



Danish support to research capacity building and knowledge creation as an instrument in development aid.

Contribution to the NUFFIC conference 23-25 May 2005:
'A Changing Landscape'
making support to higher education and research
in developing countries more effective:

*Bente Ilsøe,
Project Administrator,
Research Section,
Development Policy Office,
The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

By sharing the experience and the lessons learned from a donor organisation's support to research for over more than a decade, the aim of this paper is to contribute to the discussion of how to make support to research and research capacity building in developing countries more effective. The paper describes the current Danish set-up for support to research, summarises the outside evaluations carried out, and describes the challenges to be met and the inconsistencies to be overcome.

Strategic thoughts guiding the Danish support to higher education and research for development in the South:

Support to research activities and building of research capacity have been part of Danish development assistance for decades. Support to research is seen as an intervention area or a specific aid instrument, as well as a means to create a knowledge base for problem solving and for the identification, design and implementation of other aid instruments and development policies.

The strategy, “Partnership 2000” (RDMFA 2000b), states the following: “Denmark’s development policy will be based on realistic and strengthened partnerships with the developing countries. Denmark will therefore promote knowledge production that will benefit the developing countries as well as their own capacity to produce and use knowledge as a key prerequisite for sustainable development. Danish educational and research environments will be important partners in this work”. As an integral part of Danish development assistance, the research supported must contribute to the achievement of the key goals of Danish development assistance as set out in the Government’s development policy. Development research is thus not seen a goal in itself but an instrument in obtaining the overall goal of poverty reduction.

After a nearly fivefold increase in the support during the eighties and nineties, followed by a small decrease (of 5% for 2004-6), the level at present amounts to approximately 2,27 % of the development aid.

In the vision for new priorities in Danish development assistance 2004-2008; “A World of Difference” (RDMFA 2003), it was stated that in order to get as much assistance for the money as possible, the effectiveness of Danish development assistance would be enhanced and the efforts focused, the administration of assistance to the programme countries decentralized, and aid untied. Funding from research and information, among other activities, would be re-prioritised to direct activities in the developing countries. In this way the Government would free funding for high-priority areas, reflecting the current global challenges (such as counteracting the threats caused by the increasing gap between, in particular, the Western world and the Arab world). The Government also took new initiatives in the area concerning stability, security and the fight against terrorism, and an enhanced effort was made within human rights, democratisation and good governance. It was further stated that effective Danish development assistance presupposes clear political priorities, long-term and sustained efforts and a stable political and economic framework for the concrete activities.

The support schemes to research are thus at present undergoing reorganisation. In addition to the direction of the activities towards the developing countries, the organisation of Danish development research support must incorporate new rules on the involvement of a new Danish strategic research council, which will coordinate all Danish research councils and approve the research support procedure of all ministries as well as evaluating applications for support from the research funds of the ministries. New Danish rules of full payment of university fees for foreign students must also be handled. In a wider context, issues such as the internationalisation of the market for higher education and the globalisation of science and higher education, the brain drain debate,

privatisation and the new opportunities through improved information and communication technologies must also be taken into consideration.

Guiding principles, goals, implementation and management of research, and capacity building schemes and programmes.

Research is supported through both bilateral and multilateral Danish development aid:

Multilateral Danida funds support research activities within multilateral organizations and selected international research institutions and initiatives, especially in the fields of agriculture, health and social science. Furthermore, a few multi-national programmes, such as the PERI project on access to online scientific literature, are supported through minor grants.

Bilateral Danida funds support research that is integrated in sector programme support (SPS), fellowships, commissioned strategic research projects, four research centres in Denmark and five research co-ordination networks, as well as research and research capacity building projects granted through the Council for Development Research. Research networks have been established within agriculture, village poultry production, human health, water, the environment and good governance. The objective of the networks are to strengthen the synergies and dialogue between Danish and foreign researchers and institutions. Furthermore, they aim at ensuring the exchange of new theoretical knowledge and practical experience between researchers, the Danish resource base and development assistance.

The Danida supported Fellowship Programme is a component of the Danish bilateral support to capacity building in the Danida programme countries and covers the training and education needs of Danida financed projects and programmes through grants of fellowships for studies in Denmark, in the candidates' home country or in the region. The support is channeled through sector programmes or budget support. The programme and project-financed training may comprise tailor-made courses, degree giving studies, or participation in cross-sectoral courses. The programme provides grants to Master and Ph.D. studies carried out at Danish universities, designed as sandwich studies, when possible. It is emphasized that the studies are to be based on Danida's activities in the developing country, and the subject of the thesis is expected to be an integrated part of the existing activities. In 2003 there were 108 fellowship holders for degree studies, (with an average period of study of 5,1 months) out of a total of 602 fellowship holders that year. The central fellowship funds primarily support training activities of a political, strategic or technical, innovative nature that the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies, and programmes/projects in programme countries may want to promote. The central fellowship grant was DKK 60 million in 2003 (DFC 2003 Annual Report) and from 2004 it is DKK 40 million per annum. The Danish Institute for Human Rights supports a Research Partnership Programme for partner country researchers at least at MSc level.

