

**A REVIEW OF THE POVERTY AND ECONOMIC POLICY [PEP]
NETWORK AND AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS**

FINAL REPORT

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[This separate document has been generated to give full force to the detailed observations made by the two team members, Aimé Gogue and Mario Lamberte. For convenience, these - along with the accompanying comments and evidence they submitted - are reported in full. This document is in two parts, the first contains three sub-files, mostly reflecting the experiences of the African Regional Office in Dakar, but also incorporating an overview of PEP operations, has been prepared by Aimé Gogue. The second part consists of four further sub-files provided by Mario Lamberte. These are concerned with, respectively, the CBMS sub-network, the operations of the PEP Regional Office in Manila and a review of the research activity of related institutions in Asia, originally posted as an annexe to the response he prepared to the comments made by IDRC and PEP management to the provisional draft. Both authors devote a considerable amount of space to an assessment of the operations of other research institutions in their regions and whether there is any duplication or overlap of their work with PEP research activity.]

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Acronyms

ABCF	African Capacity Building Foundation
AKI	Angelo King Institute
AKIEBS	Angelo King Institute for Economic and Business Studies
CAMES	Centre for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies
CBMS	Community-Based Monitoring Systems
CGE	Computable General Equilibrium
CIRPÉE	Centre Interuniversitaire sur le Risque, les Politiques Economiques et l'Emploi
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CREA	Chiek Anta Diop University of Dakar- Centre de Recherché Economique Appliqué of Université de Dakar
CRES	Centre de Recherché Economiques et Sociales
CSP	Country Strategy Programme
DFID	UK Department for International Development
GTAP	Centre for Global Trade Analysis, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University
ICP	International Comparisons Programme [referred to also as 'Project']
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JRI	Joint Research Initiatives
MCA	multiple correspondence
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDT	Millennium Development Targets [the subset of specific indicators]
MIMAP	Micro Impact of Macro Adjustment Policies
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPIA	Modelling and Policy Impact Analysis
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
OFW	Overseas Filipino Workers
OIF	Organisation Internationale Francophone
PCA	Principal Components Analysis
PEF	Peace and Equity Foundation
PEP	Poverty and Economic Policy
PMMA	Poverty Monitoring, Measurement and Analysis
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
PSIA	Poverty and Social Impact Analysis
SAM	Social Accounting Matrix
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SNA	System of National Accounts [International Standard]
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SWS	Social Weather Stations
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WBI	World Bank Institute
WTO	World Trade Organization

BACKGROUND, TERMS OF REFERENCE and METHODOLOGY

Structure of PEP

PEP comprises three interlinked sub-networks: the *Community-Based Monitoring System* (CBMS), the *Poverty Monitoring, Measurement and Analysis* (PMMA), and the *Modelling and Policy Impact Analysis* (MPIA) networks. The PMMA and the MPIA sub-networks are managed by the “Centre Interuniversitaire sur le Risque, les Politiques Économiques et l’Emploi” (CIRPÉE), Université Laval, Canada. CIRPÉE runs PEP in collaboration with the Angelo King Institute for Economic and Business Studies (AKIEBS) at De La Salle University, Manila, the Philippines, which also manages the CBMS network.

Terms of Reference [TOR]

The **overall review objective**, as outlined in the TOR, is to provide an objective assessment and feedback on the PEP Network activities and approach, with the view to identifying what has and has not worked and when positioning PEP work in the context of other similar initiatives and programs. The emphasis is on lessons and forward-looking strategies rather than an “audit” of performance.

The **specific objectives** are to:

- (i) Assess the evolution of the Network against its objectives, deliverables, thematic orientation and outcomes/results, policy relevance, and future demands for PEP research.
- (ii) Position its work in the context of other similar initiatives and programs and examine its strength/value added as well as potential linkages and complementarities.
- (iii) Review the Network’s achievements in strengthening research capacity in the South, against technical criteria, policy outcomes, research development, and quality of research, among others.
- (iv) Offer suggestions on strengths and weaknesses of the Network’s overall approach and strategies in relation to current demand for and supply of capacity building for PEP-related work in the South.
- (v) Assess the Network’s approach, methods, and successes in linking research to policy and practice, and/or the scope for this.
- (vi) Examine its operational structure (its network and institutional composition), financing modalities (small grants; consultancies; country projects; etc.), and modus operandi (methodology) in terms of efficiency and effectiveness criteria (to be set out), and comment on issues of sustainability, network viability, southern ownership, mandates and vision.
- (vii) Assess the Network’s “resource expansion” and partnership strategy, and its strategy for “devolution” against its objectives to make its networks (and activities) more self-sustaining.
- (viii) Examine the scope for expansion and institutionalization of its work (public sector; universities; international agencies; etc), and resource requirements.

The review is primarily Aiméd at providing feedback to IDRC and the PEP Network that can guide future programming and Network sustainability including niche, modalities, governance, funding, and partnerships.

Methodology

The review is meant to look beyond individual projects, focusing on how the PEP Network as a whole is performing. It also looked at the experiences of each of the three sub-networks in pursuing their own specific objectives. The review thus drew on PEP network and project level data sources as well as external observations, complemented by visits by the review team to regional PEP and IDRC offices. The information received was amplified in meetings and online discussions with lead managers and consultants. More specifically, the review drew on:

- i) Miscellaneous documents, including:
 - a reading of earlier background evaluation reviews conducted by the IDRC plus a range of other relevant documentation provided by PEP, particularly in respect of steering committee agendas, meeting reports and decisions regarding what project proposals were ultimately selected and how new strategic directions emerged and were adopted
 - a selective review of papers presented at the Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, General PEP Conferences containing either initial research proposals or presenting draft final results. Such papers relate to the range of topics defined by the respective core thematic areas of PEP and so cover the wide spectrum of macro, meso (broad sector policy) and micro based enquiries represented by MPIA, PMMA and CBMS activities
 - separate and independent audits by all three members of the present PEP evaluation team of a wide menu of papers presented at the plenary and parallel sessions organised by the 5th General Meeting of PEP held in Addis Ababa from 18-22 June 2006
 - an exploration of the wealth of information contained on the PEP website, to which full access under resource person status was granted.

- ii) Wide-ranging discussions with managers, researchers and users, including:
 - consultations with the PEP [CIRPÉE and AKI] managers and their programme associates as well as IDRC officers as to how they view the programme and its development
 - interviews with core supporting research consultants and resource experts on how they have seen the PEP operate and how the quality of research and its application has improved
 - roundtable group meetings with MPIA and CBMS researchers at both the preliminary as well as final stages of their work and one-on-one discussions with individual researchers from all three thematic areas
 - attendance, as observers, at the respective MPIA, PMMA and CBMS selection committee evaluations of outline new research proposals as well as their reviews of final research reports and what decisions were made about suggested methods of dissemination
 - observation of the proceedings of the full PEP Steering Committee

iii) The research experience of the PEP evaluation team members and IDRC staff

Each of the three reviewers has been personally engaged, over many years, in policy formulation and different aspects of poverty research as well as in managing projects in this area, some directly embedded in or linked to the PEP network. The review also relied extensively on the personal knowledge and intellectual involvement of IDRC staff in poverty and development research and their institutional experience in conducting past evaluations.

The documents, data bases and recorded experiences served as primary sources of reference while further information was gathered through additional documents and interviews with managers, researchers and information users as the evaluation progressed. The knowledge acquired by IDRC staff with their unique experience both of conducting research enquiries and of managing research projects provided much of the necessary focus on achievements and outcomes and proved especially valuable.

Extensive discussions were held at all levels within the network at conferences and in the field about the respective future roles of CIRPÉE and the Université Laval and AKI in the PEP organisation structure. Among other matters, these embraced questions concerning the value and timing of any proposed decentralisation and devolution of the network. In assessing the merits of such actions, considerations of both ease of funding and increased effectiveness of the network were taken into account. Other proposed refinements that could be made to the organisation [from within the network] to ensure fuller ownership of PEP activities and research topics by the developing countries were also reviewed.

Individual Team Member Tasks

The three members of the Review Team assumed the following respective responsibilities for reviewing the separate core themes. In direct discussions with individuals and research teams at the country level, and with relevant government agencies and other users of PEP research, Aimé Gogue and Mario Lamberte explored how each sub-network can be developed, how their advocacy role in policy can be enhanced and the sustainability of these programmes ensured. Mario looked especially at the CBMS network and has described its potential and Aimé concentrated on an exploration of MPIA and PMMA activities in the African region

Mario gave attention to the question whether the closer geographical coordination of similar research activities can yield more substantial benefits to designated recipients [both the researchers themselves and the communities and countries directly involved and in which they are located]. He extended this to a selected review of whether similar benefits accrue to countries at a similar stage of development that are not geographically contingent to each other; that is, he investigated whether one country had been able to learn from the experience of another even though they might be some physical as well as economic and cultural distance between them. Was it possible to identify common themes and issues across the continents?

Aimé undertook a review of the usefulness of similar projects and of the combination of projects across a given thematic profile within the same country. He looked at whether a cross-topical approach could generate a valuable symbiosis and provide

guidelines on how joint research studies can be developed along given cross-cutting themes.

Mario Lamberte operated mostly out of the Philippines where the HQ for the CBMS is located at AKI. There he reviewed the potential for achieving greater continuity of CBMS initiatives and the sustainability of this pipeline of research. He noted how it proved possible, as in Lao PDR and Cambodia, to link different procedures over time and under different institutional arrangements. His assessment showed how projects can be designed to feed logically into standard official reporting procedures at the community level. He also looked at the synergies that can be gained by taking a 'regional' perspective on implementing the CBMS philosophy. The report draws heavily on his personal involvement in the CBMS survey design, case studies and research analysis carried out in the Philippines from the inception of this programme. These methods are being tested, refined for wider use and are being gradually implemented across the global network. There are broader issues at stake in the adoption of the CBMS approach and methodology but our evaluation, necessarily, is conditioned, primarily, by what has been accomplished in the Philippines. In this connection, Mario set out to determine if there were additional benefits to be gained in cost efficiency as well as in project and policy effectiveness from encouraging more 'crossover' research between the sub-networks. . The report recognises that the location specific context of the CBMS projects to date (as described in the review) with the accompanying constraints and geographical limitations of their coverage, potentially limit our ability to make any sweeping global generalisations. Nevertheless, the review team judges that, against the background of an increasing global concern to better target who exactly are poor, where they live and what their particular circumstances appear to be, this methodology has much to recommend it. The survey procedure is receiving serious consideration by the World Bank as a means to identify and target pockets of national poverty and the specific households affected.

Aimé Gogue visited the PEP regional centre in Senegal as well as researchers in the Cameroon where one of the proposals submitted under the PMMA group gave a clear indication of some possible paths for incorporating other thematic approaches and findings into policy action. Unfortunately, time did not permit a visit to Kenya, one of the few countries in Africa where PEP research studies under all three thematic areas are being conducted simultaneously and with potential policy linkages. The experience of an Anglophone country working through the Dakar regional office could have provided some valuable administrative lessons.

Both consultants carried out a review of the respective merits of the main objectives and modus operandi of PEP compared with other similar agencies and organisations. These are recorded later in this report.

Michael Ward, the lead reviewer, read many of the background documents provided by IDRC relating to the origins of the PEP initiative and how IDRC was looking at different ways of strengthening the impact of its participation in the programme. He met with a number of individuals, including PEP researchers, PEP co-directors and IDRC staff both during the 5th Annual PEP Conference in Addis Ababa, and in subsequent visits to Singapore, Manila and Ottawa in September and October respectively. He engaged in follow-up email and phone discussions with PEP managers and specifically with the outgoing Chair of the PEP Steering Committee.

He also met with IDRC staff both in Singapore and in Ottawa. He participated in discussions arranged by the Angelo King Institute with researchers, policymakers and government officials in the Philippines. While in the region, he also took the opportunity to discuss with senior government statisticians in Manila, Bangkok, Singapore and Beijing, the relevance of PEP research methods, and the usefulness of the CBMS approach in particular to their own survey procedures and poverty assessments. As a lead reviewer, he was tasked with pulling together the report, in consultation with the team, and using the written inputs contributed by the co-reviewers.

SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This review, commissioned by the primary source of funding for PEP, Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), examines the experience of PEP with respect to the network's stated objectives and its achievement to date, as well as its future potentials and challenges. The evaluation has been conducted and the report compiled by a team led by Michael Ward. It relies extensively on the assistance and inputs of the two co-reviewers -- Aimé Gogue and Mario Lamberte. Their own contributory reports, from which this main report has drawn generously, are provided in a separate document. The team wishes to acknowledge the support and information as well as many helpful comments and useful suggestions we have received from all those who have taken the trouble to comment and who have shown such a keen interest in this review.

A summary of the key issues addressed by the review, their implications, and some of the main conclusions and recommendations emanating from them follow.

1. Policy Influence

The main goal of PEP is to strengthen the ability of developing country governments to implement sound and fair economic policies. PEP engages in various processes to move forward ideas and initiatives through methodological enquiry and knowledge creation. Each study aims at a different level and area of policy review. The explicit intention is to define policies that enhance individual well-being and remove poverty. The network, in providing independent research based on empirical evidence, aims to help governments of developing countries have a greater local voice in influencing their own futures. Consequently, PEP research is involved in the identification of those development issues that may have an important impact on the incidence of national poverty, either reducing its extent or lowering its intensity, so giving hope and encouragement to vulnerable households and communities directly affected or at risk. Specifically, PEP aims to influence local policy thinking and improve the basis of economic understanding by creating a strong indigenous national capability in the socio-economic analysis of policy issues. In a relatively short space of time, PEP has enhanced the existence of a body of objective and independent policy relevant knowledge that can be taken into consideration alongside the conventional official thinking and policy discussion that surrounds the basis of government decision making. The network, to date, has achieved only moderate success in influencing policy decisions. The report questions whether this PEP objective can be attained effectively using the existing structure of operations or if it is desirable to move, first, to a more decentralised network and, perhaps, even to a fully devolved and locally owned management structure. Second, it asks if certain elements of the network can be more closely integrated or combined to have a greater local policy value.

To assess the impact of PEP initiative on policy, the report reviews some key concerns relating to the effectiveness of its research activities in influencing official thinking. These include an ability to ENGAGE policy-makers' attention, to be specifically RELEVANT to the real priorities to be addressed, to have potential OPERATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE within the confines defined by existing policy, and to have a continuing RESONANCE with politicians. The ability to engage the attention of policymakers depends on these aspects, but there are subtle differences and also a sense that each of these attributes is important and worthy of some

attention in its own right. How they can be applied in a practical way is explored more specifically in the main report. We welcome PEP management attempts at the proposal revision stage of projects to encourage researchers to spell out, quite specifically, how policymakers will be encouraged to give their inputs and how they will be made aware of the research output and its relevance.

So far, overall, while there have been some notable exceptions with certain MPIA trade related studies, it is the methodology of the CBMS research sub-component that has been adopted by government departments [in the Philippines, Cambodia and Lao PDR, for example] and whose empirical outcomes have proved most successful in making a direct policy connection. CBMS represents a systematic methodology for gathering poverty relevant information that is both transparent and more specific than existing survey approaches. In the Philippines in particular, it has managed to bring local governments on board in identifying significant policy issues of concern to poverty analysts, drawing attention to the problems that impinge most on those affected. It has been able to identify precisely those households in need of help and to influence the direction of resource allocations at the local level. CBMS studies, nonetheless, offer a somewhat more oblique perspective of what is traditionally regarded as 'fundamental' research. CBMS emerged from the MIMAP construct more as a means to fill in important data gaps, especially in PMMA projects. But now it is seen to represent a sound, down-to-earth data management practice, readily accessible to policymakers and generating outcomes that can be easily communicated to local stakeholders. The PEP regional centre in Manila has been especially successful in institutionalising CBMS methodology into local government units in the Philippines and progress along a similar front has been equally significant in the former socialist regimes of Cambodia and Lao PDR where the local structures are conducive to such monitoring, as well as in Bangladesh. The scope for linking CBMS data to micro-finance questions has only scraped the surface of possibilities. Most important, CBMS enables governments to target those groups and households who find themselves, according to predetermined objective standards (and through no fault of their own), disadvantaged in society. CBMS thus has the capacity to strengthen central policy direction whilst also specifically targeting local problems of poverty incidence more effectively. In the long run this also helps to conserve scarce budget resources. It is a methodology that enhances public efficiency and good governance.

MPIA and PMMA activities have been found similarly useful in increasing local understanding of macroeconomic dynamics and the mechanisms of macro policy. The tracing of the possible implications of major economic policy actions on households highlights the relevance of counterfactual analysis and necessity of seeking alternative strategies that can be more pro-poor. Weaknesses in official macroeconomic data, especially in the national accounts and what the data represent in terms of actual per capita income levels and where the sources of growth lie, exacerbate the difficulties of analysis. The PMMA activities are seen as providing a potentially key unifying link, especially within countries but also across areas of common policy interest, between the macro approach of the MPIA and more micro community emphasis of the CBMS.

However, as yet, there is far less evidence that PEP wields a similar comparative advantage, as in the case of CBMS, where either MPIA or PMMA projects are concerned, even though no other recognised methods exist for linking macro effects to micro poverty consequences. This is not surprising for, even within the walls of the core government citadel, CGE models of the type constructed by most of the research

projects pursued under MPIA auspices (and all 7 newly approved projects are based around a general equilibrium framework) tend to have limited currency. Their credibility with technicians appears to cut little ice with political decision-makers. Nevertheless, these techniques are useful in setting broad scenarios and for conducting important policy simulations. The more precise assessment of impact requires poverty status to be linked explicitly to different wage effects and sectors of economic engagement, and to certain item specific consumption patterns and price response dynamics of poor people specifically. This makes it difficult to identify what exactly will be the impact of general trade and tax policies on the poorest households.

Recently, however, in three separate studies, a major effort was made by the PEP research network to simulate some of the effects of the Doha Trade Agreement with the intention to strengthen the hand of developing countries in their negotiations with the advanced industrial countries. [In practical terms, the outcome was a stalemate and the WTO talks were stalled, but this may have been a victory for the South and demonstrates the potential of indigenous research]. As this example demonstrates, there is growing recognition of the cross-regional and international relevance of PEP research. In its present search for potential partners, PEP should be able to position itself strongly as an innovative creator of realistic alternative policy scenarios and as a credible knowledge broker. This potential, however, has to be taken into account when considering issues of decentralisation and possible full devolution. While serving local interests, care must be exercised at the same time to ensure that the message of more general applicability of PEP activities is not lost in a desire to give stronger support to well conceived national aspirations.

2. The Audience

Closely related to the issue of policy relevance is the question of who is the (potential) audience for PEP research. At the highest level are national and local politicians. These are, in principle, the main policy-drivers and implementers who set the overall objectives and specific targets to achieve. In practice, some countries pay considerable attention also to international decision-makers, such as donors, and to World Bank and IMF policy advisers in particular. This is because these countries are beholden to the international financial institutions for essential development support that is provided under certain strict policy ‘conditionality’ requirements.

Over the longer term and, ultimately, more influential in defining strategic direction, are the senior civil servants who represent the more durable policy-makers. They plan the organisation and timing of the phases of policy implementation at every stage and identify the different steps and actions to be taken.

The advisers, consultants, policy groups and think-tanks also play an important role in this connection but this is usually of a more brain-storming and ‘blue horizon’ nature rather than comprising finely detailed planning. These groups help draw up the ‘roadmaps’ to keep track of policy. It is they, however, who are most likely to be aware of current domestic research activities and how they can potentially inform national policy.

Then there are the NGOs that try to keep governments ‘honest’ and draw attention to social concerns and the environmental challenges posed by pursuing certain paths of

economic policy. They also speak for especially disadvantaged, vulnerable and often isolated groups

Peer group academics and other researchers also examine the implications of policy and their studies into related dimensions help to underpin various findings with other supporting evidence of social and economic impact. Through teaching and discussion they provide a vehicle for spreading new thinking and ideas.

A free and concerned and well-informed media helps sustain public interest in issues and to keep attention focused on emerging problems at both the local and national level. In this they are often influenced by the actions of civil society and community groups. In both an informing and advocacy role, PEP researchers may also see the media as providing suitable channels for helping disseminate their main findings.

The question of linking PEP research to these different ‘audiences’ and potential users has to do with emphasizing the participation component of PEP outreach and thus to packaging results in particular ways in order to obtain more public feedback on social impact and economic relevance.

3. Devolution

PEP is engaged in a major initiative of decentralising its activities to give more control to local research managers and administrators in the South. The present state of devolution cuts across both thematic areas and regional locations. There is a substantive ‘hub and spoke’ arrangement in place but it is not yet fully operational across the board as the regional offices have no full technical and funding authority. They still tend to preserve and emphasize their own specific areas of specialisation. The process, nevertheless, appears to have worked well, both strategically and intellectually, even though the full coverage of all sub-components in each centre has yet to be implemented. In addition, the regional AKI office in Manila has assumed responsibility for some administrative management of PEP as well as continuing its role in the direction of the overall CBMS sub-network where it clearly possesses a PEP core competency. It has shown its ability in the administrative field by the very successful organisation of the last PEP General Meeting in Addis Ababa and in its current efforts of arranging the next June 2007 PEP General Meeting in Lima. While the Manila office can call on several local experts to support research in the MPIA and PMMA networks, the formal arrangements for advising and underpinning research projects in this area of activity need some strengthening.

The research support offered by the Dakar regional office is well established and has been warmly welcomed by many PEP scholars in the Africa region, especially those working in the MPIA and PMMA sub-networks. The office has been able to draw on the services of a number of distinguished and well-qualified researchers to provide project guidance and advice. However, support for the CBMS area of work – which one might expect to grow significantly - is less strong, in part because its oversight is still managed out of AKI. There have been a few logistical difficulties reported in communications. These have been associated with glitches in the internet connections and differences in the respective command of language skills among administrative support staff. But there seems no fundamental administrative reason why the process of decentralisation should not be taken a step further. Assigning greater control to the regional centres across all thematic areas would give even greater authority and

responsibility to the true ‘owners’ of local research and should allow the network to make more efficient use of resources, particularly pertaining to the costs of travel and study visits.

In deciding on this issue, thought must be given to how well the two centres can coordinate not only the research in their respective special thematic areas in their immediate regions but also how they can oversee such research globally. Consideration should also be given to the desirability of the two centres covering all research sub-components in their geographical areas of responsibility and whether the local resources exist for them to do this.

The bottom line, however, is how the present central management and current knowledge base on which the network still relies very heavily, can be in some way maintained, at least for the immediate time-being while the search for future funding remains critical. The significant advantages of decentralisation of lower base costs and ease of communication with local researchers have to be weighed against the need to build on established contacts and relations with governments and donors given the imperative to take the PEP network and its new initiatives forward. The report basically supports the current model and the direction of devolution.

4. Capacity Building

Capacity building refers to activities that strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes. PEP goals are to help organisations meet more effectively their main objectives, missions and programmes and to do so in a sustainable way. PEP activities in capacity building have achieved significant success. Both nationally and internationally, there is growing recognition of the credentials of PEP researchers and of their role as trainers. The importance of the direction given by PEP sub-network managers and expert resource people and external advisers in creating and enhancing local human capital is widely acknowledged. A question remains, however, whether the capacity building and research capability generated by PEP is created primarily within those individuals from developing countries who are directly engaged in selected research projects or if, through the study teams, it becomes established in the institutions where they and their project teams are located.

The overall intention is to build up core expertise in the country itself and to create a virtual but distinct knowledge base. Whilst this does not have to be a physical centre, an associated aim in countries where expertise tends to be spread rather thin should be to identify a specific location where specialist skills and knowledge reside and can be called upon. A process whereby only an individual’s skills are enhanced in a way that makes them academically more competent and respectable and thus marketable in an international context does pose some risks and can be self-defeating from the point of view of building national capabilities. So far, although several have been seduced away – thus perhaps causing difficulties and having repercussions for their respective project teams because the researcher concerned is required to give up any further involvement in PEP - this has not proved a major problem. PEP research is not designed as a programme of individual self-advancement [such as would be the case in supporting individual MA or PhD research] that would enable the more successful researchers to be tempted away by lucrative job offers, teaching posts or other appointments in richer advanced economies. In those cases where a researcher moves

to an advanced economy during the course of their project, PEP requires them to withdraw from the team and their receipt of research funding.

PEP has global scope but is relatively modest in size. The network is also in its early stages of development and so the number of countries hosting projects from more than one of the sub-networks remains limited. As in the case of influencing policy, PEP would have a greater impact on local capacity building if, within a given country, it could combine projects from all three sub-component research networks. To ensure capacity is retained, PEP members in various countries need to think about how best to capitalize on their existing strengths, establish formal internal networks and extend their academic circles. They need to build on observed macro and micro linkages so as to encourage the wider exchange of ideas, construct more research bridges and enhance the cross-fertilisation of knowledge with other projects. This is an area that has been little exploited within and between countries and much more can be done, particularly through the internet, to improve internal and regional connections and set up closer virtual linkages between groups. The identification of regionally based counterparts, some of whom could be former PEP researchers, to act as resource people who can provide complementary support to local PEP teams would not only benefit projects but also create an institutional memory. Additionally, engagement of PEP researchers with local institutions and the authorities enhances the interaction and knowledge sharing that helps to strengthen the basis of governance.

5. Concepts and Techniques

An important aspect of PEP activity is introducing researchers in developing countries to the range of economic techniques and statistical tools available with which they may be unfamiliar that enable them to conduct rigorous research using sound and internationally recognised scientific methods. There is scope for local adaptation but the possibility of new methodological techniques being evolved is, at present, still quite limited. Many specific ideas and thoughts have been floated in different research presentations in PEP meetings, however, and the evidence of useful breakthroughs in thinking is encouraging. These include the new techniques implemented under the PMMA network that involve multidimensional poverty assessment, intra-household allocation analysis and multiple correspondence techniques.²

PEP thus needs further time to develop and to allow the lead researchers to experiment and reach out to make other potential connections to different methods and areas of research. Nevertheless, there seems to be little scope yet to move away from the influence of the intellectual tradition of the 'North' in the way tools are presented and research studies are conducted and supervised. The continued PEP emphasis on individual study visits and training at CIRPÉE and AKI seems crucial in educating teams wanting to acquire the essential tools required by all professional researchers.

² Despite the influential 'Structuralist' movement pioneered in the late 1960s by Latin American economists, and the innovative thinking that lay behind micro-financing and ideas on human capabilities that originated in South Asia, realistic expectations of major breakthroughs in methodology and theory by young researchers from the South at this juncture in the process seem somewhat ambitious and optimistic. Partly, this is because the PEP network has been going only for a short period and because the teams are small and deliberately built around fairly young and previously inexperienced researchers.

This traditional tutor monitoring is very much appreciated by all PEP researchers. This intellectual investment puts old [and a rather well-mature vintage] wine into new bottles. Yet it may still be some time before this new wine can gain international recognition and acceptance and the products are viewed in the same light as what is well-founded and trusted. In this respect, there is considerable scope to strengthening the foundations of PEP enquiries and to address, in particular, some raw basic research issues, such as the relevance of data officially collected in developing countries to many of the problems of policy under investigation.³ The role of PEP researchers is not to generate such data but, instead, to draw the attention of the authorities to the weaknesses in official published statistics.

Currently, given its limited budget, PEP has deliberately decided not to become involved in special data collection exercises. It is thus constrained to work with existing data sets, some of which are selective and far from comprehensive. On the other hand, a growing amount of data generated from non-traditional and non-official sources can be used in some applications. Extreme caution is called for, however, and care must be exercised to ensure the data used are relevant, robust and unbiased. Importantly, as a major user of such data, PEP is well placed to provide relevant feedback on how and where official statistics can be improved.

The PEP construct currently imposes some constraints on the nature of topics with which it can be concerned. In a multi-dimensional context such as poverty reduction, the basic remit could be extended beyond that of dynamic assessments of the impact of change and exogenous ‘shocks’ to the system. It could give more attention, as features thought to be related to observed conditions of poverty in society, to status questions such as the factor relations in production, the distribution of wealth and inequality and relative price level differences between locations and social classes. The PMMA network provides some insight into these extra dimensions and its research has revealed, for example, how access to non-market goods and services, such as health and education (and especially among women), can significantly affect the status of individual well-being.

6. Dissemination

There is a small financial provision in PEP to organise a conference or at the very least a national meeting to present research findings. Some shuffling of funds should be considered to raise the profile of research outcomes and to ensure that relevant policymakers are invited to such meetings. Policy makers need to be made aware of PEP work and be appraised of the research findings, even if they do not take on board the results by utilizing those findings – at least in the initial instance. We feel more funds should be made available to support wider dissemination. More persuasive efforts will be needed to ensure that PEP teams can keep some issues on the official policy table even after the project has been closed.

³ For PMMA public sector analysts, for example, this concern applies to the use and interpretation of unconsolidated central and local government sector accounts where basic issues of current versus capital spending remain unresolved. Major areas of costing are sometimes consistently unreported or under-valued and different expenditure items are often bundled together to hide the true nature of an activity and its real cost. An inability to sort these problems out undermines the validity of public sector research and confounds the essential interpretation of the functional distribution of government expenditures. Recent evidence supplied by the Director of the UN Statistics Division highlights the weakness in particular of national accounts data in Africa (ICP Newsletter, February, 2007)

All research submissions should include prescribed, well-defined plans as to how the results of the project will be spread and shared and how, it is believed, the findings may be taken up. The final review of a proposal should carefully examine this element of the project and give technical support to implementing a dissemination strategy. PEP researchers should receive greater encouragement to use the funds available to launch local conferences and seminars and to present their results in summary newsletters and policy briefs. The importance of placing results in the wider public domain needs to be reinforced as an essential commitment on completion of a project.⁴

We encourage the recent PEP efforts to find out how the results of projects were disseminated and what strategies worked well and had an impact on the community.

7. The PEP Concept and Research Role

At an overall level in the field of local participatory research into poverty concerns, in which other researchers and local institutions working in related subject areas as well as those who stand to benefit from the outcomes are encouraged to be similarly engaged, PEP stands alone. It continues to be fervent in its support of individual team based research initiatives that have originated from scholars from the developing countries themselves. The PEP management, although physically ‘at arm’s length’, is constantly on hand to assist teams with good advice, their personal and professional guidance and the necessary technical and financial resources to successfully implement and conduct their selected research projects. It is understood that no research project has yet failed to reach fruition or ‘defaulted’ although, because of staff movements, one or two have been delayed or placed ‘on hold’. The record of PEP research teams abiding with both the strict time bounds imposed and the limits of the total financial package is remarkable.

