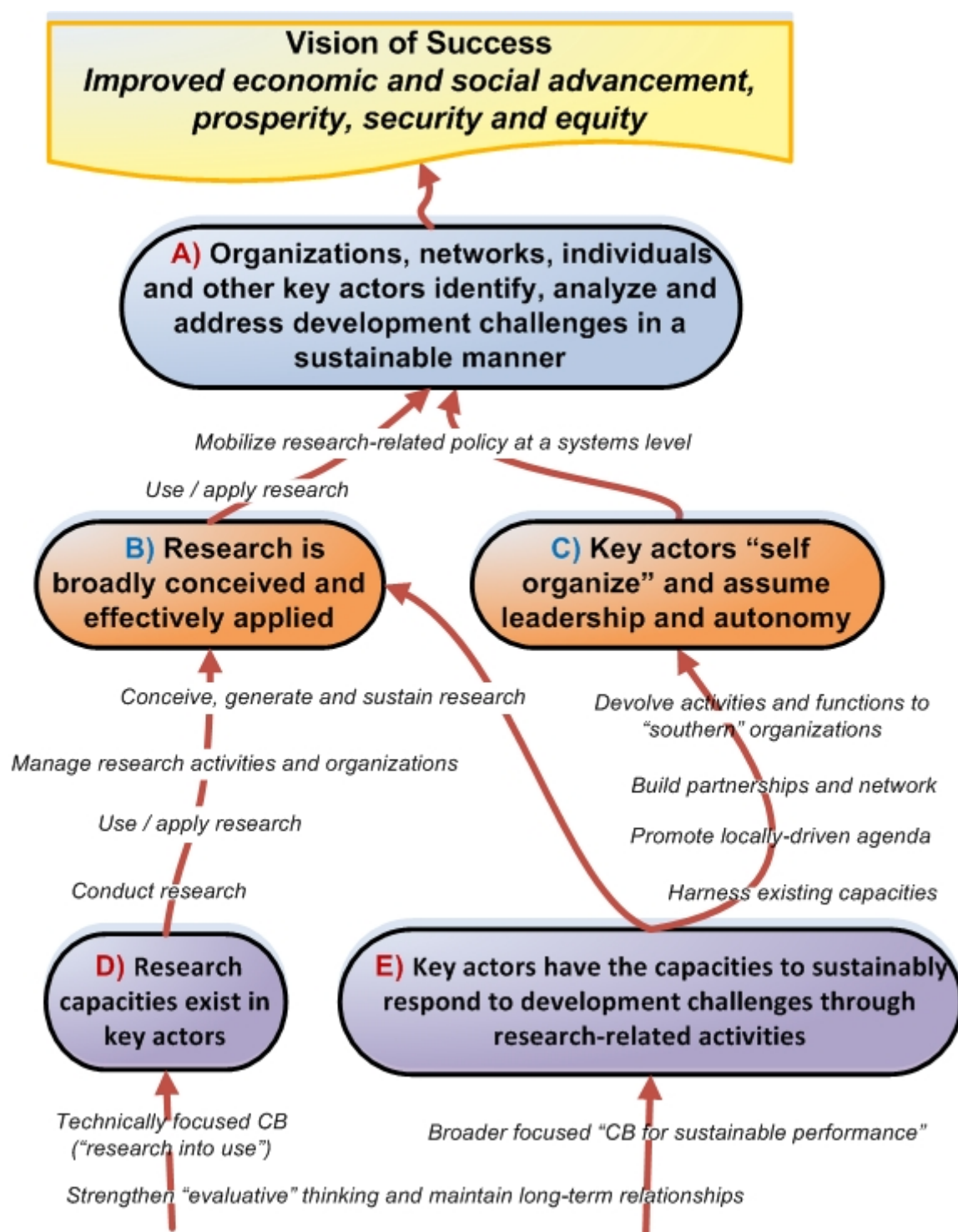
### CATEGORISING ORGANISATIONAL CD RESULTS – APPLYING A THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

Our need to classify and organize IDRC's CD results has led us to develop a Theory of Change (TOC) framework (figure 1) that we feel broadly represents the range of CD objectives that are found in IDRC's work. Entirely based on our review of IDRC corporate documents, the TOC is not intended to replace or even to add to the many useful frameworks already used by IDRC, but rather to help us make sense of a complex picture, and hopefully to help shed light on what has worked well, what has not, and why. The logic of the preconditions, and also the interventions included in the TOC, emerged from a number of frameworks that have informed IDRC's thinking, plus additional ideas from IDRC documentation.<sup>4</sup>

In Figure 1, the top box represents an overall IDRC **vision of success**. The oval boxes represent **preconditions of success**, and the labels on the arrows represent **interventions**. For a precondition to be satisfied, the preconditions below it must also be in place, and the interventions leading to it must be effective. From the top down the TOC begins with a desired vision and then identifies preconditions that must be in place for that vision to occur. From the bottom up the TOC posits how capacities translate into sustainable research, which then translates into effective, sustainable responses to development challenges. The framework is now described in more detail, by paraphrasing IDRC's language within two key frameworks: "*research into use*"; and, "*capacities for sustainable performance*" (Adapted from Bernard, 2005, Neilson and Lusthaus, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of IDRC broad capacity development goals (ends) and intended means of achieving those goals, see Annex 1—"IDRC capacity building means and ends." For a matrix summary of the TOC preconditions, interventions and their various sources, please refer to annex 2—"Results filter." For a mind map of additional sources consulted for this paper see Annex 3.

Figure 1—Simplified Theory of Change (TOC)<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> A note on linearity and TOC: We have established that before a higher-level precondition can occur, lower level preconditions need to be in place, and interventions can help these preconditions to come about. These interventions—which are essentially broad intervention categories (e.g. use/apply research)—**do not** represent a linear cause and effect set of specific activities intended to achieve project objectives. Indeed, the pathway between one precondition and another passes through complex systems, and the interventions are ultimately only part of a myriad of factors that contribute to overall change. The path between those preconditions is, like development in general, non-linear, and we do not mean to create an impression that the TOC is inherently linear. The TOC can be presented in multiple ways, including more creative organic looking diagrams that are clearly non-linear. If, however, an organisation’s overall perception of change is predominantly linear, then it is indeed possible that this orientation may manifest itself through the way the TOC is articulated.



### **Vision of Success: Improved economic and social advancement, prosperity, security and equity**

At the level of a broad vision the focus of “end”<sup>6</sup> impact (i.e. *who is the target of our work?*) is on people of developing countries and developing regions of the world. The participation of individuals, organizations, institutions, social groups, nations and societies, is implied as both a means and an end; as a means, for developing relevant knowledge with, and for use of, people of developing countries; and as an end by implying that these groups are co-inhabitants of the same ecosystem, co-owners of problems and co-creators of solutions of the developing world. Implicitly it is also desirable for actors to identify, and respond to, their own development challenges.

IDRC desires impact (i.e. *what* are we trying to achieve?) at two levels; the level of vision, and the level at which end impact is sustainable (see precondition “A”). For end impact at the vision level, quality of life issues are evident via improved “prosperity, security and equity”, the economic and social advancement of which are achieved through the identification and addressing of development challenges over time. Sustainability of end impact is reflected in a desired “state” of “standing” research capacity, empowerment, interaction, cooperation and mutual learning, as well as by the use of the qualifier “sustainable” in the definition of CD. Local research capacity broadly conceived—from individuals with innovative skills to able institutions—is implied as a precondition to developing regions solving their own problems.

#### ***Precondition A: Organizations, networks, individuals and other key actors identify, analyze and address development challenges in a sustainable manner***

This precondition for the vision of success leads directly to the concept of quality of life (improved economic and social advancement, prosperity, security and equity, i.e. end impact), and, as mentioned above, relates to how “end” impact becomes sustainable. It assumes that a self-functioning system must exist in which key actors continually respond to their own problems—utilizing knowledge directly to improve economic and social advancement, prosperity, security and equity. Outcome types to look for in satisfying this precondition include effective research use for policy change (i.e. policies changed); high-level policy advocacy; improvements in the enabling environment; broadly mobilized (e.g. disseminated) and utilized research; evidence of sustainability in application of research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities; significant evidence of organizations autonomously leading and effectively catalyzing the use of research for development within their broader ecosystem; and, development and application of improved technical methods that have the potential for wide scale impact.

#### ***Precondition B: Research is broadly conceived and effectively applied***

This precondition for “A” looks primarily for outcomes related to the *application of the capacity categories* in the “research into use” framework, particularly categories 1-4 (see box 2). This framework highlights “ideal” capacities of researchers and it envisions an applied research cycle that goes from conception of problems and conducting of research, to the eventual use of research both at local and system levels. It highlights the *technical* capacities needed along a whole theory of change continuum—from ideas to impact. Although more focused on relevance and use of research than on sustainability of organizations and systems to promote this, links to broader capacities needed are implicit within the concept of “sustain[ing] research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities.”

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<sup>6</sup> By “end” impact we mean the stakeholder group or groups that an organization ultimately wishes to affect, even if that group is not the direct target of an organization’s work. For example, an organization might focus on strengthening capacities of other organisations; with the intended end impact of improving the quality of life of the people those organizations serve. “Direct” impact, on the other hand, would refer to impact felt directly with an organization’s boundary partners. In cases where organizations work with end users of services directly, end impact and direct impact might be the same.

This precondition is essentially the technical knowledge aspects that support the effective, sustainable response to development challenges in the precondition condition above it. Outcome types to look for in satisfying this precondition include active use and application of research (including for intended policy change); promising evidence of the conduct of high quality research (research capacity applied); evidence of highly effective technical management of research; general dissemination of research (without necessarily having evidence of larger scale use or impact); and, evidence of broadened design of research agendas (e.g. adding dissemination to a previously more narrowly designed project; or adding social dimensions to more narrowly conceived research).

**Box 2: The “research into use” framework—Five Categories of Capacity Development Activity in IDRC**

In the context of IDRC’s research-for-development mandate, capacity development activities are intended to create and strengthen the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for good quality, relevant and useful research. Based on the 40-project review, these can be grouped into five broad capacity categories, each reflecting something an individual or institution is expected to be able to do or to do better, as a consequence of the Centre’s intervention. These are

1. **conducting research**
2. **managing research activities and organizations**
3. **conceiving, generating and sustaining research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities**
4. **using/applying research outcomes in policy and/or practice**
5. **mobilizing research-related policy and programme “systems” thinking.**

These capacities are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they reflect the various tasks or dimensions of a full research enterprise, the kind of overall competency which should be available within any country’s research environment, to address any development problem. (Bernard, 2005: 1)

**Precondition C: Key actors “self organize” and assume leadership and autonomy**

This precondition for “A” looks for outcomes demonstrating that relevant local and regional organizations are taking the reins of their own development challenges and driving the development agenda. It also assumes and looks for a high level of coordination and collaboration. Combined with precondition “E” below it in the TOC (capacities for sustainable response), it begins to look for broader outcomes related to a sustainable systems response to research for development (see box 3<sup>7</sup>), including outcome types such as self-initiated networking and partnering; evidence of high level strategic thinking or systems thinking; evidence of significant increase in reputation or positioning; evidence of growing leadership and continuity on a specific issue; and, evidence of major change in organizational roles that better align with research for development needs.

**Box 3: “Capacities for sustainable performance” framework**

While the “research into use” framework focuses on research capacities for conducting, managing, conceiving...using, etc., it is important to take a step back and ask the question: *what are the broad capacities needed to carry out the research into use framework?* Neilson and Lusthaus (2005, 2007) have organized the needed capacities into **individual, organizational, network, state / institutional and societal (user)** levels, and linked them to likely outcomes that would be seen at each level as a result of four broad IDRC intervention types—**education and training, mentoring / coaching, networks / networking and face-to-face interaction**. At the organizational level the resulting framework includes not only technical research capacities, but also leadership, strategy, organizational functions / systems, and relationships / linkages between organizations.

