ESRC-DFID SAT Workshop for Phase 2 PIs
BIS Conference Centre, 17th February 2012

Objectives
This workshop aimed to work directly with current researchers to identify the best ways to create development impact in the context of the Joint Scheme and to help build a community of practice.

Key conclusions and next steps
Details of Q&A sessions, along with general feedback from the event, have been compiled into a single document along with agreed responses from the SAT and funders. Please refer to the Post-Workshop Feedback document for further information.

Actions for SAT and projects:

Draft impact strategy
- SAT to collate and consider feedback to incorporate into the next version of the strategy.

Scheme communication
- SAT to include a list of project websites on the new ESRC-DFID web pages. Jessica Williams will be contacting projects to ask for details of these websites, as required.
- Projects to start thinking about what sorts of meetings or workshops may be helpful in the future, and to pass ideas to the SAT.
- SAT to develop a social media profile for Scheme, including Twitter account and newsletter.
- Projects to contact the SAT with any content for future editions of the ESRC-DFID newsletter, which will be launched during March 2012.

Ethics
- SAT and funders to start a process for the discussion of ethics procedures, including consideration of ethics guidance already available for other programmes, e.g. ESPA.
- SAT to share ethics guidance and good practice throughout the Scheme, and to investigate the possibility of hosting online discussions on issues such as ethics.
- Projects to email any examples of ethics good practice or challenges to Maeve Regan or Jessica Williams in the SAT.

Publications
- SAT to start a dialogue about the issues around publications, including open-access, over the next few months.
- Projects are encouraged to share examples of project authorship policies by emailing these to Maeve Regan or Jessica Williams to circulate throughout the Scheme.

Data
- SAT to develop data collection and management guidance for the scheme and in the meantime to circulate the link to ESPA data management guidance.
- SAT to develop an improved template to capture information about interactions, e.g. to document interactions with policy advisors at DFID.
- Projects are encouraged to keep a diary of interactions including who you have interacted with, and any follow-up activity.
- Projects are encouraged to inform Jessica Williams if there are additional outcomes which they would like to capture through the Research Outcomes System, as additional fields could be added for different outcomes for the Scheme.
Note of the meeting

**Introductions to the SAT, DFID and ESRC**

Paul van Gardingen is the lead Advisor on the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) for the scheme and also the Director of the Ecosystems Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) programme. This allows for significant cross-sharing between the programmes. Paul is based at the University of Edinburgh, along with the two other Strategic Advisors, Roger Jeffery and James Smith.

The SAT is supported by Research Assistant, Maeve Regan and Data, Evidence and Partnership Co-ordinator, Jessica Williams.

Jo McGowan and Moses Adhola (DFID) and Lyndy Griffin (ESRC) attended the workshop on behalf of the funders.

**Introduction to impact within the ESRC-DFID Scheme – Paul van Gardingen**

The ESRC-DFID draft Impact Strategy outlines the proposed approach to impact for the Scheme. The SAT welcomed feedback from projects, which will be taken into account when finalising the strategy. The final two pages of the draft strategy outline what projects might do to build and document impact, and what the SAT and the funders can do to assist this process.

The SAT is creating a series of impact notes to document the difference made by the scheme. A draft impact note for the Phase One project led by Professor Roger Jeffery (RES-167-25-0110 Tracing pharmaceuticals in South Asia: regulation, distribution and consumption) was distributed amongst participants and the SAT encouraged feedback on whether this this impact note format is appropriate for the scheme.

Impact is about making research more effective, and should not be an administrative burden. The projects, their partners, the funders and the SAT need to work together to enhance the impact of world class research, to improve people's lives.

There has been significant dialogue over the last few years about the relationship between research and impact. The RCUK website has good resources on impact - under the theme ‘excellence with impact’ - for this scheme it is excellence with development impact. One of the best ways to generate impact is to involve the end users as active research participants, e.g. in design, data collection, feedback and dissemination.

**Draft Impact Strategy**

People are at the centre of the draft Impact Strategy, with a focus on how the research is going to influence people, their lives, and how they think. Excellent research is delivered by partnerships, with partners who build impact, use research and deliver benefits. Projects need to think about the people who make research and impact possible, and how to counteract elite capture by making it easier for people to access services which they have rights to, but need to know about.