PEP takes relatively inexperienced, unknown and generally young scholars from low and middle-income countries and encourages their professional growth as competent and confident researchers by imparting to them a fuller understanding of the technical, analytical and empirical aspects of current policy issues. In giving assistance to individuals belonging to the research teams it supports, PEP managers, their advisers and resource persons engage in the continual provision of organised skills upgrading, regular mentoring, specific hands-on advice and on-going supervision. At the national level, the supervision of the research study and direction of team members is given by the local team leader. This unique arrangement helps generate new knowledge, create human capital and build local capacity. These important and perhaps mostly intangible benefits are not so evident in similar initiatives that have been launched under other institutional arrangements.

⁴ To most researchers, a project reaches closure after the research paper or article has been accepted for publication. This makes the project and its findings academically respectable but operationally less important. An article may have little policy impact. By the time the article is actually published, probably more than a year or two later, it has become history and the results may have lost much of their current relevance. Where there are enduring concerns such as with the opportunity to benefit from secondary education and the incidence of enrolments by gender and by region, evidence compiled some years previously can still be relevant.

8. Funding and Finding New Partners

IDRC has not only been the main financial sponsor of PEP, it has also been a significant contributor to its intellectual and technical development. The IDRC, nevertheless, has been commendably neutral in terms of the strategic direction and basic philosophy of research assumed by PEP management. Through a process of constructive engagement and regular communication, IDRC continues to demonstrate its commitment to the network. It has been responsibly involved in PEP research activities providing administrative and political support that continues to be highly valued. IDRC, while providing the total funding for the programme over its first two phases, has now indicated that it needs to significantly reduce its support and has thus advised PEP to look creatively for other sources of funding. IDRC now needs to gradually phase out its future involvement with PEP with a view to nurturing the continued evolution of the network from one that is funded solely by IDRC to a broader multi-donor, multi-partner initiative.

At the same time as IDRC is likely to phase down its spending over the forthcoming third phase of this programme, PEP faces strong internal and external pressures to expand the scope and outreach of its research. PEP sees the need to broaden its interests not only to be more effective in impacting policy thinking but also to reduce the average unit costs of research and exploit potential economies of scale. Although the management considers the organisation's overheads to be covered, there is an intangible but implicit 'critical minimum mass' that it is desirable PEP should achieve to ensure its continued efficacy and long-term future sustainability. The need to find other partners and obtain increased financial backing is of paramount importance. Preliminary enquiries have begun, with a list of potential donors compiled. Some consultations with other agencies have already been held. A close collaborative effort involving current partners, and especially IDRC itself, is essential if a more proactive stance in eliciting new commitments of external support is to be taken. Donors invariably require convenient 'hitching posts' to which they can attach their funds. Some funding sources thus place their emphasis on southern institutions that have become research partners in projects developed and supervised by northern universities. But the amounts involved and flexibility permitted by such arrangements are restricted and whether this would be in the spirit of PEP support and allow researchers to pursue their own work independently is a moot question.

One suggestion is that PEP should approach IDRC to help jointly convene a consultative group of potentially interested backers and research partners sometime in 2007/8 to explore the issues and meet with possible interested parties. This would require preliminary thought as to how various elements of PEP could be sensibly packaged to elicit donor interest. The meeting might also demand a more detailed analysis of the decision-making process in various political contexts in order to review ways of forging closer links between PEP research results and policy-making. Such a pragmatic approach would encourage the interest of donors but require the setting up of communication lines for the more effective transmission of economic intelligence. These should be designed to ensure that independently generated PEP research findings reach the appropriate policy-makers. Improving such channels of information sharing might necessarily include the development of communication skills in the presentation of PEP results to the media.

9. Conclusion and Some Proposals for Consideration

The conclusions the team draws from its review can best be summarised in terms of their implications for improving the impact of the network and these are set out in the following series of suggestions.

- i) The most pressing priority facing PEP is to secure a continuous flow of funding because it is on this that the whole existence of the network, including its future format and role in supporting new development policy initiatives, depends. Given the usefulness and high profile of PEP work, sympathetic consideration should be given to extending some core (administrative) funding beyond the end of the second phase of the current PEP programme in 2007.
- ii) PEP is a global institution that, in reality, is primarily engaged in the creation and transfer of knowledge capital from one source to another, encouraging thereby the accompanying enhancement of human capital. It has been most successful in this knowledge creation, intellectual investment and capacity building in developing countries.
- iii) In this respect, parallels can be drawn between PEP and elements of the role played historically by institutions like The British Council and the crucial part it played in strengthening higher-level education in developing countries. PEP work, however, is more thematically concentrated on economic strategies and poverty reduction. It is also, for the time being, more geographically focussed on certain developing countries of the South. Similarly in this context, PEP provides an important aid function possessing valuable feedback effects. It could thus be argued its activities should be supported by official aid agencies.
- iv) PEP's aid function goes beyond education to include the strengthening of local democratic forces. Its declared objective to influence policy appears to work best indirectly, through the local capacity and political awareness it creates, rather than directly through its specific research studies.
- v) While the alleviation of poverty is an essential goal, leading international aid agencies and not a few donor governments now recognise the importance of strengthening the authority of local independent elites and identifying new sources of national leadership. Without support for these national groups in their respective roles, many developing countries would lag in the analysis and formulation of policy and thus fall even further behind the development curve. PEP supports and encourages the development of this local expertise and intellectual leadership, disseminating useful information to assist their work.
- vi) Although clearly a priority, an exclusive emphasis on poverty reduction and the plight of the poor alone, without identifying the relevant means and new transmission channels to do something about it, may serve to entrench existing features of dependency and lead to continued reliance on external ideologies. PEP with its national focus needs to offer practical alternative to strategies that are traditionally tied to specific funding that tends to reinforce attitudes that can be inimical to local development and relevant treatment of the poor.

- vii) In relation to the notes above, there are some functions and activities that might have a special appeal to the World Bank Institute (more so than to the IMF that, although now formally operating a poverty focus group, is mandated by its legal statutes to carry out a narrower range of technical activities and financial policy interventions and whose responsibilities are not confined to the developing countries). The WBI might be willing to contribute to the study visits, training, regional and general conference components and the dissemination activities of the PEP programme, leaving the bulk of actual research funding to institutions such as The Ford Foundation or, perhaps, Carnegie Endowment Fund. The annual total sum for research grants, while growing, is relatively small around \$C800,000 (approximately \$US660,000). As a 'quid pro quo' for its involvement, the WBI might seek to elicit the support of CIRPÉE and AKI in providing resource people in conducting its own country and regionally based policy training programmes
- viii) While PEP has been rather less successful, at least to date, in its aim to have a direct influence on the way policies are determined, or at least modified by the results and related outcomes of the research it sponsors, it is suggested efforts should be made to set up independent national PEP councils of policymakers and local researchers. These should involve local politicians as well as senior civil servants and meet, say, twice a year (in line with the present cycle of research projects) to discuss recent results, new developments and relevant analytical findings with the PEP researchers. PEP members attending such meetings should be prepared to bring along related evidence gathered by similar thematic studies carried out in other countries so as to underline the authority of the findings they bring to the discussion table.
- ix) Extra efforts are required to disseminate results faster and more effectively and to communicate them to a wider audience in an easily accessible format and in a non-technical language that the intended recipients understand.
- x) Consideration should be given to raising the profile of the national seminars and workshops undertaken to present project findings. These should be an essential rather than discretionary part of the dissemination process
- xi) In areas where Country Strategy Programmes [CSPs] and Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes, formerly 'papers' [PRSPs] and PEP interests coincide, co-financing should be sought from the donor agencies involved. This is likely to enhance the effectiveness of PEP research in influencing the direction and content of policy. But we would advise against piggy-backing on a particular strategy devised and driven by the donor. National PEP research teams with a specific agenda related to different aspects of policy – such as has been a common practice for many years in Europe and North America – can better attract long-term funding and preserve their independence than small groups of researchers pursuing somewhat disparate projects and topics. Local groups constitute, however, a significant intellectual resource for policymakers. This is an important component of the PEP Joint Research Initiative.
- xii) Consideration should be given to conducting periodic network-wide and national level reviews of PEP to evaluate and monitor progress. This could be an auto-evaluation process, similar to that established in phase ending reports,

but benchmarked to a defined reference point and employing an agreed set of standard performance indicators. This would reinforce the legitimacy of PEP and so attract donors to both the international and national PEP networks.

- xiii) Central to any good enquiry is not only a robust research methodology and use of relevant and well-tried econometric techniques, but also sound and reliable data. Relying on ‘second hand’ and pre-processed, arms length statistics requires researchers to describe very carefully their data sources and what intrinsic errors and biases are embedded in them that could potentially affect their findings. PEP researchers are important independent users of official data and, in terms of the global efforts now being made by the international community to strengthen national capabilities in statistics, it is suggested PEP could usefully open up a line of communication with these agencies to channel researchers’ experiences, thoughts and ideas on data improvement.
- xiv) Given the growing current interest in the relationship between democracy and dictatorship and economic philosophy and policy (particularly the importance of inequality in this process), and in how policy is actually implemented, PEP might allow some scope for a specific piece of research to investigate the actual processes and protocols of official decision-making and policy creation.
- xv) In a related context, we feel that PEP researchers in many countries would benefit from having recognised designated local champions who can advance their work and help give them access to relevant sources and policymakers.
- xvi) While remaining independent and commendably neutral, a handful of IDRC staff members have dedicated valuable time and energy to providing helpful administrative, logistical and intellectual support to the network. This investment is valued and important and keeps PEP close to the cutting edge of policy concerns from a donor perspective. Whatever the funding outcome, we should like to see this more direct research involvement by IDRC continue.
- xvii) We believe PEP is an idea and initiative whose full potential has still to be realised and we should like to raise the possibility that IDRC, using its extensive network of national and international contacts, convene a ‘consultative group’ meeting or conference in Ottawa (or some other suitable location convenient to the main actors)– at which PEP provides some selected presentations of its various themes, together with an overview of its long term objectives – to try and enlist some long term commitment and financial support to help ensure the future sustainability of PEP.

Partitioning PEP activities into more compact self-contained packages that might prove capable of attracting outside funding and, in some cases, perhaps even the support of local institutions, is a complex and time-consuming business and could prove disruptive. It is also expensive from a real and financial resources viewpoint. In the present situation, however, in the absence of an over-arching generic grant, this less attractive alternative may be the only way in which to proceed. If core funding for the oversight and management of PEP can be retained for a few more years, at least until the requisite contacts and explorations of potential partnerships have been fully explored, then first attention should be paid to how the annual General Conference should be funded and who will undertake this.

One possibility might be to apply for funds from the Development Grant Facility that, although managed by the World Bank for the purposes of national capacity building, is not available to finance Bank activities in this field directly. PEP could make a good case, perhaps facilitated by the Office of the Canadian Representative to the Executive Board, under the 'management for results' criterion, emphasizing the relevance and relationship of its own research work in member countries to the achievement of broader development objectives and the MDGs. PEP plays a key role in creating archives of material and metadata useful to policy analysis in the South. This is backed up in some instances by relevant sets of micro-data and required training in the use of tools and instruments of policy. Current efforts by FAO, for example, to strengthen its own databases and draw on client feedback to improve the range of information required to substantiate the agency's agricultural policy advice uses a similar approach and provides a useful example of how a UN agency can make use of a combination of different data sets.

MAIN REPORT

IDRC Support for the Poverty and Economic Policy [PEP] Research Network: A Review

1. Introduction and Overview

1.1. The Status of PEP

Over a comparatively short space of time the PEP network, whose research has been generously supported by IDRC over its two first phases since October 2002, has achieved considerable success. PEP has gained international recognition for its knowledge creating initiatives. Its credibility is founded on the dual principles of programme delivery and ability to contribute to the achievement of associated development objectives. In pursuance of its goals, PEP has adopted some mostly self-imposed stringent performance standards.

PEP activities have been welcomed inside and outside those developing countries for which the programme and its projects have been conducted and where approved new research continues. The network has established an effective framework of communication and a process of research coordination that is maintained within a well-defined and transparent structure of governance. Not surprisingly, the network is strongly supported by its members who value its support, realise a sense of shared ownership and share a mutual empathy with its objectives.

Combining the commendable motives of applied research, operational policy application, capacity building and empirical analysis within three commonly related thematic areas of economic policy, PEP has set itself a clearly defined role. The activities of the network are already beginning to underline its relevance and potency in the wider policy debate beyond those developing countries in which its researchers are actively engaged.

1.2. PEP Operational Objectives

The primary concern of PEP, as its name indicates, is with global poverty reduction through economic policy interventions at the national and, potentially, as say in trade negotiations, international level. PEP research explores these objectives through a concerted, if not fully integrated, way that involves global trade and income analysis, assessments of the effectiveness of fiscal and monetary interventions and the evaluation of the mechanisms for delivering public goods and services (including the identification of requisite inputs) intended to make such outputs more readily accessible to individuals, households and local communities. Selected indicators are used to assess success, including the traditional measures of growth and income per head. But, increasingly, the network looks to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] as the relevant benchmarks against which to measure performance and validate the success of policy initiatives, despite the fact that there is no clear indication in the goals themselves as to what constitutes the appropriate strategy countries should follow. An equally relevant concern is the transfer to local communities of both the knowledge and capability to undertake research as an

important means to inform and influence policy choice, improve the basis of governance and strengthen democratic processes.

PEP's stated objectives are as follows:

- to support applied and high quality research on links between economic policy and poverty as a means to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to understand the causes and consequences of poverty, as well as the welfare implications of macroeconomic policies and poverty reduction programs;
- to improve the monitoring and measurement of poverty in developing countries through the development of new, as well as tailored and sharpened concepts and methodologies that better capture the nature, extent and depth of poverty at the local as well as national levels;
- to enhance the capacity of developing country researchers and practitioners in the modelling, measurement, analysis and monitoring of poverty;
- to offer alternative or accompanying policies to reduce poverty where feasible; and
- to build a network of researchers, experts, practitioners and policy makers by linking research projects whenever possible to larger on-going development initiatives and through training, capacity building and mentorship programs.

From the outset, IDRC has promoted and supported the PEP Network. It has fully funded PEP and the development and coordination of research activities designed to improve an understanding of the relationship between poverty alleviation and economic policy. At the same time, as a neutral and independent but fully committed partner, IDRC has provided strong technical and intellectual inputs into the Network's programme of research projects as and when required. The role of IDRC, generally, has been to foster and encourage development research in this important policy area.

In a relatively short period of time, PEP has achieved considerable success and seems poised to assert an even more powerful influence over policy deliberations in developing countries. With less than a year left now before the end of the second phase of the PEP programme, IDRC is considering how best to move this successful process forward and to expand the outreach of PEP activities. This includes extending the scope of current initiatives, and bringing in to the supporting management process other interested and concerned partners. A major aim of IDRC is to strengthen the catalytic role PEP is playing in both empirical and methodological enquiry and to enhance the scope of present knowledge sharing. It also wants to improve the policy significance, as well as operational implications, of PEP's work. IDRC clearly supports these important objectives but feels that, for the proper sustainability of PEP, both in terms of widening the outreach and impact of PEP research as well as in improving the existing financial basis of its investigative activities, new interested and concerned partners should become directly involved in its work. IDRC hopes others will want to share in this valued research process and help support the continued operation of what is recognized as a fair, politically unbiased and well-run research programme.

1.3. PEP Engagement in Development Research

During the first two phases of the programme, a continuity of policy interests and investigation techniques as well as an encouraging pipeline of studies and potential

research enquiries was established across a wide range of countries. Practical applied research, particularly in the field of poverty reduction, remains the key priority. The vast majority of the research projects that have been screened and approved by the selection committees and so conducted under the PEP umbrella of partnership support and supervision have had a clear pragmatic focus. Some have drawn attention to important issues of fundamental concern to policymakers. Many of the issues that decision makers are continually confronted by involve difficult choices about policy. But, these same decision makers frequently lack adequate background information about the pros and cons of their proposed actions and often are unaware of the existence of possibly less damaging alternatives.

For these and other reasons, the PEP network has been able to firmly establish itself in both the academic community but needs to gain closer access to the policymaking environment. It is generally acknowledged to have been an original idea that has achieved significant success in fulfilling many of its declared intentions. Now, at a time when the volume of regular IDRC funding is destined to be cut, PEP also faces the need to expand the scope of its activities and engage in resource expansion if it is to sustain its work and ensure its research has a lasting impact. This pressure is governed by the desire for financial autonomy and the need to spread the burden of fixed overheads, benefit from already sunk costs and exploit the economies of scale of an expanded research agenda.

1.4. Structure of the report

The following report is primarily in the nature of a review rather than an evaluation. It adopts a proactive and forward-looking perspective rather than retrospective focus. Its main objective is to identify ways in which the network can develop and expand in order to entice partners to offer a broader based support for its work and thus enable PEP to become more self-sustaining. Thus, the present report constitutes less an audit of the individual research studies themselves - and therefore it is not a critique of what has [or has not] been achieved -and more an overview of the thematic emphasis of the network and how well it has worked. The review is intended to serve as a possible beacon that may help to shed some selective light on the planned strategic direction of future PEP activities. In reviewing the progress made to date, the report tries to highlight those areas that have been especially successful and to build on that experience. The intention is to think creatively about how the programme can be developed in related directions to yield even greater benefits. The report suggests some ways where the PEP programme can be strengthened so as to enhance the existing and potential externalities that have emerged.

To set the appropriate background and context of the review, the main report begins with an overview of the organization of PEP. There follows an assessment of PEP objectives and how far they have been achieved. The intention is to assess whether the current structure is relevant to the defined objectives of the network and its future development. A review of the general effectiveness of PEP and the functions of the three sub-networks follows. This looks at the respective focus of each sub-network and their coordinated features and explores the feasibility of implementing a more integrated rather than distinct 'stovepipe' research approach. This is followed by a discussion of the *raison d'être* for IDRC support of the PEP network. The report concludes with an overall assessment of the network and recommendations. Summary of the main conclusions and recommendations is included at the outset. Brief

descriptions of global and regional institutions working in PEP-related fields, along with a commentary on PEP's comparative advantage and whether and how these agencies and operations might be seen as being research rivals is outlined in the report. A brief outline of the evidence and list of publications referred to in preparing this review is appended to the report.

It is hoped this review will help deepen the dialogue between IDRC and PEP and indicate areas where non-financial IDRC intervention and support could strengthen, as it has in the past, the PEP network and help expand its influence in developing countries.

2. Organisational Structure of the PEP Network

In respect to some of the above issues, it is first important to ask whether the present structure of management of the PEP network helps in the achievement of these desirable goals and if research is conducted efficiently and effectively under the present organisational arrangements. There are significant administrative and financial repercussions to whatever decision is made.

2.1. Overview of the PEP Structure and Processes

PEP is an integrated network that attempts to coordinate and connect researchers from different developing countries who are engaged on projects studying socio-economic policy issues. PEP provides intellectual and financial support to researchers operating within a modular structure who are working along one of three thematic approaches that are designed to help better understand the nature, causes and consequences of poverty and the types of policy that are effective in resolving the problems identified. The first of these sub-networks supports work on the construction of micro-macro models to study the impact of planned and unplanned for (mostly externally determined) macro level interventions on conditions in the domestic economy and the state of poverty. The second similarly applies various analytical tools to measure, monitor and interpret the effects of national policies on poverty. The third reinforces local research in this area and applies a specific survey methodology to locate those who are poor. It introduces, at the same time, a variety of instruments to identify the nature and incidence of such poverty.

Each of these research sub-networks is overseen and managed by a separate steering committee that initially selects the research projects from a wide range of invited submissions called for in a transparent public appeal for proposals. The managers of the sub-networks then regularly monitor, advise and support the progress of every project chosen. The sub-network steering committees answer to an overall PEP Steering Committee that meets at least once a year, during the time of the PEP General Meeting. At this occasion, the selected research projects are reviewed, discussed, endorsed and evaluated, depending on their specific status. This ensures the highest academic standards are observed and maintained. The two sub-networks, MPIA and PMMA, adopt an integrated micro-macro approach and are managed and coordinated out of CIRPÉE, Université Laval, Canada. This centre gives projects based there a potential edge in the closer coordination of topics and methodologies. Local administrative and intellectual support for this policy-oriented approach to research, particularly in Africa, is provided by the recently established PEP regional office in Dakar. The CBMS is a survey-focussed procedure that is managed by the

Angelo King Institute at De La Salle University in Manila in the Philippines. Despite being on the other side of the globe, and the conceptual differences in approaches, there is a remarkable degree of management cooperation and agreement on the process of running PEP research projects. Although the projects are well coordinated through the various network steering committees, they are not, at the moment, thematically integrated and inter-dependent in a detailed sense, specifically at the country level. This latter aspect, however, is currently being worked on.

Each year, around eight projects from each thematic area receive approval. PMMA and MPIA projects receive up to \$ 20,000 CAD each in the form of a core grant as well as up to \$30,000 CAD in other grants and contributions to enable researchers to participate in the PEP General Meeting, take study visits, attend international conferences related to their work and to subsidise national conferences to disseminate findings and to publish working papers and journal articles. The CBMS projects are also able to receive up to \$ 50,000 USD each. Thus, every project receives equal funding and all share the same access to core PEP supporting facilities, including ongoing technical and scientific help, organised training, documentation and study visits. PEP also supports and advises on the dissemination of research results. It provides funding for researchers to attend the General Meetings as well as regional PEP conferences as such events provide important learning experiences and an opportunity for researchers to interact and interface with each other. At these venues, PEP-supported researchers often learn about related work in other subject areas and regions and meet with their mentors and key resource persons.

2.2. Decentralisation and Devolution

a) PEP basic philosophy and context

Consistent with a fundamental philosophy to engage researchers from developing countries in local research and the desire to raise their profile and potential influence, PEP managers have devoted considerable efforts to encourage the full participation of mostly young researchers and their teams, as well as all the various stakeholders, in its research programme. In the elaboration and execution of its projects, PEP has increasingly transferred major parts of project administration to its regional centres. A question that has to be asked, therefore, is whether the appropriate level of decentralisation has been reached and if there should be any further devolution of authority and direction beyond the current position that would involve shedding even greater responsibility to the regions in the PEP organisational structure?

Decentralisation is more than out-sourcing and involves breaking up a previously unified organisation and decomposing its activities into various constituent and coherent parts that the responsible authorities believe, if such units are granted greater independence, will work more effectively and efficiently in addressing 'local' concerns. It is expected that this will lead to both greater specialisation on various topics and also the replication of similar activities by units that are geographically scattered. The core decisions and mandate are still preserved by the centre. The centre continues to define the basic philosophy of policy and to control the overall strategic direction but it permits the local centres to take a highly proactive and more selective role in directing research activities. In the case of PEP, this core oversight, with its institutional characteristics, is something the elements of a decentralised network of small individual team units with their specific objectives and more limited local

research perspectives, may not readily pick up. The success of a decentralised approach will depend on how well the close coordination of research activities (that while serving the same overall objective are often quite disparate) can be maintained. What local units can do is ensure that the declared central themes and emphasis of the research programme are fully applied at their level, taking into account local circumstances and different priorities of their respective constituencies.

Devolution would go a stage further and refer to the full transfer of authority. It is defined as the situation where all matters of policy and direction are fully determined at the local level. This works best where there are only a few strong regional centres. These serve as nodes and, while adhering to the common objective, assume an independent authority in their own right with allocated budgets that enable them to conduct their own operations and take full responsibility for decisions. As the Oxford English Dictionary puts it, tasks are assigned and entrusted to these separate entities and the authority for carrying out tasks is handed over to them entirely. Even stronger coordination and communication is then required to preserve consistency, maintain thematic coherence and keep operations on track.

In the area of PEP research, where one of the declared primary objectives is to enhance local research capacity and strengthen national policy formulation, there are good arguments for having an even more decentralised system than that already in place. PEP management awareness of local [regional] issues and priorities and their inter-relationship has already encouraged shifts in that direction. The hope is this will raise the level of local participation, improve the project selection process and the associated supervision of approved research studies and thereby strengthen the ties between research and policy. One of the advantages of greater decentralisation is that, if the national government sees the research as being genuinely local and useful, and other local institutions are also interested in participating, there may be a better chance they will actually use the findings and be willing to sponsor related work. It could lead to offers of supplementary funding and of other facilities in kind, thus providing recognised moral and political support for the research. In reality, with the way public budgets are prepared and scrutinised in most developing countries, the chance of obtaining outright grants is probably fairly minimal. Any grant would be, in all likelihood, quite small. In addition, the official provision of funds may raise some issues of conflict of interest and could put the neutrality of a study at risk. The intention should be that all research undertaken remains independent and ‘untainted’.

b) PEP strategy

The PEP devolution strategy is based on the belief that the durability and efficiency of the network in the long run will be increased if research teams from developing are directly managed by regional centres. These centres are staffed by regionally knowledgeable administrators and experienced researchers attached to independent institutions based in the South. The managers and their institutions are expected to be more in tune with the specific research priorities of the respective developing countries they serve and know better the characteristics of up and coming young local researchers. This has important implications for the ownership of the programme by these researchers and the countries from which they come. The opening of the Dakar office is a major part of PEP’s devolution strategy. Box A and Box B below describe the particular characteristics of the respective Regional Centres.

BOX. A

The Regional Office in Dakar

The choice of Dakar as the location of PEP's office to serve African interests outside the Université Laval, Canada, seems to be based on two elements: the regional office of IDRC in West Africa is in Dakar and the head of the Consortium pour la Recherche Économique et Sociale (CRES) which houses the PEP Dakar office was extensively involved in the past in the earlier MIMAP programme. Since 2005, the office in Dakar has taken charge of most of the administrative and substantive research management elements of all MPIA and PMMA projects in the region, leaving the Manila office, until now, to manage the CBMS projects. It is expected that even this latter function will be taken up by the Dakar Office in the near future, a wise step given the relevance and potential of this survey work in the region..

Administratively, at the time of the Review the Dakar office consisted of two persons: Ismael Fofana and Diop Aïssatou. Apart from being a resource person for the MPIA sub network, Ismael is also in charge of the thinking and implementation of the localization strategy. Diop Aïssatou looks after the administration. Both rely on the support of one full time and two half time assistants at CIRPÉE (Université Laval). This arrangement seems to work well due to a good understanding and the excellence of the internet connection.

The localization of the office in Dakar is particularly helpful to the African research teams on two accounts. First, it is less expensive for an African researcher to come to Dakar than to go to Quebec. At the moment, most PEP researchers come to Laval and Quebec for their study visits and research consultations. They are free, however, to suggest other locations that might be more relevant to their line of study and a few take this up. Thus, not everyone comes to Laval but a large percentage does, mainly because of its reputation and that of the resident PEP academic managers for being helpful. Laval's capacity to help and support researchers has become well established and word of mouth gets around. [However, it may prove easier in the future for PEP managers to monitor studies and pay scheduled group visits to the researchers if there is a regional presence]. Second, there is less of a problem for Africans to obtain visas to go to Dakar than to go to Quebec. This has become an increasingly difficult problem over the past 12-18 months as travel restrictions and security regulations have been tightened. It is also believed that strengthening the office in Dakar has other benefits; students will come of their own volition to the centre for scientific information. On these grounds alone, plus the language issue, establishing regional offices in each sub region makes sense.

Scientific back-up: Each of the sub-networks has a resource person in the region to provide advisory services (1). Momar SYLLA is used as resource person in the CBMS sub- network, Jean Bosco KI for the PMMA sub-network. Currently, these resource persons are linked into and through the sub-network Steering Committees but, at an informal personal level, they maintain close relations with the PEP office in Dakar. Their contributions are not necessarily coordinated through the Dakar office but, given the topic areas each covers in the region, there may be merit in strengthening this link. Ismael FOFANA provides the back-up for MPIA.

According to researchers interviewed, the decentralization of programme activities to Dakar is convenient and effective. Steps are in hand to move the status of Dakar up from a decentralised 'branch' to a self-contained and devolved 'centre' with full authority to provide both administrative and intellectual direction, including project selection. On scientific grounds, local researchers felt there was no problem with the localization of MPIA and PMMA projects in Dakar. The support given by Jean Bosco KI, Momar Sylla and Ismael Fofana in providing advice and scientific back-up seems to be highly appreciated. Language difficulties tend to limit the scientific outreach of Jean Bosco and Momar to mostly the French speaking African researchers of the network. Although no accurate information is to hand, those interviewed felt that English speaking African researchers are not making as much use of these resource persons, preferring to keep their link to Laval.

African researchers in the CBMS sub-network encounter some problems with the management of the sub network from Manila. The documents they send occasionally get lost; the funding suffers some delays; and they feel that their Asian counterparts have some relative advantage in relation to the number of accepted proposals, speed of reaction of the resource persons and the primary focus of AKI management. There is also a problem of language as the administrative support in Manila is English speaking whereas most of the African researchers currently in this network are francophone. But in Dakar, the French speakers are also quite adept in English.

BOX. B

The Regional Office in Manila

The PEP-Manila office is housed at the Angelo King Institute (AKI) of the De La Salle University. Under the current PEP structure, the PEP-Manila office is tasked to coordinate the networks' CBMS programs and provide technical support to partner institutions in developing countries in Asia and Africa wanting to pilot-test and eventually institutionalize CBMS at the local and national levels. It also doubles up as the Philippine CBMS coordinating team, providing technical assistance to many local government units wanting to institute CBMS studies in their respective localities. This latter task absorbs much of the team's time and real resources.

Considering the proposal presented in the Addendum, Part B, 5.2 to create a PEP-Asia Network as a step forward in devolving the functions of PEP to southern-based institution, the issue then is whether the PEP-Manila office can function as a hub for the whole PEP-Asia Network. At the outset, it should be noted that the De La Salle University (DLSU) has decided to merge AKI with another research unit within the university, and will be re-named the Angelo King Institute for Business, Economic and Research Development (AKIBERD) effective 16 May 2007. This is part of the university's effort to streamline the number of operating units and reduce overlapping functions of various units within the same department. AKIBERD will be the only research institute of the College of Business and Economics. The current head of AKI, Dr. Intal, who is a member of the CBMS Steering Committee, will head the Institute. Accordingly, the structure of CBMS and its status within the University will remain the same as before the merger. Theoretically, however, CBMS could access a wider set of scientific support from the university.

