From evidence to impact:

Development contributions of Australian aid funded research

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A study based on research undertaken through the Australian Development Research Awards Scheme 2007-2016

RESEARCH FOR
DEVELOPMENT
IMPACT NETWORK

A collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development and Australian universities

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OCTOBER 2017

About the Research for Development Impact Network

The Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network, formerly the ACFID University Network, is a collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Australian universities. The RDI Network is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development, supporting collaborative partnerships to improve the uptake and use of evidence in policy and practice. Working in close partnership with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the Network functions as a key cross-sectoral platform for shared learning and action in the international development sector.

For further information or to join the network see the website www.rdinetwork.org.au.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This study investigated how development research funded through the Australian Development Research Awards Scheme (ADRAS) has influenced policy and practice. It was conducted by the Research for Development Impact Network (RDI Network), and sought to provide insight to funders and researchers on how to maximise development outcomes arising from such research.
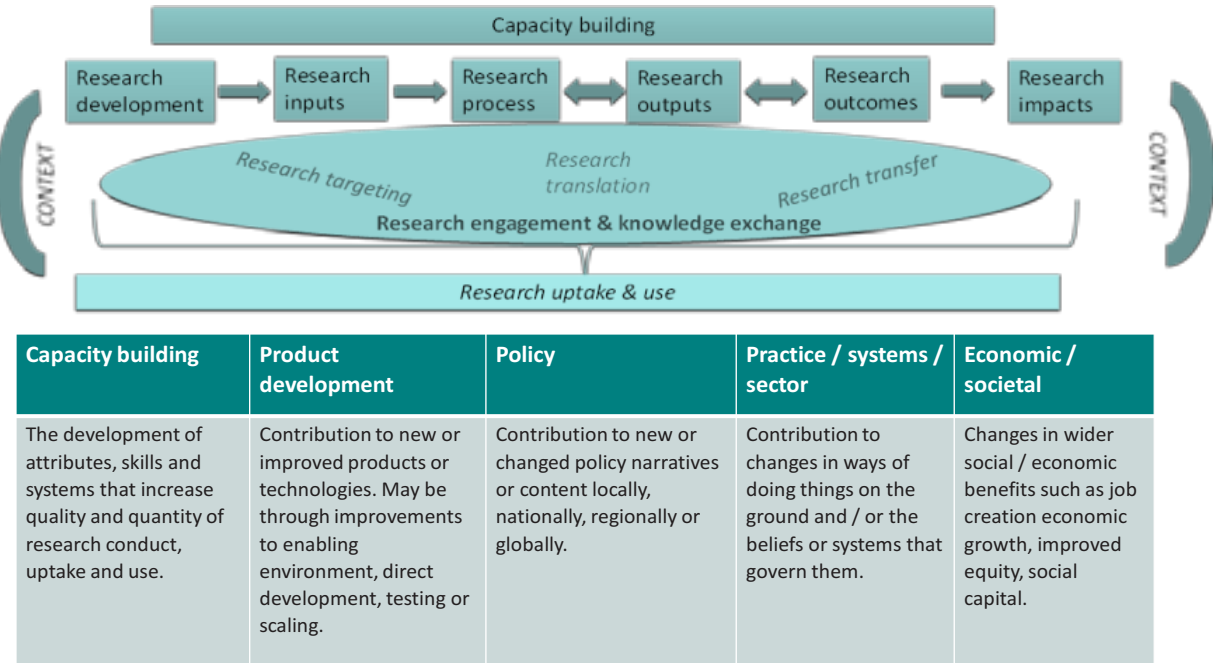
The study consolidates, reviews and provides examples of when and how research conducted under this scheme contributed to development outcomes, and should not be taken to represent an evaluation of the funding scheme per se. The documented outcomes and impacts include research that influenced development policy, changed practice, strengthened capacity, and/or increased the reach and effectiveness of Australia's development assistance.