The key components of the Draft Impact Strategy were presented:

- **Beneficiaries**: understanding who is most likely to be able to benefit from the research, so that they can be targeted.
- **People and Partnerships**: maximising the relevance of and demand for research results.
- **Research into Use**: enhancing usability of the research results – there will be opportunities for this in the future.
• **Capacity strengthening**: building the ability to deliver good interdisciplinary research and to use that research to deliver impact.

• **Communication**: there will soon be a new dedicated microsite on the ESRC website at www.esrc.ac.uk/dfid-poverty and all reported research outcomes will also be available on the DFID website.

• **Evidence**: the Scheme needs evidence to demonstrate why research matters. Demonstrating why this scheme's research is special will assist in securing future public funding for similar programmes. As stated by Stephen O'Brien, Minister for International Development, it is also important to demonstrate why research matters to the UK tax payer.

**Academic impact**

Academic impact will be measured and included as part of standard Research Council impact reporting, however ESRC-DFID projects will need to report on other types of impact as well.

**Publications**

• **Developing-country authorship** is important: the best research is undertaken with those who benefit from the research, and if these people are involved in the research they should also be involved as authors.

• **Open access**: virtually all papers can now be published open-access, at a cost.

• **Relevance**: is it relevant to the ESRC-DFID research agenda?

**Highlights from Phase 1 of the Scheme - James Smith**

A Phase 1 project led by Dr Nicola Ansell at Brunel University (RES-167-25-0167 *Averting 'New Variant Famine' in Southern Africa: building food-secure livelihoods with AIDS-affected young people*) has secured follow-on funding from the ESRC and the Wellcome Trust for further dissemination and policy influencing activities. This demonstrates that it can take extra resources to push the impact and narrative of a project's research.

A Phase 1 project led by Dr Gina Porter at Durham University, (RES-167-25-0028 *Children, transport and mobility in sub-Saharan Africa: developing a child-centred evidence base to improve policy and change thinking across Africa*) still has a huge amount of data to analyse, perhaps 5 to 6 years' worth of work. The team are taking key steps to make the most of opportunities, for example by applying for follow-on funding from ESRC and Malawi National Research Council.

Professor Roger Jeffery’s Phase 1 project (RES-167-25-0110 *Tracing pharmaceuticals in South Asia: regulation, distribution and consumption*) is a good example of a project with significant academic impacts which has also built capacity through partnerships. Roger now has a second ESRC-DFID grant (RES-167-25-0503 *Biomedical and Health Experimentation in South Asia: Critical Perspectives on collaboration, governance and competition*).

**Five minute presentation from Phase 1&2 PIs**

**Fulong Wu**

Fulong was PI of a project in Phase 1 (RES-167-25-0005 *Urban Poverty and Property Rights Changes in China*) and currently has a Phase 2 project (RES-167-25-0448 *The Development of Migrant Villages under China’s Rapid Urbanization: Implications for Poverty and Slum Policies*).

Fulong reported that migrant villages are portrayed in the Chinese media as being slums, and that it is important to change this perception in order to prevent villages from being demolished wholesale. This can be achieved by targeting specific groups, developing alternative policies, and informal and formal engagement with users. It is important to consider users’ needs, rather than just the need to disseminate research findings, for example the research team assisted with a
request to train the directors of the planning bureau and combined this with sharing their research outputs.

The involvement of local partners with connections, e.g. to policy makers, is key. It is also important to help local partners to develop their own capacities as full research partners, rather than just assistants on a single project.

The project has had feature articles in newspapers, such as China Daily, including debate with the deputy minister of housing and construction over plans to demolish migrant villages.

Local people are interested in what should be done, and this should this be the focus of projects, rather than simply the academic curiosity of the team. A future project could be used as a demonstration project to show clear outcomes.

Pat Pridmore
Pat was PI of a Phase 1 project (RES-167-25-0217 Strengthening ODFL systems to increase education access and attainment for young people in high HIV prevalence SADC countries) and is currently PI of a Phase 2 project (RES-167-25-0461 Healthy Urbanisation: Tackling child malnutrition through intervening to change the social determinants of health in informal settlements and slums).