The remaining two preconditions focus on the **development of capacities** rather than on the application of those capacities in a high-impact manner; these may be understood in some cases as *outputs*.

**Precondition D: Research capacities exist in key actors**

This precondition for “B” reflects the broad technical research capacities needed in order to be able to carry out the activities in the “research into use” framework. This could include application of technical

<sup>7</sup> Also see annexes 4 and 5 for a more complete approximation of the “Capacities for Sustainable Performance” framework.

capacities at any level (e.g. improved research project management or evaluation skills; simple conduct and production of research, improved technical procedures, improved evaluation and research methodology, etc.); general increases in research capacity, quality or awareness; and, an increase in technical advice seeking.

***Precondition E: Key actors have the capacities to sustainably respond to development challenges through research-related activities***

This precondition for both “B” and “C”—which is complementary to the existence of technical research capacities—attempts to capture the broad capacities needed for organizations to effectively and sustainably address development challenges through research. Outcome types to look out for include evidence of organizational development and improvements in general management; lower level strategic thinking (i.e. minor changes in strategy), and organizational learning outputs. Additionally, we look for increased organizational confidence, non-technical advice seeking, and increased financial sustainability.

***Interventions***

In going about its work, IDRC’s mandated preference for effecting development outcomes is via research, broadly conceived. “As the IDRC Act makes clear, the Centre is concerned with research for development, i.e. the research is intended to contribute to improving the lives of people in developing countries. (IDRC, 2005: 3-3)” This includes initiating, encouraging and supporting, conducting, managing, communicating, coordinating, applying and adapting scientific, technical, and other knowledge, towards development challenges—*over time and in a sustainable manner*.

This implies two broad intervention categories: 1) supporting “research into use”, broadly defined; and 2) carrying out activities that support the sustainability of research development and application. These interventions have been placed on the TOC diagram in the locations where we feel they best support the realization of the preconditions above them.

**TAKING STOCK OF RESULTS—SUMMARY OF OUTCOME TYPES AND KEY ASSUMPTIONS**

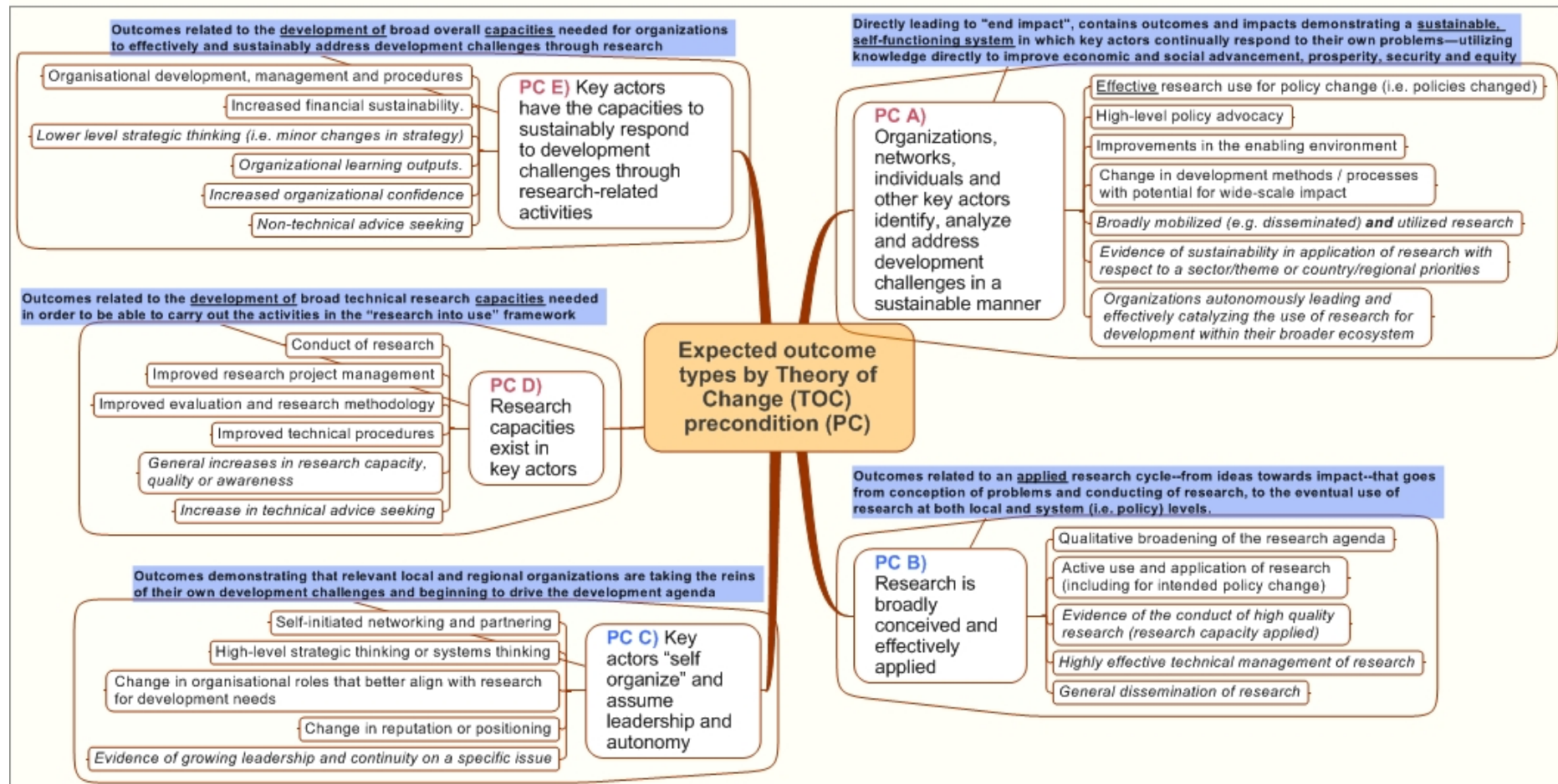
At the end of this section, figure 2 provides a visual representation of the outcome types that one might expect to see associated with each broad TOC precondition. The outcomes in *italics* were not found prominently in the results reviewed in the cases, but are listed here nonetheless as logically related to each precondition. The captions in blue briefly summarize each precondition’s expected outcome types. In the following table, we provide alternative wording for these as supporting assumptions for each precondition:

Precondition (PC)	Key Assumption
Precondition A—Organizations, networks, individuals and other key actors identify, analyze and address development challenges in a sustainable manner	In order for “end impact” to be sustainable, self-functioning systems in an enabling environment—in which key actors continually identify and effectively respond to their own problems—must exist, utilizing knowledge directly to improve economic and social advancement, prosperity, security and equity.
Precondition B—Research is broadly conceived and effectively applied	For research and knowledge to have systemic impact, an applied research cycle that goes from conception of problems and conducting of research, to the eventual use of research at both local and system (i.e. policy) levels, is necessary.
Precondition C—Key actors “self organize” and assume leadership and autonomy	In order to promote effectiveness and sustainability of research for development, relevant local and regional actors must take the reins of their own development challenges and begin to drive the

Precondition (PC)	Key Assumption
	development agenda, including leading coordination and collaboration.
Precondition D—Research capacities exist in key actors	Broad technical research capacities are needed (and must be developed) in order to be able to effectively carry out research into use activities
Precondition E—Key actors have the capacities to sustainably respond to development challenges through research-related activities	Broader (i.e. non-technical) organizational development and intangible capacities are needed (and must be developed) for organizations to effectively and sustainably address development challenges through research

Having introduced the TOC, and explained how it links to existing frameworks that have been developed for, and used by, IDRC in their capacity building programmes, we will now draw on it to help us take stock of the organizational capacity building results. In the next section (3) we present a short background explanation of each of the six cases reviewed for this report. Then, in section (4), we present the results according to this TOC (i.e. starting with precondition “A”—closer to end impact—presented first, then gradually working downwards). Subsequently, in section (5), we will offer our own interpretation of those results in relation to the TOC.

Figure 2—Expected outcome types by TOC precondition



### III. BRIEF SYNOPSES OF THE SIX ORGANIZATIONAL CASES<sup>8</sup>

#### **ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS (APC) – Global**

APC is a global network of civil society organisations whose mission is to empower and support organisations, social movements and individuals in and through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).<sup>9</sup>

IDRC has provided sustained support to APC from 1996 to 2006, through a combination of grants for project implementation, collaboration, and for institutional strengthening, and through the development of positive peer relationships between key staff of the two organizations. The relationships between IDRC and APC, characterized by a spirit of professional friendship, have been the key determinant in how capacity building has been possible and successful, through a more informal approach. This relationship is multi-faceted, with APC serving at times as a project implementer or collaborator, but also as a strategic partner in project activities; and, most important, as a strategic ally in moving the ICT4D field forward. All aspects of the relationship have served to support the two organizations to become partners in learning, challenging each other's perspectives and advancing the field of ICT4D.

With regards to intentionality, IDRC has explicitly sought to build the institutional capacity of APC as both a network and an organization. However, with the exception of the Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM), IDRC has not funded APC to undertake research. Investments have more specifically been made in project design and management in three discrete areas of shared interest: women/gender and ICTs; community networking; and ICT policy. Although intending to support broader institutional capacity, IDRC support has tended to focus on project management CD, and not as much OCB or research CD per se.

#### **UNIVERSITÉ CHEIKH ANTA DIOP (UCAD/CADU) — Dakar, Senegal**

Predating Senegalese independence, CADU maintains a reputation as one of Africa's most prestigious institutions. Most of the post-independence generation of Senegalese leaders are graduates of the university, and its alumni teach in universities around the world.<sup>10</sup>

IDRC's regional bureau in West Africa, WARO, is literally across the street from CADU. Geographical proximity, the presence of former CADU researchers in WARO, the extent of IDRC's financial support, and solid coordination between the two institutions, have given a solid foundation to the relationship between the two organizations, allowing both to learn from each other, and making it possible for IDRC to develop a deeper understanding of development problems in Senegal. The three main roles that IDRC has played in its projects with CADU are that of financial partner, that of technical assistant and that of liaison with the university's external partners. Generally speaking, IDRC has undertaken a large number of initiatives focused on individuals. Its involvement in organizational and institutional capacity building is a more recent development.

With regards to intentionality, project documents indicated research CD objectives by directly referencing research capacity building, by promoting and encouraging the generation of knowledge on specific projects and the use of specific research approaches, by promoting strengthened links between research and policy, and by promoting and supporting the creation of networks among researchers and with other relevant stakeholders. There is a perception by members of CADU and the university's governmental partners that IDRC has been the only donor with whom they have had frequent

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<sup>8</sup> Except where otherwise noted by footnote, this section was paraphrased directly—often word for word—from text in the six case studies.

<sup>9</sup> Paraphrased from APC's website as of 17-Oct-08

<sup>10</sup> Paraphrased from entry on Wikipedia as of 17-Oct-08

discussions on research capacity building. CADU researchers and senior management noted, however, the lack of a full understanding of IDRC's organizational objectives with regard to research capacity building.

### **CAMBODIA MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT (CAM-MOE) — Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

In 1993, the Ministry of Environment was established with a broad mandate of promoting environmental protection and conservation of national natural resources. This mandate included the need to establish and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of relevant agencies and actors, including those responsible for forests, fisheries, water resources, mineral resources, land management, defence, transport, and local government (interior).