The ADRAS was the Australian Government's flagship development research grant scheme from 2007 to 2016. It involved annual to biennial open competitive calls. ADRAS formed a pillar of the then Australian Agency for International Development's (AusAID's) development research strategy (2008–2012) to increase quality, diversity and transparency in aid program research funding. In total, 129 primary research projects were funded over the 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2012 rounds, representing an investment of just over A$58 million under priority themes for Australian aid programming. Three-quarters of the awards were made to Australian universities as the primary recipient institutions, and nearly 90% of all grants included a developing country partner.

The scheme focused on development outcomes. From its commencement, the ADRAS required researchers to identify the target end users, and to formulate strategic communication and engagement strategies to reach these groups. This is the first study of the contribution of ADRAS research to development policy and practice outcomes. Since all ADRAS-funded projects were completed by 2017, it was an opportune time to undertake such an analysis.

The study followed a rigorous methodology. Key informant interviews were conducted with 25 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) current and former staff situating the research in the current policy context. A strong theoretical underpinning was developed in the form of a Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impact (FERDI) which drew on relevant academic and grey literature (see Figure 1). The framework identifies five key areas of potential research influence: (i) capacity building; (ii) product development; (iii) policy; (iv) practice, systems and sectoral influence; and (v) economic and societal impacts.

Figure 1: Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impacts (FERDI)[1]

Capacity building	Product development	Policy	Practice / systems / sector	Economic / societal
The development of attributes, skills and systems that increase quality and quantity of research conduct, uptake and use.	Contribution to new or improved products or technologies. May be through improvements to enabling environment, direct development, testing or scaling.	Contribution to new or changed policy narratives or content locally, nationally, regionally or globally.	Contribution to changes in ways of doing things on the ground and / or the beliefs or systems that govern them.	Changes in wider social / economic benefits such as job creation economic growth, improved equity, social capital.

Our sample comprised 50% of mostly 2007–2009 projects with selected later projects. These were representative across sector, grant size and primary recipient (Australian or international). A targeted questionnaire was used to capture contributions to development outcomes. An iterative analytical process identified categories of development outcome and impact, as well as facilitators of development outcomes and impact. A subset of five cases was selected and examined further, using a realist evaluation framework to document the pathways to research influence, including from the perspectives of research end users.

Policy context and DFAT perspectives on the ADRAS

The policy context for research in the aid program has changed since the ADRAS was introduced in 2007. The former Australian Agency for International Development, which implemented the ADRAS, has been integrated into DFAT. Development assistance funding has been reduced by around one-third since 2013–14, and there is no longer a research strategy to guide investment in research, nor a centralised unit to handle and coordinate research investment and communications. DFAT continues to fund research in a decentralised manner, through sectors and country programs, and the role of innovation in the aid program continues to provide opportunities for new thinking and evidence to inform the aid program.

Interviews with DFAT staff provided insights into the implications of this policy context for the kind of research that is valued and currently used by DFAT. DFAT staff suggested that to be useful, research findings needed to be robust, timely and policy-relevant, and that engagement be facilitated by clear links to strategy. DFAT staff indicated that they tend to use short summary outputs and blogs, and appreciated being 'talked through' research findings and implications. There was interest in learning more about outcomes and pathways to impact (as captured in this study).

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1   This framework was developed by the consultant Debbie Muirhead in consultation with the project steering group.

In terms of perspectives on the ADRAS itself, DFAT staff saw reputational value in the high external profile of the scheme, valued its emphasis on communications and engagement (including with DFAT), and felt overall that uptake within DFAT could be further optimised. A number of sector strategies had drawn on ADRAS evidence, although the perceived relevance of the research varied by sector, and it was recognised that wider uptake of ADRAS research involved other development actors and partners rather than DFAT itself, including multilateral institutions. Staff were interested in the 'real-world' impacts from funded research. These impacts include policy influence, entry points for dialogue, budget allocations or action plans addressing recommendations, influence on aid programming, and longer-term outcomes from capacity building, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Overview of development outcomes of ADRAS research

The influence of ADRAS research was identified primarily in the areas of policy, practice and capacity building (three of the five areas outlined in the FERDI). This is as expected, given the focus of the funding scheme which excluded product development research, and the challenges of capturing subsequent longer-term contributions to socio–economic societal impacts.