DLSU is one of the top three universities in the Philippines and one of the leading research universities in the region. The College of Business and Economics to which AKIBERD belongs has faculty members who obtained their doctoral degrees from top universities abroad and from the University of the Philippines. They have produced high-quality research papers including policy-oriented studies. The CBMS coordinating team can be transformed into the Secretariat for the PEP-Asia Network. Considering CBMS coordinating team's technical expertise, the Secretariat can be both an administrative and technical secretariat.

The CBMS has sufficient administrative capacity built over the years starting from the MIMAP days to support PEP-Asia Network activities such as convening national, regional and international conferences. The DLSU's administrative department can provide additional administrative support as needed. As part of the university, it has access to good conference facilities within the university campus. The CBMS office at DLSU campus has good access to communication facilities and utility services. It is close to several hotels located in the business districts of Manila and Makati City. Given the proposed configuration of the PEP-Asia Network, it can tap other members of the network to manage some components of the research and to organize national, regional and international conferences for the PEP network or in collaboration with other senior researchers in the Philippines and elsewhere. AKIBERD can thus provide an intellectual leadership to the PEP-Asia Network.

The CBMS coordinating team has already gained the respect and confidence of Philippine authorities and local NGOs whose interests are aligned with PEP objectives and increasingly those of the donor community. With the spread of CBMS programs to other Asian and African countries, the CBMS Coordinating Team is gradually gaining respect and confidence from host agencies and policymakers. It has continued doing research on methodologies that can enhance the usefulness of CBMS to local policymakers of these countries. Considering the nature of the demand for CBMS services, the CBMS coordinating team should maintain this expertise and, having comparative advantage in this area within PEP, share such expertise with partners within Asia and Africa, who must also gain such expertise to be able to provide technical assistance to them more effectively and efficiently.

Admittedly, the CBMS Coordinating team does not have expertise in the areas covered by PMMA and MPIA. However, as mentioned above, it can draw on expertise from the university and members of the Steering Committee so that it can provide scientific support to researchers under the three PEP sub-networks. Several MIMAP researchers in the Philippines who did work on macroeconomic modelling and other aspects of the MIMAP agenda could also be tapped to provide scientific support to the network.

c) What can be the next step of the devolution strategy?

As the number of experienced researchers in the three sub networks is increasing, the scientific knowledge available will improve dramatically. This is also the case for the regional centres in Dakar and Manila.. The regional offices can then play a more important part in providing scientific support activities to new incoming groups. But this will depend on the direction devolution takes and what role is defined for the regional offices. This will determine how large, in terms of numbers of people and the respective skills required, the regional office will need to be.

According to Ismaël Fofana, who heads the PEP-Dakar Office, PEP could improve its status by becoming more involved in regional training and technical assistance. This is in line with Mario Lamberte's proposition on the unique role of the CBMS sub network in the PEP network; that is, in each region, the coordinating team for the network should develop a market for each sub-network "by training and accrediting qualified trainers and then making its training modules and manuals available to the accredited trainers who would be able to improve and enhance the effectiveness of these training modules as they themselves gain more experience in training". If this is to be a new emphasis to be implemented, there will be a need for a training coordinator in each regional office. Depending on the importance of the training programme the coordinator of the regional office can be in charge of this task. This would be a significant change of emphasis in PEP activities.

For scientific support to be efficient, the Dakar office sees the need to have at least one permanent research coordinator for each of the sub-networks. Problems of language make it advisable that such a coordinator, whichever centre, be bilingual. The Director can be in charge of advocacy, fund raising, expansion strategy and research implementation. In so doing, in the case of the office of Dakar, Ismael can devote more time for coordination, strategy and advocacy and training programme. The administrative officer (Aïssatou Diop), with the help of an assistant, can be in charge of the organisation of the annual general assembly. There is also a need to have a financial officer.

What then will be the corresponding role of the central management (CIRPÉE and AKI) in PEP? As Mario Lamberte has further suggested, Université Laval and AKI can focus in future on cutting-edge research including methodologies and coordinating the activities of PEP regional teams. They will be looking for high profile resource persons and advisors for the regional offices not only to manage projects but also to create and maintain an intellectual and knowledge capital base in their respective geographical regions. Further, the central management can concentrate on two important issues facing PEP - the problem of funding and ensuring the overall policy relevance of its research projects.

Due to the fact that most of the research funding is from outside sources, CIRPÉE and AKI (at the local level) can play a more active role in international fund raising. A joint approach to donors is recommended. In some African countries, the national institutions involved in the network have limited access to the donors in their home countries and to local policy makers that interact with them. It is therefore recommended that CIRPÉE have meetings with the appropriate departments in the head offices of these multilateral and bilateral donors. It has also been suggested it will be good policy for the regional PEP offices to get involved in this process mostly by contacting the regional development banks; Tunis in the case of the AfDB and Manila for the ADB

d) Enhancing the Regional Policy Impact

The network addresses chronic social and economic concerns vital to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Asian countries (and increasingly also in Latin America and Central America) and feeds into the work of the Bretton Woods institutions on informing and strengthening national policies to reduce poverty. Poverty Strategy Reduction Papers (PSRP) in most African countries, constitute the sole medium term development strategy document defining the objectives and policy directions necessary to tackle poverty with the support of the major donors to these countries.

In light of the quality of the research done, the relevance of the thematic focus of the three PEP sub networks and the positions of some of its (former) members, it might have been expected that the PEP network would have had a greater impact on the policy dialogue in these countries. In Senegal, for example, MIMAP/PEP researchers have been associated with the PSRP process. The lead MIMAP person who also headed CREA and was actively involved in the PRSP process has since moved to CRES, the current PEP partner. Policy makers in public administration and professional analysts often attended the launching seminars of the MIMAP studies. Furthermore, professionals and technicians from the statistical department, Ministry of Finance, were part of some of the research teams of MIMAP.

PEP is conscious of the necessity and importance of the policy impact of the research carried out by the network. For this purpose, the network has conceived a methodology for improving the policy dimension of the research. First, policy relevance is one of the criteria for the approval of a proposal. Second, each research study, after the final report is approved, is entitled to a dissemination grant. This National Conference grant of CAD\$ 2000 for each of the completed study is earmarked for dissemination of PMMA and MPIA projects. The CBMS research projects, particularly in the Philippines, have not found a similar need to make equivalent recourse to such grants because the work has generally involved passing all results directly to local governments as the main clients..

Unfortunately, due to the limited number of the researchers in each of the country, many things are done by PEP but go unnoticed in SSA countries PEP activities are not readily distinguished from other research activities carried out in SSA. PEP-funded research in SSA in the anglophone countries of SSA is even less well known within the research and policy communities in the region. The impact on policy and actual take-up of PEP research findings in this region by government appears low, although relatively more interest is shown by the multilateral agencies. For example, in most of the countries the departments directly responsible for the Poverty

Reduction Strategy Process (PRSP) seem not aware of the existence of the PEP network of researchers. They are also not well informed of PEP research and of its results, even in the country where studies have been conducted and it is not necessary to 'borrow' lessons from other countries in the region.. *For example, most SSA countries use only the monetary income based approach to poverty assessment whereas the multidimensional aspects of poverty, which are well suited to SSA and studied extensively in the PMMA sub network, are still mostly ignored in a coherent and coordinated way in much poverty analysis and strategies.* This is changing and an intensification of the interaction between PEP research and the PSRP process will eventually be of considerable benefit to countries.

The direct policy relevance of CBMS has been easier to prove. First, due to the regional dimension of poverty in most of the countries, each Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is decentralized; but the implementation, monitoring and assessment is not done because of the lack of local micro-level data. Country level data on poverty indicators are available, and these may also be found at the regional level, but rarely by districts, regions or provinces. Data provided by CBMS studies can help bridge this critical gap in monitoring of the implementation of poverty strategies.

Second, by making available data on poverty at the local level, CBMS provides good grounds for project justification, formulation and selection at the local level. In this respect, UNDP has co-financed a project that incorporates a CBMS approach that is Aiméd at mainstreaming access to various energy sources and services in Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal. CBMS has also partnered with UNIFEM to promote gender responsive budgeting. But the impact of CBMS on policy will depend on the group with whom the CBMS research team interacts at the local government level and on the decentralization policy in the country itself; that depends on whether the decentralised survey data and findings are aligned with any devolved power to local authorities. If the CBMS team interacts with elected officials, the term of tenure of the latter will be important to having policy impact. It is better that there is a team member from the district administration if such a qualified human resource can be found at the district level. A second best solution would be for the district office to assign a member of its technical personnel involved in policy formulation to follow up on PEP studies or for the research team to report to this technical person. *It is thus recommended that CBMS projects be supported by the local elected official who should then select a technical member of his personnel to serve either on the research team or appointed to "follow" the evolution of the study.*

If the country has a centralized type of government, the districts may not have power in policy formulation and implementation. In this case, even though CBMS research may be useful for sector policy at the local level, its policy impact may be quite limited. *To have greatest effect, CBMS activities should be focused on countries where decentralization is well advanced. For that reason, it is suggested that, in each CBMS sub network proposal, the author should make a short presentation of the decentralization policy in the country. In those Sub-Saharan African countries where the devolution of policy is not very advanced there is likely to be less opportunity for CBMS projects to become policy relevant, but the process can begin and draw attention to the need to look at local issues. The implication to be drawn, however, is not that CBMS should primarily focus on large diversified countries in Asia).*

In this instance, as suggested by Lamberte, in those countries where full local autonomy has not been put in place, partnering with national agencies supportive of CBMS such as the national statistical office, as in the case of Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Cambodia, offers a feasible route for institutionalising CBMS projects.

PEP could also take better advantage of the professional status of its (former) researchers. It should establish an up to date list of all past and present PEP researchers and track their professional careers. Former researchers will be useful in “opening” doors to the policy makers and the donor community. The PEP newsletter can be useful for bringing in former researchers whose names need to be maintained on the mailing list. The present newsletter posts news from PEP researchers as well as providing updates of the main conclusions of current studies.

The policy impact of PEP (and particularly of MPIA and PMMA research) can be increased if there is more direct interaction between researchers and policy makers. One way of improving this interaction and to promote the impact of research findings on policy, will be to have *a one to two days workshop with researchers, policy makers and some NGOs and private sector agencies involved in poverty alleviation, strategy elaboration and implementation. For cost effectiveness, these seminars should precede the Annual General Assemblies.* The participants to be invited (policy makers) should come from those departments related with the studies being done on the countries. PEP can also think of organizing a workshop of PSRP national offices managers. The invitation can be extended to the main donors (IMF, The World Bank, European Union and bilateral donors) who are channelling most of their funds into poverty reduction related programmes and projects. It is advisable that the PEP network in each of the participating countries establishes links with the donor communities involved in the implementation of poverty reduction strategies.

It is also suggested that the next PEP phase be launched at a one/two days seminar in which the results of the best studies are presented. The management of the PRSP department of the countries should be invited. This will be an occasion to increase the awareness of these policy makers in the poverty reduction policy work done in PEP. They will have the opportunity to discuss with PEP researchers on the multidimensional aspect of poverty. The network will also take advantage of this event to discuss research orientation with the professional participants. In the same vein, the network can also plan for a special senior policy workshop. The aim of such seminars will be to share the results of selected research studies with senior policy makers. This seminar will provide a forum for the policy makers to exchange their own experiences in poverty alleviation measurement and monitoring (PMMA) and policy impacts (MPIA) and on typical issues pertaining to poverty alleviation strategies and specific policies. Papers from the PMMA and MPIA sub networks can be supplied for this exercise. .

As it is a PEP (MPIA and PMMA) principle that each team should have at least one female and one junior researcher, *it is recommended that each team include a person from a policy-making institution.* In this case one has to make sure that this person is not a token representative for ‘show’ but an effective person important in the policy process. One way to guarantee this will be for the researcher to be recommended by an institution.

What about asking the institution(s) or departments concerned in the study to make their comments/recommendations on a research proposal, and on the interim and final reports? These comments/recommendations, which are expected to be more policy oriented, could be taken into account as part of the approval process of the documents concerned? Researchers can be asked to present in their final document an executive summary in which policy recommendations are highlighted. These executive summaries can be put together in Policy Briefs, Bulletins and newsheets.

For this to work smoothly, it is recommended that a prominent policy maker be seated on the PEP board and relevant steering committees.

Training sessions can also be organized for policy makers on cutting edge research on poverty. It is therefore of great importance to support the PEP school planned by the office of Dakar. After online training, some of the interested and well performing researchers can be invited to a workshop (perhaps in Dakar or Yaoundé conveniently for the Francophone and Nairobi or Pretoria for the Anglophone). A CD can be prepared elaborating on specific topics. This project could be extended to policy makers. (This approach is also relevant for other regions).

PEP needs to have a more aggressive communication policy targeted to a policy audience as indicated in section 2 of the Executive Summary. This can be further achieved through the proposed widening of the mailing list of PEP newsletters and the publication of both Policy Briefs and work-in-progress papers.

Both regional centres argue there should be a separate session for policymakers and other stakeholders with researchers, focusing not on technical issues of the research but on policy implications of the research results and poverty-related policy issues that need to be considered by the PEP network in its future research agenda. This may be held on the last day of the conference, but invited policymakers and other stakeholders need not attend the technical sessions.

e) Concluding remarks

Devolution may be viewed, in effect, as decentralisation taken to its ultimate extreme of full autonomy. At this stage of PEP's development, even if an extended form of 'external evaluation' of each study and an independent technical academic oversight could be put in place, questions may be raised about the consistency of assessment and supervision across the network. Both Laval and AKI have been co-managing the network from the outset but have observed a division of labour on supervision corresponding with their comparative expertise.

The regional offices need some time to secure important local institutional links and independent academic expertise across all thematic areas of the network. PEP must also be viewed as a force that can exercise local leadership in the area of poverty and economic policy research [although, eventually, this will surely come]. Unfortunately, it must also be recognised, politically, that a more over-riding and probably inescapable problem lies in the attitudes of international agencies and many bilateral donors who will prefer to use their own staff to evaluate issues (see; Angus Deaton, *The Evaluation of World Bank Research*, 2007). Although the position is slowly changing as the emphasis on 'participatory assessment' grows, donors appear to be far less likely and willing to allocate funds to a self-contained and 'internally' managed

local research unit with no formal institutional base. Full devolution will require the setting up of a local advisory or management board on which [as is, indeed, recommended elsewhere] it is highly likely members of the government or civil service will be invited to serve.

To date, the present organisation has worked well and served PEP ideals faithfully. It, and the respective pivotal roles of the Université Laval and AKI in the system, has been essential to getting the network up on its feet and internationally recognised. The quality and extent of PEP research activities is increasingly acknowledged and, in no small part this is due to the untiring efforts and dedication of the lead managers and supervisors within the network. The value the researchers themselves place on the present structure and on the leadership and guidance they receive from the Université Laval and from the Angelo King Institute (and particularly, in the latter case, in the area of community based research) lies beyond doubt. This expression of confidence is far more than a just a token of appreciation for the academic standing of their mentors and the esteem in which they are held but reflects the fact that the whole process serves as a source of technical reassurance providing continued inspiration.

The core PEP institutions and their staff have been highly instrumental in the creation of new knowledge and essential human capital. The time is approaching, nevertheless, since it is envisaged there will be a strong expansion in the network, when the centre should let go of some of its responsibilities. The current burden of administration involved in supervising external offices, organising reviews and evaluation meetings and general conferences is likely to grow even heavier and the time has come to consider which activities can be shed from the centre and handed over to other units.

2.3. Management Organisation

The structure of any organism can be broken down into a matrix of component and cross-cutting elements. In PEP, the two most evident elements are thematic and geographical. There are at least two other ways in which the budgetary cake can be cut. The first is by the functions performed by the network, in a sense, its actual operations; grant allocations, organisation and supervision of research, training and the development and preparation of manuals, the organisation of conferences and meetings, information exchange, publications, and dissemination and advocacy. Over and above all this there must exist some central administrative control and direction. The second is purely financial, categorising what the PEP network does by what it costs in terms of salaries and associated current outlays on goods and services, grants to members, travel outlays and the costs of putting on conferences, each of which can be separately bundled. The point about looking at the network in this way is to see what specific packages stand most chance of receiving outside funding or other forms of support. This often depends on the mandates and institutional rules that bind how external agencies are able to act.; some can support topics, others types of activity.

It is possible to argue, at least in certain thematic respects, that the elements of a matrix management system are already in place in the existing network. Insofar as the Université Laval and its staff focus dominantly on the review and assessment of the MPIA and PMMA sub-networks of research while the AKI concentrates on the CBMS sub-network, the PEP organisation enjoys a degree of thematic specialisation that reflects comparative expertise and knowledge. This diversification is associated, not surprisingly, with an evident geographical emphasis of certain projects. This may

be more for practical expediency than for any reasons of inherent logic, although many country studies have an implicit territorial specificity.

The effectiveness of the PEP network is only as good as the quality of the research undertaken and the significance of project outcomes to policy – their usefulness and whether they are ‘fit for purpose’. In large part, this is dependent on the range and integrity of the research proposals initially submitted for selection. Since its inception, PEP [and its precursor, MIMAP] has gained justifiable global recognition. With its reputation now firmly established, the pool of proposals has grown and the scope of topics submitted has expanded significantly. There are now well over 250 submissions each year for PMMA and MPIA alone from which only about twenty reach final selection by the respective sub-networks. The invitation to apply for research funds proceeds under a process of open competitive bidding that is fair and transparent and has proven to work well. Researchers readily see for themselves how and why various projects get accepted. They especially value the way the project managers help them to revise and refine their submissions, thereby strengthening the outlines of their research proposals and making the ideas contained in them more robust, testable and rigorous.

The way information within the academic community spreads and is shared among colleagues, especially through the internet, helps ensure that access to PEP and the opportunity for a proposal to be reviewed by the PEP network is probably made quite generally available. Nevertheless, the PEP management might like to consider, in consultation with past and present researchers, how it would be possible to widen this outreach. In particular, they might explore what steps could be made to persuade, perhaps, civil servants, community leaders and journalists to submit proposals. This would probably draw in topics that are somewhat different and, maybe, less academic than those currently considered. Yet they could have relevant practical application to local policy and help to identify alternative means to support official actions to reduce poverty. Certain research proposals submitted to the PMMA sub-network in the latest review offer evidence of a wider and more eclectic range of sector policy concerns now being taken up by PEP. In looking at outreach and dissemination success, it has been noted that those PEP researchers who also have the strong backing of their own institutions are able to obtain some financial support to present their work at conferences and meetings.

This raises the question as to whether PEP should be encouraging more people from different backgrounds to submit proposals and to suggest topics that, while relevant to the central objectives of PEP, do not fall easily into any of the distinct ‘technical’ categories of the three sub-networks. Taking the first of these actions would underline the open and receptive nature of the network; but the second might possibly raise some concern that the scope of research would be spread too widely and fall outside the immediate bounds of careful supervision that can be provided.

2.4. The Operation of the Sub-Networks

Research carried out under the umbrella of the PEP network is guided by steering committees for each of the sub-networks who form part of an overall steering committee that finally endorses which of the research proposals will receive support. Currently, all three sub-network committees are composed of five members, at least one of which is an Asian member, one an African member and another an IDRC

representative. Although electronic contact is maintained on a continuous basis, the PEP steering committee is normally convened only at PEP meetings; in practice, this is once a year at the General Conference. In between, where necessary, overall PEP network decisions are made by an Executive Committee. This comprises the PEP co-directors, the MPIA and PMMA network leaders (the CBMS leader being already in place as a co-director), and an IDRC representative when the issue requires.

i) MPIA

At its core, the Modelling and Policy Impact Analysis [MPIA] group maintains close contact with the Poverty Monitoring, Measurement and Analysis [PMMA] network. Logically, with both groups operating out of CIRPÉE and Dakar and sharing common grounds of enquiry, it makes sense to work hand in hand on both management and research matters. The emphasis of MPIA work is on economic strategies and poverty reduction. In its use of economic models, MPIA attempts to test and analyse macroeconomic strategies and policy shocks in a ‘laboratory’ situation and add dynamic features to a traditionally static review. A main objective is to explore, from a domestic perspective, how growth and public spending on current and capital account affect poverty. From an international viewpoint, the network tries to improve understanding of how global trade agreements and policies of trade liberalisation and the associated specific tariff changes that might be expected, could impact on domestic well-being.

At the national level, growth is an outcome of the way the factors of production are marshalled together to generate value added. It follows that studies of the factor relations in production that are Aiméd at determining in what ways output can be better organised and increased to become more pro-poor have considerable resonance. But, equally, it is relevant to conduct research to ascertain whether reductions in inequality, as well as improvements in some of the non-income dimensions of poverty, such as better education and health, more adequate housing, also improve the basis on which sustained growth can be achieved.

On the international scene, what has worked well in the MPIA context is the recent research and policy support it has provided focussing on relevant areas of the Doha Development Agenda. Members have also looked at specific regional Free Trade Agreements and how they affect production possibilities, particularly in agriculture, on the one hand and household consumption on the other. An equally relevant and related emphasis of its modelling activity has been on selected issues of globalisation and the best means to achieve the MDG targets by 2015. Interest has centred on the apparent transmission channels and on identifying the existence and magnitude of possible compensatory and alleviation mechanisms. These features have emerged as being significant in the results of recent studies undertaken in Morocco, Tunisia, Uruguay and Philippines. These explored especially the impact of trade agreements on labour markets and urban and rural prices and expenditures.

Both MPIA and PMMA share a concern to use micro data and micro simulation techniques, at the modelling level, and they see the desirability of harmonizing micro-macro approaches to study the macro and sector impacts of both endogenous and exogenous economic shocks.

ii) PMMA

PMMA has been strongly involved in the development of tools and techniques with a micro data emphasis to support the conduct of multi-dimensional poverty analysis. In this context, PMMA studies have introduced innovative approaches employing both normative and subjective assessments as well as parametric and non-parametric statistical methods to improve the scope and reliability of its investigation procedures. Its research activity is especially concentrated in Africa, a continent that is home to nearly two-thirds of all current PMMA projects. The projects themselves, already wide-ranging, now additionally take on a spatial as well as gender dimension in an expanded effort not only to recognise the specific importance of these issues but also to provide far more refined estimates of the distributional impact of fiscal policy and public expenditures.

PMMA projects submitted so far have been both eclectic and specific; eclectic in the range of topics considered but quite precise in the defined scope of the projects themselves. The group has been anxious to promote a better understanding of the local-regional-global socio-economic linkages and wants to explore how these links impact on different levels of organisational capability and policy initiative.

A strong argument made by both MPIA and PMMA networks is that more than 200 individual research proposals are submitted to them, out of which each group may provisionally select 18-20 for possible approval and, collectively, the research topics approved must clearly enrich the development debate. The existence of well-formulated research areas ensures this is not a 'scatter gun' approach but a process where concerns are concentrated and have potential relevance to people's living standards. Belonging to a global network strengthens credibility and the potential for influencing policy. This is underpinned by the formal cross-country collaboration and comparisons of performance arising from the open interchange of ideas that take place at regional and general conferences.

The value of PMMA activities lies in their potential to provide a key unifying link, especially within countries but also across areas of common policy interest. They offer a link between the macro approach of the MPIA and more micro community emphasis of the CBMS. PMMA projects do not, as its title might imply, carry out original data collection on any extensive scale but detailed data analysis and data mining comprise essential features of its approach. Benefits flowing from this activity could well inform specific government agencies such as the National Statistical Office

iii) CBMS

The operation and influence of CBMS work is reported on more comprehensively in an appendix prepared by Mario Lamberte. CBMS represents a distinct and separate research approach within the PEP network. Intrinsically, CBMS has an assured future; its activities have immediate policy relevance and they have high visibility. This network effectively comprises in-country teams that follow a common procedure and direction to identify and tackle, in a standard way, specific household poverty questions at their grass roots. CBMS enquiries go below the primary level of a country's Provinces or Administrative Regions down to the municipalities, districts and metropolitan governments that are directly responsible for delivering public

services. Such representative local assemblies may be subdivided further into parish councils and other smaller governance units and standing committees.

The CBMS method of enquiry applies a pre-defined set of indicators, many of them asset based, to filter the poor from the non-poor. It then proceeds to map the results to geographically specific locations according to their GPS coordinates. The process relies on the ability of the organisers to draw on resource persons outside the system and to elicit collaborative participation from those very same local agencies it seeks to assist and advise.

CBMS represents a systemic approach to area level data collection. The various 'communities' involved comprise different types of local government units that have defined geographical boundaries. These territorially defined units are political and administrative entities that may or may not be entirely relevant or significant to the specific poverty issues and questions under investigation. The approach recognises, nevertheless, that it is these recognised administrative units such as the parish, village, municipality, district, or higher level of regional authority that make the relevant decisions and possess the power, directly or indirectly, to implement such decisions. For all these units, CBMS is a good survey instrument and also, because it helps to ensure effective and proper governance, an indispensable management tool. In a real economic sense, CBMS constitutes a proper investment because it offers a productive and cost reducing service that takes into account the question of providing socially equitable treatment.

The CBMS approach was set up initially to monitor, at the household and community level, the actual impact of macroeconomic and sector policies on living standards. It responds well to official requirements for timely indicators and a defined specificity of those households that are disadvantaged, particularly where a decentralised form of government is in place.

Despite the high quality of the research undertaken, the MPIA and PMMA activities, so far, have achieved rather less evident direct policy penetration compared with the CBMS. But this may be more a matter of the relevant level at which the different types of research are targeted. There is, however, a bigger chance that such research will not cover all the variables in policy. Also, as one PMMA informed us, no contact was made with policymakers before the research was launched and that, perhaps not surprisingly, little interest had been shown by the government in the results. Of the three PEP sub-component areas, the CBMS has probably had the most direct influence on actual policy objectives because it has concentrated on long-standing structural concerns and enlightened the formulation of government responses as well as NGO policy activities to these issues at the local level.

2.5. Data Methods, Sources and Applications

Given its existing structure and the way PEP research is organised, it is important to identify those areas where the network can demonstrate its unique advantage and show a relative strength on which it can capitalise. The MPIA emphasises a top down approach; it is interested in getting the basic motors into models that are seen to drive growth. The PMMA tends to work more from the bottom up aiming, through its projects, to feed through the system by suggesting more general applications. PEP seems torn, however, between an upper ceiling that limits where its global network of

local researchers can go in any meaningful practical sense and a lower bound where they have yet to be truly effective in influencing local policy. If PEP wants to invest in a stronger global network, it will probably be necessary to involve groups other than the immediate official donors. The Human Development Report Office and other UN Specialised Agencies that primarily offer technical advice would be prima candidates. . If, on the other hand, it thinks a stronger regional dimension should be given to local policy processes – and these probably differ as between, say, Africa and Latin America or Asia – then it will need to highlight the basic institutional weaknesses and differences in the prevailing political economy that prevent the more effective implementation and operation of economic policy. In either circumstance, it would be incumbent on PEP to come up with a portfolio of potential policy solutions because however ‘right’ the technical analysis of its researchers might be, it will be conditional upon the local ‘rules of the game’.

The paradox is that, at the end of the process, PEP research can be very policy oriented yet have no relevance, or clout, in changing policy. The process of gaining trust and confidence may simply take more time than originally thought as the weight of evidence slowly accumulates from different sources - perhaps, specifically in the case of the more wide-ranging and innovative MPIA and PMMA enquiries, This suggests that the biggest contribution PEP makes is the transfer of knowledge and the instruction it gives in the appropriate use of recognised tools of enquiry and analysis; that is, its training and capacity building. The main characteristics that make PEP a development network rather than just an agency organising research are the close links between the ‘centres’ of academic excellence, that is the teachers, technical consultants and advisers and other players and functions. These include PEP managers and the steering groups that draw their membership from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures, the researchers with their local understanding, knowledge and contacts, the specialist resource persons; the provision of formal training, including study visits, provided to every researcher; and the exchange of ideas and information that is facilitated at the regularly scheduled conferences and meetings.

Although conceptually well founded, the three sub-networks take quite different approaches to data usage. But the scope for greater integration is there. The MPIA, more of necessity because of the limited time frame of projects, resorts to the use of available published micro and macro data and adopts various micro data simulations based on assumed relationships and behaviour patterns that have been previously observed or assumed to be consistent with theory. The CBMS provides important input because researchers compile micro survey data directly from communities and households at the grass roots. They use filtering processes to structure and stratify the information that has been collected at these levels. In between, the PMMA network of researchers borrows selectively from both. This is not surprising; MPIA projects are as much about testing the relevance and practicality of their models as they are about highlighting areas of concern for policymakers. Managers in the PMMA group are encouraging the network to explore the potential for greater use of CBMS survey material in their area and sector modes of enquiry.

CBMS, uniquely in the PEP network, represents an applied empirical process of enquiry rather than a fundamental or theoretic method of socio-economic research. Many of the CBMS area based studies, while focusing on specific concerns, simply replicate the same enquiry method. As a data compilation process, this commonality of method has merits and CBMS surveys have become an important and influential

information tool in most of the contexts in which this empirical approach has been applied. For the time being, with the international agencies stressing the need for fuller poverty and social impact analysis [PSIA] and growing demands from local governments for more micro level information, the pressure is on to expand the outreach of CBMS enquiries to generate local data rather than to conduct any detailed analysis of the results that have been obtained so far. [Given the limitations of both real and financial resources, especially at AKI, analytical studies based on these data have been assigned, for the time being, a back seat. Some progress is being made on this front in other country applications such as Bangladesh, Cambodia and Lao PDR. In the latter two countries, the CBMS methodology has been woven into the traditional local level comprehensive reporting system inherited from earlier socialist regimes].

In the Philippines, it is clear from the comments received from politicians and senior administrators, that the CBMS has had an important impact wherever it is applied. Recently, it has been used in a number of social policy areas; to identify individuals who need a health ID card, to determine indigence, to refine social health insurance programmes, and to allocate support from a capitation fund to help the poorest of the poor. A wide range of official local government agencies are not only interested in CBMS data but committed to using them, including the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, the National Anti-Poverty Commission, several concerned Representatives of Congress and the Ministry of Local Government.

No enquiry procedure can be comprehensive and perfectly suited to all conditions. CBMS is community based and focused on those areas and households that are mostly poor, disadvantaged, vulnerable to the vagaries of the economy and at risk from cost-saving administrative actions that cut into their access to public non-market goods and services. Local governments are involved in the process but households remain primarily respondents rather than participants who are engaged in the enquiry.