Danish aid does not support the development and implementation of national policies at tertiary education and research in developing countries directly, except for the support to MSc studies attached to sector programmes or to ENRECA projects as part of the capacity building in the partner countries. The co-financing between the Ministry of

Science, Technology and Innovation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the DUO-Denmark Fellowship programme, which is one of the ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programs supporting exchange between Danish and Asian higher educational institutions.

Projects granted through the Council for Development Research:

With the principal goal of fostering closer integration of development research, development assistance policy and practical cooperation in the field of development assistance, the following *sub-goals* have been defined for grants allocated through the Danish Council for Development Research:

- The building and maintenance of research capacity in developing countries of direct relevance to their development.
- The building and maintenance of research capacity in Denmark of direct relevance to the development of developing countries and development assistance cooperation.
- The generation of technical know-how and other expertise for solving operational problems.
- The generation of knowledge for use in developing assistance policy and strategy.
- The generation of new knowledge through research conducted at Danish and international research institutions and at institutions in the developing countries.

The distribution of support to development research is at present subject to a comprehensive priority assessment based on the following *principles*:

- The research and capacity building must be of relevance to Danish development cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral.
- The support must go towards high-quality research and capacity-building activities.
- Research cooperation between the North and the South must take its point of departure in the needs of the partners in the South, it must contribute to capacity building in the South, and it must be built on local ownership.
- Application-oriented dissemination and implementation of research findings must be an integral element of all projects and take place alongside dissemination through international, regional and national peer-reviewed journals.
- Increased open competition for research grants is to strengthen quality and promote greater diversity among recipients of the grants.
- Concentration of support is to secure a critical mass in priority areas.

(RDMFA 2005).

With an annual budget of DKK 96.7 mio. the Council grants support to three different types of projects:

- ❖ Individual research projects for PhD- and Post Doc studies,
- ❖ Major collective research projects in cooperation between several institutions within strategic areas, in subjects relevant for development. These aim to

generate new problem-orientated knowledge relevant to the needs of developing countries. Collective projects should strengthen crosscutting research cooperation and innovative alliances between research environments, especially in the form of partnerships between Danish researchers and researchers from developing countries.

- ❖ ENRECA-projects (Projects for the ENhancement of REsearch CAcapacity): Partnerships between Danish and partner country researchers for the building of sustainable research capacity at selected partner institutions, in subjects based on the partner country's needs (as expressed in national strategies). Essential features of the ENRECA-projects are: Cooperation in carefully balanced partnerships on planning and implementation of locally rooted research activities, PhD and MSc education of partner country researchers, preferably attached to their home universities in a "sandwich" approach with shorter stays in Denmark, building-up of research environments in which they can continue their work, as well as supporting the building of the institutional capacity. Annually, 40-50 PhD- and MSc students from the partner countries study in Denmark for an average of 3 months each. The ENRECA projects use about 60% of the Council's grants.

In addition, "Initiative grants" support potential new partners' formulation of collective research or ENRECA projects, and small travel grants are allocated for Danish MSc studies attached to Danida activities.

The Council for Development Research select, on an ongoing basis, major themes and focus areas to receive funding for research activities. The prioritisation and selection of the annual applications to the Council are based on an evaluation of the research quality, the applicant's academic qualifications and the innovative character, assisted by an international peer reviewing procedure and an evaluation of the relevance for bilateral aid as reviewed by Danida. Important quality parameters for the ENRECA projects are the quality of the research capacity building, the management and balancing of the partnership and the sustainability issues and local prioritisation and institutional anchorage. For the new collective research projects, the quality assessment also includes the project's organisational quality, interdisciplinarity and the partnership issues. The application forms for each project type specifically asks for information about these parameters.

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the responsibility for the supervision of the projects granted by the Council, including the processing of the reports and accounts, project visits, reviews, evaluations, etc. The current number of these projects is 306.

Evaluations of Danida support to research.

The ENRECA programme was subject to an independent evaluation in 2000, where an international evaluation team concluded that the programme was "an imaginative and effective example of how a relatively small amount of money may be used to mobilise the enthusiasm of researchers from both North and South, thus creating synergistic

relationships for building research capacity in developing countries” (RDMFA 2000a). Inputs were based on professionalism, energy, motivation, creativity and problem-orientation and promoted human capital building and positive attitudinal change, which led to good and relevant research. Virtually no “brain drain” had occurred.