Approximately 40% of the sampled ADRAS projects had a verifiable and direct influence on policy or practice outcomes (see Table A for examples). A recent evaluation of comparable Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)/Department for International Development (DFID) grants found that a similar proportion (35%) had an influence (France et al. 2016). However, the scope of this study was not extensive enough to follow up all potential outcomes, so they could be underrepresented.

In the sample, health-related ADRAS research appeared to have the most frequent contribution to outcomes, a finding that is consistent with other assessments of development research impacts. Disability and gender projects in this study also showed clear contributions to development outcomes. Economics and governance ADRAS projects appeared to have the lowest rates of direct contribution to outcomes in this study, unless the former were focused on a specific industry or sector issue.

Table A: Summary of ADRAS research contribution to development outcomes

OUTCOME CATEGORY	EXAMPLES OF ADRAS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUTCOMES
Policy	▶ **Country-relevant addition to new law:** The 2016 Papua New Guinea (PNG) tobacco control act created a separation between village customary regulations for local small-scale tobacco producers and national framework for large companies.
	▶ **Change in tax policy:** Fiji taxation policy was changed to reduce palm oil use and increase consumption of fruit and vegetables to address rising obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
	▶ **Evidence-informed policy decision:** Roll-out of Health Equity Funds (HEF) over Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) for health care coverage of poorer households in Cambodia and Laos.
	▶ **Influenced DFAT monitoring:** Gender composition of community committees was adopted as an indicator for DFAT gender-inclusiveness monitoring.
	▶ **Influenced policy:** Research insights and the situation of women with disabilities were referenced in the Cambodian National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014–2018.
	▶ **A gender-responsive budget** was developed to support Timor Leste's domestic violence law.
	▶ **Informed quality standards:** ADRAS research informed quality standards for early childhood education in Indonesia.
	▶ **Informed policy requirements:** School textbook authors were required to undergo gender awareness training in Indonesia.
Practice and systems	▶ **Changes in payment practices to benefit small-scale producers:** Payment practices changed in coffee buying companies in Timor Leste for improved consistency of livelihoods for small scale producers.
	▶ **Changes in disability-inclusive road practice:** Disability-inclusive road infrastructure changed in at least two PNG provinces.
	▶ **Uptake and use of disability assessment tool:** Rapid Assessment of Disability (RAD) tool was used in monitoring and evaluation for DFAT access to education project in Fiji.
	▶ **Construction of accessible infrastructure:** An accessible residence was built at a vocational training centre to enable women with disabilities to access training.
	▶ **Adoption of guidance materials on public health law review:** Guidance for public health law review developed and used in the Pacific was also being demanded, adapted and extended to other WHO regions, supporting health security and systems reform.
	▶ **Use of gender-related guidance materials to inform practice:** Gender principles and monitoring were incorporated in NGO water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs in Indonesia, Timor Leste and Vietnam.
	▶ **Use of gender and disability community training materials to develop staff and volunteer sensitivity:** Cambodian NGO integrated gender and disability awareness and inclusion training for all staff and volunteers into its practice.
	▶ **Strengthened practice regarding data collection and inclusion of intersectionality:** Disability indicators were included in the Individual Deprivation Measures (IDM), allowing disaggregation by disability as well as gender.

OUTCOME CATEGORY	EXAMPLES OF ADRAS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUTCOMES
Practice and systems (continued)	▶ **Improved access to health-related evidence:** Databases and access systems were developed to promote greater access to health-related evidence for decision-making in Fiji. ▶ **Changed health check practices:** NCD-related health checks and occupational health and safety practices were introduced in key ministries in Fiji. ▶ **Development of indices of investment attractiveness** in Indonesia was influenced by research. ▶ **Changed practices to protect groundwater:** Informed approaches to improve groundwater quality were promoted in the Cook Islands.
Products	▶ **Product testing and scale-up:** Wastewater treatment devices were tested and scaled up in the Cook Islands and more broadly in Pacific island nations (ecoTrench and other strategies).
Capacity	▶ **Improved skills, experience and confidence benefiting employability:** Research skills, and evidence-informed advocacy skills have led to further employment for women and people with disabilities in PNG, Solomon Islands and Cambodia. ▶ **Improved analytical and convening skills:** The local sanitation-related community-based organisation (CBO) peak body in Indonesia developed improved data collection, monitoring and convening power amongst key stakeholders. ▶ **Systems for access to and use of evidence** were enhanced in Fiji. Key policy officials noted the importance of these changes and institutionalised them. ▶ **Improved knowledge exchange and research translation skills:** Knowledge exchange and research translation skills for policy were developed in producers' and users' evidence for health policy in Fiji, and included into courses at Fiji School of Medicine.