In the case study period IDRC support covered the full range of functions and issues in the 'green, blue and brown' environment. From 1993 to 2007 support included:

- Institutional development—including organizational development of MoE, policy research and development of research capacity for policy development, donor coordination and collaboration, and technical strengthening addressing a wide range of NREM issues
- Policy research projects—with a focus on CD for developing policy research on land and resource rights of indigenous people, degradation of coastal resources, strengthening community forestry approaches, legal arrangements and capacities in key agencies, and strengthening community fisheries approaches and capacities
- Network and capacity development—building on increasing collaboration and sharing by advisors, leaders and members from IDRC-supported projects, as well as from similar projects supported by other organizations.

Capacity development intentions were clear and explicit at the organization level, although over time much of IDRC's investment focused on multiple boundary partners and departments within the MoE.

### **PERU ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (CIES) — Lima, Peru**

The consortium's mission is to contribute to Peruvian development by elevating the quality of national debate to become more informed on key political, economic and social choices.<sup>11</sup> It does this by strengthening the capacity of the Peruvian academic community to produce and disseminate useful knowledge for analysts and decision makers in the Peruvian public sector, civil society and academic community.

CIES originated in an unstable political and economic context at the end of the 1980s—inauspicious for the development of a research community—when CIDA and IDRC agreed to finance five Peruvian research centres to join as a Consortium in order to conduct applied economic research. Today, CIES has evolved into a nationally recognized NGO which is made up of 40 public, private, and civil society member organizations that are engaged in social and economic research. The Consortium engages in a wide range of activities, including a large research grant competition, training, seminars, publication of books, journals, and others.

IDRC's intentions at the outset appear to have been to influence the research system in Peru, namely the people, organizations, and institutions doing and using social science research. The Centre has maintained explicit capacity development intent in each of the phases of its support to CIES. In more recent phases, the objectives of its support have been to strengthen the organization and contribute to its sustainability—the potential for financial sustainability of CIES without Canadian funding is a critical issue at this time. Although IDRC's CD intentions have been explicit and its investments significant, there has been concern that its CD approaches have been highly ad hoc, tending to be reactive, and lacking assistance in programme management, governance and other key areas of importance to CIES.

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<sup>11</sup> Taken from the CIES website (accessed on October 18, 2008), and paraphrased from Spanish in English.

## **INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE DRY AREAS (ICARDA) – Aleppo, Syria**

Established in 1977, ICARDA is one of the 15 centres strategically located all over the world and supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). ICARDA works through a network of partnerships with national, regional and international institutions, universities, non-governmental organizations and ministries in the developing world; and with advanced research institutes in industrialized countries.<sup>12</sup> ICARDA's mission is to improve the welfare of people through research and training in the dry areas of the developing world, by increasing the production, productivity and nutritional quality of food, while preserving and enhancing the natural resource base.

In the late 1970s, IDRC decided to support the development of country researchers in the Middle East as one of its own corporate objectives. It invited ICARDA to participate in this effort and ICARDA agreed. Since then, IDRC has backed ICARDA in support of that organization's capacity building of its partners—National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS)—in the region. In the past decade, IDRC has tended to work at the project level with ICARDA scientists to encourage and develop new research processes.

While IDRC has no explicit CD *agenda* with ICARDA or its scientists—indeed, very few explicit capacity development objectives have been written into the projects examined under the case study—IDRC engages in an explicit *process* of capacity development with ICARDA primarily at the level of the scientist. This process includes receiving concept notes and project proposals, engaging with the scientists, thinking through their research questions, setting out hypothesis, field monitoring, and the writing of technical reports. Although ICARDA scientists tend to not recognise the process as CD, and there has been a lack of an explicit CD agenda, reciprocal learning is reported to occur between the two organizations and both acknowledge that this, on balance, is to their mutual benefit.

## **MAKERERE UNIVERSITY (MU) – Kampala, Uganda**

Established in 1922 as a technical school, Makerere University is one of the oldest and most prestigious Universities in Africa. It aims to be a centre of academic excellence, providing world-class teaching, research and service relevant to sustainable development needs of society, in Uganda and beyond.<sup>13</sup>

IDRC's partnership with Makerere goes back more than 30 years, starting in 1972, and continuing throughout the following decades until today. Since then multiple IDRC supported research and research support projects have been initiated, in addition to the involvement of Makerere researchers in various regional network activities supported by IDRC.

The relationship between MU and IDRC has been and is constituted through a collage of different relationships between individual researchers or teams at Makerere and a variety of IDRC staff. The Centre does not 'do' capacity building of Makerere University, but of individual researchers and teams, 'one person/team at a time'. In exploring what research capacity development has taken place, it is important to keep in mind that largely, the IDRC supported initiatives did not specifically set out to build research capacities, but focused on other thematic priorities. That said many research projects do include explicit CD objectives, with a focus on strengthening research capacities of individuals or groups. This includes building qualitative research capacity in networks, developing linkages among African researchers in the area of ICT policy and between them and international research networks, strengthening the capacity of researchers and practitioners to analyze policy change and assess policy options, and creating momentum for more concerted cross-disciplinary research, teaching, and information gathering regarding women and gender issues.

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<sup>12</sup> Taken and paraphrased from ICARDA's website on October 18, 2008

<sup>13</sup> Taken and paraphrased from the university's website on October 18, 2008



## IV. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING (OCB) RESULTS

OCB takes place at different organizational levels, which can be categorised in different ways, e.g. by type, discipline, problem-focus, etc. Within such units there are of course further levels of differentiation (sub-units, departments, groups and even individual researchers), which creates a somewhat complicated system. We have included in our analysis the broad organizational unit that each of the six cases described on the previous pages represents (i.e. two universities, three networks, and one government ministry). Considering that IDRC has targeted different sub units within each organization (e.g. individual researchers, “institutionalized” teams, and *ad hoc* project teams), we have utilised a broader definition of “organizational capacity development”. At this point we should add that three concepts are central to our search for a working definition of “organizational level CD results”: the extent to which CD results at any level contributed to organizational learning, sustainability and/or institutionalility<sup>14</sup>.

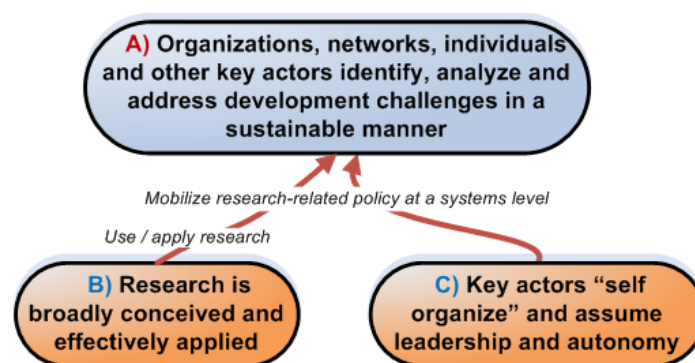
Throughout this presentation of results we will highlight different elements of IDRC’s approach (i.e. methodology, process) and also different degrees of intentionality regarding explicit capacity building. We do not intend to draw on a representative range of results from all 6 cases<sup>15</sup>. Rather, we draw on evidence from individual case studies that demonstrate clearly that this result has been achieved, and show how this is related to different elements of the TOC. For each result, it would be possible to include a range of examples, but those included here have been selected because they are more representative and offer interesting stories of change; further details may be found from the original case study reports.

### RESULTS LINKED TO PRECONDITION (PC) “A”: ORGANIZATIONS, NETWORKS, INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER KEY ACTORS IDENTIFY, ANALYZE AND ADDRESS DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

In all six cases evaluated, IDRC has applied actively two key strategies: 1) broadening the research agenda to include more of a development focus; and 2) attempting to increase research mobilization and use. Both of these strategies are intended to transform the status quo and create system level impacts that *indirectly* improve the quality of life of people in need—by attempting to change public policies<sup>16</sup> as well as improve specific,

high-level development processes. These two strategies reveal instances in which IDRC investments, programming and CD activities have resulted in an effective use of research for policy change, i.e. policies changed or research finding its way to key decision making circles. There is evidence of broadly mobilized and utilized research, along with indications of sustainability in application of research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities. There are also cases where supported organizations can be seen autonomously leading and effectively catalyzing the use of research for development in the broader system, as well as examples of improved methodology or processes that

Figure 3—Precondition A



<sup>14</sup> This is developed further in annex 6, and has been utilized in analyzing the results.

<sup>15</sup> An in-depth comparative analysis of the 6 case studies is provided by Adamo, A (2008) IDRC’s strategic evaluation of capacity development: a cross-case study analysis (draft version)

<sup>16</sup> See core assumption (box 1) in the frameworks section with its reference to “contribut[ing] to the creation of a facilitating and enabling environment for economic growth, social progress, and greater human freedom.”

have the potential for creating wide scale improvements in people's lives. Here we present four kinds of results associated with Precondition A in the TOC.

### ***i) High-level policy advocacy***

IDRC has supported high-level advocacy efforts that ultimately strengthened APC's offerings in information and communication technologies (ICTs). Additionally, IDRC support contributed to the improvement of the use of research for informing policy decision making at CIES (see box 4).

#### **Box 4: Policy advocacy at CIES**

Research by CIES has influenced policy and decision making at the highest levels, for example by seeking research influence in the design of public policies in the "Peruvian Elections 2006" and "Peruvian Regional Elections 2006" projects. This undertaking allowed CIES, through the Executive Office and the partner organisations, to play an important role as part of civil society in relation to the electoral process. In both projects, debates between the candidates and a series of meetings and seminars with all political parties were organized (CIES, p. 32). This process included developing policy documents for use in the pre-election process, and developing rapport with the media (ibid, p. 47). The process culminated in CIES convening and organizing a debate amongst presidential candidates, which strove to introduce the need for institutional communication. The CIES study showed how this particular process helped opportunistically to develop the capacity of CIES partners for research and advocacy by incorporating capacity building into a live case study—the national and regional elections process. It built capacities not only in the major cities, but also in the provinces. Perhaps more significant even than the elections advocacy, CIES has found ways to build some level of sustainability of research influence into the policy system, by forming formal ties with key public institutions.

### ***ii) Improvements in the enabling environment***

Drawing further on the case of CIES, its policy level outcomes, along with IDRC's networked capacity building approach, contributed to the improvement of the overall enabling environment for research in Peru. It achieved this by promoting relationships between organisations nationwide, using a consortium model, and supporting the capacities of people, research groups and partner organisations. Over time, this type of support has contributed to the creation of a more favourable environment for socio-economic research and the inclusion of research in policymaking processes in Peru. A survey of CIES's partners reveal their positive view of the organisation's efforts to influence public policies, contribute to a favourable environment, increase the useful knowledge stock for the design and implementation of public policies, disseminate useful knowledge on public policies and programmes, and promote public debate on public policies and programme. The case of CADU also reveals how engagement between researchers and government has helped to create a new political environment favourable to the use of ICTs.