At the strategic level, there were considerations concerning the programme relying on the Danish researchers selecting the research areas and partners, rather than selecting activities based on an overall assessment of priorities by the host country. A further dilemma met was how directive towards giving more Southern ownership at the programme level the programme could be without undermining the genuine professional interest and enthusiasm on the part of the Danish participants, which the positive results of the programme relied on. Furthermore, it was found that Danish research institutions and their younger staff were losing interest in being involved in ENRECA projects as a result of growing financial and performance pressures on Danish research. This was accelerated when focusing on the poorest partner countries whose needs are primarily capacity-based, which would give less high level research outcome for the Danish partner. Parallel considerations are described from other programmes, where it has been found that having to play the part of the consultant (without the consultant level payment) further could decrease the interest of the universities in the North in development cooperation and reduce their opportunities for gaining academic and research benefits (Boeren 2004b).

The ENRECA evaluation recommended expanding the programme substantially, adopting a more participatory approach, and integrating it more fully into a Danida-wide research strategy. In case the expansion of the programme was not possible, it was recommended not to undertake significant reform and to accept that the main driving force would continue to be the professional interest and enthusiasm of the researchers. No further attempt should be made to direct the projects to Danida Programme countries or sector programmes. Any possible budget increase should be directed towards expanding programme staff in order to improve monitoring and communication, include institutional assessments in the application and monitoring procedures, and to improve the sustainability of the project’s impact by requiring all projects to develop and report upon an exit strategy. As neither expanding the programme nor the staffing was chosen, the possibilities of following the recommendations of the evaluation were limited to certain improvements concerning the institutional assessments and the sustainability issues.

In 2001, the entire Danish support to development research was subject to an evaluation by an international commission (RDMFA 2001). This resulted in a report on Danida's performance in the research and knowledge production arenas, and the relationship between Danish researchers and policy makers. It explored the relevance of knowledge, knowledge production and research for Danida, within the context of international development. The commission had a vision of a future in which Danish development research was given higher priority; was better integrated into the mainstream; more accurately reflected both development needs and Denmark’s comparative advantages; was of more use to policy-makers; had stronger links to capacity-building in developing countries; and was more accountable to its stakeholders in both North and South. The Commission found that development research in Denmark was largely funded by Danida, and that it was marginal to the main national research effort and not linked with overall, national Danish research policy. Thus, opportunities for influence and synergy

were lost. It recommended that Denmark should develop a coherent vision of how development research contributes to knowledge, how knowledge contributes to development, and how Denmark itself could best underpin development-oriented knowledge societies – in both North and South. Danida should make its priorities visible and contribute to the overall priority setting of the Danish research councils.

The Commission further recommended that Danida made adequate organisational and staffing adjustments in order to facilitate knowledge management both in relation to external partners, i.e. fostering links and networks with the research community, in Denmark and abroad, and with the aim of promoting knowledge-related components in sector programmes; taking a view on the overall size and distribution of Danida's research programme. If this was effected, the Commission believed a more coherent, productive and collaborative structure would be put in place for Danida's management of development research, to the benefit of both Danida and the development research community. As further institutional interventions, the report recommends that the role and position of the Council for Development Research should be reconsidered. Danida should fund specialist research centres who should be subject to performance contracts, but they should "market-test" their research capacity by competing for a share of grants, and not be overly reliant on core grants from Danida, but be taking on more applied work.

The Commission pointed out that the mutual perceptions between Danish researchers and development policymakers were out of synch: "Where the one group feels nobody listens, the other feels their opposite numbers have little to say". Researchers had felt that there was no eager political audience for their work, and that not enough notice was taken of research results, and that too few traces of them were found in policy documents. Policymakers had felt that what researchers contributed was not relevant, that research reports often were verbose and that interesting inputs for policy-making were found elsewhere.

A sub-report to the Commission report (Blackie et al. 2001) found that some two thirds of the funds provided explicitly for research by Danida were used for purposes over which the agency had little direct influence, and that there was an evident lack of cohesion between Danida priorities and the purposes for which research funds were being used. It was stated that the key role and function of research as part of the necessary operation of development aid needed to be restated and clarified, and that Danida should reiterate its commitment to research in support of development aid from the highest management level.

The reports did not evaluate the efficiency of the Danida approach in fulfilling the second part of the dual purpose of the support to research: The building and maintenance of research capacity in Denmark of direct relevance to the development of developing countries and development assistance cooperation.