Facilitators of research use and development outcomes

Five key facilitators of research influence were identified on the basis of this study. They provide a framework to guide practical approaches to improve research uptake and use by researchers and research funders. The five facilitators were:

▶ **Foundational facilitators:** familiarity and prior engagement with research context and users

▶ **Planning for impact:** intentional focus on impact and integrated methods for its achievement

▶ **Engaging end users:** proactive engagement and co-production of knowledge

▶ **Influential outputs:** tailored fit-for-purpose design of outputs

▶ **Lasting engagement:** ongoing engagement and continuity of relationships

1. Foundational facilitators: familiarity and prior engagement with research context and users

An understanding of the research context, and of the relationships and networks between researchers and key end users or influencers, was foundational to the development contribution of ADRAS research. Such relationships and contextual understandings could be built to an extent during the project to increase the influence of the research, but they required additional effort.

An understanding of the local political, policy and socio–cultural context, and an overall receptiveness to research evidence, can help researchers to recognise and take advantage of opportunities or mitigate risks. Knowledge of local context prior to planning the research, and mechanisms to stay abreast of changes, were key facilitators of impact. Three mechanisms found to contribute to strong contextual understanding were: (i) inclusion of in-country partners in research teams; (ii) appointment of an advisory committee of key stakeholders; and (iii) previous or formative work in the setting.

Long-established relationships of trust were key, particularly when there was a direct relationship between end users and senior researchers that had been built up over a period of time. In many cases, relationships with in-country research partners were crucial in ensuring take-up and use of ADRAS research. Continuity in the people who held research team positions, and continuity in the positions held by key end users, were important in ensuring that interpersonal linkages were maintained.

2. Planning for impact: intentional focus on impact and integrated methods for its achievement

Planning for impact or 'starting with the end in mind' was found to be key to maximising the development contribution of research projects. ADRAS research that addressed a clear question or debate was more likely to be taken up and used in policy and practice than exploratory research that was designed to fill a gap in knowledge. Exploratory ADRAS projects frequently lacked a clear pathway for practical use and outcomes.

This analysis supports the ADRAS communication and engagement requirements for clarity in impact goal, and target end users. Two-thirds of the ADRAS research that had strongly defined impact goals directly contributed to development outcomes, whereas less than a quarter of projects that had less clearly defined impact goals directly contributed to development outcomes. Similarly, projects with clearly targeted end users were twice as likely to influence policy and practice outcomes as projects with more broadly-defined end users. Teams with substantive roles for in-country partners and greater inclusion of target end users, and teams that bridged sector silos, appeared more likely to influence development policy and practice outcomes.

3. Engaging end users: proactive engagement and co-production of knowledge

Rather than concentrating on end user engagement only at the beginning and end of the research process, impactful research facilitated *ongoing exchanges* with end users in ways that aligned with the incentives, motivations and processes of these individuals and groups. We established that research findings were more likely to be used if they were *co-produced*, and if the timing of the results aligned with decision-making needs. This was sometimes facilitated though advisory committees that were sufficiently resourced to hold face-to-face meetings throughout the research, or through presentations to regular meetings of end users.

Engagement with DFAT, rarely identified as a specific target end user of ADRAS projects, varied by sector and program. Some ADRAS project teams appreciated aid program staff's facilitation of their research's influence due to their ability to bring together stakeholders, to provide linkages with key individuals who could assist with getting the research used, and to support take-up into their own policy or programming. Others felt that engagement with DFAT was limited despite the alignment of research with aid program priorities.