### ***iii) Policy change***

One concrete example of policy change is the CIES supported macroeconomic research network which influences system level impacts, although it is difficult to establish a cause- effect relationship and there is difficulty in establishing connections between research and a policy change. In Cambodia, the IDRC supported Community Forest Research Project (CFRP) contributed "to the national guidelines for community- protected areas, in which all CFRP members from CPADO were actively involved. (CAM-MoE, 66)"

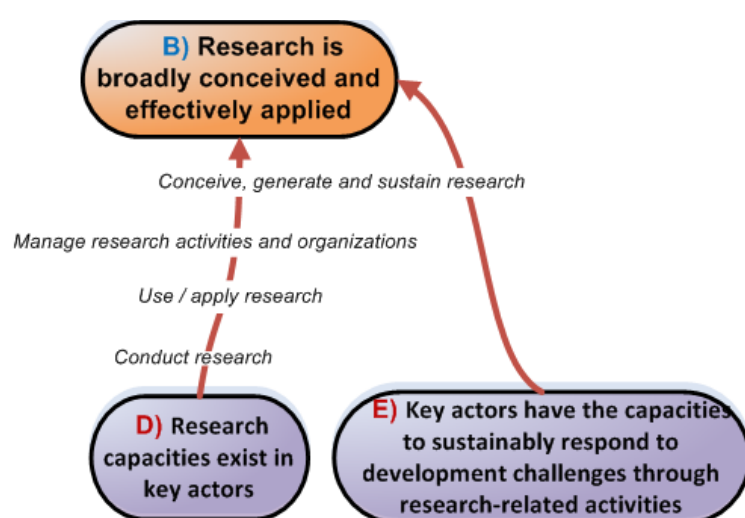
### ***iv) Change in development methods/processes with potential for wide scale impact***

IDRC has contributed to conceptual and methodological approaches to specific development problems, with the potential for large-scale application and impact. For example, the use of a participatory barley breeding approach contributed to improved barley varieties of use to poor farmers in marginal rain-fed areas. An ICARDA researcher attributed "his new-found ability to give informed advice to farmers to his having been invited to be part of the IDRC Access and Benefit Sharing project and the broadening effect of IDRC's insistence that the research embrace the broader implications of PPB. IDRC's influence on the scientist has, in turn had an influence on the relationship between the scientist and his partners at

farmer level. (ICARDA, p. 49) Two of the ICARDA researchers “are now familiar with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as a result of the latest IDRC-inspired contribution to [their] research”, and as a consequence were able to advise farmers regarding their rights when asked by a government Ministry to provide them with seed samples. IDRC’s flexible approach to funding and technical ability to detect the emergence of strategic opportunities has been important in enabling researchers to follow-up on unforeseen opportunities that really can make a difference. Additionally, ICARDA researchers observed differences in the level of involvement of women in plant breeding activity in Syria and Jordan.

## RESULTS LINKED TO PC “B”: RESEARCH IS BROADLY CONCEIVED AND EFFECTIVELY APPLIED

Figure 4—Precondition B



There are a number of examples of research use with intentions for policy change, with evidence of qualitative broadening of the research agenda. There are also observed results in **high quality application** (conducting, managing, and use of research at the organizational level) as well as general indications of mobilization (e.g. dissemination— without clear evidence of larger scale use or impact). Here we present two kinds of results associated with Precondition B in the TOC.

### i) Qualitative broadening of the research agenda

There is evidence that IDRC has contributed to a qualitative shift in the scope of organisational research-related activities; for example the CIES consortium has helped government and development programs to make better public policy decisions through applied research – thereby increasing its capacity for policy influence. CIES has participated actively in public discussions and debates, and increased its use of targeted communications, including books, bulletins, panels and discussion forums , as well as training sessions and internship coordination. There is also evidence of bi-directional (IDRC<->research organisation) capacity building in most of the cases; for example ICARDA has moved from being organised along disciplinary lines and has evolved its approach to one that requires an integration of work on farming systems and food production. Its relationship with IDRC has been enhanced by obtaining and exchanging information that is of mutual interest and value. In both the ICARDA and APC cases, considerable mutual learning has taken place, for example increasing support for the social sciences in ICARDA, and APC influencing IDRC towards greater integration of gender into ICT4D programmes, and its willingness to embrace open-source software.

Although there is clear evidence of co-strengthening, IDRC’s impact on the incorporation of broader development realities into the research of partner organisations is also evident.

### ii) Active use and application of research

There is evidence of broad sharing of a methodology and learning within the APC research network, as well as with IDRC. The development of the GEM methodology—designed to evaluate gender implications of ICT initiatives—was based on the emergence of “a shared APC- IDRC interest<sup>17</sup> in

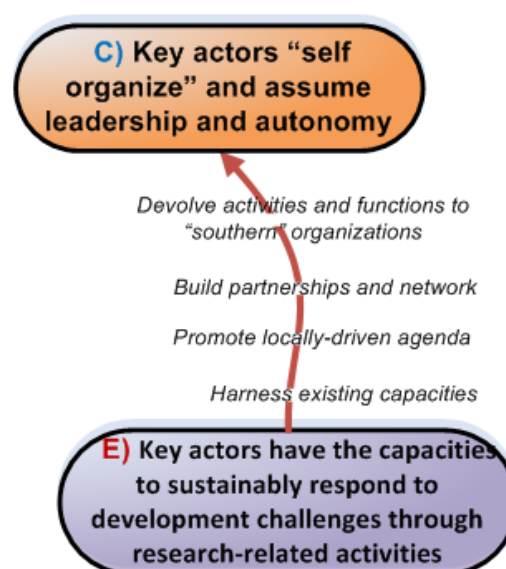
<sup>17</sup> In the case study this is cited as “one of the most important outcomes of the early WNSP- building activities. APC 41)”

evaluating women's involvement in ICT projects, as well as the impact of ICT policies and practices on women's lives. (APC 40-41)" This provides an example of APC having a credible partner to build momentum within a shared area of interest. While APC was actively trying to develop a niche in this area, IDRC was busy supporting the enabling environment.

## RESULTS LINKED TO PC "C": KEY ACTORS SELF ORGANIZE AND ASSUME LEADERSHIP AND AUTONOMY

Here we are looking for evidence of **self-initiated networking and partnering**. The expansion of the number of partners of APC in strategic areas provides an example of this: "IDRC has contributed to "monitoring of landscape" and "Partnerships and alliances developing and nurturing". In all aspects of the relationship (project funder, project collaborator, strategic partner and strategic ally), IDRC staff have shared their perspectives on trends in ICT4D and sought to facilitate relationships between APC and other IDRC partners. A second related results area is that of **high-level strategic thinking or systems thinking**. The APC case study provides further evidence of this. For example in the late 1990s, APC members in many countries began to reassess what community connectivity meant and what their role was in supporting civil society and local networks. At the international level, APC supported their members and partners by developing large multi-country initiatives to test community networking approaches and to document and share lessons learned .

Figure 5—Precondition C



**Change in organizational roles** is a third key results area linked to this precondition, as evidenced in the GEM collaboration, through which IDRC's support helped APC develop new capacities for project management—helping APC to evolve into a more externally oriented project-based organization more capable of generating sustainability through service provision. There is also evidence of IDRC's influence on APC's broader expansion into explicit research even though this move was not pursued intentionally: *As an APC staff member declares, "Having IDRC with a research orientation helps to locate those places where you can get the research and learning from the action. Having someone look over your shoulder and point out the opportunities... what a boon!"* (APC 38). Another example was of a private local university that explicitly developed a research function due to participation in CIES. Fourthly, we see results relating to **change in reputation or positioning**. Another CIES partner benefited from IDRC-supported capacity strengthening, resulting in improved institutional image and prestige, coupled with both institutional and individual benefits. IDRC's support of APC's more explicit research advocacy role also improved its overall reputation, and at ICARDA, IDRC funding of the Faba Beans Information Service (FABIS) and the Lentil News and Information Services (LENS) helped improve visibility through partnership building and information exchange.

Figure 6—Precondition D



## RESULTS LINKED TO PC "D": RESEARCH CAPACITIES EXIST IN KEY ACTORS

Here we are looking for application of **technical** capacities at any level, including at the output level. We can identify results in four key areas. Firstly, in terms of **conduct of research**, there are multiple cases

of production of research outputs. For example, *“The second result of IDRC's initiatives at CADU is the rich production of research, theses and publications that researchers have turned out in the context of projects. The list is long and the count is still in progress.”* (CADU 40). Secondly, there are results in the area of **improved research (project) management**. For example, with ICARDA there is evidence of improving overall project design by adding a dissemination component to its project work, whilst in the case of CADU, evidence exists of improved research management capacities and increased production and publication of research: *“At the organizational level, both the Department and the ICT Resource Centre<sup>18</sup> improved their ability to manage research, for they gained a high-quality staff with good designers and good technicians; they were also enabled to publish their research and make it relevant to Senegalese society”.* (CADU 42-3).

A third area of results linked to this precondition relates to **improved evaluation and methodology**. In its relationship with APC, for example, IDRC has contributed to the professionalization of its performance measurement and evaluation processes by helping with the incorporation of more academic research methodologies in the pursuit of social change. Finally, there are results associated with **improved technical procedures**, such as CIES being able to transform the way it distributes available research funds (that before were added to each professor's salary) into an internal competition, following the guidelines established in CIES' own contests. A further example of this relates to IDRC's strategic investment by encouraging APC to utilize multiple capacities with only a partial investment from IDRC.

## RESULTS LINKED TO PC “E”: KEY ACTORS HAVE THE CAPACITIES TO SUSTAINABLY RESPOND TO DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES THROUGH RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

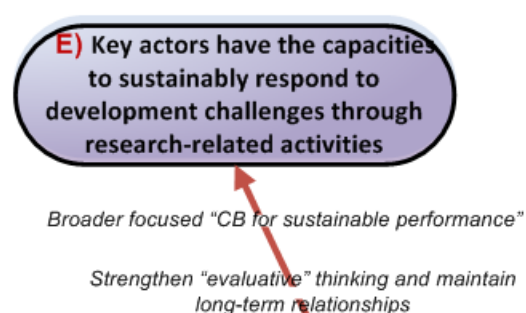
Here we focus on evidence of organizational development and general management, lower level strategic thinking (i.e. minor changes in strategy), and organizational learning outputs. Additionally, we look for increased organizational confidence, non-technical advice seeking, and increases in financial sustainability.

### i) Organizational development, management and procedures

There are few examples of explicit and intentional, broad organisational capacity development support from IDRC, but one case in point is the institutional support grant provided to APC for staff training, financial systems upgrading, and project management tool building. It also set up funds for more regular in-person management team meetings and established a fund for APC members to travel to learn from one another. In another example, the Cambodian Ministry of Environment (MoE) was strengthened both in terms of increasing “the capacity of strategic human resources (CAM-MoE 67),” as well as in “the development of administrative processes and guidelines more conducive to sustainable development in protected areas. (ibid)”

Within the broader concept of organizational development, there are examples in most of the cases of increase in number of staff and organizational size due to IDRC funding. There are also many examples of improvements in infrastructure due to IDRC investments—including critical technical equipment. At the level of strategy, IDRC contributed to a key board of directors meeting with APC, which “resulted in a strategic plan focused on activities required to meet the Secretariat's goals in five broad areas: membership; revenue generation; public profile; products and services; and organization. (APC 24)”.