The observations of the Commission were noted, but the Ministry was not obliged to follow the recommendations. Following the report, the bilateral research administration department, which had been a separate department, was moved to the Ministry's policy unit, and the staffing was slightly reduced. The ENRECA programme was included in the Council for Development Research portfolio and the Council was renewed to include members appointed by the NGO community and the private sector and representatives

from the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The guidelines and criteria of the Council were reformulated, with clearer demands for project formulation and reporting. The opportunity for applying for a new project type (collective research projects) was given and the possibility for individual partner country researchers to apply for PhD and Post Doc grants was opened, in competition with their Danish colleagues and attached to a Danish institution. Three new research networks were established. On the basis of reviews of most of the centres, performance contracts were created, forming the basis for the support to the centres.

Additional lessons learned from managing the support to research and research capacity building:

In addition to the observations of the two evaluations mentioned, the later experiences drawn from the attempts to integrate research components in the sector programmes while new trends in aid are being implemented, can be summarised as follows:

Integration of research elements into the decentralised bilateral assistance:

Research components have been integrated in a few Danish sector support programmes, and more programmes are currently struggling with the practical issues raised through such a process. The ownership of the sector programme support lies with the partner countries which do not prioritise the need for support to research high enough to raise it during the annual negotiations, or have no tradition for handling knowledge needs in line with the other issues raised with the donors. Identification of research and knowledge management needs is not part of the guidelines for programme appraisal, and the introduction of research support issues in the middle of a sector programme cycle creates many practical problems. If research components should be part of a sector programme, it must be taken up with the partner country as part of programme appraisals and annual negotiations. Furthermore, sector programme administration is attached to the partner country's line ministries, which often do not have strong connections to their ministries of education and research. This creates practical problems when research components want to include support to universities.

After the decentralisation of the appraisal and management of bilateral assistance, establishing links between the Danish research resource base and the sector programmes will be less direct. The experiences especially of the Network for Agricultural Research (NETARD - see <http://www.netard.dk/>) have provided valuable experience of how to link research and sector programme support. In a preliminary report, the Network has summarized the following lessons learned:

The lack of guidelines for research partnerships managed from the South and of suitable and flexible funding mechanisms have been a main obstacle to integration of research in agricultural sector programme support. But, as the starting point for such research partnerships should always be the problems and needs defined by the specific partner country, and, as the local contexts and national priorities differ, it is not realistic to develop an overall model for the integration of research in all the sector programmes.

Insufficient capacity to manage and administer research projects in the poorest of the partner countries has led to delays and communication problems. Ideally it should be possible to link different types of Danida research funding for different types of activities, e.g. applied research funded by ASPS and long-term capacity-building research funded by the Council for Development Research. However, differences in deadlines, procedures, requirements and co-ordination of the various funding sources have made it rather difficult to combine these.

Researchers find conflicting goals of carrying out research and development work. The sector programmes cannot be expected to cover all the expenses on the Danish side, but it is still not clear how the Research Council grants can be combined with research carried out through sector programme support or covered by local competitive funds. Furthermore, it was not clear to the researchers how the sector programmes could communicate their research needs to the Council.

However, the Network has made a difference with regard to establishing research partnerships within some of the sector programmes. They ascribe their success to the following factors: Researchers and programme staff in the South were involved from the very beginning of the process in a demand driven approach. The Danish resource base were provided with up-to-date information about the institutional and organizational set-up, e.g. in the form of “National Research Profiles”. Danish “added advantages” and expertise were made visible to the potential Southern partners through the Network, which then promoted researcher-led and multi-stakeholder approaches and organized meetings at each of the possible partner’s location. It was further observed by the Network that institutional linkages were crucial to secure accountability, continuity and local sustainability of the research, that it was necessary to work with key persons and institutions, and that the right timing in relation to the programme cycle and the positive attitude towards research of the programme and embassy staff were important. The Network furthermore found it useful having been able to introduce sector programme advisers to the Danish research resource base prior to their posting, and furthermore reported that the use of Danish Master’s students for small studies in the sector programmes on travel stipends funded by the Council for Development Research had contributed to strengthening links between researchers and the sector programmes.

Untying and basket funding:

DAC member countries have agreed to untie their aid to the greatest extent possible (DAC 2001). So far, this has been agreed for general sector programme assistance, while direct research support as “free standing technical cooperation” is exempted, because it is recognised, that the country policies may be guided by the importance of maintaining a basic sense of national involvement in the donor countries. Other donor countries are also trying to integrate support to research into their bilateral assistance, in some countries as “basket funding” with contributions from several donors into a common pool. The national and sub-regional competitive funding schemes in the South encourage partnerships with the North, but the grants are small and mainly meant to cover the costs of the Southern researchers.