4. Influential outputs: tailored, fit-for-purpose design of outputs

Short outputs on aspects of the research most relevant to particular end user needs were found to facilitate research use. This is because policy makers from donor organisations or national or regional bodies were unlikely to read long, dense reports. The *ongoing availability of outputs* through project-specific websites with easily digestible summaries was found to promote take-up and use of ADRAS research, including by audiences beyond those anticipated. Take-up and use, including for advocacy, was facilitated by short *targeted guidelines* or *tools* that contained clear practical recommendations and implementable actions. Beyond policy briefs, which are now almost mainstream, more *novel approaches* to output communication, such as dissemination through DVDs, face-to-face presentations, and other interactive tools, were reported to be valuable.

A small number of projects used groups recognised as 'knowledge-brokers' or 'intermediaries' and others facilitated uptake and use through engagement with a specific organisation that had influence with the end user groups. These 'brokers' were sometimes development assistance agencies, for instance DFAT or the World Health Organisation (WHO), or other government-linked bodies, associations, or influential advocacy groups.

5. Lasting engagement: ongoing engagement and continuity of relationships

Long-term engagement between researchers and end users concerning ADRAS work, beyond the time-frames of the grant itself, was particularly important in promoting contribution to development outcomes. Ongoing advocacy and engagement through in-country ADRAS projects team members who felt ownership of the research was also important. Monitoring and evaluation of take-up and use of the research by ADRAS project teams themselves was rare, but when it did occur, it strongly improved outcomes and up-take.

ADRAS project teams frequently highlighted constraints to long-term engagement. The most commonly cited constraints were time, funding, and capacity (human resources, skills, priorities, etc.) restrictions for all partners, as well as a lack of continuity in key positions in end user groups.

Pathways to influence

Three pathways to influence emerged from the case studies and mapping of their contextual factors and mechanisms using the realist evaluation approach. These were:

▶ **Targeted influence:** Research that was purposefully planned in response to end user information demands and questions

▶ **Enabled influence:** Intentional incorporation of multiple facilitators of impact in the research design and process

▶ **Emergent influence:** Relevance of research to national or local context, enhanced by shifting imperatives, narratives, crises or other pressures, and close engagement with key stakeholders.

ADRAS projects that had adopted a **targeted influence** purposely planned for their research to be in line with end user demand for information to address a current policy question or debate. Long-term relationships and valued work with relevant decision-makers often underpinned such research. Examples of this type of research had the greatest and most direct contribution to development policy and/or practice, such as ADRAS projects using evidence to inform an assessment of whether scale-up of Health Equity Funds (HEF), Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI), or a combination of both, would best address health equity gaps in Cambodia and Laos (see box below).

TARGETED INFLUENCE – Extending health coverage in Cambodia and Laos

In the late 2000s the ministries of health in Cambodia and Laos faced similar questions and debate on ways to extend health care coverage for poorer and vulnerable members of their populations. Both Health Equity Funds (HEF) (that use grants) and Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) (where contributions are made to costs) were in operation.

Based on the ADRAS project team's existing work and relationships with ministries of health and WHO on health financing, coverage and equity, a 2007 ADRAS research grant targeted the clear demand for objective evidence to determine whether health equity funds, CBHI, or a combination of the two, best provided equitable and sustainable coverage for the poor and vulnerable in each country. Trusted working relationships, objective methodology and objective evidence enabled this research to contribute to government policy. The policy involved prioritising the roll-out of health equity funds, and led to further requests for contributions to health financing policy and strategy in the two countries, particularly Cambodia.

Where direct relationships with, or demand from, decision-makers responsible for relevant changes did not exist, some ADRAS project teams still resulted in **_enabled influence_** through a range of facilitating actions such as:

▶ including end users or influential groups in the research team

▶ working with a local partner with the necessary reputation and networks to ensure local ownership of the research

▶ bridging traditional gaps or silos between key sectors or types of development partners to address an issue

▶ including NGOs as research team members to support local ownership of the research and continued relevant advocacy based on the evidence produced

▶ having both policy and practice aspects to impact goals

▶ producing research outputs with clear action points that are relevant and which can be used by key decision-makers who need to enact changes.

One example was the Travelling Together research for Disability-Inclusive Road Development in Papua New Guinea (see box below).