In the Philippines, however, it would be worth exploring whether it might be possible, if the study areas could be coordinated, to link up with the privately conducted qualitative and highly subjective studies regularly undertaken by the 'Social Weather Stations' [SWS] group. Both groups could cross-check and compare their respective results from different enquiry methods and note where they overlap. It seems likely that the validity and integrity of the SWS findings – which receive widespread coverage and political recognition because they allegedly reflect 'what the people are saying' – would be enhanced by a closer informal partnership with the CBMS.

Drawing primarily on the Philippine experience where the CBMS initiative and methodological architecture is well established and the most advanced, and on the basis of key informant interviews, it is worth noting some of the more important issues flagged with regards to the potential limitations arising from the way CBMS is currently operating. These could help to remove some of the obstacles to its wider use and improve its functionality as a more pertinent and timely data source representing the micro dynamics of household behaviour.

- a) Per household, the direct cost of a CBMS enquiry is low [\$US 0.32 in the case of Philippines]; but, for both cost and practical logistical reasons, its coverage can never be nationally comprehensive within any meaningful operational and

policy time frame. [This is analogous to painting the Forth Bridge; as soon as all the surface areas are covered, it is time to start the process all over again]

- b) The sharing of information and its standardisation across areas for comparative analysis is difficult. Comparison between people and households found in different socio-economic circumstances is usually more interpretive than comparing between locations. But homogeneity within groups is found.
- c) Although the ability to conduct CBMS style surveys by local authorities has been successfully taught, the sharing of techniques and training methods has been more limited and not reached down to where it is necessary to strengthen local institutional capacity to continue with this investigative work on their own reliance and on a regular basis.
- d) Some municipalities in the Philippines have found the procedure to be too costly and means should be found to regularise this work and keep a continuous system going, perhaps on a modular or rotational basis. Others felt the data gathering and data encoding took too long and results were not made available quick enough and in an appropriate presentational form to influence senior local government officials.
- e) Availability of data results needs to be coordinated with proposed action plans and aligned with budget schedules for implementing projects that are dependent on the information provided.
- f) The CBMS generates core benchmark information about households, their apparent status and where they are located within a specified district or barangay (as in the case of the Philippines). It helps, but does not identify the type of project or determine the nature of the service support to be provided; these still have to be decided and one type of project weighed against another.
- g) For practical and financial reasons, the selection of administrative units where survey work is carried out is not only selective but also clustered. Local authorities, dependent on central government subventions that are determined according to specific criteria, are concerned the coverage is not evenly spread and thus some areas will receive lower allocations than others.
- h) It was pointed out that it is difficult for CBMS to penetrate provinces that have already taken on other poverty monitoring systems, often required and funded from external sources and determined by donors.

2.6. Policy Linkages

CBMS studies are having an increasingly widespread impact on local policymaking, especially in countries with a decentralised system of government like the Philippines. In several countries this work has received recognition and support from international agencies like the World Bank and bilateral donors such as DFID. Demands for the information the process generates are growing rapidly because the data are highly relevant and useful to an understanding of the poverty problem. CBMS surveys provide national agencies and departments with the means to identify problems and

the potential beneficiaries of policy more effectively and efficiently. The methodology is designed to identify those specific households living in constrained social and economic circumstances and who may be at risk from adverse policies and official decisions at all levels of government. It is primarily a 'local' investigation initiative compiling information that complements core official data and overall national indicators that usually reflect little more than summary countrywide totals and averages.

CBMS information is particularly valued by those donors and international NGOs who want to support clearly defined target population groups and who intend to implement specific projects that have a distinct geographical provenance. In principle, it is an essential tool for good governance and, wherever possible and funding and resources are available, the data the studies generate should be extended to have national coverage. This is certainly the desire of the key agencies and policymakers that the review team talked to in the Philippines and a sentiment reflected in those countries where CBMS has been applied in Africa.

2.7. Enhancing Policy Relevance

Earlier it was stated, without elaboration, that governments had to be convinced of the relevance and operational significance of PEP research. This requires PEP managers and national researchers, first, to be able to engage with the policy makers at various levels and, second, to gain their trust. This will depend on the perceived integrity and 'neutrality' of the research, that is, on convincing the authorities that there is no underlying evident political bias or agenda in the objectives, and that the results are robust and technically sound and thus will resonate with politicians.

Aspects of this bridge building to policy makers and creating goodwill are considered in more detail below.

i) Engagement

Initial support for a particular research proposal comes first from the PEP selection committees on which IDRC is formally represented. Although at the centre of these reviews lies the basic intent to affect and possibly change policy, the actual assessment of a research proposal does seem to lean quite heavily on its inherent academic content and intrinsic policy interest, plus an assessment of the researcher's ability to complete the work. There is no harm in such an approach, particularly where the selectors anticipate the project will have a more general significance and expand the scope to other projects, not just in terms of the expected outcomes of the research but in replicating some of the techniques used. Researchers need to identify local policy 'champions' within the political and administrative network to establish an official interest and ensure continued enthusiasm for projects. This approach has been adopted most effectively in pushing forward the CBMS agenda and replicating its techniques in different parts of the world. Local champions involved in policy review might be encouraged to serve as members of some PEP steering committees or local research 'councils' (recommendation 9h).

This is not to deny the significance and value of rigorous academic analysis, especially when founded on sound data and reflective of local conditions, to public

policy determination. PEP researchers clearly need to be able to draw national conclusions from their work and point to the potential caveats and lacunae that may modify their findings. PEP research will engage more attention if, as a network, its studies establish a universal reputation for excellence and thoroughness. The present process of regular review and close supervision minimises the chance that any PEP research will be so seriously flawed as to be unusable.

From the outset, MPIA and PMMA applicants are strongly advised to engage in dialogues with policy makers not only to bring them on board but also to help the researchers themselves elaborate and refine their initial proposals to be more in line with policy concerns. To engage interest, researchers should be further encouraged to present plans relating to the dissemination of their results. (recommendation 9). However, whether a particular piece of research will prove acceptable will probably depend more on an endorsement by the policymaking institution and its perception that the results will be valuable and that it can utilise the findings.

ii) Relevance

Having access to research placed in the public domain relevant to current policy concerns makes the life of the decision-makers much easier. Such research also appeals to donors and is useful in marshalling popular local support. An obviously important element of the 'engagement' process is to identify potential partners in government and the NGO community and to persuade them of the relevance of specific PEP research as a means to clarify issues and thus help make their tasks lighter and more pertinent.

That relevance must be linked not just to a thematic concern but also to the population that is being targeted. Improving the relevance of projects through clear targets, and strengthening the scope for making inter-connections with other sectors and issues, makes research potentially more attractive to external donors and funding partners. CBMS, notably in the nature of its design, can have an immediate and direct impact on the way poverty is perceived and policy is conducted. Its empirical basis is very different from the conceptual foundations of the other two sub-networks. MPIA and PMMA projects in their technical formulation, by contrast, draw on a formidable body of recognised microeconomic theory and on concepts, econometric principles and the practical experience of economic model building. The presence of a 'champion' as mentioned above, especially a former PEP researcher, could help interpret and clarify findings and raise the level of PEP engagement by enhancing the influence of its current researchers in local policy evaluation. This has been the recent good experience of collective PEP modelling work that has reviewed the possible impacts of the Doha Round.

iii) Operational Significance

Currently, there seems little direct linkage between the research that has been undertaken under the MPIA and PMMA umbrellas and how macro policy at the national level is implemented. The same is true of CBMS activities. This is partly a passage of time issue but it is partly because all three sub-networks are perceived to rely on micro-oriented methods. Even the general equilibrium nature of MPIA research has micro foundations and rests on the micro dimensions of macro policy. The absence of closer links to policy is a consequence of the process of sharing

research outcomes being weak. Results are shared but the means of signifying their relevance are still in their infancy and the channels of communication remain under-developed. In practice, the conventional dissemination procedures so far adopted appear to offer a very limited 'entrée' into policy thinking. The concept of 'operational significance' is acknowledged as a key element of PEP research and clearly represents a genuine practical concern of policy-makers. Evidence from the Africa region suggests that a process of interaction does exist but that it tends to work informally through personal contacts and the influence in government of previous PEP researchers, either directly as policy-makers or indirectly as consultants and 'retainers'. The establishment of much stronger, well defined institutional and systemic links with policy makers would work even better, especially with MPIA and PMMA projects.

iv) Resonance

The effectiveness of policy goes beyond the immediate task of official persuasion and should reach out to international donors. A wider and fuller understanding of why certain policies are pursued and what may be the possible effects will resonate more with those involved and help secure greater policy effectiveness. This has a lot to do with how the outcomes of PEP research activities are disseminated and shared with agencies outside the country, where the results are posted, and whether there is a PEP commitment to keep the information 'live' and routinely updated. At their basic level, research results are inevitably expressed in some form of summary statistics supported by an array of associated data. One idea is to devise new ways to move data beyond that of representing a store of information to a position where it is thought of as 'intelligence'.

A relevant PEP objective is to create an environment of evidence based policy action that is accompanied by a standard evaluation procedure and the regular and consistent monitoring of progress. Set against relevant base reference benchmarks, this forms an essential ingredient of good governance. An increase in well-informed, non-official participation at all levels of policy-making is to be welcomed because it clearly enhances the democratic process, widens the extent of policy coverage and thus helps expand the potential economies of scope as well as of scale.

2.8. Joint Research Initiatives [JRI]

A possible way to increase the visibility of the network and to enhance its attractiveness to new donors is to combine some activities into a more consolidated structure. The intention of a JRI is to identify a relatively focused theme within one of the PEP networks that is likely to attract outside funding. The JRI is seen as a specific initiative that allows a predefined number of projects to be funded. In the conception of this initiative, it is proposed the usual research management process be expanded to include an expert associated with and knowledgeable about PEP, a representative from a relevant donor agency and someone from a partner institution. Such an initiative might also explore and promote new means for uniting each respective sub-network's activities into a closer global alliance across all regions. It could similarly strengthen the role of each region and bring together, under the control of a unified geographical structure, the various research studies belonging to the different sub-networks. The first would underpin the technical content of the research and facilitate

a more specialised management of the studies whereas the latter would yield financial benefits from costs reduction. Both offer a potential for exploiting the externalities of different approaches and attracting outside interest. The present PEP management feels it is important to preserve the distinct characteristics of each sub-network because the type of potential interaction between them may be quite different.

It should be emphasized that every individual research study, however unique it may appear, generates outcomes above and beyond its immediate goals that can contribute significantly to the store of knowledge. This may manifest itself in the form of fresh basic data, different sources, the adoption of different methodological approaches, the use of new instruments of enquiry, as well as in the actual project results obtained.

Partnership arrangements with other agencies and donors can range from the simple exchange of information about research interests and concerns, to data sharing and results and to the funding of joint initiatives.

3. IDRC Support of PEP Objectives

IDRC sees its primary role as implementing new initiatives and providing the necessary seed funding to get programmes off the ground to a stage where they can be increasingly self-supporting. It has encouraged the PEP network for several important reasons:

3.1. Philosophical and Ideological

There is a single-minded, practical purpose behind PEP research but its activities involve a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary approach to the complex problem of selecting appropriate economic policies at different levels of official intervention, to attack the chronic problem of poverty in developing countries. PEP supported researchers adopt, in their separate ways, a multi-pronged approach to these enquiries. They try to identify the contingent supporting social actions that need to be taken to supplement the core direction of this work. The various approaches taken underline the multi-dimensional but coordinated features of PEP activities.

As this work has expanded and delved more deeply into certain policy areas, the complexity of the oversight function that PEP managers currently now confront has increased. Tackling this problem demands that closer attention should be paid to questions of convergence and the way projects complement each other and that recognition is taken of the threat of potential divergence in the scope of those research topics under selection.

3.2. Technical and Administrative

As the number of projects the network takes on increases, administrative requirements for seeing projects through to their successful conclusion will also grow. The present system has proved efficient and cost effective, in part because the key players are willing to commit so much of their time to PEP and to devote their efforts, informally and 'voluntarily', to supporting the programme. More specifically, they have helped the individual PEP researchers in various, mostly unrecorded, ways with academic

advice and writing guidance. This is a key virtue of the network as it is presently set up but the wider and more extensive range of activities that PEP is now thinking it should take on will draw even more heavily on their scarce resources of time and test the present capacity of the existing sub-component directors and network advisors to the limit. This calls for extra support and, at the very least, some financial involvement from other partners.

In bringing in other partners, thought should be given not only to how they can contribute resources to the PEP network but also how they can provide greater visibility and support a more extensive outreach to a well-based rigorous analytical process and so strengthen the grass roots applications of ongoing research.

To encourage specific multilateral agencies and donors to join in a mutually beneficial partnership will require network managers to consider how to arrange and select different research projects so that they reflect the need to address a more focused theme and problem area that can be effectively bundled into a package donors can support. The PEP idea of promoting more 'issue-focused' joint research initiatives seems a step in the right direction in meeting this concern. Donors who are potential research and policy partners, generally, will not agree to fund individual 'stand-alone' research projects, however technically rigorous, coherent and academically respectable these may appear.

3.3. Value and Quality of Research

PEP research has already yielded interesting and useful results. As guiding principle, the goals of 'public good value' and 'fit for purpose', ie, relevance and usefulness, should be enshrined in how projects are selected. The intent to influence official policy and effect basic changes in the way decisions are made is both commendable and well established. PEP's main concern is to implement a philosophy of evidence based decision-making and to make sure the evidence is as convincing and watertight as possible. This goes beyond conventional ideas of evaluation and monitoring and of impact analysis that all pre-suppose a policy is already in place. All these principles need to be kept in the forefront of people's minds in pursuing PEP's desired aim to prioritize themes and topics and strengthen national research capacity.

In their regular reviews of research project proposals, the PEP sub-component areas have looked for creativity, the development of ideas and thinking and innovative ways to apply both new and well-tried approaches to policy analysis. But, perhaps inevitably, because of the way proposals are assessed and projects are at present selected, less attention can be paid to the potential for the cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches. Among the varied research initiatives submitted, it is difficult to have an overview that involves establishing an inter-active core community of ideas. The MPIA and PMMA projects essentially adopt a 'vertical' method of enquiry and a top-down approach (more evident in the case of MOIA) that identifies significant macro and sector issues and traces their impact down to individuals and households and suggests fiscal and policy refinements and modifications to improve outcomes. The CBMS approach, on the other hand, primarily follows an applied 'horizontal' research method and tries to work from the bottom up, although in a socially and geographically selective way.

This is a reflection, in part, of how the PEP process emerged from the MIMAP approach when it was realized that the studies selected should offer a much greater possibility of monitoring the impact of macro and sector policies at the grass roots level. The challenge is to blend these three lines of enquiry in a way that can create more lateral thinking within a real and virtual network of researchers. The outcome should give rise to more public goods and a wider range of externalities that help ensure individual efforts are not dissipated and diluted but serve to widen and deepen policy thinking

The idea of presenting research from each of the sub-networks during the plenary sessions at PEP annual meetings is an attempt to inform the wider network of key issues and areas - being explored and of the various methodological approaches being followed by the different sub-networks. The parallel sessions are also aimed at encouraging individuals to participate in sessions outside their network, although it is not certain how effective this has been. These obviously have limitations and do not address the risk of operating in silos. Some suggestions are offered later as to how this situation can be improved.

It must be noted that the network has been going for a comparatively short time. Only in the year 2005 were the drafts of the first round of research projects presented for review. This is pertinent when it is also remembered that PEP research studies, while nominally limited to an 18-month time span, usually follow a 24-36 month cycle to full completion. This means that some outcomes and many of the less tangible benefits of a thematically defined research network are still to become evident. Much intellectual capital, nevertheless, has been acquired already from the participation of individuals (to the benefit also of the institutions and countries to which they are attached) in the activities, operational management and implementation of PEP research projects.

3.4. Collaboration and Capacity Building

PEP takes relatively inexperienced, unknown and generally young scholars from low and middle-income countries and encourages their professional growth as competent and confident researchers by imparting to them a fuller understanding of the technical, analytical and empirical aspects of current policy issues. In giving assistance to individuals belonging to the research teams it supports, PEP managers, their advisers and resource persons engage in the continual provision of organised skills upgrading, regular mentoring, specific hands-on advice and on-going supervision. At the national level, the supervision of the research study and direction of team members is given by the local team leader. This unique arrangement helps generate new knowledge, create human capital and build local capacity. These important and perhaps mostly intangible benefits are not so evident in similar initiatives that have been launched under other institutional arrangements.

The strong point of PEP is the mentoring, supervision and broadly based peer review process by internationally recognized scholars. The ongoing institutional support given to the network, particularly by the Université Laval and AKI, is highly valued. It provides intellectual and strategic guidance to PEP researchers who might otherwise struggle to complete their projects satisfactorily if they had to rely solely on their own devices and a constrained access to already limited local resources. This

does not lay PEP open, however, to the charge of ‘colonial’ thinking and paternalism, and an ‘imperialist’ approach to research organization and supervision. An absolutely essential component of capacity building is to teach rigorous research methods and make researchers aware of available statistical tools and data. The research advisers share their store of knowledge and accumulated experience and pass on information they have acquired about related work. All this is done to facilitate the work of the researchers. All the researchers spoken to clearly welcomed the academic advice as well as the neutrality, international standing and intellectual status, extensive knowledge and independent thinking of PEP advisers and supervisors. This, they believe, has lent international substance to their work and has helped ensure wider recognition of their own research while strengthening its relevance to local conditions.

There has to be a minimum critical mass for research capacity to be effective and capable of further development. It seems likely such core capacity will reside more in institutions than in individuals. These ‘institutions’ need not be physical locations but simply groups of like-minded persons that bring together past researchers, including those drawn from the PEP network itself. Even if this may not argue for a greater institutional focus and specialisation, it provides a strong appeal for more crossover exchanges between people, institutions and PEP subcomponent areas supporting research groups pursuing specific themes. Certainly, some institutions in poor countries may be too small to support more than a single joint research initiative.

The concentration of thematic research in certain institutions has much to recommend it in terms of enhancing intellectual interaction and feedback. It also attracts the interest of possible donors and external partners that no small team of individual researchers can usually do. In reality, however, a problem with institutions in developing countries is their fragility and often cumbersome and out-dated administrative procedures. Many may be inclined, given their entrenched interests, to exercise authoritarian control and charge high servicing fees. In addition, established institutions can be elitist and ignore the legitimate claims of young but as yet non-established researchers, placing unfair obstacles in their way. This whole issue has been the subject of extensive discussion in PEP and the arguments for and against, including those related to relative costs, are elaborated in more detail in the main report.

Leadership in capacity building for empirical enquiry emanates from the Université Laval and Angelo King Institute and the excellent way their respective programmes of research are organised. It also owes a great deal to the dedication and skills of the PEP research managers and their teams of academic consultants and advisers. The basic research tools and techniques taught, the specialist technical advice that is offered, the encouragement of an open-minded approach and a politically neutral stance, the creation of awareness plus the opportunities for exposure to conferences and to the work of other researchers are all valuable [and essentially indispensable] building blocks for creating a permanent knowledge base. It represents a huge investment in human capital. These are lasting assets in the quest to support countries’ efforts to develop their own development initiatives, national policies, long term strategies and international negotiation positions.

It would be helpful if the network could make it more clear whether the capacity building that is of key significance in the PEP philosophy is geared primarily to the individual researcher, to the creation of a body of independent research that represents

an expanding repository of knowledge and thinking, to the institution in which the researcher works, or is intended to apply to the operational management of the country itself. The idea behind this is that the existence of a separate, publicly available and independent store of knowledge should lead to a more balanced and careful consideration of policy options. But capacity building that leads only to the advancement of individual academic careers and that enhances the possibility of a subsequent appointment overseas, is more debatable. Furthermore, if the research undertaken replaces work that the institution itself should be undertaking as a normal part of its mandated responsibilities, external financial support from PEP may seem more questionable.

3.5. Risks of Compartmentalisation

Inevitably, by its very nature, a programme that opens up the possibility of providing financial support to individuals through a process of competitive bidding for a limited number of small, standard value research grants runs the risk of either covering the ground too thinly or compartmentalizing activities into reasonably well-defined topic areas. This tends to encourage the submission of neat and concise projects with distinct but limited objectives. There is also a danger that valid and potentially influential but high cost research projects will not be attracted to PEP sources of funding, not because it is not valued but because it might affect the eligibility of those involved to apply for other funding.

The ‘niche’ problem is accentuated in PEP by the division of financial and intellectual support into the three sub-component realms of the network. This categorization clearly facilitates the selection process. It also recognizes institutional strengths in overseeing the research, encourages internal coherence and ensures academic respectability. But, equally, this separation may overlook potential opportunities for inter-connecting themes and issues, particularly within specific countries. The PEP network may wish to consider, therefore, the virtue of pre-assigning a higher profile to selected themes and topics and to taking a more restrictive view about the capacity of the host country to benefit. The overall intention would be to maximize the potential exploitation of local externalities.

3.6. Partnerships and External Involvement

The future sustainability and continuing consolidation of the PEP network requires the increased engagement of other actors. The involvement of additional partners in a cooperative effort has both intellectual and financial advantages. Widening participation improves transparency and strengthens the democratic process. There is scope to take on temporary associates for particular reasons and circumstances as well as a longer term need to contract more permanent partners who will take on an active role in all aspects of PEP’s present activities. It would also be beneficial to be able to call from time to time on the support of a ‘college of cardinals’, an opinion forming civil association such as the local economic society, or groups like the Fabians, the Asia Society or Asian Foundation. These societies bring together people with different disciplinary backgrounds who have an interest in the outcome of research and who exercise some measure of influence. In this connection, the local Chamber of Commerce, a trade association and the Rotary Club might be able to offer help in

different but specific ways. They can usually provide a forum for the practical testing of ideas and enquiry methods and, significantly, they are able to give moral support to surveys based around their constituent membership.

The involvement of affected groups, the community (especially local NGOs) and of civil society in general is clearly desirable in pursuing the quest for broad consensus along both professional and policy lines. New ways, other than formal working papers, should be explored to align maximum support for PEP research findings so that they can claim widespread legitimacy and have the greatest impact on decision makers. Means also must be found to give a stronger voice and wider forum to local young researchers whose work currently attracts only limited attention. The format of dissemination and the language of research and public presentation of results may need to be reviewed to make results more publicly available and digestible.

3.7. Policy Foundations and Formulation

In freely putting out all the research findings, PEP's aim is to introduce fresh thinking into policy. Its prime intention is to galvanise official actions at all levels of government, at the very least by presenting a list of findings and an associated agenda that cannot be immediately brushed to one side. The merit of PEP research is that it is independent and non-partisan, unlike the political process and the ideological models of development and associated performance indicators assumed by major donors. The ability to test truth at its face value and to challenge existing paradigms is the first step in an advocacy agenda to reformulate policy in favour of those most disadvantaged, vulnerable and in need.

This raises a wider question as to whether PEP research should be primarily empirical and related pragmatically to a particular policy issue or situation, or whether it should also address concerns about the underlying methodology and mode of enquiry. When MPIA projects adopt a general equilibrium model to test policy impacts, there is a temptation to apply specific techniques and to adopt systematic structures readily available off the shelf [such as in GTAP, IFPRI and University of Laval approaches]. The management team takes great care to ensure the technical rigour of research studies arguing relevantly that, to be recognised and accepted, the work must reach the highest standards as well as being applicable to a current issue of concern. In a sense, this does, indeed, make them more policy relevant. The CBMS method of enquiry is, in a way, similar in that it provides both a systemic and systematic approach to local data compilation. But it is mainly an empirical survey procedure where the methodology has been refined by earlier enquiries that have been undertaken that allows the 'model' can be applied in a more or less standard way in different contexts and continents. All PEP enquiry methods, nevertheless, possess the virtue of allowing researchers to gain crucial knowledge about the potential tools of enquiry that can be applied while also permitting a more harmonised approach to cross-country comparative analysis. It is less clear that the numerical outcomes of CGE modelling are equally robust, at least for some important local policy issues that do not involve trade and tariff changes. Policies involving a more political and psychological perception as, say, applies in the case of stimulating foreign investment project or the sitting and need for a new international airport or introduction of a rapid transit system in the capital city are less susceptible to some forms of macro

assessment but bring to the table well tried techniques to determine locational impacts.

Ultimately, of course, PEP would like to see its research make inroads in terms not only of making methodological advances, including the ‘tweaking’ of existing models to make them more suitable for the various situations found in less developed countries, but also in creating new knowledge useful for policy review and formulation. Using the tools of empirical enquiry, PEP provides the relevant local ‘facts’ designed to benefit the countries hosting their research projects in implementing policies to reduce poverty. This may be more successfully achieved if, initially, a greater effort can be made to pre-define those areas where the scope of research is likely to get some support because the study proposes to deal with issues and questions that are inter-related and focused around a wider theme falling under one or more of the sub-components of the PEP network. This would require the whole selection committee, meeting together, to give thought and consideration, before inviting proposals, to those, perhaps country specific areas of policy importance they feel projects should address

4. Some Questions and Issues

4.1. Technical and Conceptual Arrangements

The review team asked a number of questions about how the existing network arrangements and priorities in their areas could be refined and extended to improve the value of PEP research. The following briefly reviews the contributions that have been made by each of the three sub-networks. The outcomes may have implications for the future style and structure of the network’s management and help contribute to some strengthening of the conceptual links between the three PEP sub- components

A study of the list of topics approved suggests that many of the core effects being studied in the research projects are interlinked. However, without an extensive impact assessment of each project it may not be quite so evident how the present PEP research arrangements and its framework of support can capture the essence of these common links and thus build on observed inter- relationships to the benefit of policy.

4.2. Impact Assessment

There are two levels at which an assessment is needed to judge the impact of the PEP network. The first relates to the effectiveness of the network and its management structure at carrying out the various tasks it has taken on for itself in respect of selecting and processing research enquiries in different developing countries. The second concerns the evaluation of the impact of these specific research studies on the countries themselves; whether the incidence and level of poverty has been reduced as a direct result and the overall level of well-being improved.

A previous and very useful impact study conducted for IDRC by Paul Shaeffer, while pre-dating PEP, still retains its relevance to evaluations of the three PEP sub-networks in respect of their declared goals. The study attempted to ‘tease out’ areas of convergence and divergence between the core MIMAP pillars of enquiry and set out to explore the links between policies and well-being, mainly as categorised through the MPIA and PMMA research streams. At a conceptual level, it showed that, in these

areas, there was a convergence related to the use of formal modelling techniques based on micro data and a common [economic theoretic] methodological approach that was able to identify similar transmission procedures through which certain policies could, in principle, impact on well-being. Yet the impact of PEP activities has been shown to be clearest, in a practical policy sense, in respect of the work carried out by the CBMS stream because those at risk in a country are clearly and unambiguously identified.

PEP closely monitors and supervises the nature of the research conducted on a continuous basis to ensure its quality and potential relevance. What is missing, however, and thus perhaps needs to be looked into at some future date, is the way specific PEP research studies have had an impact at the country level on people, on the way policy is conducted, and how the emphasis and broad direction of government thinking has been changed.

This may have implications, perhaps, for the more precise definition of the appropriate empirical foundations and sources for future studies. An important objective will be to make sure the sum of the separate component parts of the network contribute to a more coherent whole. For instance, an effort to identify the means to secure the MDGs at the local community level might prove more efficient and effective than the present top-down and top-heavy approach that emphasizes undue reliance on energising macro level interventions but does not specify by whom. This is also a matter, therefore, of making sure the core thematic areas remain part of an overall coordinated perspective on poverty policy and that they are not separately assessed and procedurally developed by their respective management steering committees as distinct ‘stovepipes’ containing sets of specific individual and usually independent research studies that may be distributed across a wide range of countries at different stages of development.

Can PEP research make a real impact at the country level? With the help of the existing statistical techniques, a more enlightened and alert approach by PEP network members can begin to distinguish the possible significance of their combined research initiatives in influencing policy. The steering committees need to advise the researchers in their sub-networks to maintain a watching eye and compile evidence of how their studies appear to be changing the emphasis of policy thinking and if their work is having a real effect on observed outcomes. It is relevant to know whether studies by small groups of nationals are likely to have an influence and overcome the prevailing national institutional and cultural conditions that so often create a local socio-political environment that negates the value of their research findings.

This is as much a theoretical concern of distinguishing between the various ‘confounding’ factors affecting the outcome of quantitative research and what variables might have been omitted as it is a question of how better to position PEP research to make sure its results are relevant. They can be offered as options in the agenda of available evidence that should receive careful consideration by policymakers. How far is it PEP’s central responsibility to disseminate the findings of the network by supporting formal presentations and getting engaged in discussions with national officials? Is there an obligation on PEP to actively promote the work and outcomes of its projects? If so, how can it contribute to informing policymakers and making them more accountable? In other words, can PEP do more to help

developing country experts get a toe-hold on policy by getting their work more centrally positioned on the map and thus encourage them to be more fully engaged in national policy and, specifically, the PRSP process?

What are the possible synergies of specific research? Can some of the recognised but more intangible benefits of conducting research in a particular way be factored into how the research enquiry is initially set up and the programme of enquiry actually organised? How can policy edicts be made the outcome of a more consultative process and dialogue, and consultation be turned into true participation? The cross-fertilisation of ideas and research procedures has proved beneficial and must be encouraged to exploit the potential synergies of such interaction. And, equally, efforts should be made to identify and build on the externalities coming out of cooperative research and on the spin-offs to the institutions supporting researchers.

Does some attention need to be paid to the various guidelines and criteria that define whether a proposal is a) desirable and b) feasible? And what are the trade-offs to be considered?

At present there are three core thematic pillars to PEP; MPIA, PMMA and CBMS. These cover a wide range of potential policy interventions. The criteria applied in reviewing draft research proposals and their acceptance include the potential for capacity building, policy relevance, scientific merit, geographical 'spread' (and whether the host country is low income), the applicability of the research to the country and the benefits it will bring to the network. Subsumed under these broader criteria are more specific questions concerning relevance such as 'what are the real policy issues?', 'what are the policy questions being asked by the policymakers and 'what are the priorities being attached to them?' More practically, every project must answer the question 'are sufficient data of the right quality available to test the hypotheses and answer the defined research questions?' Another basic question relevant, say, to the Sudan, Somalia, East Timor and Zimbabwe is 'will the activity prove permissible and, of equal importance, sustainable locally?' The hardest thing is to persuade poorly governed countries to adopt good policies.