In the light of the Danish engagement in the efforts of donor harmonisation and the untying of aid, it will not be likely that the financing of external research partners for

research components in the sector programmes in the future can be earmarked to using Danish research institutions only. But it is of course desirable to involve Danish partners if they are internationally competitive, possess obvious comparative advantage qualities and are thus a relevant choice. The question is then how the limited range of comparatively expensive Danish researchers can profile themselves in the international competition, where researchers and institutions from other donor countries have a stronger tradition for competitive bidding and a wider range of products to offer. The research networks can assist in certain ways, as described above.

The untying and basket funding issues will favour the largest and most competitive institutions in the countries that put development research high on their agenda and stress the need for working towards better co-ordination among the Northern suppliers of research and capacity building. There is a need for defining the comparative advantages of each Northern partner within research and capacity building and avoiding duplication. One idea could be to establish a website for matching researchers, as done in several EU programmes (see links in the literature list).

Further issues to consider, when discussing how to improve the research and capacity building support programmes:

The selection of partners:

The initial contact between North-South research partners can be a result of individual contacts between researchers within the same field. This can be initiated through fellowship grants, meetings and conferences, consultancies, personal initiatives or through co-operative agreements and exchange between universities or research institutions. The potential partners in the ENRECA projects must have found each other at the time of writing an application, as the project administration does not have the resources to engage in matchmaking, and it is believed that there is an advantage in letting the partners select each other before they apply for support. It is the experience that matches made on an individual basis often contain the attitudinal values so important for the quality of a partnership (see below).

Within research components of sector programmes, the selection procedure is reversed and the decisions lie in the partner country. Other donor programmes have also given full ownership to the Southern partner and rely on “arranged matches” when including co-operation with the donor country researchers. Such relations are not defined in terms of a partnership but as a business arrangement between client and Northern service provider (Boeren 2004b). When arranging meetings between potential research partners of sector programmes, it has proved to be an advantage, if the meetings are carried out before the actual funding conditions are set. In that way, the discussions revolve more around the content and process of new partnerships rather than the funding issues alone, and the partnerships formed can apply to other programmes as well.

The selection of subjects:

Basing the selection of partnership projects on the advertisement of narrow themes or subjects may mean that the best projects in terms of capacity enhancement output and quality may not be selected. This approach may be better suited for research projects aiming at knowledge creation only. The applicants to the Research Council grants must explain the relevance of their topical area to Danish development cooperation as well as the relevance to the development of the partner country in the application, by giving an analysis of the relevance for the partner country's national research strategy and/or strategy for poverty reduction.

Basing the selection of subjects on demand raises many questions: The Livestock Development Group (2004) analysed the demand-led research concept: When the participatory approach was recognised as producing limited outcomes, the demand-led research agenda corresponded by linking the receptors to the generators of research. In theory, both the receptors and clients were the drivers of projects and programmes. But, it was found that without acknowledging the impact of the internal and external drivers to demand, it is likely that any priorities derived will be incorrect. A discourse analysis demonstrated that there was confusion about who the end-user was or should be and illustrated that conceptions of demand linked to the farmers were the most contentious and problematic. Indeed, when the end-user was the farmer, demand-led research was 'fashionable' and driven by donor interests.

Researchers participating in a workshop following a reform of the Ugandan national agricultural research system felt that the reform was pushing them too fast into demand-driven and applied research. The interest of the donors in promoting strategic knowledge production and prioritising their support in order to strengthen the application of the knowledge produced was perceived by the Ugandan researchers as being top-down and donor driven, and the researchers were concerned about where the demand for more multidisciplinary and applied research would leave their basic research skills. This would give them too few possibilities for publishing at an international level, which is a precondition for career development within their university system. For the Southern researchers, there can thus be a tension between addressing local questions relevant to the development of their societies and at the same time being part of mainstream science and recognised by the local and international scientific communities.

As pointed out by the ENRECA-evaluation, the involvement in capacity building at Southern partner institutions is time-consuming and does not contribute much to the career prospects of the Northern researchers, who are under pressure to perform. As observed by Boeren (2004a), the Northern researchers may thus be reluctant to engage in co-operation with their colleagues from the countries most in need, which is in conflict with meeting the poverty alleviation objectives of donors.

Balancing the ownership:

Key questions when setting priorities for supporting research partnerships are then: Where are the interests of the Northern and Southern researchers and institutions and those of the donors in conflict, and where are they synergistic? Or how can the demand

for assistance to research and capacity building from the Southern partners best be matched with the supply from the research resource bases of a Northern partner? As long as the Danish support to research through the Council for Development Research serves the sub-goals of research capacity building both in Denmark and the partner countries, a synergy between demand and supply must be found. There is a dilemma of wanting to maintain the Northern national research resource base while trying to secure a demand-driven and poverty focus and giving more ownership to Southern partners. The dilemma described in the ENRECA evaluation of giving more Southern ownership without undermining the enthusiasm from the Danish participants, is still valid. Trying to fit in all the (conflicting) objectives in one project approach is not the solution. The Danish programmes distinguish between the research and the research capacity building objectives and have set up the project typology accordingly, as described, with different sets of objectives and selection criteria for each type of project.