Figure 7—Precondition E



<sup>18</sup> IDRC initiated the process for the two departments to join efforts in an area of common interest. (CADU 42)

## **ii) Financial sustainability**

There is evidence in many of the cases of overall increases in funding either to the IDRC supported organizations or their members (for the network cases), generated in part by using IDRC investment as leverage. The CIES case is illustrative at the member level, in terms of credibility gained by organisations successful in winning funding from CIES; and the APC case provides an example of

financial sustainability at the IDRC partner level whereby it knitted a substantial funding allocation into “a densely interconnected web of events, publications, and services related to WSIS”. (APC 54). With IDRC support, APC has developed a business planning toolkit to “contribute to long-term operational sustainability of NGO information and communication service providers by developing business planning models which bring together the best of private sector and civil society practice in the delivery of online services. (APC 23)”. They have successfully used the toolkit to leverage additional funding for regional workshops from the Open Society Institute (OSI). In the CIES case, although still dependent on IDRC funding there has been a gradual diversification over the last few years, as well as an increase in public sector financing. This is significant because it represents “an important step given its [the government] track record of financing the economic and social sciences and its willingness to back civil society organisations. (CIES 53)”

### **Box 5: Key findings with respect to institutional strengthening in APC**

Individual IDRC project support, together with a specific institutional strengthening grant (INSPRO), have contributed to key elements of APC organizational capacity. Following the McKinsey framework, IDRC has helped to influence aspirations (vision, mission), assist with strategies (for leadership and financing), build organizational skills (particularly in the area of performance evaluation), supported human resource development (enabling, through project funding, an increase in staffing), and strengthened systems and infrastructure (direct and solid support through an institutional strengthening grant). Of the remaining elements in the McKinsey framework, organizational structure and culture, the study found no evidence of IDRC contribution, although clearly the two organizations share many cultural values and reinforce those through the positive peer relationships. (APC Executive Summary 2)



## V. OBSERVATIONS ON IDRC ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING RESULTS

We saw in section 2 that, at a broad level, results take on meaning for a particular organization when it has defined what success looks like. This self-definition of success is necessarily subjective, but can be strengthened by borrowing from accepted best practice, emphasizing high performance and by using a stakeholder-inclusive process in its design. The usefulness of this vision will always be limited, however, if the organisation fails to make its evolving change hypotheses visible, including offering clarity on where it fits strategically as well as operationally within its broader ecosystem. Without this clarity, an organization must rely primarily on *intuition* to gauge whether it is having its desired impact—and whether it is effectively achieving its mission or not.

The many frameworks that IDRC draws on for carrying out its work are potential sources of clarity on CD definitions, ends, goals and approaches. They offer much detail on interventions and intervention types, and the outcome categories (plus examples of outcomes) that the interventions should lead to at different levels. They present additional ways of looking at capacity development means (i.e. interventions), ends (i.e. intended outcomes), and principles, including the development of generic skills and knowledge, the importance of participatory processes, a focus on development relevance, views towards end-use and end-users, and the importance of “sustained” capacity. Quality and effectiveness, application of adult learning principles, ownership, measurement and strategic approaches are also detailed (Bernard and Armstrong, 2005), as is the need to look both at “people abilities” and “enabling conditions” (see box 6). The “research into use” framework even presents an *implicit* change hypothesis (as do all the frameworks to some degree) by helping us visualize how research might ideally move from conception to eventual use in influencing public policy.

**Box 6:** In the ideal case of fully present organizational research capacities, both 'people abilities' and 'enabling conditions' are in place. If they are not in place, both of them need to be strengthened. Strategies of intervention aiming to strengthen these two aspects of research capacities differ considerably though. Simply put, 'people abilities' largely relate to knowledge, skills, and attitudes, while enabling conditions mostly imply structures, procedures, and systems being in place. (MU, p. 20)

The principal challenge is not so much with defining capacity building better, which will continue to be defined and improved—the frameworks provide an excellent base from which to continue this effort. The main challenge with regards to organizational capacity development at IDRC is more about making the change model explicit, so that the most effective CD strategies and processes can then be applied, with more clarity on IDRC’s roles, and metrics of success on how CD fits into a broader change strategy that supports interventions that include, but are not limited to CD. Intuition can complement, but not substitute a well thought out, evolving CD change model and strategy.

It is worth noting here that when we refer to CD change models and strategies, we refer to the idea of having a dynamic, fluid model(s) that guides overall intentionality, envisions positive directions and makes assumptions explicit. This allows for general guidance and creates a sounding board of sorts with which to react to, challenge, learn and evolve (improve) hypotheses of change and organisational interventions over time. It also gives partner organizations and other stakeholders something to react to and help improve over time. We are not referring to setting of targets and codification of static change models and ways of doing business. The TOC-type model(s) we have presented here are intended primarily for improving strategic thinking and improving bases for learning at different levels.

That said, we feel that a “strategic” learning focus should be at the heart of accountability systems, and TOC type thinking can form the basis of learning-based M&E systems that improve downward (i.e. users of IDRC funds and services), lateral (i.e. accountable to one’s own organisation through adaptive management), and upward (i.e. corporate reporting frameworks) accountability. We have come across

few M&E systems designed with learning purposes in mind, but there is no shortage of M&E systems developed primarily to support upwards reporting purposes. These, however are focused more on “getting it reported” than on “getting it right.” We recognize the importance of upward accountability, but feel that TOC-based systems have the potential to generate learning agendas that test assumptions from different stakeholder perspectives. They also can help to improve/increase upward accountability, but we feel strongly that the system should be designed for learning first, and secondly for upward accountability purposes.<sup>19</sup>

With this present, the remainder of this section will briefly analyze IDRC’s results and approach in achieving those results, discussing the extent to which an implicit TOC guides IDRC’s program design and execution, and how its existing, sophisticated CD approach uses multiple intervention types and strategies to achieve its goals. There are, however, potential problems with a non-explicit change framework, including major gaps with the approach that fail to harness its full potential, and so we also identify what we feel are the main gaps, and suggest ways in which IDRC may address these by strengthening its work in key areas.

### **WHAT IDRC’s APPROACH TELLS US**

Many organizations define capacity building as central to their programmatic offering. These range from technically focused organizations that specialize in specific sectors (e.g. health, environment, education, etc.) to organizations whose actual mission focus is organizational capacity building. Amongst those organizations there are a few who, after years of implementing what they term capacity-building work, have come to realize that their approaches are so lacking in conceptual and operational consistency that their very relevance has been put into question. Capacity building has become a catchall phrase for weak accompaniment models that add very little value to “partner” organizations.

This is clearly not the case with IDRC’s CD approach, which intuitively and coherently applies capacity building interventions and funding in an emergent, often customized manner, and distinguishes itself with high level (i.e. talent, commitment and experience) front line program officers. Based on the cases, two things are clearly evident with IDRC’s CD approach:

- An implicit TOC exists and guides program design and execution
- A sophisticated CD approach exists, which uses multiple intervention types and strategies

### ***AN IMPLICIT TOC EXISTS, AND GUIDES PROGRAM DESIGN AND EXECUTION***

From the evidence we have seen, it is not clear whether the “research into use” framework is the cause of a dedicated effort to move results up a Theory of Change (i.e. from conception of research all the way to eventual use in policy change)<sup>20</sup>, or the product of observing that effort already in motion. What *is* clear in the cases is that intentionality exists to promote not just the production of research, but also its use; and not just its utility at a local decision making level, but also its desired application at a broader policy level.

The simplified TOC framework that we have presented in section two introduces neither new intentionality nor new strategies. Taken from our detailed review of approaches and interventions

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<sup>19</sup> For a more detailed discussion on learning-based approaches to M&E, see ORTIZ, A. & TAYLOR, P. (2008) EMERGING PATTERNS IN THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PUZZLE: Why, what and when to measure? (report for IIEP). Institute of Development Studies.

<sup>20</sup> Conceiving of and generating research, as well as developing the capacities to do so, are preconditions found lower down (i.e. further away from end impact) in the TOC model; whereas mobilizing research for policy change (i.e. closer to end impact) is found higher up in the TOC model. “Moving results up the TOC”, therefore, refers to evidence of IDRC showing clear intentionality (through program design and interventions) of not only conceiving of and generating research, but also making efforts to get the research used in policy circles, which would ideally, eventually, have an effect on quality of life issues.



documented in the cases, the TOC framework simply maps, and thus makes explicit, our best approximation of how IDRC sees change through the development process. In other words we have mapped what was already implicitly present. Yet by not being explicit, learning from and reporting on results becomes extremely difficult, and diminishes the potential to generate useful data that can help in understanding impact of CD and the need for further, meaningful support. We discuss this more below.

Whether one uses the TOC as a reference, or studies IDRC's approaches and interventions, it is clear that a broad vision exists that ultimately sees how research contributes to improvements in the quality of people's lives—via policy change and qualitative improvements in high-leverage technical development methods. It is also clear that IDRC selects interventions that attempt to build up to policy change by starting with research and improvements in the enabling environment, and persistently working up the TOC. The fact that the TOC is not yet explicit in IDRC's working approach helps explain gaps in design and consistency of application, which will be explored shortly. Still, the existence of the change model is clear from various angles, and is implemented through multiple intervention types and strategies.

### ***A SOPHISTICATED CD APPROACH EXISTS, WHICH USES MULTIPLE INTERVENTION TYPES AND STRATEGIES***

On a simple level, organizational capacity building is about helping people and organizations do their work more effectively, without doing it for them. It is about empowerment and skills building, as well as improving strategic thinking, framing, and development design, execution and evaluation. CD literature stresses that practitioners need to study and attempt to understand development situations before designing CD interventions (Kaplan, 1999: 8). It also stresses that long-term development is non-linear and unpredictable, and generally more responsive to emergent CD approaches that are able to respond to changing realities in an agile and opportunistic manner (Eyben et al., 2008: 203-4).

The case studies and other literature reviewed reveal that IDRC's approach has clear ends in mind (i.e. it knows what it is working towards), but uses emergent, mixed, high-level approaches and methods for responding to them. At the level of research *conception* and *design* IDRC's approach attempts to expand the relevance of research (and future suitability for broader policy influence) by *questioning and challenging* more narrowly conceived technical research to better ground itself in *broader development realities*. It consistently uses the proposal development process, including intense *feedback, editing and oversight* to improve designs, broaden the agenda, and develop evaluative thinking and design capacities in the process. In addition to broadening the agenda horizontally (i.e. to reflect broader development realities), the design process broadens the agenda vertically (i.e. upwards in the TOC) to include funding for fine-tuning, *publication, dissemination*, and in some cases *mobilization* of research.

Once research is conceived and designed, IDRC supports *networking and relationship building* activities that lay the groundwork for moving the research up the TOC. Funding backs up the broadened agendas, including using challenge funds, "[t]o provide "catalytic" fund[ing] to drive certain processes of strengthening or strategic thinking...(CIES 34)."

This is a "capacity development by doing" process, which relies on highly experienced and respected *program officers* (PO's) developing relationships and interacting with what are generally speaking, high level researchers in respected institutions. Through the PO's, IDRC has developed a solid reputation for *reading the context* in which they operate, and offering relevant advice grounded in that reading. The continual *design support, feedback and accompaniment* that these PO's carry out appear to be the most important element to IDRC's CD approach. This high value approach (and highly valued by partners in the case studies) that IDRC brings through its POs is paramount and should be cultivated and improved through ongoing investment of resources, and allocation of time to specifically perform this function.

Something so valued and central to IDRC's CD offering, even though it may be perceived as rather labour intensive, **should become a core, recognised role of POs.**

The IDRC characteristics of persistence, flexibility and resilience are present in all the cases, as are the remaining elements of the "Good Practices". The combination of the Good Practices and the interventions described above constitute IDRC's overall emergent CD approach, grounded in an implicit method. The intentionality along the TOC confirms that there is a method behind most of it, not the "lack of approach" noted in some of the cases.