ENABLED INFLUENCE – Travelling Together Disability-inclusive road development in PNG

Road transport is the main form of transport in Papua New Guinea, including for pedestrians. A 2008 ADRAS-funded research project, Travelling Together, aimed to encourage road planners and decision-makers (including infrastructure donors) to include road users with disability in road development and maintenance planning; to ensure that key attributes important to them for safe road use are included; and to provide better connectivity for social and economic participation.

The Travelling Together team provided '**enabling conditions**' through:

▶ the inclusion of PNG men and women with a disability as research assistants who had ownership of the work and conducted follow-up advocacy, coordinated through the PNG Assembly of Disabled Persons

▶ partnering with a private sector senior road engineer working in Papua New Guinea to bridge the usually siloed worlds of 'hard' infrastructure and 'soft' social development

▶ producing easy-to-understand guideline briefs with implementable recommendations, separately targeted for road planners and policy makers.

Outcomes included disability-inclusive road alterations in at least two provinces; changes in infrastructure development practices in a major engineering consultancy; and further employment of a number of young men and women with disabilities in other research and advocacy positions.

Other ADRAS projects had **emergent influence**, where national or international imperatives, crises or other pressures saw the focus of the research become more topical over time. One example was ADRAS-funded work on public health law development and reform in the Pacific, which created a practical companion guide to conducting a public health law review. In the wake of the Ebola crisis, WHO focused on country capacity to implement its International Health Regulations. The WHO picked up and facilitated wider adaptation and use of this ADRAS-funded work, regionally and globally.

ADRAS research that had emergent influence was also generally built on previous work and continuity of relationships in the research context. These interpersonal relationships were a clear pathway to influence and resulted in clear policy (usually) or practical actions that could be taken as a result of the research. End users were also often engaged in carrying out and translating the research.

EMERGENT INFLUENCE – Supporting effective public health law in the Pacific and globally

Public health laws, which are fundamental to the effective functioning of a country's health system, require updating in response to emerging health threats, changes in disease patterns, and reforms to health services. These reviews are often conducted in short time-frames in response to disasters, outbreaks or other external pressures.

In the Pacific nations, many laws have been imported from other countries and are ill-suited to effective and sustainable functioning of health care. A 2007 ADRAS project to develop Pacific-appropriate guidance for health law review was not initiated in spite of a specific demand. However, as national needs and global concerns emerged, expertise and guidance arising from this ADRAS project was taken up, reviewed and published by the WHO. It was also used in building customary law provisions into the 2016 PNG tobacco control law, and adapted for wider global use.

Finally, ADRAS projects that have had an emergent influence tend to have outputs that were practically targeted and were available long after completion of the project. They also tended to be conducted by researchers with a solid reputation in their field, and in general they were obviously aligned with a topic that grew in international significance and emphasis. The research anticipated needs and was available when those needs arose.

Recommendations

This study has informed a series of recommendations for different development and research actors. They aim at maximising the development outcomes and impacts arising from Australian-funded development research.

For Development Research Funders

Recommendation 1: Ensure research investments are guided by a holistic research strategy that enables the funder to commission a strategic mix of research which have a range of pathways to impact (e.g. targeted, enabled and emergent influence).

Utilise the insights and guidance from this study to orient funding towards research approaches and ways of working observed to have the greatest impact on development. To achieve this, invest in research that is oriented to inform specific strategy policy, programming or practice issues as a way to provide an immediate and visible return on investment.

To complement this targeted research investment approach, coordinate with research councils or other funders to ensure the availability of funding for other types of research which examines and prepares for emerging development challenges and opportunities (sometimes termed 'blue sky' research).

Recommendation 2: Assign responsibility for communicating research findings and recommendations arising from funded research to a relevant staff member or area (for example within DFAT; the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE), the Development Policy Branch or InnovationXchange). Target internal communications and messaging about research and evidence to relevant sectors and/or country teams at times when they are likely to be receptive to evidence and insights.

Recommendation 3: Include in grant funding guidelines a requirement to demonstrate existing relationships, networks and understanding of context as part of research proposals and weight this highly in selection criteria.