Over and above all these issues is the scope and direction of the research itself; such as, does it have a gender or, say, a rural-urban or formal-informal dimension? Having said this, is the objective of the selection process to have a thematic 'balance'? If so how might this be achieved as between themes, criteria, focal areas and research topics? In essence this is a question about how judgements concerning the selection of proposals can be improved across the various 'stovepipes' and how PEP can constructively influence the design of the project itself.

There is, perhaps, an additional problem insofar as all research proposals are offered an identical amount of funding (as well as study visits and resource support) irrespective of the potential size and complexity of the project. Thus each proposal is stuffed into much the same financial pot which could constrain its potential outreach on the one hand or make it flush with funds on the other.

One preliminary thought is that this may be less of a problem when dealing with CBMS proposals. Most of these seem to adopt relatively similar and sometimes common features of enquiry method in respect of their structure and overall research design. Indeed, CBMS projects, though sometimes less participatory than is widely

presumed, reflect a fairly standard applied methodological approach that is readily replicable across many countries. This yields benefits that could have more general application than, perhaps, other enquiries with a uniquely defined specific focus and policy commitment.

Is there scope for looking at long-term development concerns? Current research must be completed, to all intents and purposes, in an 18-month time frame. This limits the potential size of the programme and its scope; long-term questions tend to demand more data spread over a longer period. Pooling outdated cross-section data to provide a basis to arrive at conclusions about the attainment of MDG goals by 2015 is neither sufficient nor legitimate.

5. Refining PEP Oversight and Objectives

5.1. Project Selection

Many of the above questions pose issues for deciding the best way to manage PEP's difficult project selection procedures. There seems to be an unwritten understanding that selection from the proposals submitted should be evenly allocated across the three sub-networks. This reflects the respective capacities of the supervisory teams as presently constituted to handle the successful implementation and outcomes of the projects assigned to them. Research proposals are currently approved on a one by one basis. They are mostly on the basis of their individual merit and inherent research interest, academic confidence in the researcher's outline programme and an appraisal of his or her demonstrated ability to manage the work and thus provide the necessary intellectual insight to interpret their findings. Instead of placing significant emphasis on strengthening local individual expertise and capabilities, which ultimately could be lost to areas elsewhere, could PEP's involvement prove more valuable by focusing on a wider institutional capacity building and national competence?

Some of the latter concerns are currently being addressed, albeit partially and primarily at a conventional statistical level (where certain gaps in standard data series are clearly evident), by the World Bank and IMF and several other international institutions. What is missing in most countries, however, is the ability of an independent institution itself to support an ongoing policy related programme of poverty reduction research.

5.2. Capacity Creation

In discussions with a wide range of PEP researchers, it was repeated time and again that what they valued most, in the absence of very much local interest and concern, was the feeling that they were no longer isolated and marooned on a deserted atoll because they had access to an understanding and knowledgeable PEP staff and were given the chance to interact with its internationally recognised resource experts. PEP's continual guidance and advice on the back of a coordinated programme of study visits to Laval and AKI were seen by all to be absolutely invaluable.

5.3. Sustainability

Two key questions arise from these observations; can more be done to create economies of scale by centring research around a specific hub? Can this work as a local forum of researchers with no real base that comprises a virtual national PEP network or must the hub be an actual physical institution? Are there extra spin-off benefits to be gained by having an across the board thematic approach, that is, research activities and projects with inter-connected MPIA, PMMA and CBMS aspects of enquiry in the same country? If so, how can these projects interact with each other to maximum advantage not only to the separate research outcomes and to the policy process but also to the creation of an influential pool of local expertise? This report believes the former to be possible and desirable and that PEP management is right to be looking into the means of achieving this goal.

The other big questions about organising the PEP programme relate to the attractiveness of establishing a research continuum, with a pipeline of activities engaging collaborative local and external support. This would build on existing research and contacts developed through the network and provide additional tools for expanding the flow of relevant inputs into the PRSP and MDG process, opening new arteries to funding.

5.4 Situating Similar Research Institutions with PEP

This review has been anxious to underline the public goods nature of what PEP does and to emphasize its unique role in supporting developing country researchers and the contribution of their activities to policy and strengthening local capacity and existing knowledge base. Refining PEP functions and outreach may imply re-defining the scope and range of its activities to take account of what other agencies may be doing. Some concern has been expressed about an apparent proliferation of organisations concerned with supporting research into areas designed to promote development in poorer countries, and particularly to bring about poverty reduction and its alleviation. These could be seen, perhaps, as competing operations and thus rivals to PEP. While the following list is probably not comprehensive, it does try to identify and describe the research activities of these alternative organisations, according to their respective mandates and spheres of influence that might be seen as being similar in certain respects to PEP.

a. Global Operators

**Several institutions conduct international development research. These include:
The Global Development Network [GDN]**

This is a worldwide network of research and policy institutions set up in 1999 by the World Bank in Washington dedicated to address the pressing development challenges of the day. It is now based in India but the Bank continues to have a strong tacit and implicit intellectual influence on its agenda. It comprises an association of workers who are encouraged to contribute to building local research capacity. The GDN supports high quality policy-oriented research in the social sciences designed to promote more rapid and sustainable development.

The Center for Global Development [CGD]

The CGD is an independent think-tank of well-established researchers, mostly from the USA, with international reputations. The staff work to reduce global poverty and inequality by encouraging policy change in the US and other rich countries through rigorous research and active engagement with the poverty community.

While both these institutions maintain high profiles and pursue very desirable policy objectives and also look at macro development issues of concern to PEP, they are not in any sense in competition with the network and its way of operating.

World Institute of Development Economics Research [WIDER]

WIDER is part of the UN University and it is based in Helsinki, Finland. The Institute places a special emphasis on the problems of inequality and poverty. It supports and publishes work carried out by its researchers, comprising a core group of resident staff members and visiting who are invited to spend time at WIDER on limited duration contracts to conduct various approved studies. There is also a network of external project directors located in their own universities and institutes who coordinate the research activities of 300 network members, almost all of whom have some UN international agency affiliation. There is an internship programme for Ph.D students pursuing research in areas of interest to WIDER that allows them to spend up to half a year benefiting from the guidance of resident staff and library facilities at the Institute. In certain respects, the Institute has a structure similar to PEP but with six Nobel Laureates associated at various times with its research projects, and involvement of high-level UN personnel and people on academic secondment, the people driving the WIDER agenda are quite different. Many associated with the Institute, even if they are from a developing country or serving in one, are there only in a transitory capacity. In this sense, WIDER does not offer the same type of indigenous developing country knowledge and investment as that provided by PEP.

b. Canadian Agencies

Specific to the role of IDRC as a Canadian based agency are the following:

North-South Institute [NSI]

The NSI does not have the independent arms-length research features that are embedded in the PEP mandate but is an independent Canadian (Ottawa-based) non-profit institution conducting research relating to international development. The key topics it covers include governance, gender and ways to achieve the goal of a fairer world. It conducts research on Canada's relations with developing countries on a wide range of foreign policy issues. Like PEP, it is dedicated to eradicating world poverty but it chooses a different route to achieve this end based on enhancing social justice through promoting cooperation, democracy and conflict prevention rather than adopting more appropriate socio-economic policies. It generates research findings for policymakers, educators, business, the media and general public. The main aim is to offer objective, non-partisan interpretative policy analysis and information. It explores the respective roles of the public and private sectors in generating progress and aims to enhance aid effectiveness, strengthen accountability and transparency, and promote a more equitable trade regime. Its main areas of research are;

- finance; debt and development assistance;
- trade and labour conditions, migration
- governance, civil society, gender and conflict prevention

NSI is a registered charity with a strong Afro-centric agenda and focus. It is funded from many sources and by such diverse institutions as the Catholic church, TU organisations, CIDA, IDRC and the Conference Board.

The Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA]

CIDA is Canada's lead agency for development assistance. Its relevance is not that it shares the PEP mandate but that it supports its philosophy. CIDA has close contacts with developing countries, works on a poverty and economic sustainability agenda and is concerned to secure a more equitable, safe and prosperous world. It provides relevant finance and it produces reports. CIDA continuously carries out thorough background research on its current and proposed programmes and projects, but mostly using its own in-house Canadian staff. A primary emphasis at present is to address the critical linkages the agency sees between environmental degradation [with its impact on long term development], poverty and social inequality. The Agency reports to Parliament and is represented officially at the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

The relevance of these two Canadian agencies revolves around the question of whether PEP has a niche role to perform to assist them in providing information and also supplementary support and insight at the country programme level that enables both agencies to achieve their declared objectives.

c. African Institutions

In Sub-Saharan Africa, there two other research networks, which PEP network can be compared with: African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). The three have been established to facilitate networks of African researchers who are in isolation. AERC and CODESRIA are non-profit organizations, with headquarters in Africa and their objectives are to promote research in the continent.

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)

The AERC was established in 1988 and is devoted to the advancement of economic policy research and training. AERC's mission is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into the problems facing the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa.

AERC has many similarities with PEP network. Established since 1988, AERC uses networking as its key strategic instrument for implementing its activities. It supports research, dissemination, and training programs in Sub Sahara Africa. It has similar project selection procedures as PEP network. Research proposals are first filtered and then selected by the Director of Research aided by appointed external reviewers. Selected proposals are then presented at a workshop at the relevant network, where

they are assessed a panel of professional economists, drawn worldwide and peer researchers. Once the proposal accepted and a grant given, the authors have to present their work progress in a biannual research workshop held each year in May and December with the same (in composition) panel. As in the PEP network, apart of the panel support, each author (s) of a paper is assigned a resource person and benefits a support system established through peer review, methodology workshops and literature.

Although AERC research activities are more concentrated in the areas of balance of payments and macroeconomic issues more generally, it is supporting work on poverty policy issues. But unlike PEP network, through this thematic emphasis, AERC concentrates attention on fields such as employment, labour markets, government expenditures, and human capital. This has similarities to the PMMA agenda and AERC research also uses diversified methodologies including computable general equilibrium models and various econometric techniques and models. AERC is very strong in capacity building activities. AERC is more directly concerned with specific economic policy than PEP network. It has a comprehensive communication and outreach strategy designed to encourage the application of AERC research products to economic policy-making.

In addition to publishing its full research results, AERC also disseminates executive summaries and abstracts from the research papers that are issued in a less technical language. In so doing, it facilitates greater access to research findings. It uses also national economic policy workshops and senior policy seminars to discuss policy-oriented syntheses of AERC research. These provide the opportunity to interact with local policy makers on AERC's whole research agenda as well as on specific project results. Every year, policy practitioners are also called upon to join in a policy round table, to discuss policy relevant issues.

A consequence of this is that AERC has more success in economic policy in Sub Saharan Africa than PEP network. AERC members are involved in the formulation of Africa position in the World Trade Organization Doha Round. They were also associated in formulating the African position at the Monterrey Conference. AERC has been engaged frequently for counselling and advising key multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank and African Development Bank on major policy matters. AERC researchers have to date been invited as witnesses to four testimonies to the US Congress on matters pertaining to African development and the operations of the international financial institutions that affect that process.

The background of the resource persons in the AERC network is much diversified and they are known worldwide in their respective field of expertise. Most of them come from international donors institutions such as the World Bank or IMF. AERC also has institutional attachment programmes with IMF, UNECA and the World Bank. May be because of this, AERC has succeeded in being considered as the premier African research body in the field of economics on the continent. But unlike the PEP network, AERC is a non-profit organization with 15 rather than a just a single funding partner. AERC, therefore, seems to have a a more secure and diversified financial resource base than PEP.

CODESRIA

In contrast with the AERC and PEP networks that draw dominantly on the economic community for their research population, CODESRIA is a multidisciplinary institution. The intention of the founding members of CODESRIA was to break down the disciplinary and linguistic-geographical barriers in research on the continent. As with AERC, in the period from around the mid-1980s onwards, CODESRIA, was successful in establishing itself as the premier and pioneer African social science research organisation. CODESRIA has been established since 1973 as a non-profit organisation. Like AERC, CODESRIA is also funded by a variety of donors from around the world.

CODESRIA has many programmes. The ones most comparable with PEP activities fall under the provenance of the Multinational Working Group (MWG). MWG is a “network” of 20-30 researchers from various disciplines working on one of the research priority themes determined by the CODESRIA General Assembly. Researchers are appointed to coordinate the research in each of the MWG. Each MWG commences in its assignment with a methodology workshop to train the researchers selected following the submission of their proposal and is responsible for its research agenda/time table. Once the MWG has completed its work (a life span of two to three years) it convenes a research workshop to present the findings for discussion.

Due to its multidisciplinary dimension, CODESRIA has less impact on economic policy than AERC and the PEP network. It is only in 2002 that CODESRIA introduced the Policy Dialogue Series designed to serve as a platform between African researchers and the policy-making community. These are organized quarterly bringing together the research community, government officials, civil society activists, and representatives of professional organizations, international organizations and specialised agencies. In such activities, relevant research results from studies supported by CODESRIA are introduced into the dialogue; but this seems to be the only vehicle by which CODESRIA gets feed back from the policy community.

On the capacity building issue, CODESRIA awards scholarships to young researchers to complete their MA or Ph.D. thesis and provides some small grants to offset certain associated costs of research. CODESRIA also holds some methodological workshops. PEP has an advantage over CODESRIA on these grounds, but CODESRIA seems to have a stronger dissemination policy.

d. Asian Institutions

A detailed list and description of these is provided in the Addendu
These are:

- a) Pacific Trade and Development Conference (**PAFTAD**)
- b) East Asian Bureau of Economic Research (**EABER**)
- c) The East Asian Development Network (**EADN**)
- d) The South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes (**SANEI**).

In terms of research agenda, both PAFTAD and EABER cover a broad range of development issues in the region but do prioritization in the execution of the research. That is, they do research around a particular theme of interest to the region as a whole and to individual countries within the region, commission senior researchers of member institutions and internationally renowned economists to conduct the studies, and discuss the studies' results and policy implications in international conferences, which include key national policymakers as participants. The two organisations engage established consultants to carry out their research and so any capacity-building component is inevitably only indirect.

EADN and SANEI are regional partners of the Global Development Network (GDN), the former consisting of research institutions and researchers in East Asia, and the latter, in South Asia.⁵ Like PAFTAD and EABER, both EADN and SANEI cover a broad range of development issues in their research agenda and conduct studies around thematic areas, the results of which are to be discussed in regional conferences. Unlike PAFTAD and EABER, however, EADN and SANEI have different structures to PEP and put their main emphasis on strengthening the capacity of research institutions and researchers in developing member countries through awarding research projects to individuals on a competitive basis and through their provision of specific training grants. The character of their capacity-building activities, therefore, is rather different to PEP.

In terms of core activities, however, PEP is probably closer to EADN and SANEI than to PAFTAD and EABER. However, there are significant differences. PEP has a more focused research agenda aimed at analyzing and understanding a wide range of poverty issues and impacts of policies and external shocks on poverty, and builds methodologies and local research capacity around this area. None of the existing networks in Asia has gone deeper into the issues of poverty and has accumulated knowledge and analytical skills than what PEP has done over a relatively short period of time. One factor that clearly distinguishes PEP from other existing networks in the region is its community-based monitoring system. CBMS fills in a large lacuna in knowledge and local policymakers need to better understand the multidimensional nature of poverty so as to improve the allocation of scarce local government resources to address the nature of poverty in their respective communities.

While such contributions to development issues in the region distinguish PEP from other regional networks, PEP can complement other networks' initiatives and vice-versa. The four Asian networks mentioned above conduct researches on impacts of macroeconomic policies and shocks on individual Asian economies, and PEP can make a contribution by analyzing impacts of such factors on poverty using economy-wide models. PEP can lend its expertise to researchers of the four networks wanting to learn about how to analyze poverty in its multidimensional sense. Conversely, studies on poverty done by the four networks can inform PEP specific issues that need to be included in its research agenda. The study done by EADN on urban poverty and safety net can be cited as an example here. Such potential for complementarities between PEP and the existing regional networks can be exploited by establishing a link between them through collaborative research and the linking of their websites to facilitate exchanges of information. PEP could take the initiative in building such relationship.

⁵ The counterpart of these networks in Africa is AERC.

The above Asian research networks are known to governments in the region and to the donor community as distinct specific institutional entities. This is not the case, however, with PEP. Rather, it is the sub-networks, particularly the CBMS, that are known to be contributing to poverty analysis, not PEP as a whole. This is because seldom do all sub-networks have projects in a particular country, and even if all have projects in the same country, policymakers come into contact with them separately rather than as one entity.⁶ In the Philippines where all three sub-networks were present at one particular point in time, there was no conference in which CBMS, MPIA and PMMA researchers together presented the results of their studies. Neither did the PMMA team approach CBMS for assistance to organize a national workshop for the study.

Full descriptions of the African and Asia institutions can be found in the Addendum. It is important to point out, nevertheless, that when comparing PEP research activities with other similar initiatives, full account should be taken of the relative size and resources available to these other institutions.

5.4. Future Financing and Partnerships

The question of funding remains the most contentious issue, not least because of the complexity and inter-connection of PEP's organisation and research activities and the variety of its many 'products'. It can be divided into a number of separate issues:

- i) the need for 'core' budget resources to support the continued overview and administration of the PEP network
- ii) developing a pipeline of research funding that can be used for to conduct different projects in various parts of the world
- iii) financing the study visits and travel of researchers
- iv) support for holding an annual general conference and regional and thematic meetings
- v) coordinating and conducting joint research with local authorities and other agencies
- vi) providing seed funds for new initiatives and procedures.
- vii) financing the publication of research and the wider dissemination of results

While these are mostly unique stand-alone activities, they are all inter-related and if one fails, it undermines the value of other important aspects of the network. It may be possible to bundle several activities in various ways to take account of the defined

⁶ For example, when a Mayor was informed that there are MPIA researchers in the country that are looking at macroeconomic policies on poverty, which is part of the PEP project to which CBMS belongs, as a response to his comment that such issue is important but not being discussed during the conference, his quick reaction was that he does not really know or heard about PEP and MPIA nor does know that CBMS is part of PEP.

rules by which funds held by donors are allocated to national and overseas institutions or research teams of individuals. It is normally easier to apply for funds under a programme with defined objectives and a specified philosophy, such as knowledge creation, human capital development and national capacity building, than to find finance for specific individual projects, however well specified and rigorous the research.

6. Summary and Concluding Observations

In a short space of time PEP it has achieved many goals and accomplished much of what it originally set out to do. It has also acquitted itself in an exemplary manner in accordance with IDRC basic criteria of excellence, proper supervision, effective quality control, strong local participation and the exercise of due diligence [Wind, Kavanagh, March 2005; Adams, Kavanagh, March 2005]. PEP activities have been welcomed inside and outside those developing countries for which the programme and its projects have been conducted and where approved new research continues. The network has established an effective framework of communication and a process of research coordination that is maintained within a well-defined and transparent structure of governance. Not surprisingly, the network is strongly supported by its members who value its support, realise a sense of shared ownership and share a mutual empathy with its objectives. To date, while there are some important exceptions, the PEP network has been far more successful in capacity building and associated technical training, and in the development of new knowledge and sources of data, than it has in influencing development policy. Yet, this is hardly surprising; the network has been in existence for little more than four years, and the first two years had to be devoted primarily to establishing the PEP network and getting its various operations properly up and running.

The Summary at the beginning of the report has highlighted most of the main conclusions of the review team. The list of recommendations offers some detailed suggestions on ways to improve the systemic organisation of the PEP network and to reinforce the connectivity of its programme, particularly to make it more policy effective. It is in this crucial policy area that PEP is anxious to exercise a more persuasive influence and wield some stronger 'clout'. CBMS activities of survey and training have emerged as highly relevant and useful development management tools and some considerable success has been achieved in Asia in demonstrating CBMS research outcomes have immediate policy relevance. The potential may be even greater if, as in some Philippines applications, local officials can be more intimately involved throughout the duration of the surveys and research. Closer interaction with not only local officials but also possible donors, NGOs and those international agencies with a presence in the country could raise the profile of such studies. As indicated earlier, it seems such suggestions will work best where there is already a strong element of decentralised government and decision-making. It is suggested that researchers presenting proposals in this area should include a brief explanation of the extent and nature of decentralisation in a country and how their work and their results will be integrated into that framework

In other areas, so far, PEP research has received relatively little recognition at the national government level, although there is increasing interest from several international institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and UNDP that exert a

significant influence over the policies of their developing country member. . Renewed efforts are needed to convince national authorities of the operational significance of PEP research outcomes and alert them to the costs of not bringing these to the policy table. Apart from establishing various forums for explaining the relevance of PEP results, parallel work can be conducted to define the counterfactual scenarios and to draw attention to comparative experience in other countries where the network has an active research programme. In this way, the specific national modelling activities of the MPIA group and performance and correspondence analysis of PMMA researchers can be seen as lures and to have more specific policy resonance.

All PEP researchers interviewed are dedicated and well motivated professionals who are instilled with a clear sense of purpose. Fresh efforts seem necessary, however, to inculcate a research philosophy among politicians and policymakers within host countries and to encourage a greater willingness to absorb, nationally, PEP project findings. These factors are crucial to establishing a strong indigenous knowledge capital base. The foundation of both new knowledge and of local, non-transient intellectual capital whereby information, experience and understanding can be fully exploited and built upon by host countries is a major priority of PEP. The goal is to ensure this is converted into the necessary knowledge and wisdom that is utilised constructively to inform government decisions. National policymakers will then become more aware of the policy issues and alternatives and, hopefully, seek to apply this better understanding to the long-term improvement of policy operations and the planning of strategic development. The review offers some suggestions and guidelines as to how the present programme can provide further added value to policy analysis while remaining adaptable to the changing agendas of governments and maintaining its ongoing relevance. By these means, it is hoped to ensure the future sustainability and value of the PEP network.

To broaden the scope of potential policy relevance, it is also proposed that PEP researchers who have completed their studies be invited to present their most significant findings at a joint forum. The choice can be based on a review of the Executive Summaries of all PEP studies and, consequently, these will need to highlight not just their main results but also the implications of their findings for policy. The best outcomes can then be amalgamated into PEP 'Policy Briefs' that have both general strategic application and importance and some can go into shorter newsletters that draw out specific lessons for particular countries. Timing is important to having a public impact and for elevating the profile and usefulness of the research activities conducted under PEP auspices and perhaps, ideally, the proposed forum should be held before the implementation of the next stage, that is, Phase III, of the PEP programme and just before the Annual General Conference. A good editor may have to be hired to produce the necessary publications.

Greater success in making an impact on the policy debate and in influencing the direction of a country's development path, nevertheless, may well have a potential downside. Donors, publicly, are often concerned not to interfere in the sovereign right of countries to determine their own future and so may be reluctant to support research that, while conducted by nationals, appears to be directed and supervised by outside institutions, mostly with a base in the developed world.. There is a grey dividing line and PEP should be prepared to pre-empt any such suggestion that it is wielding undue influence and that it is emphasising, either explicitly or implicitly in its filtering process, certain policy directions.

While these questions are being worked out, IDRC faces its own limitations of finance and staff time. This has forced the organisation to exercise more stringent control and careful stewardship in husbanding its scarce resources. IDRC favours more integrated and coordinated strategies of development and thus it continues to encourage networks that serve as effective catalysts in furthering IDRC's wider agenda. PEP embraces this philosophy and fully recognises the need to press forward with new ideas to support more sustainable and egalitarian development. Divorced from political pressure, PEP management has pursued a sound, viable and valuable research programme that recognises the core priorities of development and the need to accord countries the power, most importantly, to have a stronger say in their policies.

Appendix A: List of individuals consulted and interviewed

1. Addis Ababa, June 18-22, 2006

IDRC

Evan Due [also in Singapore, September 2006]
Martha Melesse [and Ottawa November 2006]]
Marie-Claude Martin [and Ottawa, November 2006]
Elias Ayuk
Lachlan Munro

PEP

Chris Scott, PEP Steering Committee
Bernard Decaluwe, MPIA, CIRPÉE, University of Laval
Pramila Krishnan, University of Cambridge
Nicola Jones, Save the Children Fund, UK
Louis-Marie Asselin, University of Laval
Momar Sylla, PEP, Senegal [and in Dakar]
Ramon Clarete, MPIA [also in Manila]
John Cockburn, MPIA, CIRPÉE, University of Laval [also in Ottawa]
Jean-Yves Duclos, PMMA, CIRPÉE, University of Laval
Ponciano Intal, Jr [and in Manila]
Swapna Mukhopadhyay, PEP Steering Committee
Jane Mariara, PMMA, University of Nairobi
Try Sonthearith, CBMS, National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia [also in Manila]
Aissatou Diop, PEP African Office, Senegal
Evelyne Joyal, MPIA, CIRPÉE, University of Laval
Li Wang, MPIA, China
Dileni Gunewardena, PMMA, Sri Lanka
Daniel Suryadarma, CBMS, Indonesia
Erwin Corong, MPIA, Philippines
Fenglina Du, PMAA, China
Margaret Chitiga, MPIA, South Africa
Christian Arnault, MPIA, Cameroon
Maria Inés Terra-Ortiz, MPIA, Uruguay
Marie-Odile Attanasso, CBMS, Benin
Martin Valdivia, PMAA, Peru
Ponciano Intal, Jr., PEP Steering Committee
Rajan Kumar Guha, CBMS, Bangladesh
Rizwana Siddiqui, MPIA, Pakistan
Selim Raihan, MPIA, Bangladesh
Tuan Anh Vu, CBMS, Viet Nam
Vilon Viphonzag, CBMS, Lao PDR

Non-PEP

Randy Spence, Economic and Social Development Affiliates
Sherman Robinson, IFPRI and University of Sussex; GTAP Conference
David Evans, University of Sussex, GTAP Conference [also in Cambridge]

Scott McDonald, University of Sheffield, GTAP Conference
Tom Hertel, Purdue University
Nanak Kakwani, UNDP International Poverty Centre, Brazil
Maurizio Bussolo, The World Bank
Hans Lofgren, The World Bank

In addition, the team members held joint interactive meetings with the three sub-network researchers. These were both structured in the sense that, initially, a basic set of common questions was asked about PEP arrangements, and ‘free-wheeling’ so as to get personal feedback in a group context where others involved could agree or disagree with the opinions expressed.

2. Manila

Persons interviewed by Mario Lamberte during the CBMS-Network Conference, November, 2006:

Ranjan Guha, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
Md. Abdul Quader, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
Marie Odile Attanasso, Universite d’ Abomey Calavi, Cotonou, Benin
Lea Tchobo, Benin
Kim Net, National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia
Felix Ankomah Asante, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Ghana
Cythia Addoquaye Tagoe; Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Ghana
Daniel Suryadarma, SMERU Research Institute, Indonesia
Md. Akhmedi, SMERU Research Institute, Indonesia
Rangya Kyulo Muro, Town Planning, Dodoma Municipal Council, Tanzania
Domitilla, Institute of Regional Development Planning, Dodoma, Tanzania
Vu Tuan Anh, Socio Economic Development Center, Viet Nam
Nguyen Xuan-Mai, Institute of Sociology, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
Sengmany Keolangsy, National Statistics Center, Lao PDR
Soukanh Sykayphack, National Statistics Center, Lao PDR

Interviews with Officials in Manila; Michael Ward and Mario Lamberte, September 2006:

a. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)

Assistant Secretary Austere Panadero
Ms. Anna Bonagua- Section Chief, Local Planning Division
Ms. Priscella Mejillano- OIC, Local Planning Division

b. National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)

Attorney. Datu Reza Sinsuat, Chief of the Staff of the former Secretary of NAPC (Datu Zamzamin Sinsuat)

c. Congress (House of Representatives)

Hon. Albert S. Garcia, Representative, 2nd District of the Province of Bataan

d. National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)

Dir. Erlinda Capones, Director, Social Development Staff, NEDA

e. League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP)

Mr. Jouhlan Aralar Chief-Policy, Plans and Programs Office

Atty. Romeo Plata-Chief of Administration and Legal Office

Mr. Third Espejo, MDG Project Coordinator

f. Institute for Democratic Participation in Governance (IDPG)- Eastern Visayas

Mr. Oscar Francisco-Managing Trustee

3. West Africa

Persons interviewed by Aimé Gogue, October- November, 2006

Lea Akoété Ega AGBODJI, Researcher MPIA, CREA Dakar

Akilou AMADOU, Researcher, MPIA Lomé Togo

Marie-Odile ATTANASSO, Resarcher , CBMS, Université Nationale du Bénin,
Abomey Calavy, Bénin

Kokou BANIGANTI, Reserarcher, Univesité de Lomé

Fatou CISSE, researcher

Abdoulaye DIAGNE, Director

Oumar Diop DIAGNE, Researcher

Aïssatou DIOP, PEP African office, MPIA-PMMA, Dakar

Kossi Agbeviade DJOKE , Researcher, Ministry of Health, Togo

Ismael FOFANA, Director, PEP's African Office, Dakar

Borel FOKO, Researcher

Momar SYLLA, CBMS Steering Committee, Direction de la Prévision et de la
Statistique, Senegal

Jean Bosco KI, PMMA, Deputy Network Leader

Boevi Kouglo LAWSON BODY, Researcher, Université de Lomé

Damien MEDEDJI, Researcher, Bénin

Abdelkhalek TOUHAMI, MPIA Steering Committee, Institut National de Statistiques
et d'Economie Appliquée (Rabat)

Cosme Zinsou VODOUNOU, PMMA Steering Committe Member, Direction de la
Statistique, Bénin

4. Washington DC

Robert Gillingham, IMF

Mustafa Mujeri, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka

Dil Raj Khanal, Institute for Policy research and Development, Nepal

Nicholas Adamtey, Integrated Social Development Centre, Ghana

Cesar Cororaton, Philippines Institute for Development Studies, Manila
Samuel Fandon, University of Yaounde II, Cameroon
Peter Paulson, PSIA, DFID, UK
Olivier Dupriez, The World Bank
Jo-Marie Griesgraber, New Rules for Global Finance NGO

5. Ottawa, Canada

Andres Rius, IDRC
Brent Herbert-Copley, IDRC
Prof. Tom Rymes, Carleton University
Denys Cooper, Canadian Scientific Research Council

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ADDENDUM

The Independent External Evaluation of the Poverty and Economic Policy [PEP] Research Networks; The Regional Perspective

Supporting Reports and Evidence from the Review Team

PART A. Aimé Gogue

I. 'RAPPORT EVALUATION RESEAU PEP'

POLICY IMPACT

On scientific ground, PEP networks achievement is manifest. The ideology free of the resource persons and of the scientific supervisors, the excellent quality of the scientific process of approval of proposals and of interim and final reports and the diversity of the references given to the researchers ensure that the reports in the three networks are of high quality and international standards. The network addresses topics that are vital for SSA countries: namely, poverty. Poverty Strategy Reduction Papers (PSRP) are, in most African countries, the sole medium term development strategy document. These strategies are ones supported by major donors to these countries.