The ENRECA partnerships must have shared ownership, shared visions, and mutually rewarding outputs. The fact that the Danish partner most often initiates the cooperation within the projects and that the overall project responsibility lies with the Danish institutions is balanced by securing the proper involvement and ownership of the Southern partners through setting up clear criteria and guidelines. This is a compromise, but the ENRECA evaluation (RDMFA 2000a) found that the programme had proven that it was indeed possible to forge productive research partnerships between Northern and Southern institutions, refuting the notion of Northern dominance. Once the partners have found each other, the balancing of the ownership can be enhanced through a thorough planning process and clear demands for the application to reflect the balance, and selection criteria and administration principles that promote the well balanced projects (see below). An experiment to allow the mixing of the research and the capacity building project types by the Council for Development Research has resulted in applications for projects with relatively more of the expenses on the Danish side and less Southern influence and ownership.

Full ownership in the South with decisions concerning objectives etc. of a project does not match well with the partnership concept, which will only work if both sides have something to offer that meets a need on the other side (Boeren 2004b). If the Northern partner does not benefit from engaging in a research partnership, this will more take the character of consultancy, which cannot capitalize on free Northern input in the form of staff, training and expertise.

The conditions for successful partnerships:

The benefits received from North-South research partnerships can be increased through more focused and selective partnership portfolios and through improved planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of partnerships. But, scientific efforts to better understand institutional partnerships and to find the key to their successes and failures in contributing to better institutional performance and institutional learning, particularly from the perspective of a developing country organization, are rare (Michelsen 2003).

Gaillard (1994) noted that the main issue concerning research partnerships was related to the asymmetry of the collaboration and the risks of dominance by the Northern partners. The problem was compounded by the lack of local research priority setting which could

ensure both a demand orientation and the relevance of the research. He found that an obvious imbalance laid in the fact that the Northern partner's country supplied many of the resources for the partnership. The projects were either managed fully by the Northern partner, or the management responsibility was shared to different degrees. Projects dependent upon external funds managed by the donor organisation tended to be more easily balanced than if the full responsibility for the granting was left with the Northern partner itself.

In The Declaration of Maastricht (2001), donors agreed to "address the asymmetric character of North South research collaboration by granting greater autonomy for programmes and projects initiated in the South, in the spirit of more trust and less prescription". A study demonstrated, however, that it is the institutional capacity and not just money that gives the Northern partners the upper hand, as they have the corporate power to place the conditions on the table (RAWOO, 2001). Many problems in research partnerships are more related to questions of attitude than of asymmetry. It is the Danish experience that the most successful North-South research partnerships are based upon reciprocity, trust, mutual respect, sharing, understanding, idealism and enthusiasm, and the researchers on both sides are motivated by principles of global equality, a sense of fairness, and a wish to make a difference.

A partnership is very unlikely to thrive if the Northern partner (implicitly or explicitly) is perceived as being overly dominant. But Southern partners are not likely to criticise either the donor or their Northern partner directly, unless the project administration gives them direct opportunity to do so. Further, the dominance by the Northern partners can be hidden, even to themselves, behind their good intentions, convincing their partners of the importance of their own favourite subjects, with too little regard for the relative significance of the subject for the development of the partner country, and whether it fits within the institutional or national development process. Potential partners in dire need of support may not have the power to say no to such a proposal if it includes salaries, equipment and budgets for field research. Although it may seem advantageous in the short run, there will be little chance of sustaining the capacity built after such a project is completed. The selection procedure must rule out such projects, and there must thus be attention to attitude and motivation of the involved partners when selecting and managing projects. To a certain degree the most fruitful partnerships can be nurtured in the setting up of the systems for the selection and management of projects and programmes:

- Initiative grants will allow the partners to decide on the objectives and define the problem and approach together and build up mutual trust. Such grants for travel and communication will allow the partners to be equally involved in the planning of research, capacity building and management during an incubation or inception phase.
- It is advised to start off on a manageable scale with not too many partners and to allow sufficient time to plan.
- Allow flexibility in project and programme administration, and room for the fact that partnerships are not static and that expectations, relations and time plan change over time.

