

## ***Capacity Strengthening in ESPA: Information Note***

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### **1 Overview**

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Capacity strengthening in the Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) Programme is considered to be part of a wider set of impact activities as described in the [ESPA Impact Strategy](#). A new set of major projects funded by ESPA will commence in 2012 and 2013. During 2012 the ESPA Directorate will produce a Capacity Strengthening Strategy for the Programme to outline ESPA's approach and support for capacity strengthening. This Information Note serves as an interim document to provide the ESPA community with an understanding of ESPA's approach to capacity strengthening.

ESPA's current approach to capacity strengthening can be captured by the following statements:

- Capacity strengthening activities should be a minor component of most ESPA activities. The ESPA Programme concentrates on generating new, world-class research evidence and putting that research into use to benefit the world's poor.
- The proposed ESPA Fellowship scheme has the potential to deliver some capacity strengthening outcomes.
- Capacity strengthening supported under ESPA will normally be restricted to one of the following: (1) strengthening capacity to design and implement ESPA research; (2) strengthening capacity to build impact from ESPA research; and (3) strengthening capacity to design and write research proposals (this support to be provided by the Directorate).
- The way that most capacity strengthening outcomes will be delivered by ESPA will be as part of other activities such as designing or undertaking research, events linked to projects or supported by the Directorate or dedicated research into use activities.
- ESPA projects can request support for PhD studentships as part of grants, but only when the student will be registered at a UK academic institution. ESPA funding cannot support students training at masters-level.
- The ESPA Programme recognises that it cannot meet all capacity strengthening needs that are likely to be associated with staff working on projects and will provide information to the ESPA community on support provided by other initiatives from the ESPA funders as well as other sources of funding for capacity strengthening.
- The ESPA Programme encourages projects and institutions that have been funded to consider capacity strengthening to be part of standard professional development practices and to consider allocating some of their overhead income to support additional capacity strengthening activities of staff and project partners.

## 2 Development of a Capacity Strengthening Strategy

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### 2.1 Current status

2.1.1 The ESPA Directorate has undertaken to produce a strategy for capacity strengthening to be approved by ESPA's Programme Executive Board (PEB) and to be published during 2012. The Directorate is currently consulting with relevant stakeholders in the ESPA community to provide input to the development of the strategy. These include:

- Extracting responses relating to capacity strengthening from the two online questionnaires issued by the Directorate during 2011;
- Participation at the UK Collaborative for Development Sciences event on capacity strengthening during 2011;
- Extracting information on requests for capacity strengthening emerging from the ESPA Director's regional visits in 2010 and 2011;
- Requesting members of the ESPA International Programme Advisory Committee (I-PAC) to indicate their priorities for capacity strengthening linked to ESPA (not just those which could be supported by ESPA);
- Production of an issues and options paper for the ESPA Fellowships scheme, which includes discussion of potential capacity strengthening components;
- Discussions with staff from the ESPA funders with responsibility for capacity strengthening; and
- Discussions with some non-UK agencies with a remit for capacity strengthening that could potentially support or complement the ESPA programme.

### 2.2 Next Steps

2.2.1 The Directorate will collate the information and feedback provided by key stakeholders into an issues and options paper to be considered by the Programme. A final draft will be presented to the PEB and the I-PAC for comment before it is finalised and published by the end of 2012.