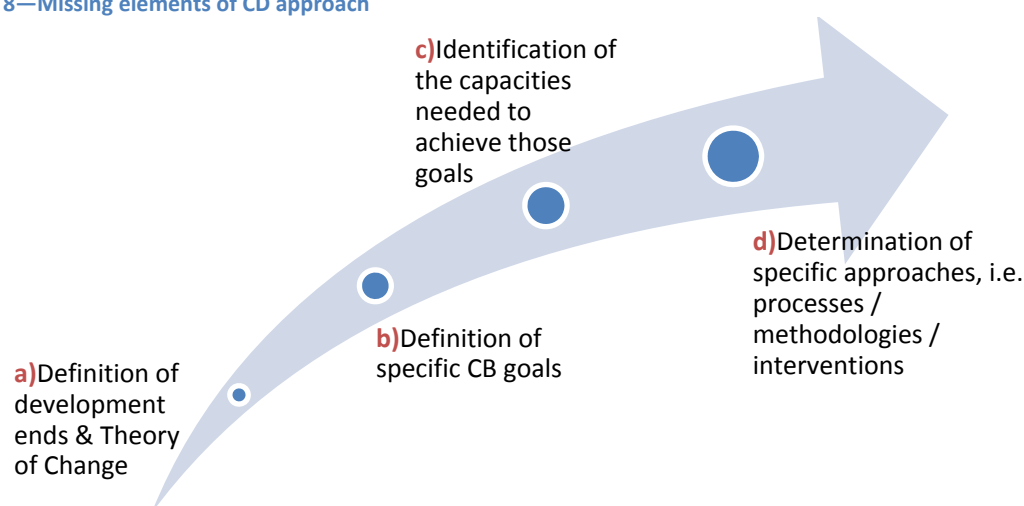
## WHAT NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED IN IDRC'S APPROACH?

### ***A MORE EXPLICIT TOC IS NEEDED***

In all of the cases it was evident that an emergent CD approach was well suited for responding to challenges and taking advantage of opportunities as they emerged. An overly structured, pre-programmed approach would have been doomed to failure in the dynamic and complex environments in which each of the cases took place. That said, not having an explicit change model—even as a rough guide and baseline for learning—can lead to excessive improvisation and inefficient, ungrounded learning. It makes it difficult to determine what makes any particular result relevant, because no basis has been established for answering that question. Most importantly, it doesn't allow for the development and application of high impact CD strategies, which leverage IDRC's institutional strengths and promote investment in the interventions most likely to create long-term positive change as envisioned in IDRC's act and mission statement.

What appears to be missing from IDRC's approach<sup>21</sup> (see figure 8) is a more explicit statement of: a) the development ends it is working towards and the theories of change on how to get there; b) specific CD goals in each case (i.e. CD 'ends'—what IDRC wants to build capacity towards); c) the broad capacities that are needed to get there in each case; and, d) the best approaches—i.e. processes, methodologies, frameworks, interventions, toolkits, etc.— for assembling the right "package" in each case.

Figure 8—Missing elements of CD approach



<sup>21</sup> As mentioned earlier, this framework was constructed based on a mix of specific cases, corporate documents, and other frameworks developed in the strategic evaluation process. It is presented here in a generalized manner for purposes of broad explicability. In practice, the various levels of the "IDRC approach"—e.g. project, program, corporate, etc.—would need to be differentiated in order to ground concepts and construct more relevant levels of the framework from different user perspectives.

How then could IDRC address this gap?

### ***a) Defining of Theory of Change***

The elaboration of a change framework serves to visualize development ends and preconditions of success, broad change strategies, and even to clarify ideal organizational roles within the broader ecosystem in which the organization operates. The TOC aids in understanding where the most strategic interventions lie along the framework, and what complementary alliances and relationships (e.g. with organizations, project teams, individuals, or some combination), as well as underlying capacities, are needed for catalyzing desired change. And, as mentioned earlier, it creates a reference point for defining what makes CD effective or not. Developing and operationalising a TOC—which is essentially a programmatic strategy as we have framed it—can be highly complementary to overall organizational strategy development. Indeed, they are likely to inform each other. In box 7 we offer a series of questions that may be helpful for IDRC in putting its TOC into operation.

#### **Box 7: Key Theory of Change Questions**

##### *Development philosophy and assumptions*

- What are our core development beliefs, including assumptions about how capacity development contributes to end impact?
- What does it all add up to—how do we know that we have compelling intervention “model(s)” that are aligned with our development vision and are more than the sum of impacts from various programs, projects and initiatives? How do we leave distinguishing impact, and not just effective project execution?

##### *Roles and partners*

- At what level(s) should we engage within the research for development ecosystem? Where should our organizational capacities and investment abilities lead us? Where in the “research into use” continuum are we best placed to have impact?
- What types of boundary partners should we engage with in catalyzing our TOC?
- Why do we believe that the capacities we seek to develop with our partners are fundamental to the sustainability of our development models?

##### *Interventions*

- How can we better respond to our programmatic vision and models across programs and sectors, including designing CD interventions with our development models in mind, and developing the internal capacities to achieve our vision?
- What are the gaps in our current intervention models and methods?

##### *Communication and learning*

- How can we more clearly express our “intuition” about what we do in a way that convinces internal and external stakeholders that our vision and development models are distinguished and relevant? How can we develop understandable, consistent ways of expressing what we do in CD?
- What should be measured to help achieve maximum impact, and how will we learn from our experiences and improve our “hypotheses” and approaches?

A TOC broadly indicates where a particular organization is best placed to contribute to change. Throughout corporate documents and CD frameworks there is an expression of IDRC’s intentions to generate large-scale impact through the use of research for policy change.<sup>22</sup> The “research into use” framework connects this to other research processes (i.e. conceiving conducting and managing), and shows how, in an ideal world, some research eventually has broader impact through the use of research

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<sup>22</sup> It is important to note that in many of the documents there are also expressions of a preference towards working at the level of developing individual research capacities to produce good research—which is seen as a good thing in and of itself—regardless of whether the research eventually gets used in policy decision making.

outcomes in policy and mobilization of research-related policy and programme “systems” thinking (Bernard, 2005). Different organizations may specialize or focus on particular elements of this “research into use” continuum, and—assuming all roles are needed within a broad ecosystem—focusing on one area (e.g. conducting research) isn’t necessarily more or less strategic than focusing on another (e.g. mobilizing research for policy change). What makes it more or less strategic for a particular organization depends on how it defines its role, how much its contribution is actually needed (demanded) in the broader ecosystem, and the extent to which it has the core competencies to play that role.

Were IDRC to choose to focus on the policy impact end of the TOC, then working with networks and advocacy organizations, for example, might make more sense than investing heavily in support to research by individual researchers. If, on the other hand, the focus is on generating new research in an area that lacks empirical evidence to eventually take to a policy level, then perhaps investment in conceiving and conducting of research makes most sense. A donor typically has the ability to invest more broadly in various parts of a Theory of Change than do many partner organizations, but its investments might not add up to more than the sum of their parts if they are not placed strategically within such a framework. And most importantly, defining the theory (or theories) of change it subscribes to will help it better determine the interventions, boundary partners and indicators of success needed to catalyze positive change through the TOC.

#### ***b) Defining specific CD goals***

If IDRC is trying primarily to improve or increase certain types of research content and use, it may make sense to take a very instrumentalist approach and only strengthen capacities related to weaknesses/barriers that are currently impeding progress—in order to move things forward rapidly and efficiently. In other cases IDRC may be relying on the capacity of a network to take research outcomes to scale (e.g. mobilize research for policy change over time), and therefore will need to strengthen the network and key members for the long haul, as well as to engage more deeply with high level accompaniment. In other cases, the placement of strategic funding (e.g. challenge funding) may be all that is needed to help an organization apply its existing capacities, as well as to develop new ones. IDRC needs to decide what its short to long-term capacity building goals are with each organization it works with, make them explicit in order to avoid incorrect assumptions from prevailing, communicate them well, and work with each organization in making them a reality. These goals should be coherent with IDRC’s overall TOC and interventions models, and invest in the organizations and interventions most likely to catalyze positive change towards IDRC’s mission.

The Strategic Evaluation cases included examples of poorly defined capacity building ends, including non-explicit project level CD objectives, which led to mixed messages for some of the partner organizations. Consequently there were semi-hidden CD agendas in some cases, inadequate CD approaches, and lost opportunities for co-developing more effective CD relationships “owned” by the organizations themselves. Explicit clarity on CD intentions is an essential step in developing a highly effective CD approach, and utilizing collaborative/participatory approaches in developing explicit CD agendas with partners is fundamental, and should become the rule.

The cases revealed also a very specific strategic conundrum regarding the definition of TOC and specific CD goals. Although all of the cases had differing levels of explicit CD intentionality, the extent to which IDRC believes that the organization level<sup>23</sup> is the right level to invest in is unclear. Strategically, the decision should be based on finding the right boundary partners (and/or subdivisions within those partners) to help IDRC catalyze its TOC, which is based on how it defines its roles and what it is specifically trying to achieve. For example, is IDRC looking for a relationship with Makerere University broadly speaking, or with distinguished researchers who happen to reside at Makerere University, but

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<sup>23</sup> For additional detail see Annex 6—“Delimiting the organizational level.”

who are so loosely coupled that this does not represent a direct relationship with the University at all? Similarly, is IDRC trying to build the capacity of those researchers for long-term institutional change, or simply investing in getting more research into use<sup>24</sup>, both of which may be needed? Although the belief seems to pervade that everything that IDRC does is CD, much of what it funds is the production of needed research, with some added CD support. The lack of a TOC lens leads to confusion on which types of boundary partners are ideal for IDRC to work with and for what purposes. Given IDRC's traditional practice of working at the individual level, it leaves organizational capacity building in murky waters in many ways.

### ***c) Identifying capacities needed to achieve CD goals***

If a goal of IDRC is to improve research quality then capacity building can be focused towards those ends (e.g. skills for conception, gathering data, writing, etc.). Broader organizational development (OD) in this case, while relevant to the organization, may be well outside the scope of what is needed to be accomplished. If, on the other hand, IDRC's goal is helping a network take research to scale over the long term then a mix of OD and technical CD support may be more appropriate. And if the goal is to influence a specific policy process in a dynamic environment (e.g. the CIES-Peruvian elections example), then capacity strengthening on adaptive management/decision-making, relationship-brokering and advocacy might make most sense. The ends should guide the means, and the means are context specific and not generically applicable in a "complete capacity"<sup>25</sup> approach (IDRC, 2005, Universalialia, 2007). Complete capacity as an approach is not necessarily applicable in specific cases either, until IDRC has better defined the relevance of the organizational level of intervention.

### ***d) Aligning approaches (means) with CD goals (ends)***

IDRC uses multiple interventions, applied intuitively towards what are often implicit capacity building goals. The definition of a TOC framework, specific CD goals and the capacities needed to achieve those goals lay the ground work for developing specific CD approaches for responding to each organization's needs. Specific interventions and methodological frameworks can be designed to more effectively channel IDRC's approaches towards its CD goals and put together the right package in each case. This could include some generic, universally applicable mechanisms (e.g. initial diagnostics), but only as a starting point, not as a total CD framework and approach.

## ***ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR STRENGTHENING***

### ***Maximising leverage by avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches***

The missing elements listed in this section are based on the definition of what IDRC is trying to accomplish, and is less focused on defining ideal capacities for *all* cases, as the "research into use" framework and the "complete capacity" concept suggest. It might be assumed that IDRC's research partners would, ideally, collectively have *all* the capacities listed in this framework—each would represent the various levels in the value chain from research conception to mobilization. It is clear that for research to have impact at the policy level it needs to move upwards in the TOC model, but is unrealistic to expect that every single organization should hold multiple roles (and develop multiple capacities) in making that happen (also see box 8).

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<sup>24</sup> The cases contained various examples of IDRC funding to produce specific research. For example, if \$50,000 goes to fund a series of studies on economic development, then even though CD is applied throughout the process, the driving factor is the need to get those studies out—the product itself. This is a case of funding research, not funding to build the capacity for research, and should perhaps be classified as such. It would be interesting to see how much of IDRC's overall funding goes directly to the research, how much for pure CD activities, and how much as ancillary CD for projects that are essentially research projects.

<sup>25</sup> An approach towards more complete CD in projects, involving ancillary activities such as communication and dissemination capacities or fundraising capacities (Universalialia, 2007: 34).