- The most straightforward partnership collaboration is between researchers at more or less equal levels, so senior-junior imbalances at the overall project level should be avoided and direct twinning between research students at the same level from North and South should be encouraged.
- Encourage the partners to discuss the partnership relation openly and honestly, (which is not easy), and leave the opportunity for each partner to give their view on the partnership.
- Individuals shape the partnership and strong and shared leadership is necessary, but projects overly dependant upon or dominated by a single person will be vulnerable, as will projects with a weak organisational structure or based on people with weak co-operation abilities.
- Northern project managers should not be permanently present at the South institution, except in some cases during the starting phase.
- Insist on the sharing of responsibility. Give opportunity for the Southern partner to develop their capacity for gradually taking over full responsibility for their part of the project.
- Ensure sufficient resources, working conditions and time for project planning and management on both (all) sides, as well as for the building of management capacities.
- Ensure sufficient resources for good and effective communication and sharing of information.
- Agree upon an explicit decision making process and create transparency in all stages of project planning and management.
- Favour the setting up of steering committees, co-operation agreements and flexible action plans based on realistic and shared ambitions and interests and mutual agreements on goals, approach, outcome, impact and responsibility.
- The research agenda must fit in with the institutional development process to ensure solid institutional backup and anchorage on both sides.
- From the planning stage of a project, handle the issues of how to sustain the capacity built after terminating the support.
- From the planning stage of a project, discuss how to use the results and capacity, and set up a publication and dissemination strategy.

The experiences from other partnership programmes are quite similar (Michelsen 2003, Maselli et al 2004).

Another challenge for both project and programme administration is how to secure the dissemination and use of the research results and the capacity built. Strengthening the skills for publication should be planned from the onset by setting up innovative and

vigorous strategies for the dissemination of results early in the research process, and it should also be reflected in the budget. There is a need to build up Southern capability within science journalism, and this could be part of the support. Through linking to international efforts within science publishing and access to online scientific literature (ELDIS, SciDev.Net., PERI etc) both the dissemination of the results and the access to information can be enhanced.

Sustainability:

Unless an institutional capacity building component is enforced, the long-term impact of a project will lie more within the individual researcher educated. But, the institutional capacity building will rely on continuous funding and is more vulnerable, as it depends on institutional and national priorities and politics. The best partnerships based on personal relations will last long, even though the initial funding stops. Research relationships started as “arranged matches” may only outlive the initial funding, if they have developed into genuine partnerships.

A realistic measurement of sustainability is the researchers’ or institutions’ ability to attract further funding from other donors. The ENRECA evaluation (RDMFA 2000a) pointed out that fostering high-quality research outputs is more likely to lead to sustainability, while the essential, less glamorous and longer-term task of building research capacity is less likely to attract future funding.

Due to the increased enrolment in many Southern universities, a heavy teaching load is put on Southern University staff, leaving little time for research. Such institutional problems affect the sustainability of the research capacity building supported. If the donors do not support tertiary education, the support to research will be less effective, as the educated researchers are overloaded with teaching duties. Furthermore, the university researchers are facing difficulties in combining their own research with carrying out consultancies for the donors. This is much better paid, as research support programmes do not top up salaries. But there is not sufficient time for both consultancy work and scientific publication, and promotion within the university systems requires publications at international peer reviewed level.

Donor organizations prefer short-lived projects of about 3 years, in which measurable immediate outputs should be demonstrated. Building of Southern research capacity at PhD and postdoc level takes at least 4 years. In the poorest countries, where capacity building must start at Bachelor or Master degree level, building up research capacity to an international level takes at least 10 years. Boeren (2004a) found that this inconsistency applies to most programmes that do not guarantee funding for such a long period.

Monitoring the progres of the supported projects:

As mentioned, the most productive research partnership projects are based on reciprocity in the collaboration, trust, mutual respect, sharing, understanding and enthusiasm, and such factors are difficult to monitor. The Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) have set up an Impact Matrix for improving the

impacts of research partnerships, also including the question of attitudes (Maselli et al 2004). Otherwise, few publications about research partnerships discuss the question of attitude in more depth, although they are described as being essential for the outcome. Bautista (2001) compared a number of donor-supported research capacity-building programmes and found that a major challenge facing donors supporting demand-driven or participatory research was how to measure the outputs of process-oriented research with multiple outcomes in qualitative and quantitative terms.

When setting up a quality assurance and monitoring system for research and research capacity building projects, a system of self-evaluation can be used. The projects thus report upon significant changes and progress in relation to the specific information given in the application on objectives, activities and expected outputs. Furthermore they propose necessary remedial actions, and describe the consequent implications for the budget and time plan. Such reporting must cover changes concerning the involved institutions and staff, alterations in the factors determining the conditions for involvement, the partnership balance and the commitment of the institutions and researchers in the project, changes concerning the relevance for the partner country's national strategies, as well as progress and changes concerning the organization and management of the project. In addition, the progress and results concerning the achievement of sustainability of the research capacity built must be reported, such as employment of the educated researchers and other funding obtained, and the activities aiming at the application and dissemination of the results and the communication with the users must be listed. The specific properties of the different project types must thus be regarded when monitoring the research support.