A second aspect of PEP has to do with the professional history of some of the former researchers of the network. In fact some of the past PEP network researchers have been promoted in cabinets of ministers or work in international institutions. These promotions are not necessarily linked to their previous research in the network.

Due to the quality of the research done, the relevance of the thematic focus of the three PEP sub networks and the positions of some of it (former) members, it should have been expected that PEP network should have had a great impact on policy dialogue in these countries. In Senegal for example, the researchers of CREA have been associated with the PSRP process. CREA, of the Chiek Anta Diop University of Dakar and a partner institution of PEP network, has been closely involved in the process: CREA has written the draft PSRP report of Senegal and attended most of the workshops where the papers and recommendations were discussed. Policy makers have been involved during the study. Policy makers (public administration and professionals) have often attended the launching seminar of the MIMAP studies. Professionals from statistical department, Ministry of finance are part of some of the research teams of MIMAP.

PEP seems conscious of the necessity and importance of policy impact of the researches of the network. It is for this purpose that the network has conceived a methodology for improving the policy dimension of the researches. First, policy relevance is one of the criteria for the approval of a proposal. Second, each research study, after the final report is approved, is entitled to a subsidy. This National Conference grant of CAD\$ 2000 for each of the completed study is for dissemination of PMMA and MPIA research findings.

Unfortunately, may be due to the limited number of the researchers in each of the country, many things are done in PEP but go unnoticed in SSA countries. The impact of PEP researches on policy seems low. This situation can be harmful for the efficiency of poverty reduction and the achievement of MGD in the countries. In most of the countries the departments in charge of PSRP are not aware of the existence of the PEP network researchers not to talk about the conclusion of their studies. For example, most SSA countries use only the monetary approach to poverty whereas the multidimensional aspects of poverty, which well studied in PMMA sub network, are ignored in poverty analysis and strategies, most often. The intensification of the interaction between PEP researches and the PSRP process will therefore be of great benefit for the countries.

Policy impact of CBMS may be easier to achieve. First, due to the regional dimension of poverty in most of the countries, each Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper is decentralized; but the implementation, monitoring and assessment is not done because of lack of data on local level. Country level data on poverty indicators are available, may be also on regional level but rarely on local level. Data provided by CBMS studies can therefore bridge the gap in helping for the monitoring of the poverty strategies implementation at local level.

Second, by making available data on poverty at local level, CBMS gives ground for project justification, formulation and selection at local level. It is in this respect that in the case of Senegal, according to a CBMS researcher, UNDP planned to finance an “energy-poverty” project, which is intended to provide electricity to a community. UNDP also intend to finance a similar project in Burkina Faso. The data also make it possible for UNIFEM to promote a gender sensitive budgeting.

But the level of CBMS impact on policy will depend on the group with who CBMS researcher team interacts at the local government level and on the decentralization policy in the country. If CBMS team interacts with elected officials, the term of tenure of the later will be of importance for policy impact. It is better that there is a team member from the district administration if qualified human resource is available at the district level. A second best solution would be for the district administration to assign a member of its technical personnel involved in policy formulation to follow up the study done or that the team report to this technical person. *It is then recommended that the proposal be supported by the local elected official who will select a technical member of the personnel to either be on the research team or to “follow” the evolution of the study.*

If the country has a centralized type of government, the districts may not have power in policy formulation and implementation. In this case, even though CBMS researches may however be useful for sector policy at the local level, the policy impact may be very limited. *On policy impact ground, it will be therefore recommendable that CBMS sub network be focused on countries where decentralization policy is well advance. For that reason, one will suggest that in each CBMS sub network proposal, the author makes a short presentation of the decentralization policy in the country.*

PEP has to take advantage of the professional position of its (former) researchers. To do this, PEP has to establish and update the list of PEP (former) researchers and to track their professional carriers. They will be useful to “open” the doors to the policy makers and the donor community. The PEP newsletter can be useful for this purpose

and these researchers have to be on this mailing list. It will be used to post news from (former) PEP researchers and the main conclusions of studies.

The policy impact of PEP research can be increased if there is more interaction between researchers and policy makers. On way of improving this interaction and to promote the impact of research findings on policy, will be to have *a one to two days workshop with researchers, policy makers and some of NGOs and some private sectors involved in poverty alleviation strategy elaboration and implementation. For cost effectiveness, these seminars should precede the Annual General Assemblies.* The participants to be invited (policy makers) should come from the departments in relation with the studies done on the countries. PEP can also think of organizing a workshop of PSRP national offices managers. The invitation may be extended to the main donors of SSA countries (IMF, the World Bank, European Union and bilateral donors) as they are channelling most of their funds in poverty reduction related program/projects. In any case it is advisable that PEP network in each of the participation countries establishes links with the donors communities involved in the implementation of poverty reduction strategies.

One can also recommend that the next PEP phase be launched in a one/two days seminar in which the results of the best studies will be presented. The management of the PRSP department of the countries may be invited. This will be an occasion to increase the awareness of poverty reduction policy makers of the work done in PEP. They will have the opportunity to discuss with PEP researchers on the multidimensional aspect of poverty. The network will also take advantage of this event to discuss research orientation with the professional participants. In the same vein, the network can also plan for a special senior policy workshop. The aim of such seminars will be to share the results of some research studies with senior policy makers. This seminar will provide a forum for these policy makers to exchange experiences and to deliberate on their experience on poverty alleviation measurement and monitoring (PMMA) and policy impacts (MPIA) and on typical issues partnering to poverty alleviation strategies and policies. In the first place, papers of PMMA and MPIA sub networks can be qualified for sort exercises. For ample, such a seminar can be organized seminar on multidimensional aspect of poverty.

As it is requested that each team has at least on female and one junior researcher, *it is recommended that each team included a personnel from a policy-making institution.* In this case one has to make sure that this person is not a “show” case but effectively a person who is important in the policy process of the structure. Oneway to guarantee this would be to ensure that this researcher is recommended by its institution.

What about asking the institution(s) concerned by the study to make their comments/recommendations on the proposal, the interim and final reports. These comments/recommendations, which are expected to be more policy oriented, have to be taken into account for approval of the documents concerned?

Researchers can be asked to present in their final document an executive summary of about six to ten pages long, in which policy recommendations are highlighted. These executive summaries can be put together in Policy Briefs papers.

It is also recommendable that prominent policy makers be seated on the board/steering committees. One can reserved a percentage of such organs for policy makers.

Training sessions can also be organized for policy makers on cutting edge of research on poverty. It is therefore of great importance to support the PEP school planned by the office of Dakar. After an online training, some of the interested (well performing) researchers will be invited to a two weeks workshop (Dakar or Yaoundé for the Francophone and Nairobi and Pretoria for the Anglophone). CD will be elaborated on specific topics. This project may be extended to policy makers.

PEP must have an aggressive communication policy. This can be done through the widening of the mailing list of PEP newsletters and of the publication of Policy Briefs papers.

Following the positive experience of CREA, it'll be highly recommended to rely more on institutions than on individual researchers to strengthen the impact of PEP research on policy. In the case that the national institutions are not in position of lobbying for its involvement in PSRP process, it can be recommended that be done by the PEP network through its relation with the donors.

CAPACITY BUILDING

About fifteen proposals are selected each year on a competitive base. According to the network documents, "Selection of proposal is based on proposal scientific contribution, its integration into the thematic focus of the sub network, its policy relevance, its capacity building component, the feasibility and suitability of the methodology proposed, the composition of the team and data requirements".

It is however felt that the evaluation process of proposals focuses more on the capacity of team to complete the study. The weight of the scientific capacity of the team is very important in the decision of the approval of a proposal. Policy recommendations and policy implications of the proposals are not very important in the selection process.

It is also felt that PEP put much emphasis on scientific aspect of the studies. Some researchers feel that DAD software is more suitable for sophisticated statistical treatment and analysis that prove difficult to translate into policy recommendation. Much time is allocated to test the hypothesis of the study but not enough to try to find out the policy dimension.

Once the proposal is approved, the PEP network improves the technical knowledge of individual researchers in poverty reduction strategy related methodology. In PMMA sub network, researchers are trained to develop analytical tools for poverty analysis, evaluation and monitoring. In MPIA sub network, they are trained to build micro-macro models to be used to follow the impact of shocks and macroeconomic policies on poverty. The CBMS sub network builds capacity in developing and institutionalising systems for community based poverty monitoring in developing countries. Readings and other information are posted on PEP Web site. Researchers have also access to IDRC publication available on line. They can also have link to other related research studies and to relevant expertise. Benefiting form highly

qualified scientific supports of the resource persons and of the supervisors (often well known in the international science community) of the network is mostly helpful for them for their academic carriers⁷. They may apply for fund to participate international conference to present their papers (MPIA and PMMA). This grant is given on a competitive basis. They are also exposed to international research ethics. They can have the opportunity in writing and publishing international quality scientific papers. PEP therefore gives opportunity to individual researchers from South to be exposed to their peers. The effort of the network to enhance individual researchers' capacity is therefore very important.

Two methodologies dominate PEP network: factorial analysis for PMMA studies and CGE models for MPIA ones. Because of MPIA network studies, countries can have SAM. And this can have external effect: the mastering of the CGE modeling expertise can be used for simulations of other economic policies in the country.

Aside of the quality and availability of data in these countries for the CGE models, the problem with this research orientation is that a researcher who does not master one of these models will have difficulties in getting his proposal approved. According to researchers interviewed, most of the comments received from resource persons of MPIA networks focus mostly on the CGE model used. This is a weakness of the network. Econometric models can also be used to evaluate the impacts of macroeconomics policies on poverty (MPIA sub network). It is better to focus on proper measurement rather than on select a particular methodology. The network can take the responsibility of making available the different of models/methodologies that can be used for researches for monitoring, evaluating, analysing the impacts of policy impacts on poverty. The researcher will then be left to choose the model and methodology that he thinks he already masters or is more relevant to the research he is undertaking.

Human resources development

There is however a problem of sustainability of the capacity building component of the network activities. Even though the network tries to promote south-south links, the primary links are still south-north, i.e. respectively, the researchers from developing countries, on the one hand, and the resource persons and steering committees members from developed countries, on the other. Unless the network succeeded in promoting south-south links, it will be difficult to ensure greater research self-sustainability. Even though this is done, there is a need to further increase the use of senior researchers as resource persons. First, the research teams in each of the countries must be encouraged to meet each other. Taking into account the possibility of delays, the sub network leader may encourage the team to first refer to a senior researcher in the country or region before coming to the north resource person.

Up to now, PEP gave privilege to individuals in capacity buildings. Proposal selection procedures do not take care of the institutional attachment of the researchers. This focus on scientific capacities of the individual researchers is reinforced by the

⁷ The African Francophone researchers however complain that PEP working papers can not be included in their academic promotion file, as CAMES, the regional institution in charge of the promotion of university professors and researchers does not consider such publication.

objectives of these researchers who seem more interested in the scientific quality of their papers than in the policy impact of the conclusion of their studies.

But focusing on individual researchers and on scientific criteria may have some adverse effect on institutional capacity building. The one coming from research institutes or from universities invest in their professional future than on policy implications of their papers. On this ground, some researchers say that the institution responsible of their promotion, does not take into account their papers as PEP policy considers them as working papers even though their scientific quality is high. This can have some side effects. Two of the three members of a team live outside the study country. One of the two not living in the country works in an international organization. One member of another team lives outside Africa, whereas another one is in a department not directly links to poverty reduction. In these cases, it is difficult to find by what means the research conclusions can impact on policies in these countries or how the country can benefit from capacity building component.

One can always say that capacity building is for the country not for a particular institution. Therefore as long as the researcher is maintained in the country there is nothing to matter of. Therefore, even though institutional capacity building seems to increase the probability of policy impact of the researches, there is also a merit in individual capacity building. But what if the researcher is in the country but does not work in a department not link to poverty? It is not also guaranty that the researcher so “selected” will have externals effect on other researchers in the department.

There is a need to find a balance between individual and institutions capacity buildings. But following CREA experience in Dakar, as the policy impact of PEP researches are greater if they are institutional based, it'll be recommendable to focus more on institution capacity building. A prior existence of research programme in institution in the south may help the institutional capacity building. In this case, the research proposals will be in the mainstreams of the institution. The proposal will be submitted by the institution that will then make sure that researchers who will be assigned to work on the study are those best matched for it.. The researchers identified by these institutions for capacity building opportunities by the PEP network will benefit and so will the institution. One way of reaching this goal, is to address the call of papers to the research/policy institutions and to individual researchers. These institutions will be aware of the existence of the network and mostly of the benefits they (their researchers) may have from their participation. PEP network will have to identify such institutions.

Second, it is advisable that in the proposal approval process, individual researchers with an institutional attachment have an edge compare to individual researchers with no (appropriate) institutional attachment.

Another way of improving capacity building will be to extend the dissemination programme to make it include a training activity. In this case, a small grant can be given to the individual researchers to train other researchers in the country or in other institutions. The researcher can have the support of senior researchers in the country or in the region. This will also be a way to maintain the senior researchers in the field ad to increase the policy impact of the studies.

LINKS BETWEEN THE THREE SUB-NETWORKS: CBMS, MPIA and PMMA

It is necessary that links between the three sub networks be enhanced.

As MPIA studies seem to follow directly the procedures and approach of PMMA, the links between MPIA and PMMA are stronger than the between CBMS one the one hand and MPIA or PMMA on the other.

PMMA uses information relating to the management and organisation of operations while the CBMS is able to collect actual information on those at risk. In this connection, CBMS studies compile information on the population, education, health, nutrition, housing, access to basic services, economy, micro-finance and on local collectives. Information is also provided on priorities, and the socio economic aspiration of the population (but these information are provided by the chiefs of the villages). PMMA studies use data from country surveys. PMMA studies can therefore use CBMS data. But often, CBMS data are not available when PMMA studies are done. When the CBMS data are not suitable to PMMA study, PMMA team is obliged to use other data. There is therefore problem of sequences and a need of coordination of the studies of these two sub networks. It is recommendable that PMMA teams be involved in the elaboration of the CBMS questionnaire; this will help them to say something about information to be collected. CBMS teams also will know that the data they collect will serve others.

But for this to be, it is necessary that there is in each of the countries, at least a team working on each of the sub network. This is not the case now, and in the case where there is a team on each of the three sub networks they do not seem to have interaction between them. There must be more interaction between the researchers of the three networks in each of the countries. The network has to consider the possibility of networking the national teams. The PEP newsletter can be a way of having news of the national networks. Is this more likely to happen with institutions than with individual researchers?

DEVOLUTION

PEP devolution strategy is based on the belief that the durability and efficiency of the network in the long run will be increased, if southern researchers are managed by Southern based institutions. These institutions may be well in tune with the research priorities of the countries in the South and of characteristics of the researchers. They will be a more implication and ownership of the program by these researchers.

The localization of the network to its Dakar centre seems to be based on two elements: the regional office of IDRC in West Africa is in Dakar and le Centre de Recherche Economique Appliqué of Université de Dakar (CREA) has been extensively involved in the MIMAP programme. The office is hosted by the Centre de Recherches Economiques et Sociales (CRES), because of the power availability and Internet connection facilities. From 2005, the office of Dakar is in charge of all the MPIA and PMMA projects, whereas Manila office manages all the CBMS projects.

The Dakar office has two personnel: Ismael Fofana and Diop Aïssatou. Apart from being a resource person for the MPIA sub network, Ismael is also in charge of the

thinking and implementing the devolution strategy. This will prove too cumbersome for one person. Diop Aïssatou is in charge of the administration. She is helped by two assistants based in Montreal, Quebec, at the University of Laval; one full time and two working half time each. This arrangement seems to work quite well due to the good quality of internet connection.

The scientific back up comes more and more from Dakar. Momar SYLLA is used as resource person in CBMS sub network, Jean Bosco KI for PMMA sub network and Ismael FOFANA for MPIA sub network.

CBMS African researchers feel that there are some problems: the documents they sent are some time lost; the funding suffers some delays; they feel also that their Asian counterparts has some relative advantage in relation of the number of accepted proposals, speed of reaction of the resource persons and of the management. There is also a problem of language as the administrative support in Manila is English speaking whereas most of the African researchers in the network are English and French speaking.

According to researchers interviewed, the decentralization program is good. It is felt that there is no problem with the devolution of MPIA and PMMA projects in Dakar. Following Dakar office, there is no particular complaint from Latin America and Asian researchers (this statement has to be checked in these two regions). The localization of the office in Dakar is also helpful for the African researchers on two other aspects. First, it is less expensive for an African researcher to come to Dakar than to go to Quebec. Second, there is less visa problem to go to Dakar than to go to Quebec. On this ground and due to the language problem mention above, one has therefore to think of establishing regional offices in each of the sub region. It is also believed that the localization of the office in Dakar has also external effects: students come to the center to search for scientific information and to use the library.

But due to language problem, the scientific back up of Jean Bosco and Momar are mostly for the French African researchers of the network.

What can be the next step of the devolution strategy?

The contributions of Jean Bosco KI, Momar Sylla and Ismael Fofana in providing scientific back-up activities seems to be highly appreciated by researchers. As the number of experienced researchers in the three sub networks is increasing, this scientific support will improve dramatically. This is also the case of the other two regions. The regional offices can then play more and more importance in the scientific support activities. But for this to be effective, the regional offices need to have permanent resource persons: one for each of the sub network. In so doing, in the case of the office of Dakar, Ismael can devote more time for coordination, strategy and advocacy. The annual general assembly will be organized on regional basis.

What will then be the role of the central management (CIRPPE and the University of Laval and of AKI) in PEP? They will allocate time for new scientific development in the thematic of the PEP, and up dating the science of the resource persons.

Two important issues PEP is facing: problem of funding and policy relevance issue of the researches. The central management can concentrate on these two issues. Due to

the fact that most part of research funding is from outside sources, CIRPPE can play an active role in fund rising. This can be done in two ways. In some of the African countries, the national institutions involved in the network can have limited access to the donors in their home countries or policy makers. It is therefore recommendable that CIRPPE have meetings with the appropriate departments in the head offices of these multilateral and bilateral donors. However, it will be a good policy that the regional PEP offices be involved in this process mostly concerning the regional (development banks) donors.

II. FINANCE OF THE NETWORK

Subsidy Policy in PMMA and MPIA sub-networks

The finance of the network is in two parts: one benefits directly to the research teams and the second part is managed directly by the administration.

For PMMA and MPIA studies each approved proposal is entitled to a core subsidy of CAD\$ 20000 paid in three stages: 40% at the approval of the proposition; 30% upon the approval of the interim report and 30% upon the approval of the final report. Apart of this core subsidy, a member of each research team of an approved proposition benefit of a three weeks study visit (at Universite Laval) and a National Conference grant of CAD\$ 2000 is also available for each of the completed study for the dissemination of the research findings. The junior researcher of each research team can apply, on a competitive basis for a travel grant. There is also the opportunity to apply on a competitive basis for a subsidy for participation in international conference to present the research paper of the PMMA and MPIA sub networks.

The network finances also the participation of research team at the general support, the resource persons, the steering committee works and the general administration of the network.

The policies of subsidy to the research teams seem transparent and are known of the researchers as soon as there are engaged in the process. This is praiseworthy.

Each of the studies benefits from the same core subsidy. This is good in terms of providing a sound and uniform management basis but not necessarily relevant to the respective real costs of each project. Because of this policy, the management is less cumbersome: there is no need to worry about financial reports from researchers and to scrutinize the justification of spending. The researchers will not also lose time for the financial reports. The only thing that is asked from the researcher is to produce a paper that receives approved from PEP.

This policy may however have some adverse effects:

- Researchers may try to reduce outlays so as to be under the minimum, the allocation to rubric of the study (data collection; interaction with policy makers, etc) so as to keep a maximum of the revenue supplement for themselves.
- The study to be completed may not require the same amount of resources.

Apart of one researcher interviewed⁸, there seems to be no concern nor from the researchers nor from the network on this policy. Following this, it is not necessary to change this setting.

Source of funding

During the two phases, all financing comes only from IDRC, although local institutions make useful contributions in kind. For sustainability reason, there is a need for IDRC and the network to look for potential partners and to search for prospects to generate other source of financing.

PEP has well established scientific procedure, expertise and experience. This can be put to the service of researchers financed by other donors. The CRES in Dakar as submitted a research proposal to CODESRIA ; once the proposal is approved by the institution, the researchers will integrate PEP network and follow the PEP network project cycle. For this service PEP can ask for a fee. These researchers can be invited to participate in activities of PEP sub networks. The difference with the network researchers is that the former receive funds from other donors. First, the former PEP network researchers may be prompted to look for funding from other donors. The “training” they have received in the network gives them an edge to get their proposal approved by other donors. This policy can be extended also to researchers who were not formerly in the network.

As mentioned earlier, most of the SSA countries are involved in the implementation of poverty alleviation strategy, and most of countries in the network are concerned with MGD goals. Due to the relevance of the PEP every in the section concerning devolution, the thematic topics of the network, the increase of the policy relevance of the studies will make the interaction between the network on the one hand and the policy makers and the donor easier. It is necessary that PEP have a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] with institutions in charge of the formulation and implementation of poverty alleviation strategies in each of PEP countries to define a framework of cooperation between PEP network and these institutions. The regional office or CIRPPE will be called upon in countries where the researchers/national institutions are not in position to negotiate such an MOU and this will make it easier for PEP to get funding from most of donors involved in poverty reduction strategy such as the World Bank, UNDP, European Union, and bilateral donors. As stated in the devolution section, there have to be a share of work: the national office will more in charge of fund raising in the countries; the regional network will be more involved in contact with the regional donors such as African Development Banks, regional institutions (such as Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement, Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine); CIRPPE and the Angelo King Institute will be more involved in contacts with international donors institutions.

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Organisation Internationale Francophone (OIF) both support capacity building initiatives in African and Francophone countries. These are therefore partners, PEP can approach mainly for mostly funding of policy makers training. These two institutions may be approached for funding the PEP school referred to in the section concerning Policy

⁸ In fact he said also that he has some problems.

impact of the network. AFRISTAT may also be approached for funding mostly CBMS studies.

III. Complementary Feedback to IDRC and PEP Comments

DEVOLUTION

The situation

PEP devolution strategy is based on the belief that the durability and efficiency of the network in the long run will be increased, if southern researchers are managed by Southern based institutions. These institutions may be well in tune with the research priorities of the countries in the South and of characteristics of the researchers. They will be a more implication and ownership of the program by these researchers. The opening of Dakar office is a major part of PEP's devolution strategy.

The choice of Dakar as the localization of PEP's office outside Laval University seems to be based on two elements: the regional office of IDRC in West Africa is in Dakar and le Centre de Recherche Economique Appliqué of Université de Dakar (CREA) has been extensively involved in the past in the MIMAP programme. From 2005, the office of Dakar is in charge of all the MPIA and PMMA projects, whereas Manila office manages all the CBMS projects.

Administration: The Dakar office has two personnel: Ismael Fofana and Diop Aïssatou. Apart from being a resource person for the MPIA sub network, Ismael is also in charge of the thinking and implementing the devolution strategy. Diop Aïssatou is in charge of the administration with the support of one full time and two half time assistants at CIRPÉE (Université Laval). This arrangement seems to work well due to the good quality of internet connection.

The localization of the office in Dakar is helpful for the African researchers on two aspects. First, it is less expensive for an African researcher to come to Dakar than to go to Quebec. Second, there is less visa problem to go to Dakar than to go to Quebec. It is also believed that the localization of the office in Dakar has also external effects: students come to the centre for scientific information. On this ground and due to the language problem mention above, one has therefore to think of establishing regional offices in each of the sub region.

Scientific back up: Each of the sub networks has a resource person. Momar SYLLA is used as resource person in CBMS sub network, Jean Bosco KI for PMMA sub network and Ismael FOFANA for MPIA sub network.

According to researchers interviewed in Dakar, the decentralization program is good.

On scientific ground, it is also felt by the researchers interviewed in Dakar, that there is no problem with the full relocation of MPIA and PMMA projects in Dakar. The performance of Jean Bosco KI, Momar Sylla and Ismael Fofana in scientific back up activities seems to be highly appreciated. But due to language problem, the scientific back up of Jean Bosco and Momar are mostly for the French speaking African researchers of the network. Even though we are not able to have accurate information,

it is therefore felt that the English speaking African researchers are not making use of these resource persons.

African researchers in CBMS sub network feel that there are some problems with the management of the sub network from Manila: the documents they sent are some time lost; the funding suffers some delays; they feel also that their Asian counterparts has some relative advantage in relation of the number of accepted proposals, speed of reaction of the resource persons and of the management. There is also a problem of language as the administrative support in Manila is English speaking whereas most of the African researchers in the network are French speaking. However, following Dakar office, there is no particular complaint from Latin America and Asian researchers (this statement has to be checked in these two regions).

What can be the next step of the devolution strategy?

As number of experimented researchers in the three sub networks is increasing, the scientific support will improve dramatically. This is also the case of the other two regions. The regional offices can then play more and more importance in the scientific support activities.

If PEP wants to succeed in its devolution policy, one has first to define the role of its regional offices. It will be after this task is done that one can determine of large (number of people) will be the regional office. But in first approximation, one can suggest the following.

According to Ismaël in Dakar Office, PEP can improve its involvement in training and technical assistance. One can generalize Lambert's proposition for CBMS sub network to the entire PEP network, that is: In each region, the coordinating team for each network to develop a market for the sub network "training by training and accrediting qualified trainers and making its training modules and manuals available to accredited trainers who might be able to improve and enhance the effectiveness of these training modules as they gain more experience in training". If that is to be implemented, there is a need to have a training coordinator in each regional office. Depending on the importance of the training programme the coordinator of the regional office can be in charge of this task.

For scientific support activities, to be efficient, there is a need for Dakar office to have at least one permanent research coordinator for each of the sub network. Because of problem of language it is advisable that such coordinator be bilingual. The Director can be in charge of advocacy, fund raising and expansion strategy implementation. In so doing, in the case of the office of Dakar, Ismael can devote more time for coordination, strategy and advocacy and training programme. The administrative officer (Aïssatou Diop), with the help of an assistant, can be in charge of the organisation of the annual general assembly. There is also a need to have a financial officer.

What will then be the role of the central management (CIRPPE and the University of Laval and of AKI) in PEP? As Marion has suggested, Université Laval and AKI can focus on cutting-edge research including methodologies and coordinating activities of PEP regional teams. They will be looking for high profile resource persons for the regional offices.

Two important issues PEP is facing: problem of funding and policy relevance issue of the researches. The central management can concentrate on these two issues. Due to the fact that most part of research funding is from outside sources, CIRPPE can play an active role in fund rising. This can be done in two ways. In some of the African countries, the national institutions involved in the network can have limited access to the donors in their home countries or policy makers. It is therefore recommendable that CIRPPE have meetings with the appropriate departments in the head offices of these multilateral and bilateral donors. However, it will be a good policy that the regional PEP offices be involved in this process mostly concerning the regional (development banks) donors.

POLICY IMPACT

The network addresses topics that are vital for SSA countries: poverty. Poverty Strategy Reduction Papers (PSRP) are, in most African countries, the sole medium term development strategy document. These strategies are ones supported by major donors to these countries.

Due to the quality of the research done, the relevance of the thematic focus of the three PEP sub networks and the positions of some of it (former) members, it should have been expected that PEP network should have had a great impact on policy dialogue in these countries. In Senegal for example, the researchers of CREA have been associated with the PSRP process. CREA, of the Chiek Anta Diop University of Dakar and a partner institution of PEP network, has been closely involved in the process: CREA has written the draft PSRP report of Senegal and attended most of the workshops where the papers and recommendations were discussed. Policy makers have been involved during the study. Policy makers (public administration and professionals) have often attended the launching seminar of the MIMAP studies. Professionals from statistical department, Ministry of finance are part of some of the research teams of MIMAP.

PEP seems conscious of the necessity and importance of policy impact of the researches of the network. It is for this purpose that the network has conceived a methodology for improving the policy dimension of the researches. First, policy relevance is one of the criteria for the approval of a proposal. Second, each research study, after the final report is approved, is entitled to a subsidy. This National Conference grant of CAD\$ 2000 for each of the completed study is for dissemination of PMMA and MPIA research findings.

Unfortunately, may be due to the limited number of the researchers in each of the country, many things are done in PEP but go unnoticed in SSA countries. The impact of PEP researches on policy seems low. In most of the countries the departments in charge of PSRP are not aware of the existence of the PEP network researchers not to talk about the conclusion of their studies. *For example, most SSA countries use only the monetary approach to poverty whereas the multidimensional aspects of poverty, which well studied in PMMA sub network, are ignored in poverty analysis and strategies, most often.* The intensification of the interaction between PEP researches and the PSRP process will therefore be of great benefit for the countries.

Policy impact of CBMS may be easier to achieve. First, due to the regional dimension of poverty in most of the countries, each Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper is decentralized; but the implementation, monitoring and assessment is not done because of lack of data on local level. Country level data on poverty indicators are available, may be also on regional level but rarely on local level. Data provided by CBMS studies can therefore bridge the gap in helping for the monitoring of the poverty strategies implementation at local level.

Second, by making available data on poverty at local level, CBMS gives ground for project justification, formulation and selection at local level. It is in this respect that in the case of Senegal, according to a CBMS researcher, UNDP planned to finance an “energy-poverty” project, which is intended to provide electricity to a community. UNDP also intend to finance a similar project in Burkina Faso. The data also make it possible for UNIFEM to promote a gender sensitive budgeting.