**Box 8:** The final two [Bernard] capacity areas are extremely important with respect to the APC case study as they concern the capacities necessary for research dissemination and systemic advocacy. However, these capacity areas are frequently overlooked by many IDRC staff debating the nature and focus of ICT4D research. Many seem to assume that it is impossible to undertake these activities without first possessing the individual and organizational capacities to conduct and manage research. Other staff, however, have a more nuanced approach and recognize that it will likely be necessary to work with a variety of organizations—some with stronger capacities to conduct research and others with stronger research dissemination and advocacy capacities. (APC 37)

In order to move the research up the TOC, therefore, relationships and strategic partnerships with a blend of organizations is needed. These can fulfill different roles and functions for which they are best suited, so that when seen collectively, the whole become greater than the sum of the parts. For example, a network might be better suited to research use and mobilization than to research production. A small university team might be better suited to research production than to policy influencing. A specialized NGO might be more suited for direct advocacy. Working together, these organizations can catalyze the TOC, greater leverage is found, and large-scale change may be achieved.

### ***Extending and improving measurement of results***

Due to the lack of a strategic TOC framework it is difficult to say what makes IDRC's specific and cumulative organizational capacity building outcomes significant. By making IDRC's intentionality and practices (i.e. its implicit framework) visible we have tried to organize and interpret results in a more meaningful way. If IDRC chooses to make its TOC, CD goals and approaches more explicit, it follows that in order to know whether progress is being made, the frameworks need to be incorporated into IDRC's overall measurement processes. Ideally, this will serve to track progress (i.e. results for downward and upward accountability), stimulate learning, and stimulate the development of agile, adaptive management to better inform IDRC's emergent CD approaches.

The most important point to take into account is that the most fundamental reason for utilizing a TOC process is to **identify, visualize and substantiate** important development conditions and assumptions, **test** those assumptions continually, **learn** in the process, **and improve** development designs through adaptive management feedback loops. Indeed, each precondition is dynamic, and should change over time. This is an intentional learning framework intended to make hypotheses explicit and improve the way work is done.

In addition to incorporating frameworks into a broader corporate M&E system, documentation at the organization/project/intervention level is fundamental for partner and IDRC learning and adaptive management processes. Some of the case studies noted that a key limitation in the study process was that available project documents and files provided information on only a small part of the actual capacity development objectives and results—the studies therefore had to rely largely on information gathered in interviews. The message we take from this is that a) project monitoring systems must be the front line in documenting CD results and insights; and, b) qualitative processes such as interviews, story gathering and participatory approaches should be part of the M&E system if IDRC and the organizations it supports are to become learning partners and apprehend the rich learning that is found in the details of experience.

CD should not be seen as an instrumental or deterministic means to an end, however; to avoid this, it is important to measure how well CD processes create worthwhile standing capacities<sup>26</sup>. Paying greater

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<sup>26</sup> "Standing capacities" are basic functionalities and unique organizational abilities—beyond those which are necessary for immediate performance—which are fundamental for long-term performance and sustainability (ORTIZ, A. & TAYLOR, P. (2008) EMERGING PATTERNS IN THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PUZZLE: Why, what and when to measure? (report for IIEP). Institute of Development Studies.).

attention to measurement of results may also lead to further debates around downwards accountability and ownership, as we discuss below. Many donor agencies are grappling with such questions currently, and it is important that notions of accountability are explored more thoroughly and openly in order to distinguish between the needs for accountability to different constituencies.

### ***Identifying and supporting ownership of results***

Particularly (but not exclusively) with the networks, the cases we have reviewed gave significant detail of partner level capacity building results of its membership (the CIES case in particular). Many of the cases involved a partner utilizing IDRC supplied funding to strengthen the capacity of its membership, with some evidence of success in doing so. Technically speaking, these are secondary results to IDRC—i.e. they are capacity building results to the partner and funding effectiveness results to IDRC. Such examples merit more exploration, because there is some evidence that IDRC's strategic (emergent opportunism) funding approach contributes to, and is potentially partially responsible for the CD outcomes of its partners' partners. Yet, not enough is known or understood, currently, about this. Also, it is clear that IDRC is interested in knowing more about its "footprint" in the wider research systems where it is engaged. By having the means and the understanding of how to track results, a better understanding of IDRC's contribution to impact may be achieved.

### ***Being aware of power relations and reading both the external and the internal environments***

There were examples in several of the cases of IDRC occasionally being unaware of organizational histories and strategies (APC and MU) and internal mandates (ICARDA). There were a few suggestions of mild donor imposition (APC and CAM-MoE), and some insinuation of IDRC trying to strengthen the capacity of organizations to achieve its own goals, rather than those of the organizations it supports. The issue of power dynamics is important with any donor/partner relationship, but perhaps even more important with donors who include organizational capacity development as part of their overall approach. Issues of organizational autonomy, mixed motivations and even conflicts of interest can come into play, potentially rendering good intentions into harmful side effects. These examples were not widespread in the cases but they are worth mentioning as a reminder that IDRC should aim to be more intentional about addressing perceived power imbalances in their relationships with partner organisations, and be extra aware of the intended and unintentional wakes that their presence inevitably creates in the organisations with whom they work and in the wider landscapes in which those organisations are situated.

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

We recognize that CD takes time. We know also that both tracking and measuring processes and results are important. By embedding and institutionalizing the understanding, the means, and the will to think and act strategically about CD, IDRC will be able to build on its extremely strong track record in this area, and reach even greater achievements with its partners around the world. In this sense, its commitment to past and future investments in CD seem very worthwhile.

## VI. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1—IDRC CAPACITY BUILDING MEANS AND ENDS

Source	Who	What	How	Note
<b>CD definition:</b> “For IDRC, Capacity Development is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their ability to identify and analyse development challenges, and to conceive, conduct, manage and communicate research that addresses these challenges over time and in a sustainable manner.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses these [development] challenges over time and in a sustainable manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased their ability to identify and analyse development challenges, and</li> <li>To conceive, conduct, manage and communicate research that addresses these challenges over time and in a sustainable manner.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Increased capacities” is also a “what” in this definition, but with the intention that they be applied towards eventually solving development challenges through research.</li> <li>We assume “increased capacities” has a direct link to “sustainable”.</li> <li>Implied is actors identifying and responding to their own development challenges</li> </ul>
<b>IDRC Act:</b> 4. (1) The objects of the Centre are to initiate, encourage, support, and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical, and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions, and in carrying out those objects,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing regions of the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Identify and understand] problems</li> <li>[problems solved and] economic and social advancement of those regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate, encourage, support, and conduct research into problems...[and] the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical, and other knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied research “cycle”—as detailed in the Bernard framework—is very explicit here</li> </ul>
<b>IDRC act sub items:</b> (a) to enlist the talents of natural and social scientists and technologists in Canada and other countries (b) to assist the developing regions to build up the research capabilities, the innovative skills and the institutions required to solve their problems (c) to encourage generally the coordination of international development research; and (d) to foster cooperation in research on development problems between the developed and developing regions for their mutual benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enlisting talents of social scientists and technologists</li> <li>Building (assist in) research capabilities, innovative skills and institutions</li> <li>Encouraging coordination of research</li> <li>Foster cooperation between “developed” and “developing”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Research capacity broadly conceived—from individuals with innovative skills to able institutions—is implied as a precondition to developing regions solving their own problems</li> <li>Research coordination is highlighted as an important intervention area</li> </ul>



Source	Who	What	How	Note
<b>IDRC Mission—‘Empowerment through knowledge’,<sup>27</sup></b> i.e. to promote interaction, and foster a spirit of cooperation and mutual learning within and among social groups, nations, and societies through the creation, and adaptation of the knowledge that the people of developing countries judge to be of greatest relevance to their own prosperity, security, and equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of developing countries</li> <li>• Social groups, nations, and societies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosperity, security and equity</li> <li>• A “state” of empowerment, interaction, cooperation and mutual learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting interaction, a spirit of cooperation and mutual learning within and among social groups, nations, and societies</li> <li>• Creation, and adaptation of [relevant] knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The participation of social groups, nations and societies is implied as both a means and an ends. As a means for channelling relevant knowledge to people of developing countries. As an ends by implying that these groups are part of the same system, co-owners of problems and co-creators of solutions of the developing world</li> </ul>

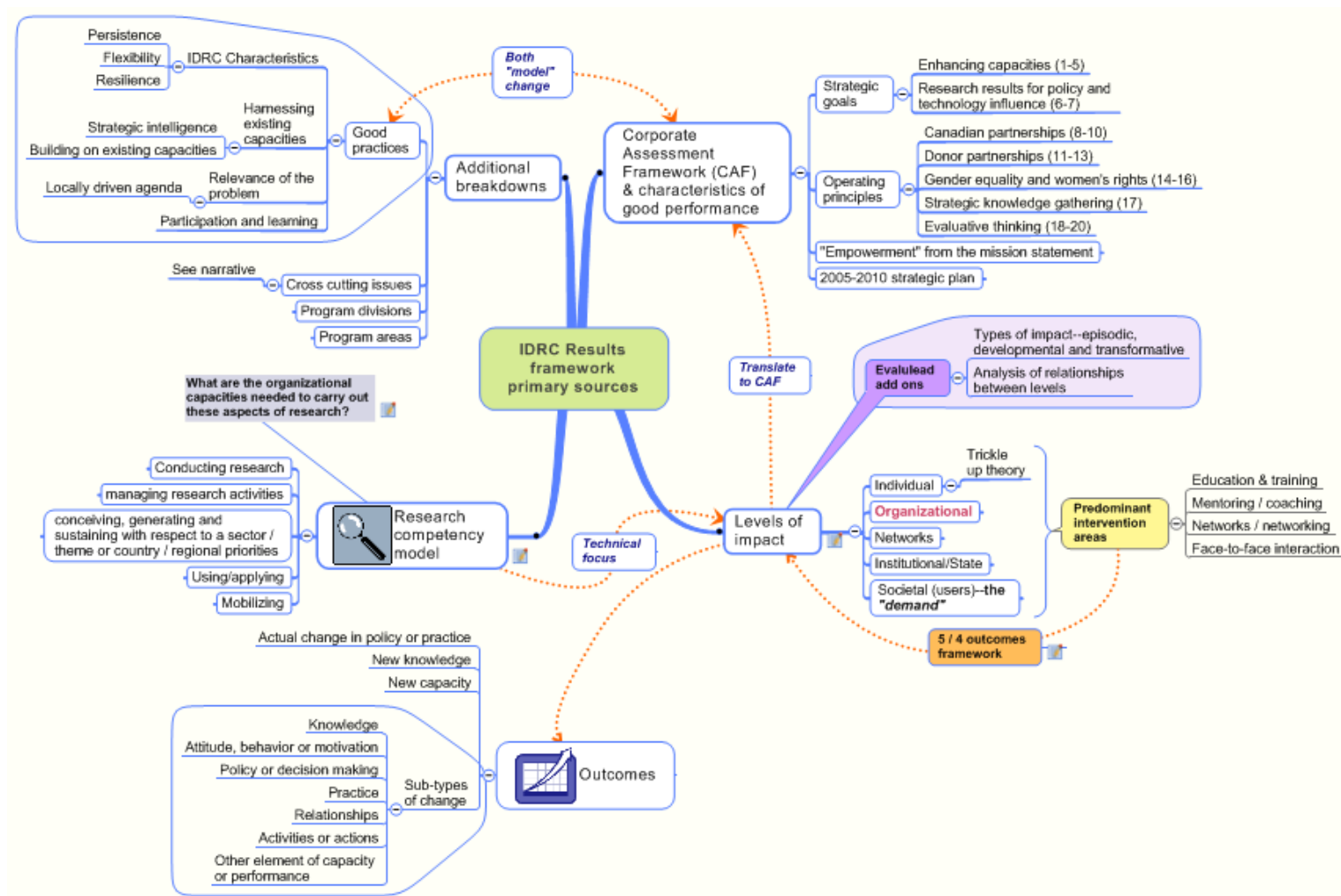
## ANNEX 2—RESULTS FILTER

Precondition	Description	“Capacities for sustainable performance” outcomes	“Research into use” outcomes	Other
(3.1) Organizations, networks, individuals and other "key actors" identify, analyze and address development challenges in a sustainable manner	This precondition is one below the concept of quality of life (i.e. end impact), and as mentioned earlier, relates to how “end” impact is sustainable. It assumes that a self-functioning system exists in which key actors continually respond to their own problems—utilizing knowledge directly to improve economic and social advancement, prosperity, security and equity. It also assumes the preconditions below it (in figure 1) are also in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective research use for policy change, i.e. policies changed</li> <li>• Large-scale and system level impacts generally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadly mobilized and utilized research (5)</li> <li>• Evidence of sustainability in application of research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant evidence of organizations autonomously leading and effectively catalyzing the use of research for development in the system</li> <li>• Improved technical methods that have scalable impact</li> </ul>
(3.2) Research is broadly conceived and effectively applied	This precondition primarily looks for outcomes related to the application of the capacity categories in the Bernard framework. It is essentially the knowledge side of the equation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts at research use for policy change</li> <li>• Promising evidence of high quality technical research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of conducting, management, or use of research (1,2,4)</li> <li>• Dissemination of research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of broadened design or research agenda (e.g. adding dissemination)</li> </ul>