Conclusions

When planning the future modalities for the Danish support to research, the challenges following the above-mentioned shift to the untying and decentralisation of aid must be taken into account, as well as the steps towards basket funding with other donors. Furthermore, the challenges following budget cuts must be comprised, together with the demand for more Southern ownership and prioritisation. The integrating of research components into bilateral programmes must be organised, and the demands of monitoring the quality of the research supported and its impact on poverty reduction must be met. If one of the goals will still be to sustain a Danish research resource base, the research support must also be seen in a national Danish context. This may contribute to bridging the described gap between researchers and policymakers. While building on the experiences from the part of the present set-up that was so positively evaluated, it may turn out to be necessary to change the whole set-up thoroughly to meet all these challenges.

LITERATURE:

Bautista, C. R. B., L. Velho and D. Kaplan (2001). Comparative study of the impacts of donor-initiated programmes on research capacity in the South. Report to the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGIS) Division for Research and Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, The Hague.
<http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC7256.htm>

Blackie, Malcolm, Piers Blaikie and Michael Stocking, Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia Norwich, UK, (2001): "Review of Danida Funded Research in Agriculture and Natural Resources".

Boeren (2004a): "A matter of interests: perspectives on international cooperation in higher education". Draft paper prepared for a special session of the Committee for Consultation on Development Cooperation (COO), The Hague, 18 March, 2004.

Boeren, A. (2004b): "To untie or not to untie?" Paper presented at the British Council Seminar: Development Priorities and the Role of Tertiary Education. March 8-12, Wilton Park, Birmingham.

DAC (2001): "DAC Recommendation on untying official development assistance to the least developed countries". DCD/DAC(2001)12
http://www.oecd.org/LongAbstract/0,2546,en_2649_33721_1885469_119672_1_1_1,00.html

Danida Fellowship Centre 2003 Annual Report.
http://www.dfcentre.com/?Welcome:Annual_Reports

"The Declaration of Maastricht" (2001):
<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/313>

Gaillard, J. F. (1994): North-South Research Partnership: is Collaboration Possible between Unequal Partners? Knowledge and Policy: The International Journal of Knowledge Transfer and Utilisation, Vol. 7, No. 2.

Livestock Development Group, (2004) "Receptors, End-Users and Providers: The deconstruction of demand-led processes and knowledge transfer in animal health research". Livestock Development Group, School of Agriculture Policy and Development, The University of Reading, UK October, 2004. ISBN No. 0704910985

Maselli, Daniel, Jon-Andri Lys and Jaqueline Schmid (2004): "Improving Impacts of Research Partnerships", KFPE: Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries. ISBN 3-906151-83-2, Geographica Bernensia, Berne. 86 pp.
Michelsen, Heike (2003): "Learning from Partnerships" Experiences from the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development (CIIFAD), , published by CIIFAD and ISNAR.

RAWOO (2001): North-South Research Partnerships: Issues and Challenges. Trivandrum Expert Meeting. RAWOO Publication no.22, 2001. ISBN 90-71367-30-4

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000a): "Evaluation of Danida's Bilateral Programme for Enhancement of Research Capacity in Developing Countries (ENRECA)".

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000b): "Partnership 2000", Denmark's Development Policy – Strategy. ISBN: 87-7265-981-5

The Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2001): "Partnerships at the Leading Edge: A Danish Vision for Knowledge, Research and Development"
Report of the Commission on Development-Related Research Funded by Danida
Copenhagen, April 2001. Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida:
http://www.um.dk/NR/ronlyres/54C9D07C-64C9-4AEF-B537-44B655D1338C/0/CMI_Partnership_at_the_Leading_Edge.pdf. ISBN: 87-7964-083-4

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, (2003) "A World of Difference", The Government's Vision for New Priorities in Danish Development Assistance 2004-2008, ISBN:87-7964-794-4
<http://www.um.dk/Publikationer/Danida/English/DanishDevelopmentCooperation/AWorldOfDifference/index.asp>

The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005): Guidelines Concerning Funding of Research Activities as Part of Denmark's International Development Cooperation
January 2005
http://www.um.dk/NR/ronlyres/7564731A-3432-4A4E-B933-66326D770DD7/0/Guidelines_Funding_Research_Activities.doc

Examples of websites for linking research partners:

The Partners Service, an on-line service, tailor-made for matchmaking between research partners, in the context of EU-funded Research and Development: <http://partners-service.cordis.lu/>

The Partner Search Database of the EU ASIA LINK programme:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-link/partners.htm>