But the level of CBMS impact on policy will depend on the group with who CBMS researcher team interacts at the local government level and on the decentralization policy in the country. If CBMS team interacts with elected officials, the term of tenure of the later will be of importance for policy impact. It is better that there is a team member from the district administration if qualified human resource is available at the district level. A second best solution would be that the district administration assign a member of its technical personnel involved in policy formulation to follow up the study done or that the team report to this technical person. *It is then recommended that the proposal be supported by the local elected official who should select a technical member of hise personnel to be either on the research team or who is required to “follow” the evolution of the study.*

If the country has a centralized type of government, the districts may not have power in policy formulation and implementation. In this case, even though CBMS researches may however be useful for sectoral policy at the local level, the policy impact may be very limited. *On policy impact ground, it will be therefore recommendable that CBMS sub network be focused on countries where decentralization policy is well advance. For that reason, one will suggest that in each CBMS sub network proposal, the author makes a short presentation of the decentralization policy in the country. In Sub Sahara Africa countries decentralisation is not very advanced.*

PEP has to take advantage of the professional position of its (former) researchers. To do this, PEP has to establish and update the list of PEP (former) researchers and to track their professional carriers. They will be useful to “open” the doors to the policy makers and the donor community. The PEP newsletter can be useful for this purpose and these researchers have to be on this mailing list. It will be used to post news from (former) PEP researchers and the main conclusions of studies.

The policy impact of PEP research can be increased if there is more interaction between researchers and policy makers. On way of improving this interaction and to promote the impact of research findings on policy, will be to have *a one to two days workshop with researchers, policy makers and some of NGOs and some private sectors involved in poverty alleviation strategy elaboration and implementation. For cost effectiveness, these seminars should precede the Annual General Assemblies.* The participants to be invited (policy makers) should come from the departments in relation with the studies done on the countries. PEP can also think of organizing a

workshop of PSRP national offices managers. The invitation may be extended to the main donors of SSA countries (IMF, the World Bank, European Union and bilateral donors) as they are channelling most of their funds in poverty reduction related program/projects. In any case it is advisable that PEP network in each of the participation countries establishes links with the donors communities involved in the implementation of poverty reduction strategies.

One can also recommend that the next PEP phase be launched in a one/two days seminar in which the results of the best studies will be presented. The management of the PRSP department of the countries may be invited. This will be an occasion to increase the awareness of poverty reduction policy makers of the work done in PEP. They will have the opportunity to discuss with PEP researchers on the multidimensional aspect of poverty. The network will also take advantage of this event to discuss research orientation with the professional participants. In the same vein, the network can also plan for a special senior policy workshop. The aim of such seminars will be to share the results of some research studies with senior policy makers. This seminar will provide a forum for these policy makers to exchange experiences and to deliberate on their experience on poverty alleviation measurement and monitoring (PMMA) and policy impacts (MPIA) and on typical issues partnering to poverty alleviation strategies and policies. In the first place, papers of PMMA and MPIA sub networks can be qualified for sort exercises. For ample, such a seminar can be organized seminar on multidimensional aspect of poverty.

As it is requested that each team has at least on female and one junior researcher, *it is recommended that each team included a personnel from a policy-making institution.* In this case one has to make sure that this person is not a “show” case but effectively a person who is important in the policy process of the structure. One way to guarantee this will be for the researcher be recommended by his or her institution.

What about asking the institution(s) concerned by the study to make their comments/recommendations on the proposal, the interim and final reports. These comments/recommendations, which are expected to be more policy oriented, have to be taken into account for approval of the documents concerned?

Researchers can be asked to present in their final document an executive summary of about six to ten pages long, in which policy recommendations are highlighted. These executive summaries can be put together in Policy Briefs papers.

It is also recommendable that prominent policy makers be seated on the board/steering committees. One can reserved a percentage of such organs for policy makers.

Training sessions can also be organized for policy makers on cutting edge of research on poverty. It is therefore of great importance to support the PEP school planned by the office of Dakar. After an online training, some of the interested (well performing) researchers will be invited to a two weeks workshop (Dakar or Yaoundé for the Francophone and Nairobi and Pretoria for the Anglophone). CD will be elaborated on specific topics. This project may be extended to policy makers.

PEP must have an aggressive communication policy. This can be done through the widening of the mailing list of PEP newsletters and of the publication of Policy Briefs papers.

Following the positive experience of CREA, it'll be highly recommended to rely more on institutions than on individual researchers to strengthen the impact of PEP research on policy. In the case that the national institutions are not in position of lobbying for its involvement in PSRP process, it can be recommended that be done by the PEP network through its relation with the donors.

This proposition of Marion is also important to take into account. *Third, there should be a separate session for policymakers and other stakeholders with researchers, focusing not on technical issues of the research but on policy implications of the research results and poverty-related policy issues that need to be considered by the PEP network in its future research agenda. This may be held on the last day of the conference, but invited policymakers and other stakeholders need not attend the technical sessions.*

PEP AND SIMILAR INITIATIVES

In Sub Sahara Africa, there two other research networks, which PEP network can be compared with: African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). The three have been established to network African researchers who are in isolation. AERC and CODESRIA are non profit organizations, with headquarters in Africa to promote research in the continent.

PEP versus AERC

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), established in 1988 is devoted to the advancement of economic policy research and training. AERC's mission is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into the problems facing the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa.

AERC has many similarities with PEP network. Established since 1988, AERC uses networking as its key strategic instrument for implementing its activities. It supports research, dissemination, and training programs in Sub Sahara Africa. It has similar project selection procedures as PEP network. Research proposals submitted are first selected by the Director of research with the support of independent external reviewers. Selected proposals are then presented at a workshop at the relevant network, where they are assessed a panel of professional economists, drawn worldwide and peer researchers. Once the proposal accepted and a grant given, the authors have to present their work progress in a biannual research workshop held each year in May and December with the same (in composition) panel. As in the PEP network, apart of the panel support, each author (s) of a paper is assigned a resource person and benefits a support system established through peer review, methodology workshops and literature.

Although AERC research activities are more concentrated in the areas of balance of payments and macroeconomic issues more generally, it is supporting work on poverty

policy issues. But unlike PEP network, through this thematic, AERC covers fields as employment, labour markets, government expenditures, and human capital. AERC research uses also diversified methodologies (CEG and econometric models). AERC is very strong in capacity building activities.

AERC is more concerned with economic policy than PEP network. It has a comprehensive communication and outreach strategy to encourage the application of AERC products to economic policy making.

In addition of publishing research results, AERC also publishes executive summaries and abstracts from the research papers in a less technical language. In so doing, it facilitates access to research results. It uses also national economic policy workshops and senior policy seminars to discuss policy-oriented synthesis of AERC research and to interact with policy makers on AERC research agenda and results. Every year, policy practitioners are also called upon, in a policy roundtable, to discuss policy relevant issues.

A consequence of this is that AERC has more success in economic policy in Sub Sahara Africa than PEP network. AERC members are involved in the formulation of Africa position in the World Trade Organization Doha Round. There are also associated in African position formulation of Monterrey Conference. AERC has also been used frequently for counselling multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank on major policy matters. AERC researchers have to date been invited as witnesses to four testimonies to the US Congress on matters pertaining to African development and the operations of the international financial institutions affecting it.

The background of resource persons belonging to the AERC network is much more diversified and they are known worldwide in their respective field of expertise. Most of them come from international donor institutions such as the World Bank or IMF. AERC also has institutional attachment programmes with IMF, UNECA and the World Bank. AERC is thus considered as the premier African research body in the field of economics on the continent.

But unlike PEP network, AERC is a non profit organization with 15 funding partners. AERC therefore has a more diversified resources base than PEP network.

PEP versus CODESRIA

In contrast with AERC and PEP networks which draw from economic community for its research population, CODESRIA is a multidisciplinary network. In so doing, the founding members of CODESRIA want to breakdown disciplinary and linguistic-geographical barriers in research in the continent. As AERC, in the period from around the mid-1980s onwards, CODESRIA, succeeded to establish itself as the premier and pioneer African social science research organisation. CODESRIA has been established since 1973 as a non profit organisation. As AERC, CODESRIA is also funded by a variety of donors from around the world.

CODESRIA has many programmes. The one which can be compared to PEP' activities are the Multinational Working Group (MWG). MWG is a "network" of 20 – 30 researchers from various disciplines working on one of the research priority themes determined by the CODESRIA General Assembly. Researchers are appointed

to coordinate the research in each of the MWG. Each MWG commenced its assignment by a methodology workshop to train the researchers selected after submitting their proposal and is responsible for its research agenda/time table. Once the MWG has completed its work (a life span of Two to three years) it convened to a research workshop to present its findings for discussion.

Due to its multidisciplinary dimension, CODESRIA has less impact on economic policy than AERC and PEP network. It is only in 2002 that CODESRIA introduced the Policy Dialogue Series designed to serve as a platform between African researchers and policy makers' community. They are organized quarterly between research community, government officials, civil society activists, and representatives of professional organizations and international agencies. In such activities, relevant research results supported by CODESRIA are fed into the dialogue; this seems to be the only vehicle by which CODESRIA gets feedback from the policy community.

On capacity building issue, CODESRIA give scholarship to young researchers to complete their MA or Ph.D. thesis and some small grants for research. CODESRIA also holds some methodological workshops. PEP seems to have an advantage vis a vis CODESRIA on this ground. But CODESRIA seems to have a stronger dissemination policy.

PART B. Mario Lamberte

I. COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM [CBMS] SUB-NETWORK

1. Introduction

This paper provides some answers to questions relevant to CBMS Network posed by the external review team in the Inception Report that are further amplified by Michael Ward's notes reflecting the outcome of his discussion with Evan Due in Singapore. This report is based on the various documents and reports produced by the CBMS Network, brief roundtable discussion with Network members during the PEP Annual Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, several meetings with the CBMS Coordinating Team based in Manila, national and local policy makers in the Philippines who support and promote the adoption of CBMS, local government units implementing a CBMS and CBMS Network members (Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Tanzania, and Viet Nam) who attended the CBMS Network conference held on 15-17 November 2006 in Pasay City, Philippines.

The next discusses some challenges currently facing the CBMS network. The last section presents some comments on key questions from the perspective of the CBMS Network.

2. Challenges Facing the CBMS Network

The challenges the CBMS Network is facing today can be categorized into four broad issues; namely: methodological concerns; policy questions; strategies for expanding coverage of CBMS; and institutional matters. Some specific issues are discussed in respect of each of these broad concerns.

How about best practices emerging amidst diversity of CBMS initiatives?

a. Methodological issues

Poverty is multidimensional, and CBMS is found to be useful in knowing who and where the poor are, identifying and designing appropriate intervention programs for the poor, and monitoring impacts of such programs on the identified poor households. The current practice of local government units adopting CBMS is to find out where their respective communities score poorly among the CBMS indicators, e.g., access to sanitary toilet facilities, and build around them intervention programs for households who score poorly in such indicators. Each indicator is given equal weight, and given that local resources are limited, local government units make decisions as to which one of them needs to be given priority. The problem, however, is somewhat different when an intervention program that is called for (e.g., cash transfers to soften the impact on the poor of sudden change in policy such as removal of government subsidy on gasoline) requires the use of all dimensions of poverty to identify poor households. This poses a challenge to the CBMS Network. Indeed, the CBMS Network has made advances in this area, by experimenting the use of certain techniques, such as principal components analysis (PCA) and multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), to derive a composite indicator that can be used to rank households and identify poor. As more experiments are conducted in various CBMS sites, the Network will gain more insights into the usefulness of such

techniques. The challenge in the future though is how to download this relatively sophisticated technology from social scientists to the unsophisticated CBMS analysts at the local government unit level, making it user friendly and easy to understand and to explain to the community who may be included or excluded from specific government intervention programs based on the results of such analytical techniques. The computer soft-ware needed to apply such techniques must also be made available to the CBMS analysts at the local government level at affordable price or freely as in the case of the DAD or the software used for poverty mapping.

Some CBMS country sites have gone beyond the pilot-testing stage and is currently implementing CBMS in other communities. In the Philippines, for instance, there are already 161 municipalities and 13 cities covering 4,438 barangay (lowest administrative unit) that have implemented CBMS. Many of them, as in community sites in Viet Nam and Bangladesh, have collected data more than once, thus gradually accumulating time series data. The optimal coverage of CBMS is, of course, the entire country, although this could take years to materialize unless the national government mandates it and provides the necessary funding for collecting and organizing CBMS data. In the case of the Philippines, the Philippine Development Forum sets a target of 100 percent CBMS coverage by 2010, which seems too optimistic considering that the country has not yet reached 50 percent coverage at this time. Nonetheless, the issue of aggregating and scaling up CBMS data needs to be examined closely at this early stage to ensure that CBMS data meet certain quality standards and are consistent and comparable across CBMS communities and time. This has been recognized by the CBMS network, but more work is needed to ensure quality and consistency of CBMS data and to design and put in place the system for scaling up CBMS data from the lowest community level to the national level. Issues on ownership of data and protocols for accessing and sharing data need to be clarified and worked out further.

The importance of qualitative data should not be understated considering the potential contribution such qualitative data can make in helping policymakers understand the various causes of poverty in different communities. For instance, they can help local level policy makers understand why despite high level of employment rate in the communities, many households still score poorly in most poverty indicators. Gathering qualitative data through focus group discussions held during or outside the data validation exercise requires special skills on the part of local CBMS monitors. At this point, the CBMS Network has already enough experience in collecting, organizing and analysing qualitative data, and the challenge here is to identify best practices so that they can be integrated in training modules. Another issue is what to do with qualitative data when scaling up the quantitative CBMS data. To the extent that qualitative data help policymakers at higher geopolitical levels make informed decisions, they too must be scaled up. Developing a technique of packaging qualitative data in a manner useful to higher level policymakers is indeed another important challenge to the CBMS Network.

As regards the CBMS Network's approach to training, the CBMS Coordinating Team has already well-developed training modules and manuals applied rigorously in training programs. Unlike MPIA and PMMA, CBMS training is Aiméd at building capacities of researchers, the local government unit's technical staff and some members of the community who serve as enumerators. The challenge to the CBMS network is to find out whether there is still room for improving the effectiveness of its

training programs. Presently, there are already several local government units in CBMS Network member countries that have a relatively long experience in implementing CBMS and using CBMS data for various purposes that benefited the poor. Such experience can provide valuable lessons to new CBMS implementers. Unlike researchers in MPIA and PMMA whose research capacity is enhanced through personal interactions with university professors with internationally recognized expertise in certain fields, CBMS researchers and implementers can enhance their capacities through exposure and interactions with those that have long experience with CBMS. Thus, the CBMS training methodology could perhaps be enhanced by complementing the classroom-type approach to training with an attachment program lasting for about 2-3 weeks wherein a team consisting of researchers from new partner institutions and technical staff of a candidate local government unit can gain first-hand knowledge of how an experienced local government unit in other countries develop, implement and use CBMS for various purposes. This can be accompanied by a short study tour by officials of a candidate local government unit to the same experienced local government unit to exchange views with their peers. Admittedly, it entails additional training cost, but it is worthwhile exploring whether it is cost-effective than the current practice of exchanging views and experiences in big international conferences and making a quick visit to a CBMS site, if any, in the host country. Some members of the CBMS Network from Africa who attended the CBMS conference in Manila last November 2006 welcome such possible enhancement to the current CBMS approach to capacity building.

The in-country expansion and institutionalising of CBMS in other local communities could also adopt such training methodology.

b. Policy issues

The usefulness of CBMS data in making evidence-based policy decisions, planning and programming at the local level has already been demonstrated by those communities adopting the CBMS. Indeed, the Network is now exploring ways of enhancing the returns on investment in CBMS data used for local level planning and budgeting.

The CBMS Network however has huge potential for analysing more poverty-related policy issues. Currently, CBMS data are analysed from the perspective of individual local communities to aid local government units in formulating policies, plans and programs that have impacts on poor households. As more local government units adopt and implement CBMS, making data collected at regular frequencies more widely available, it is then possible to analyse poverty-related issues not only from the perspective of individual communities but also from the perspective of several local communities that may have common interests on such issues. For example, the concentration of poor households with no access to school facilities and safe drinking water in the borders of two municipalities or communes could be better addressed through inter-local government cooperation more efficiently than leaving each municipality or commune separately deal with such issues. In the same manner, inter-local government cooperation could be solicited to arrest deterioration of common natural resources, such as lagoon, that are the main source of income of households in adjoining municipalities or communes. Sanitary landfill is another issue that might be common to several communities. Indeed, inter-local government cooperation can

address free-rider problems that often beset several communities closely situated to each other.⁹

Certain national level policies affecting the poor can as well be analyzed using CBMS data. For instance, a sudden change in policies with respect to exploration of natural resources such as metal products could have large impact on several mining communities whether such communities are located contiguously or in several parts of the country. The availability of CBMS data in several mining communities could enlighten such policies and help national government design a program to mitigate, if not prevent, their negative impacts on the affected sector especially the poor.

Depending on the political system of CBMS country sites, the Parliament or Congress can wield considerable power in the allocation of funds across sectors of the economy that can support local level initiatives inspired by information generated by CBMS.¹⁰ It might be stretching it too far, but it certainly is worth exploring how CBMS can inform such allocation system in a manner that would have desirable impact on the poor. This however can happen only when a large number of communities comprising a province or district are simultaneously implementing CBMS.

There are other policy issues such as labour markets and credit markets that can be analysed by adding a few indicators to the CBMS indicators. Bangladesh and Viet Name, for instance includes indicators on access to credit. While the potential for using CBMS for analysing several policy issues including those of interest only to the community concerned is indeed huge, care must however be exercised in doing it so as to maintain the CBMS character – locally managed, simple and periodic assessment of poverty and well-being.

c. Strategy for expanding CBMS

The number of CBMS implementers has gradually been expanding both in terms of participating countries and communities within a participating country. The challenge facing the Network is how to sustain that momentum and yet be able to include countries that need most the assistance of the CBMS Network given its limited resources.

Unlike the MPIA and PMAA Networks, the CBMS Network provides grants to partner institutions in developing countries to develop and institutionalise CBMS. Under the current PEP-CBMS Network procedure, the Network calls for project proposals and selection is done on a competitive basis. Proposals are categorized into two categories: (1) development and a pilot-test of CBMS for newly participating countries; and (2) expansion and institutionalising of CBMS for participating countries that have succeeded in pilot-testing of CBMS. The Network appears to have well developed criteria and procedure for choosing grantees for both categories.

It is worthwhile revisiting the appropriateness of the CBMS Network's current strategy for attracting new member-institutions to pilot-test and institutionalise CBMS in their respective countries. Unlike in the case of the PMMA and MPIA Networks

⁹ That is, one municipality under-invests in say, education, because the neighbouring communities allows without compensation its students to enrol in their schools built near the borders.

¹⁰ Excluding block grants to local government units that are mandated by law.

that promote cutting-edge research, the CBMS Network offers a tested methodology which, with little tweaking, could be adapted to the existing political, cultural and economic milieu of new participating countries. Again, unlike the PMMA and MPIA research which can be done by individual researchers often using secondary data, the CBMS methodology even at the pilot-testing stage already calls for the involvement of not only a lead research institution but also local government units and some members of the communities in the collection, processing and analysis of primary data. Finally, unlike PMMA and MPIA researchers whose research responsibilities end with the submission of the final reports to their respective steering committees and presentation of the same to policymakers within one or two years, CBMS researchers, as demonstrated in the case of the Philippines and other older countries adopting CBMS, are likely to be tied up to a much longer commitment, providing support to increasing number of local government units wanting to institute or refine their CBMS in their respective localities. Thus, potential partner institutions must demonstrate readiness and willingness to enter into a long-term commitment. On top of that, they must already exert some sort of mobilization effort in the course of preparing a proposal for submission to the CBMS Steering Committee. Thus, potential partner institutions in developing countries, which need most assistance from the Network in initiating CBMS, may not be able to prepare a good proposal and as a result may likely be screened out in this competitive process. Worse, they may screen themselves out of the competitive process at the outset – a case of self-selection. Thus, it may well be for the Network to take a more pro-active stance in selecting new participating countries and contacting possible partner institutions in the selected countries rather than passively wait for proposals to come. Here, the Network could map out a plan for the expansion in the number of CBMS countries matched by its financial resources and the human resources of the CBMS Coordinating Team. This will conserve resources of proponents which will soon be found not qualified for a variety of reasons, will minimize the possibility of having no proponents in any one year, and avoid the situation wherein some qualified proponents could not be supported by the resources of the Network.

Another issue is the Network's national partner institution, which at present seems to be unclear. A research institution or statistical agency has been the preferred lead institution in the CBMS Network member countries, but other institutions can qualify as well, such as a local government unit as in the case of Tanzania, which may have little potential for or may pose some constraints later in replicating the system in other local government units in the same country unless the local government unit concerned has adequate sources and is willing to subsidize other local government units in instituting CBMS in their localities.

d. Institutional issues

The CBMS Network, which is a loosely organized network covering 15 countries including Tanzania, the latest member, is guided by a Steering Committee and serviced by the CBMS Network Coordinating Team. The increase in the number of CBMS participating countries and number of local communities implementing CBMS is both a boon and a bane to the Network. It is boon to the Network because it demonstrates the importance and usefulness of CBMS in informing policy, designing intervention programs for the poor and monitoring results at the community level with community participation. It is a bane in the sense that it weighs heavily on the

Network's limited human and financial resources. This maybe less of a problem now, but this problem will become more glaring as the Network continues to expand both in terms of the number of participating countries and the number of local government units within a country implementing CBMS. In the Philippines, the CBMS Coordinating Team, aside from providing services to CBMS Network in Asia and Africa, performs the function of a national CBMS partner institution, providing technical assistance to local government units wanting to adopt CBMS. This is one benefit the country has enjoyed which cannot be replicated in other countries. The problem, however, is that the Network could be locked in to the task of replicating CBMS in various communities instead of taking the lead in doing cutting-edge research, such as those mentioned above, that can provide more value to the CBMS database system.

The CBMS Network therefore may have to review its organizational structure, however loosely it may be to continue supporting the expansion of CBMS. In this regard, it may be worthwhile to start exploring the feasibility of establishing a two-tier structure – one national network for each country and an international CBMS network. The national CBMS network can perform the functions currently done by the CBMS Coordinating Team for the country and mobilize resources to fund the services it provides to its old and new members. It should be supported by a CBMS Country Team that provides technical services to members. The international CBMS network meanwhile will then be supported by the current CBMS Coordinating Team. This structure will allow the CBMS Coordinating Team to focus on providing technical assistance to new CBMS participating countries and doing research Aiméd at enhancing further the usefulness of CBMS at various geopolitical levels. The establishment of a national CBMS Network should however be done on a case by case basis because not all currently participating countries have already achieved a sufficient number of local government units implementing CBMS to form a network. Among the participating countries, the Philippines appears to be ripe for establishing a national CBMS network. Other countries can surely benefit from such experience in the future the moment the number of local government units implementing CBMS reaches a critical mass.

II. The PEP Network; Issues for Consideration

a) Technical and Conceptual Arrangements

1. Can the conceptual links between the three PEP components be strengthened?

Tracing impacts of public policies on households is a very difficult and complex process, requiring various analytical skills that can hardly be found in one individual. The creation of the three sub-networks is PEP's response to this difficulty, with each sub-network focusing on a subset of the entire process and capacities are built around each sub-network. Thus, conceptually and operationally, the research programs and activities of the three sub-networks should be interlinked. In reality, however, this seems to be not happening. In particular, CBMS researchers do not have a clue of how PMMA and MPIA research can be linked to their activities for lack of guidance from a conceptual framework that clearly outlines the inter-linkages among the issues dealt with in each sub-network. This is aggravated by the fact that PMMA and MPIA researchers come from other countries who are dealing with country specific issues in

their research. Moreover, international PEP conferences in which all sub-networks run parallel sessions offer them with very little opportunities for closer interactions with PMMA and MPIA researchers.

One pleasant recent development though is the inclusion in the CBMS Network agenda researches that are the concern of the PMMA network, the preliminary ideas and results of which were presented during the CBMS Network conference held in Manila in November 2006. More analytical work could be done with the existing CBMS data through closer linkage and interaction between CBMS and PMMA researchers.¹¹ It could be that existing CBMS data are not sufficient for a particular PMMA research, but with the cooperation and assistance of CBMS researchers, arrangement could be made in which a sample of communities will be requested to collect a few additional data aside from the core poverty indicators they have been collecting to make the PMMA research happen. Communities that understand the purpose for such exercise and have keen interest in the results of such study would likely be willing to lend their cooperation.

Although MPIA researchers have been producing high quality research using much more sophisticated methodology, their linkage to PMMA and CBMS research are however less clear. Findings of CBMS and PMMA researchers have the potential for aiding MPIA researchers in specifying their macroeconomic foundations and CGE or partial equilibrium models, but this has not been happening for reasons already mentioned above. Analytical work on the transmission channels through which effects of macroeconomic policies or external shocks are transmitted to households is visibly absent. This could be one area where MPIA and PMMA researchers could closely work together.

The discussions above suggest that to strengthen the conceptual and operational links between the three PEP components, a PEP country site must have a team composed of researchers from all three sub-networks. Within each country, researchers may come from various research institutions but coordinated by a lead research institution. The three PEP sub-networks meanwhile should be maintained to provide technical support to their respective researchers.

2. Can PEP research make a real impact on policy?

CBMS has addressed expressed demand by local level policy makers and has shown how availability of data at the community level can influence policy and planning at the local level. It is however unclear at this point whether such influence is moving up through the various geopolitical levels. The scaling up of CBMS can hopefully achieve that objective. When combined with the research done by the other two sub-networks, the research of the PEP network in a particular country can be more effective in influencing policy. The bottom line though is that policy makers get to dictate the policy issues that need to be analysed so that research results can be effectively utilized. And this may vary across countries. In the Philippines for example, remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) play an important role on the growth of the national economy, in general, and on the communities where families of OFW are residing, in particular. Sudden shifts in exchange rate or labor

¹¹ Some CBMS researchers interviewed during the CBMS conference held in Manila in November 2006 said that they would like to focus on their comparative advantage, which is developing CBMS, but are willing to support PMMA researchers who would like to do more analytical work using CBMS data.

policies of labor-receiving countries can have significant effects on the country, in general, and OFW households, in particular. In Viet Nam, accession to the WTO may have initially uneven effects on households, which if not addressed by government can undermine the reforms the country has committed for joining the WTO. In Bangladesh, changes in credit policies can have significant impact on households, and thus may be considered by policy makers as an important policy issue.

The discussions above suggest that there ought to be a process of determining research priorities of PEP country sites that express the countries' needs. This is clearly lacking in the current PEP approach to selection of research topics.

3. Management and Organization

3.1. Project Selection

Under current PEP project selection procedure, project proponents are selected on a competitive basis. Thus, it is not surprising to see a MPIA project that is being carried out by a researcher in a country without CBMS and PMMA projects. Our proposal in the case of CBMS is for the Network to be pro-active in selecting CBMS country sites. Given our proposal above to have a country team comprising of researchers from all three sub-networks, we thus propose that the PEP network be more pro-active in selecting a PEP country site. The emphasis would be to develop the country's capacity to conduct analysis on poverty related policies and monitor impacts of such policies and ensure that at the ground level the three sub-networks are linked together through common research agenda and activities, i.e., working on the same thematic area, to achieve greater policy impact. Thus, the potential country site must be able to demonstrate that it can organize an in-country PEP research team and a highly focused research agenda on poverty-related issues that require analytical skills from the three PEP components. The country PEP research team will have a long-term commitment to poverty-related research issues as opposed to the current situation wherein only CBMS researchers appear to have long-term commitment to poverty research. Because of sunk costs, those countries that have already one of the PEP components will likely be the strongest candidates to complete the country teams.

3.2. Capacity Creation

In the case of the CBMS sub-network, research capacity is built at three levels, namely: partner research institution; technical staff of local government units; and selected members of community acting as enumerators. We have pointed out above that the current training methodology of the CBMS team can be enhanced through attachment of new CBMS implementers to experienced CBMS implementers. In the case of both PMMA and MPIA sub-networks, the current approach to capacity building such as capacity-building workshops for network researchers and giving network researchers access to internationally recognized experts is deemed sufficient and effective. It is in this sense that we argued for the retention of the three international sub-networks to ensure that sufficient attention be given to the building of research capacities in each PEP component and to facilitate and coordinate the sharing of research experiences among peers in the same sub-network.

3.3. Organizing conferences

Like other conferences, PEP conferences are intended to serve as a market of ideas for both researchers and policymakers. There are three types of conferences that the PEP Network promotes. The first type is the national conference that the research grantee has to organize to disseminate research results and hopefully to influence policy. The second type is the annual network conference, which in the case of CBMS, has combined national and international conferences together into one conference for the entire network. The third type is the annual international PEP conference which includes representatives from the three sub-networks including steering committee members and resource persons but with all three networks running parallel sessions.

Financial resources spent to support such conferences are by no means small. Thus, the issue of cost-effectiveness must be given consideration when organizing these conferences. Among the three types of conferences mentioned above, the international PEP conference needs some modifications to be cost-effective. First, the format of the conference should be modified to maximize interaction and exchange of ideas among researchers from all sub-networks. Thus, the current practice of holding parallel sessions by sub-networks should be discouraged or stopped altogether. Second, the papers to be presented during the conference should be limited only to those that can deliver new ideas or methodologies (i.e., cutting-edge research), not more of the same ideas presented in earlier conferences or application of an existing methodology to a particular country or community. Third, there should be a separate session for policymakers and other stakeholders with researchers, focusing not on technical issues of the research but on policy implications of the research results and poverty-related policy issues that need to be considered by the PEP network in its future research agenda. This may be held on the last day of the conference, but invited policymakers and other stakeholders need not attend the technical sessions. Given this, the number of participants and days devoted to this international conference can be scaled down.

3.4. Activities to be added/deleted: CBMS Case

We suggested earlier the creation of a two-tiered institutional framework for CBMS, one national CBMS network and the other, international CBMS network, with the former taking over the functions of the latter including training and advocacy at the national level while the latter focuses on cutting-edge research including methodologies for effective poverty monitoring system, promoting CBMS in other countries and coordinating activities of CBMS country teams. This can be done gradually over time depending on the scale of CBMS in CBMS country sites, but can be started now in the case of the Philippines. It is to be noted that as of August 2006, the CBMS Coordinating Team that doubles up as a national CBMS Coordinating Team had 39 outstanding technical assistance commitments to national and local partners. One approach to the provision of technical assistance that could be explored is for the CBMS Coordinating Team to develop a market for CBMS training by training and accrediting qualified trainers and making its training modules and manuals available to accredited trainers who might be able to improve and enhance the effectiveness of these training modules as they gain more experience in training.