Recommendation 4: Consider a two-stage research funding and selection process that provides initial seed funding on the basis of a successful concept note in order to develop a full proposal. This will enable during proposal development a more detailed focus on understanding actors, processes and context, and better planning of engagement with relevant end users.

Recommendation 5: Consider follow-on research Impact or evaluation grants by invitation for selected research teams who have completed high-quality, relevant research. Such grants would support dedicated efforts to enable impact (for example through follow-up communications, engagement or other research translation processes), and/or to facilitate tracking and evaluation of longer-term research take-up and impact.[2]

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2   Competition between completed ADRAS grants for extension/evaluation was recommended as part of a 2011 internal process review of the ADRAS. This idea was also raised by stakeholders during consultations to inform the development of then AusAID's research strategy. The ESRC–DFID joint fund for poverty alleviation initiated "impact maximisation" grants. Whilst these include knowledge exchange activities, here we suggest only implementation bridging and evaluation activities (with knowledge exchange activities, particularly output preparation, remaining as part of the main grant).

Recommendation 6: Replicate and extend the communication and engagement requirements exemplified in the ADRAS to other current channels for research funding, and require explicit articulation of the intended pathway to impact of proposed research as well as identification of clearly defined impact goals and target end users.

Recommendation 7: Improve the available guidance, resources and capacity building for research communication and engagement planning to assist researchers, including by linking to existing resources such as the ESRC–DFID-funded Impact Initiative website.[3]

For Development Researchers

Recommendation 8: Build in and budget for an adequate inception phase to understand context and stakeholders, build relationships (e.g. with relevant development partners, government, and/or NGOs), clarify impact goals, and target end users.

Recommendation 9: Integrate target end user representatives and relevant implementing organisation representatives into research teams or on-going engagement structures to strengthen the pathways from research to policy and practice.

Recommendation 10: Develop and implement a communications and engagement plan for every research initiative, including consideration of the proposed pathway to impact and effort to 'design in' facilitators of research impact to the research process.

Recommendation 11: Plan diverse, engaging communication outputs, and utilise interpersonal engagement to support research use, drawing on growing sources of information and good practice such as the Impact Initiative website in the UK. Long reports and journal papers are a necessary foundation for accountability and credibility, but decision-makers need short, accessible products to engage with.

Recommendation 12: Ensure appropriate funding and adequate time and human resources for monitoring of research use during and at (and after) the completion of research, as a means to continue to facilitate impact and to demonstrate influence.

For Representative Research Bodies and Networks

Recommendation 13: Increase targeted advocacy about the value and impacts of development research and the role of institutional requirements or incentives, to support the use of quality evidence in Australian foreign policy and development assistance.

Recommendation 14: Consider collective work (for example, via Universities Australia, Australian Technology Network (ATN), RDI Network and/or Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)) to strengthen the ability to track, aggregate and demonstrate the value-add from research in foreign policy dialogue, relationships and development. In addition, collectively build on and strengthen existing research sector developments such as the increasing requirement to demonstrate research impact that can be expected to incentivise researchers' attention to impact.

Recommendation 15: Strengthen and resource a focus on research communication and engagement, translation to policy and practice and impact evaluation, including by drawing on and exchanging with best practice initiatives and groups such as the UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS) and the Impact Initiative in the UK, or the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada. This can promote outcomes from development research and generate evidence of 'real world' impacts.

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3   http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/ accessed 10/11/2017

For Research Evaluators

Recommendation 16: Utilise and build on the Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impacts (FERDI) developed in this study, to underpin future evaluations of the impact of development research.

Recommendation 17: Complement *forward evaluations* of research schemes that have a starting point of examining individual research projects and their contribution to development outcomes, with *backward evaluations* that take a policy and practice change as the starting point, and work backwards to the role that research played, to better understand how to maximise the contribution of development research to improved policy and practice.

Recommendation 18: Conduct follow-up of short-term study of the impacts of development research on policy, practice and capacity building (such as this study), with subsequent assessment of the longer-term social and economic impacts of such changes, to strengthen the evidence base regarding returns on development research.

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A collaboration between
the Australian Council for
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and Australian universities