<sup>27</sup> IDRC Corporate Strategy 2005–2010, 3-1

Precondition	Description	"Capacities for sustainable performance" outcomes	"Research into use" outcomes	Other
	that supports the effective, sustainable response to development challenges in the condition above.	(capacity)	without evidence of larger scale use or impact	
(3.3) Key actors "self organize" and assume leadership and autonomy	This precondition looks for outcomes demonstrating that relevant local and regional organizations are taking the reins of their own development challenges and driving the development agenda. It also assumes and looks for a high level of coordination and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-initiated networking and partnering</li> <li>• Evidence of high level strategic thinking or systems thinking</li> <li>• Evidence of significant increase in reputation or positioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of growing leadership and continuity on a specific issue (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of major change in organizational role</li> </ul>
(3.4) Research capacities exist in key actors	This precondition is primarily about <b>developing the capacities</b> for research, broadly defined—in order to be able to carry out the activities in the Bernard framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical advice seeking</li> <li>• General increase in research capacity, quality or awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of technical capacities at any level (may be more of an output level)</li> <li>• (e.g. Improved project management or evaluation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
(3.5) Key actors have the capacities to sustainably respond to development challenges through research-related activities	This precondition is complementary to technical capacities and attempts to capture the broad capacities needed for organizations to effectively and sustainably address development challenges through research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational development and management, strategic thinking (i.e. change in strategy) and organizational learning outputs</li> <li>• Increased confidence</li> <li>• Non-technical advice seeking</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased financial sustainability</li> </ul>

## ANNEX 3—PRIMARY SOURCES FOR INTERPRETING RESULTS

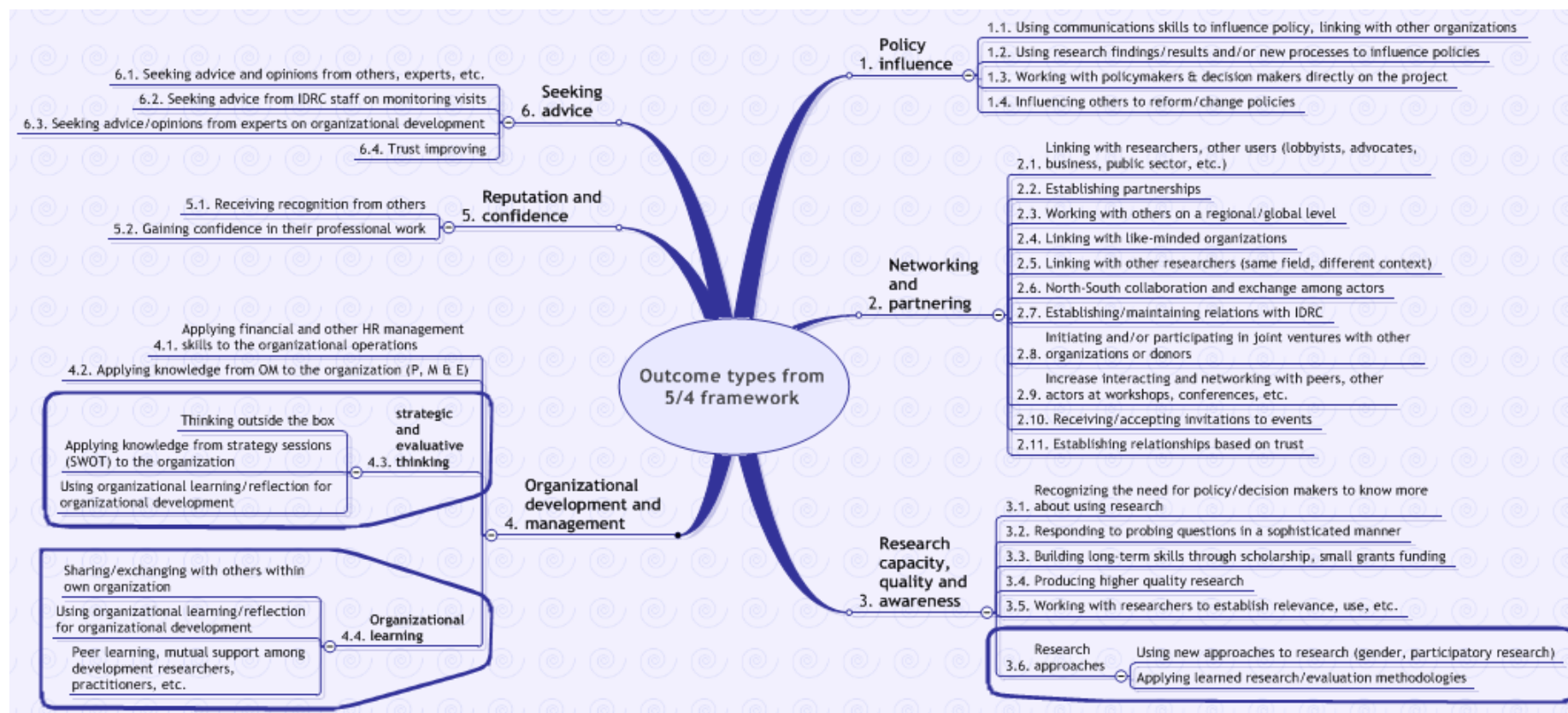


## ANNEX 4—“CAPACITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE” FRAMEWORK

Interventions Capacities	Education & Training	Mentoring / Coaching	Networks / Networking	Face-to-face interaction
<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Competencies</li> <li>• Attitudes/Values</li> <li>• Personal &amp; Professional networking</li> </ul>	<b>Outcomes<sup>28</sup></b>			
<b>Organizational</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Strategy</li> <li>• Organizational functions/systems</li> <li>• Relationships/Linkages between organizations</li> </ul>				
<b>Networks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance / Leadership</li> <li>• Strategy</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Competencies</li> <li>• Attitudes / Values</li> <li>• Personal and Professional networking</li> </ul>				
<b>State/Institutional</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory frameworks</li> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Conditions (context)</li> <li>• Receptive culture to research</li> </ul>				
<b>Society (users)</b>				

<sup>28</sup> See annex 5 on the following page

## ANNEX 5— OUTCOME TYPES FROM THE “CAPACITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE” FRAMEWORK



## ANNEX 6—DELIMITING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

Defining the organizational level is clear in some cases, a bit more difficult in others. It is clear that the broad organizational unit that each of the six cases represents (i.e. two universities, three networks, and one government ministry) can be referred to as “organization”. It is somewhat clear that capacity building results referring to individual researchers who work on the extreme periphery of the organization are not organizational, strictly speaking. But what about CD results that fall in between these two levels? In all of the cases individual researchers, research teams and project teams were targeted, yielding considerable results at these levels. But at what point should we classify these results as organizational?

**Box 9:** *Capacity building is a very complicated concept. What does it mean? How is it measured? But let's say that one key point (under this concept) is having good human resources. To the extent to which you have a good relationship with a group of people, a stable relationship in a country that has leadership, the ability to shape public opinion, sooner or later, these people will be in important decision-making positions. It is your way of capacity building or helping to bolster institutionalism. A Member of the CIES Board (CIES 59)*

Broadly speaking one could say that everything that occurs under the guise of what an organization sanctions is organizational. By this definition, all results with individuals and teams that reside within the organizational boundaries—no matter how peripheral, or loosely coupled<sup>29</sup>—are considered organizational level results. And in a sense there is some validity to this. For example, an individual who delivers high or low quality research logically increases or decreases the standing of the organization he or she represents. This is the case whether or not the organization has contributed to or learned from the process. In the positive case the intangible organizational capacity “reputation” increases, even though the researcher might be completely removed from the organization’s internal processes and learning and decision making systems.

Phases 1-3 have already examined the individual level in detail and we are looking for something more specifically “organizational”—i.e. more than the sum of its parts. Three concepts are central to our search for a working definition of “organizational level CD results”: ***learning, sustainability and institutionality***.

### ***Learning***

We start with a basic assumption that builds on Senge’s assumption. Organizational capacity and learning is enhanced by individual capacity when the conditions exist for coherence and continuity of organizational approach, know how, identity, etc; including mechanisms<sup>30</sup> for maximizing individual capacity—even as people come and go. The same can be said for organizational departments, teams, and ad hoc project teams. To the extent that they clearly contribute to organizational learning—i.e. the organization is seen to benefit from them (through evidence of organizational level changes/outcomes)—they will be considered to be organizational capacity building results, even if the organizational level wasn’t targeted.

**Box 10:** “Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs. (Senge, 1990: 139)”

<sup>29</sup> To aid in the “analysis of institutional characteristics of Makerere as a University” (MU iii), the concept of ‘loose coupling’ was introduced by the authors. “[I]t describes a situation in which system elements (e.g. parts of an organization) are responsive to each other, but at the same time retain evidence of separateness and identity. At universities – including at Makerere - research tends to be among the loosely coupled [decentralized] functions of the organization. (ibid)”

<sup>30</sup> And not by attempting to proceduralize all that is in people’s brains. Individuals often leave organizations with huge amounts of accumulated know-how, but this doesn’t have to debilitate the organization in the process.

***Sustainability***

Simply speaking, if we find evidence of individual, team or project level results that clearly increase the organization's ability to sustain its service offering over time, then we will consider it to be an organizational capacity development result.

***Institutionality***

Loose coupling as a concept actually applies in the majority of the cases—even the non-Universities. For example, projects are usually by definition “loosely coupled” within the broader organization. When a loosely coupled unit is strengthened (whether a project or a research department), its transfer effect to the organization is difficult to quantify. On the other hand, if the loosely coupled unit is a more permanent fixture, it is part of the organizational “institutional identity and reality”, and as such can absorb organizational capacity building—even if broader learning and/or sustainability to the central organization is not obvious.

## ANNEX 7—BIBLIOGRAPHY<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The authors reviewed multiple reports and corporate documents in addition to those cited here. We have only included the documents that have been cited in this report in the bibliography.