The interest of donors in funding specific programs identified by local governments after thorough analysis of CBMS data is a testimony to the usefulness of CBMS in developing poverty-related intervention programs at the local level. A case in point is

the CBMS Development Grant Program funded by UNDP and Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF) – Philippines. However, the CBMS Coordinating Team should not involve its self in, much less take the responsibility for, identifying worthy grantees from among the applicants for certain reasons. First, it detracts its attention from its primary mission, which is to promote CBMS and provide technical assistance to those that want to implement and institutionalize CBMS. Second, failure of awarded projects, especially livelihood projects, to meet their stated objectives could undermine the credibility of the CBMS Coordinating Team. Thus, programs like the current CBMS Development Grant Program should be managed independently of the CBMS Coordinating Team or the CBMS network. Such task should be downloaded to an NGO.

With the training and expertise they have received from the network former researchers, are in position of offering high level expertise service to institutions as consultant. It is therefore recommend that CIRPPE and the Angelo King Institute establish a roster of the network researchers and acts as a “consultancy firm”. It will then propose the services of the network.

The implementation of the recommendations in the report will need an increase in the resources. The diversification of the sources of funding will take time to materialize. If the objective of IDRC to decrease its financial contribution to the network, it not recommendable that be done in the next phase.

III. Response to the IDRC/GGP Team Comments

In organizing my response to the IDRC/GGP comments, I would like to start with the issue on situating PEP in the context of other similar initiatives, followed by the issues on capacity building, policy impact/influence and decentralization/devolution in that order.

1. Situating PEP in the context of other similar initiatives: Asian perspective

There are several networks of research institutions and researchers in Asia whose main objective is to provide high-quality analysis of development issues important for the formulation of policies at the national, regional and international levels. It is noteworthy that many of them have been operating for several years now and are able to continue performing their core functions. Good leadership, keen interest of network members in the network’s core activities and support from various donors have helped them sustain their operations.¹² For purposes of this review, four are briefly described in Annex A. These are:

- e) Pacific Trade and Development Conference (PAFTAD);
- f) East Asian Bureau of Economic Research (EABER);
- g) The East Asian Development Network (EADN); and
- h) The South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes (SANEI).

In terms of research agenda, both PAFTAD and EABER cover a broad range of development issues in the region but do prioritization in the execution of the research. That is, they do research around a particular theme of interest to the region as a whole

¹² Some research institutions in East Asia are members of two or more of these networks.

and to individual countries within the region, commission senior researchers of member institutions and internationally renowned economists to conduct the studies, and discuss the studies' results and policy implications in international conferences, which include key national policymakers as participants.

EADN and SANEI are regional partners of the Global Development Network (GDN), the former consisting of research institutions and researchers in East Asia, and the latter, in South Asia.¹³ Like PAFTAD and EABER, both EADN and SANEI cover a broad range of development issues in their research agenda and conduct studies around thematic areas, the results of which are to be discussed in regional conferences. Unlike PAFTAD and EABER, however, EADN and SANEI put emphasis on strengthening the capacity of research institutions and researchers in developing member countries through research projects awarded to individuals on a competitive basis and training grants.

In terms of core activities, PEP is closer to EADN and SANEI than to PAFTAD and EABER. However, there are glaring differences. PEP has a more focused research agenda aimed at analyzing and understanding a wide range of poverty issues and impacts of policies and external shocks on poverty, and builds methodologies and local research capacity around this area. None of the existing networks in Asia has gone deeper into the issues of poverty and has accumulated knowledge and analytical skills than what PEP has done over a relatively short period of time. One factor that clearly distinguishes PEP from other existing networks in the region is its community-based monitoring system. CBMS fills a large lacuna that local policymakers need to understand about the multidimensional nature of poverty and it helps them to better allocate scarce local resources to address poverty in their respective communities.

While such contributions to development issues in the region distinguish PEP from other regional networks, PEP can complement other networks' initiatives and vice-versa. The four Asian networks mentioned above conduct researches on impacts of macroeconomic policies and shocks on individual Asian economies, and PEP can make a contribution by analyzing impacts of such factors on poverty using economy-wide models. PEP can lend its expertise to researchers of the four networks wanting to learn about how to analyze poverty in its multidimensional sense. Conversely, studies on poverty done by the four networks can inform PEP specific issues that need to be included in its research agenda. The study done by EADN on urban poverty and safety net can be cited as an example here. Such potential for complementarities between PEP and the existing regional networks can be exploited by establishing a link between them through collaborative research and the linking of their websites to facilitate exchanges of information. PEP could take the initiative in building such relationship.

The four existing Asian networks are known to governments in the region and the donor community as PAFTAD, EABER, EADN and SANEI. This is not however the case with PEP. Rather, its sub-networks, particularly the CBMS, are known to be contributing to poverty analysis, not PEP as a whole. This is because seldom do all sub-networks have projects in a particular country, and even if all have projects in the same country, policymakers come into contact with them separately rather than as one

¹³ The counterpart of these networks in Africa is AERC.

entity.¹⁴ In the Philippines where all three sub-networks were present at one particular point in time, there was no conference in which CBMS, MPIA and PMMA researchers together presented the results of their studies. Neither did the PMMA team approach CBMS for assistance to organize a national workshop for the study.

4. Capacity building

Building local capacity to analyze various facets of poverty and impacts of policies and shocks on poverty has been recognized by PEP researchers interviewed for this evaluation as one of the strongest components in the network that compares well with other networks with similar initiative. Right from the research proposal stage, researchers already received assistance from the PEP network in the form of comments on and suggestions to improve their framework, approach and methodology and easy access to related literature. MPIA and PMMA researchers learned a lot from the training they obtained from Université Laval on CGE modeling and microsimulation analysis. They pointed out that Université Laval Team's quick responses to technical questions they raised while their research was in progress, incisive comments on their draft reports that came promptly, access to international experts outside of Université Laval and participation in regional and international conferences organized by PEP or by other organizations are important elements of the training for raising the quality of the research that they hoped the PEP network will continue.

Currently, there are already several MPIA and PMMA researchers who have completed their studies and acquired new skills that could be shared with fellow southern researchers. While making themselves available as resource persons for training is sufficient in certain cases, in other cases a better way to share such expertise with fellow southern researchers is to encourage them to do collaborative research with neophyte researchers in other MPIA or PMMA country sites. This would involve supporting short visits (e.g., 1 month) of senior MPIA and PMMA researchers in other countries.

[Note: Although this already appeared in the previous draft, I added this to complete this section.] As regards the CBMS Network's approach to training, the CBMS Coordinating Team has already well-developed training modules and manuals applied rigorously in training programs. Unlike MPIA and PMMA, CBMS training is Aiméd at building capacities of researchers, the local government unit's technical staff and some members of the community who serve as enumerators. The challenge to the CBMS network is to find out whether there is still room for improving the effectiveness of its training programs. Presently, there are already several local government units in CBMS Network member countries that have a relatively long experience in implementing CBMS and using CBMS data for various purposes that benefited the poor. Such experience can provide valuable lessons to new CBMS implementers. Unlike researchers in MPIA and PMMA whose research capacity can be enhanced through personal interactions with international experts based in universities or research institutes, CBMS researchers and implementers can best

¹⁴ For example, when a Mayor was informed that there are MPIA researchers in the country that are looking at macroeconomic policies on poverty, which is part of the PEP project to which CBMS belongs, as a response to his comment that such issue is important but not being discussed during the conference, his quick reaction was that he does not really know or heard about PEP and MPIA nor does know that CBMS is part of PEP.

enhance their capacities through exposure and interactions with those that have long experience with CBMS. In line with this, CBMS researchers from Benin have suggested that the CBMS training methodology be enhanced by complementing the classroom-type approach to training with an attachment program lasting for about 2-3 weeks wherein a team consisting of researchers from new partner institutions and technical staff of a candidate local government unit can gain first-hand knowledge of how an experienced local government unit in other countries develop, implement and use CBMS for various purposes. This can be accompanied by a short study tour by officials of a candidate local government unit to the same experienced local government unit to exchange views with their peers. Admittedly, it entails additional training cost, but it is worthwhile exploring whether it is cost-effective than the current practice of exchanging views and experiences in big international conferences and making a quick visit to a CBMS site, if any, in the host country. Some members of the CBMS Network from Africa who attended the CBMS conference in Manila last November 2006 welcome such possible enhancement to the current CBMS approach to capacity building.

5. Policy influence/impact

Tracing policy influence and impacts of an independently conducted research (i.e., not commissioned by policymakers) is indeed difficult to do, and no technique has ever been perfected that can be uniformly applied to all cases. One conventional approach is to define important milestones in the research process and develop indicators that could shed light on the extent of policy influence and impacts of the research. However, as the milestones get further away from the starting point of the research, the causal links between the research and policy influence and impacts gets more blurry for reasons already cited in the draft report paper (pp. 39-41). Despite this weakness, one could attempt to use this conventional approach to trace and assess policy influence and impacts of the PEP research. For purposes of assessing PEP research's policy influence and impact, we can define the following milestones of the research:

- 5.1.research proposal preparation
- 5.2.conduct of the research
- 5.3.research dissemination
- 5.4.formal adoption of the research's policy recommendations
- 5.5.policy implementation
- 5.6.policy impacts on poverty and assessment

Ideally, policymakers' participation should appear in each of these milestones, albeit the degree of their participation may vary from milestone to milestone and also according to the policy issue being addressed by the research. PEP's review process in general puts emphasis on (a) to (c) where it can exert considerable influence.

The policy influence and impacts of PEP initiatives can be assessed through the milestones outlined above. At the outset, however, it must be stated that it is extremely difficult to assess policy influence and impacts of PEP as a whole at the national level since some sub-networks are not present at all in a particular country. In countries wherein all three sub-networks are present, the research problems examined by the sub-networks are different from each other. Thus, assessment of policy influence and impacts has to be examined on a sub-network basis.

By design, CBMS enjoins participation of LGUs, which includes sharing some costs of data gathering, analysis and dissemination of the results. Of course, the most important indicator of CBMS' policy influence is when LGU officials seize control of the CBMS process (with some assistance from CBMS team), including assessment of the poverty impacts of their programs that have been designed based on the information generated by their CBMS.

In the Philippines where CBMS adoption rate by LGUs is already widespread, the presentations of several provincial governors, city/town mayors and "barangay" officials of their CBMS initiatives and how they use CBMS information to mobilize resources and/or reallocate annual budgets to address certain facets of poverty during the CMBS international conference held in November 2006 in Manila are clear examples of policy influence and impacts of CBMS at the local level.¹⁵ The League of Municipalities of the Philippines issued a memorandum to its members in June 2006 enjoining all municipalities to adopt the CBMS as a tool for local poverty diagnosis. At the national level, the Social Development Committee comprising of Secretaries of key national government agencies including the Executive Secretary passed a resolution in July 2006 recommending the adoption and use of CBMS as the principal monitoring tool and system for the core local poverty indicators (CLPIs).

Although none of the existing CBMS participating countries that have already successfully pilot-tested CBMS has reached the same level of policy penetration as in the Philippines, there are however initiatives to institutionalize CBMS at least in some local government units. For countries where local autonomy has not yet been in place, partnering with national agencies supportive of CBMS such as a statistical agency as in the cases of Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Cambodia appears to be a feasible route for institutionalizing CBMS.

While MPIA and PMMA researchers have produced high-quality research, the policy influence of their research has so far been less clear, at least in the Asian region. In this regard, other networks like PAFTAD, EABER, EADN and SANEI appear to be more successful than MPIA and PMMA in communicating policy implications of their research to policy makers at the national and regional level and in some cases succeeded in influencing policies at these levels. Part of the problem stems from the perception of researchers about what PEP really wants to accomplish. For instance, a MPIA researcher thinks that the "objective of PEP MPIA is only to encourage local young researchers to participate in international network and to develop local capacity." That is why his research team was not provided a budget for research dissemination. In the case of the PMMA research team, budget for dissemination had been allocated but the amount was insufficient to mount a workshop in the place where research results were thought to have been more useful to stakeholders.

Some networks in the region have also similar budget constraint to support research dissemination. However, member institutions to which the researchers are affiliated can make available their resources (e.g., conference room, website) or share the cost of holding policy workshop and/or publishing the research report. For instance, one EADN researcher received only US\$1,000 from the network for publishing her research report, which obviously is not enough, but her institution picked up the rest

¹⁵ Some of them showed maps indicating pocket of poverty based on some poverty indicators before and after program intervention.

of the publication bill.¹⁶ This may not happen to MPIA and PMMA researchers because research awardees do not represent their institutions unlike in the case of EADN and SANEI that provide research grants on a competitive basis to individual researchers whose research proposals are endorsed by their respective network member institutions to which they are affiliated (see Annex A).

There are several ways by which PEP, particularly MPIA and PMMA, can be more effective in influencing policy. One is that before finally awarding a research grant to a candidate chosen on a competitive basis, PEP requires the candidate to create an *ad hoc* advisory committee, preferably consisting of policymakers who can potentially make use of the results of a stand alone research, potential sources of data, and academics, to help him/her throughout the research process including the fine tuning of the research questions and securing additional resources for research dissemination.¹⁷ Another approach, as suggested by one PMMA researcher and which other networks are doing, is to have “some kind of collective effort among PEP-funded teams across thematic or regional lines”. Such collective effort can more readily attract additional resources for research dissemination than stand alone research. This approach though requires a lead researcher who will organize the research topics and teams. These approaches are not mutually exclusive, and PEP may adopt both.

6. Decentralization and Devolution

The PEP network devolution strategy is clearly laid down in the “Devolution Strategy” paper (4 September 2003) and being implemented in a gradual manner. We support this effort, but we would also like to see it to it that once the PEP network is completely devolved to southern-based institutions, it can carry out its task of informing policy to reduce poverty in developing economies not only in a more effective and efficient manner but also in a sustainable manner. One issue highlighted in this Review is that IDRC support to the PEP network is going to diminish over time, which means that the PEP network should tap other sources of funding to support its continued expansion. We thus propose an organizational structure for PEP that would preserve the key elements that made the network effective in carrying out its tasks since its creation and add new elements to strengthen it further as it implements its devolution strategy.

5. Overall organizational structure

The PEP Network shall consist of the PEP Coordinating body and two regional sub-networks, namely, the PEP-Africa Network and PEP-Asia Network. This puts it more explicitly what has already been thought out in the devolution strategy paper. But to enhance PEP’s effectiveness and assure its sustainability, PEP as a network must raise further its profile in the policymaking, academic and donor communities at the national, regional and international levels, and this should be reflected in its organizational structure.

5.1 PEP Coordinating Body

¹⁶ The PEP Network can of course tap other donor agencies to support research dissemination, but that is different from network members themselves contributing to such activity.

¹⁷ Junior researchers may need help from PEP in organizing the advisory committee.

The PEP Coordinating Body (PEP-CB) represents PEP in the international policymaking, academic and donor communities. Its functions are to provide general direction to the network and to ensure that the network as a whole and its regional networks contribute to the attainment of its objective (and avoid polarization of the regional networks); to mobilize and manage resources to support the PEP network's activities; and provide scientific support to the PEP network.

We envision the PEP-CB to consist of an Advisory Board, Steering Committee and Resource Persons. The Advisory Committee is the policy-making body of and provides general directions to the PEP network. The Advisory Board shall comprise of eminent persons who have strong links to the international policymaking, academic and donor communities. Needless to say, Africa and Asia shall be represented in the Advisory Board.

The Steering Committee supported by a small secretariat provides administrative and technical support (e.g., packaging network activities that may be of interest to donors) to the Advisory Board and to the network, and mainly assumes the functions of the existing three steering committees. It also manages the pool of Resource Persons, ensuring that network researchers can easily access their services. It promotes research on methodologies that PEP researchers can use in their studies and thematic issues on poverty common to the African and Asian regions. The regional networks should be represented in this committee.

The Université Laval is the natural home for the PEP-CB. It is close to the major international policy-making bodies, multilateral agencies and private foundations. Aside from its own scientific resources that has been and can be made available to PEP Network researchers, it is located near the leading academic institutions and think tanks which it has been tapping to provide high quality training to PEP researchers. Needless to say, such relationships need to be maintained when PEP-CB is transferred to a southern-based institution.

Once in place, the PEP-CB, as mentioned earlier in this Review, may request IDRC assistance to convene a consultative group of potentially interested backers and research partners. It is essential that the PEP-CB has firmly established relationship with various donors to raise sufficient resources to support future PEP activities before completely devolving it to southern-based institution. It is equally essential that the PEP-CB has firmly established relationship with the leading academic institutions and think tanks before completely devolving it to a southern-based institution.

5.2 Regional PEP Networks

The regional networks should look after the activities of and provide scientific support to the CBMS, PMMA and MPIA sub-networks, ensuring that the sub-networks' research themes and activities are tightly linked to each other to make the research more effective in influencing national and regional policies and programs on poverty. As has already been started by PEP, they should gradually take over major administrative functions of the PEP Coordinating Body such as hosting and managing international PEP conferences, workshops and training especially in areas where it has expertise that could be share with PEP researchers. While continuing to receive

financial and technical support from the PEP Coordinating Body, the regional networks should also mobilize financial support from regional and international donor agencies that are interested in supporting regional PEP projects and tap services of regional experts.

The regional PEP networks should reflect their regional character. They should therefore be organized as a network of research institutions and researchers in their respective regions. Institutional members of the regional networks may also share the costs of their regional network's activities, such as hosting regional national and regional conferences. They may also manage some of the activities of the network as was done recently by some PEP members.

The regional PEP networks shall be governed by a Steering Committee composed of heads of member research institutions and some senior researchers with expertise in the three areas covered by PEP. In other words, the Steering Committee can be configured in such a way that it can provide scientific support to the network. The Secretariat shall be housed at the institution where the Chairman of the Steering Committee is affiliated.

6. Assessment of PEP-Manila Office

The PEP-Manila office is housed at the Angelo King Institute (AKI) of the De La Salle University. Under the current PEP structure, the PEP-Manila office is tasked to coordinate the networks' CBMS programs and provide technical support to partner institutions in developing countries in Asia and Africa wanting to pilot-test and eventually institutionalize CBMS at the local and national levels. It also doubles up as Philippine CBMS coordinating team, providing technical assistance to many LGUs wanting to institute CBMS in their respective localities.

Considering our proposal to create a PEP-Asia Network as a step forward in devolving the functions of PEP to southern-based institution, the issue then is whether the PEP-Manila office can function as a hub for the PEP-Asia Network. At the outset, it should be noted that the De La Salle University (DLSU) has decided to merge AKI with another research unit within the university, which will be called Angelo King Institute for Business, Economic and Research Development (AKIBERD) effective 16 May 2007. Accordingly, this is part of the university's effort to streamline the number of operating units and reduce overlapping functions of various units within the same department. AKIBERD will be the only research institute of the College of Business and Economics. The current head of AKI, Dr. Intal, who is a member of the CBMS Steering Committee, will head the Institute. Accordingly, the structure of CBMS and its status within the University will remain the same as before the merger. Theoretically, CBMS could access a wider set of scientific support from the university.

DLSU is one of the top three universities in the Philippines and one of the leading research universities in the region. The College of Business and Economics to which AKIBERD belongs has faculty members who obtained their doctoral degrees from top universities abroad and from the University of the Philippines. They have produced high-quality research papers including policy-oriented studies individually

or in collaboration with other senior researchers in the Philippines and elsewhere. AKIBERD can thus provide an intellectual leadership to the PEP-Asia Network.

The CBMS coordinating team can be transformed into the Secretariat for the PEP-Asia Network. Considering CBMS coordinating team's technical expertise, the Secretariat can be both an administrative and technical secretariat.

The CBMS has sufficient administrative capacity built over the years starting from the MIMAP days to support PEP-Asia Network activities such as convening national, regional and international conferences. The DLSU's administrative department can provide additional administrative support as needed. As part of the university, it has access to good conference facilities within the university campus. The CBMS office at DLSU campus has good access to communication facilities and utility services. It is close to several hotels located in the business districts of Manila and Makati City. Given the proposed configuration of the PEP-Asia Network, it can tap other members of the network to manage some components of the research and to organize national, regional and international conferences for the PEP network.

The CBMS coordinating team has already gained the respect and confidence of Philippine authorities and local NGOs whose interests are aligned with PEP objectives and increasingly so of those of the donor community. With the spread of CBMS programs to other Asian and African countries, the CBMS Coordinating Team is gradually gaining respect and confidence from host agencies and policymakers. It has continued doing research on methodologies that can enhance the usefulness of CBMS to local policymakers of these countries. Considering the nature of the demand for CBMS services, the CBMS coordinating team should maintain this expertise and, having comparative advantage in this area within PEP, share such expertise with partners within Asia and Africa, which must also gain such expertise to be able to provide technical assistance to its partners more effectively and efficiently.

Admittedly, the CBMS Coordinating team does not have expertise in the areas covered by PMMA and MPIA. However, as mentioned above, it can draw on expertise from the university and members of the Steering Committee so that it can provide scientific support to researchers under the three PEP sub-networks. Several MIMAP researchers in the Philippines who did work on macroeconomic modelling and other aspects of the MIMAP agenda could also be tapped to provide scientific support to the network.

7. Organizing the PEP-Asia Network

The organization of the PEP-Asia Network should be done gradually over time, and AKIBERD can take the lead in this initiative. Fortunately, CBMS has already several partner institutions in Asia that AKIBERD can start with as members of the network. Some of the existing members of the CBMS network have in-house expertise in areas other than measurement of poverty and poverty monitoring system that could qualify to do research under MPIA and PMMA sub-networks. It could then expand to include other research institutions especially those that have considerable policy influence in their respective countries and have in-house expertise in some aspects of the PEP agenda and individual researchers interested in developing their research capacity in areas covered by the PEP network.

IV. Other Research Networks in Asia

1. Pacific Trade and Development Conference

The Pacific Trade and Development Conference (PAFTAD) is an informal privately-organized and operated conference that started in 1968. The impetus for organizing the conference came from mounting concern among the economically advanced market-oriented Pacific nations of the time – Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States – about the trade implications of the newly-formed European Economic Community. Through the years, however, PAFTAD has attempted to address emerging development issues in the region covering everything from employment and mineral resources through to technology transfer, structural change and financial reform. Thus, its function has evolve into promoting policy-oriented academic research and discussion of Asia Pacific economic issues, serving as the most authoritative source of economic analysis in the Pacific area, and generating high-quality publications on international economic and development issues.

PAFTAD is maintained by a network of research institutions in 15 Pacific countries in Southeast Asia, North Asia, North America, Latin America and Australasia. It is managed by an International Steering Committee whose Secretariat is housed at the Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government, the Australian National University.

Each PAFTAD annual conference is dedicated to a particular development issue chosen by its International Steering Committee, with the assistance of major research and academic institutions in the host country. Because of its objective to provide high-quality research as inputs to policy formulation at the national and regional levels, PAFTAD commissioned seasoned researchers in PAFTAD member countries to do the research. Aside from researchers, conference participants include those with considerable national and regional influence. Research results are disseminated through PAFTAD's annual conferences and publications. Accordingly, the issues PAFTAD has identified and the ideas it has generated have been taken up by national governments and have shaped the agenda of regional organizations including APEC and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council.

PAFTAD is supported and funded by private foundations, which include, among others, the Ford Foundation, the Asia Foundation, Kansai Economic Foundation; government agencies like USAID, AusAID, IDRC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan; and research and academic institutions in the region. Member research institutions in developing countries contribute to the network by underwriting the local cost of hosting conferences and in some cases commissioning studies for presentation at the annual conference.

2. East Asian Bureau of Economic Research

The **East Asian Bureau of Economic Research (EABER)** is a forum for high-quality economic research focusing on issues facing the economies of East Asia which was organized in the late 1990s. Its objective is to provide research support for policymakers, improve links between researchers throughout the region, and create

venues where researchers and policymakers can come together to discuss issues vital to economic development in East Asia. Its research covers a wide range of issues which are categorized into: macroeconomics, microeconomics, trade, labour, development, finance and governance. It organizes international conferences, each focusing on a particular theme, and publishes proceedings of these conferences.

EABER involves co-operation among key 19 research institutions in East Asia. Its programs are supervised by a Steering Committee whose Secretariat is located at the Crawford School of Economics and Governance, Australian National University. Researchers from member institutions and internationally renowned researchers are invited to present papers to these conferences. Participants in these conferences include national policymakers.

Member research institutions have considerable influence on policies at the national and regional levels, and research outputs of EABER serve as additional inputs to the formulation of policies at the national and regional levels.

EABER's programs are being supported and funded by the Ministry of Finance, Japan; AusAID; and Crawford School of Economics and Governance, Australian National University. Member institutions including those from developing economies share in the cost of hosting these international conferences.

3. The Global Development Network and its Regional Partners in Asia

The Global Development Network (GDN) is a worldwide network of research and policy institutes. It was established in 1999 by the World Bank and is now an independent organization based in New Delhi.

GDN supports multidisciplinary research in the social sciences; produces policy-relevant knowledge on a global scale; builds research capacity to advance development and alleviate poverty; facilitates knowledge sharing among researchers; and disseminates knowledge on development issues to the public and policymakers. It aims to generate research at the local level in developing and transition countries. It has five core activities Aiméd at building research capacity in developing and transition economies. These are: regional research competitions; global research projects; global development awards and medals competition; annual conferences; and GDNNet (the electronic voice of GDN). It has a diversified donor base, which includes governments, multilateral development agencies, private corporations and foundations.

GDN operates through its regional partners, which by themselves are networks of research and policy institutes in their respective regions. These partners implement GDN programs and activities at a regional level. Currently, it has nine regional partners, two of which are located in Asia.

4. The East Asian Development Network

The East Asian Development Network (EADN) is a network of research institutions in the developing countries of East Asia under the Global Development Network (GDN). It currently consists of 42 research institutes representing China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines,

Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. EADN membership is on an institutional basis. Operationally, however, a large number of research institutions and researchers are affiliated to EADN through the research activities and the meetings of EADN and GDN.

EADN's mission is to strengthen the capacity of research institutions and researchers in developing East Asia to undertake high quality development-focused and policy-relevant research in the social sciences that can be used in policy analysis, debates and inputs at the regional and national levels. Its major activities include:

- ***EADN Regional Research Projects***: EADN seeks to facilitate collaborative research projects between different research institutions in the region. The aim of the regional research projects is to build knowledge of regional issues, through comparative studies on a regional theme. Since its organization, EADN has completed regional projects such as Urban Poverty and Social Safety Net; Income Distribution and Sustainable Development; Indicators and Analyses of Vulnerabilities to Economic Crises; and Social Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis.
- ***EADN Individual Research Grant Projects***: EADN awards individual research grants, providing financial support for research aimed at improving research capacity and research quality in developing East Asia. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis to selected research proposals from individuals or teams of researchers from the EADN member economies on topics that are social science and development-oriented and policy-relevant. The amount of the grant ranges from US\$20,000 to US\$30,000.
- ***Global Research Projects***: EADN assists the GDN in the implementation of the Global Research Projects such as explaining growth, understanding reform, bridging research and policy, and impact of rich country policies on poverty.
- ***EADN Training Grants***: EADN provides fellowships and financial support for young researchers to undertake research at any of its member institutes and in organised training programmes organized by international and regional organizations.
- ***EADN Annual Forum***: EADN organizes an annual forum for its membership for the purpose of research networking, presentation and discussion of results of research projects funded by EADN, and presentation and evaluation of research proposals for EADN funding.
- ***EADN Research Workshops***: EADN organises a series of research workshops to discuss and evaluate work-in-progress and presentation of results of various research projects.
- ***EADN Website***: The EADN website provides information to inform the EADN membership, GDN, other regional networks and interested parties of the EADN membership, activities, research grants and grant-funded publications. GDN is currently assisting EADN and other regional networks in developing the GDNet Regional Windows.

EADN is governed by a Steering Committee consisting of a Regional Coordinator (Chairman) and country coordinators. The EADN Steering Committee nominates its representative to serve on the GDN Board of Directors. The Regional Coordinator and Secretariat are appointed on a competitive basis and serve a five-year term while country coordinators are nominated by member institutes of their respective countries

and serve an indefinite term. Currently, the Secretariat is based at the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), Bangkok.

A formal application must be made by the research institution with which the applicant for a research grant is affiliated. When the proposal is approved by the Steering Committee, the researcher may opt to have the grant administered by his/her research institution or directly disbursed to him/her.

Most member institutes and individual researchers of EADN have been doing policy-oriented studies, some of which have influenced the formulation of socio-economic policies in their respective countries. Thus, the studies they conduct under the auspices of EADN add inputs that they can provide to debates on national and regional issues.

Although EADN receives financial support from GDN, it also mobilizes resources to fund some of its activities, and in some cases, member institutions share the cost of disseminating research results such as holding regional and national conferences and publishing research reports.

5. The South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes

The South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes (SANEI) is GDN's regional network partner for South Asia. It consists of 48 research institutes based in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It seeks to establish strong research interlinkages among diverse economic research institutes in the region and conduct research to inform policy. While maintaining high-quality research, the network puts emphasis on capacity building.

SANEI activities include:

- ***Regional Research Competitions:*** As part of its efforts to support research capacity building in South Asia, SANEI organizes regional research competitions annually. The candidates are selected on a competitive basis by a panel of experts. Aside from stand alone research, SANEI funds projects which are jointly carried out by at least two research institutes based in two different countries in South Asia.
- ***SANEI Annual Conferences:*** SANEI organizes an annual conference to promote exchange of ideas and collaborative research in the region.
- ***SANEI Lecture Series:*** SANEI has initiated a lecture series. Every year, an eminent academic delivers a lecture on a topic relevant to the South Asian region.
- ***Global Research Projects:*** SANEI has collaborated with GDN on the South Asian component of the Global Research Project on "Explaining Growth". Three thematic papers and five country studies were prepared. It is also involved in the "Bridging Research and Policy" GRP.
- ***GDN Annual Conferences:*** SANEI participates in GDN's Annual Conferences.

SANEI covers research areas of interest to the development of the region. However, there were instances in which research proposals were invited around thematic areas such as trade and investment, development and roles of institutions in development, good governance and infrastructure all with reference to South Asia.

SANEI is governed by a Steering Committee consisting of a Chairman and representatives from member countries and an Advisory Body. A Research Advisory Panel reviews research proposals. Grants are awarded for one year only. A formal application must be made by the research institution with which the applicant is affiliated and if the project proposal is funded, the institution will be responsible for the administration of the grant. No funds will be paid directly to the individuals.

SANEI receives financial support from GDN and augments it by mobilizing funds from donor agencies such as the Ford Foundation.