Pat describes her position as a development practitioner, rather than a researcher. Her projects build on previous development work, through talking with people such as public health officials. Pat’s team have asked questions such as “what sort of data do you need, and when do you need it by”, with the intention that this could be worked into research plans.

The project’s work has included a participatory action research group in Kenya, with an urban nutritional working group. The team was working with a mandate from government and within their culture and remit; therefore there was a lot of support from government. It is important to establish a dialogue in-country, even before the proposal stage, and to then find steering group members, and ask them to help you through working at their level, e.g. local political or governor level.

In choosing a team, it is useful to have a senior and a junior researcher in each country, i.e. a researcher with policy connections and one with local connections. Rotating researchers around can assist with cross-learning. Pat’s team has an annual meeting and Skype meetings in between.

National dissemination activities can be facilitated by inviting people who are interested in the project’s outcomes. Networking opportunities can be used for the promotion of the project at different levels, e.g. international conferences and dissemination at all different levels throughout the project.

Social impact can be more difficult to achieve than academic impact. Pat’s Phase 1 project used formative research to design an intervention, incorporating the people who would be involved, including awareness raising and training, which engaged people as part of the research process at their level.

It is important to pay attention to sustainability, e.g. trying to find out how much it costs to do things, and how to reduce these costs in future. This can be done by trying to get buy-in, e.g. from NGOs and government, using existing structures as much as possible. Consider where the funding is going to come from for activities which need to be sustained.
Breakout session one – regional
The participants split into five breakout groups according to the primary region(s) of their research – East Asia, South Asia, North and West Africa, East and Southern Africa, and South America. This was an opportunity to identify potential areas for improving the impact of research, and what the SAT and funders can do to facilitate this.

Please see Appendix B for notes from the breakout groups.

International research and implications for ethics, authorship, data management, reporting – discussion session
This Scheme is one of seven joint Research Council-DFID programmes; it is innovative and is asking for different things from its researchers. DFID is the only UK Government department with a truly protected budget and it is therefore under great scrutiny, with associated expectations for programmes with DFID funding. The SAT can assist projects with these requirements.

Ethics
Ethics are an important part of an international project, and one of the best ways of making sure the research is effective.

It is important for projects to have procedures in place for different scenarios. A real-life example given was the case of an accident involving a UK and a non-UK researcher. Having guidance in place for the procedure to follow would avoid researchers needing to make difficult decisions on the ground. A full ethics review should be completed for such a situation. ESRC costing guidance for future calls under this scheme will include information on related expenses.

Publications and authorship
- Developing country authorship should emerge from the partnerships in these projects; if a researcher is involved in the research they should also be involved in authoring the paper.
- DFID Open Access policy will be published in 2012; this will lay out DFID expectations. Most journals publish Open Access at a cost.
- Projects are encouraged to provide feedback to the SAT about finding a solution to open-access publishing for existing projects. For future projects, open-access publishing will be expected, and can therefore be built into budgets.
- It is good practice to agree written project guidelines for authorship. Individual institutions may have authorship polices, but most projects involve multiple institutions.
- Publications must be relevant to the funded research in order to be attributed to the Scheme.
- Acknowledgements should include the Scheme name and grant reference number.

There is an expectation of a wide range of outputs, but projects need to be able to show at least the significant probability of producing a high quality peer reviewed journal article.

Data management
- From 2012 it is a requirement for new projects to produce data management plans; this does not apply to existing projects, although clear data management procedures are encouraged.
- Submission of data to ESRC data centres is a requirement of current funding, but not all data is appropriate for these data centres, and so this method alone will not meet current requirements. The SAT’s Data, Evidence & Partnership co-ordinator can help projects to meet contractual requirements.
Reporting

- Reporting provides access to information about projects, providing a full evidence trail and enabling the funders to evaluate the programme and demonstrate its world class research.

- The new Research Outcomes System (ROS) will make the reporting process easier for projects, and the aim is that by 2013 projects will only need to report once to meet all regular reporting requirements for the Scheme. At the Final Report stage, the SAT will present projects with a list of publications they are aware of, and projects will be asked to submit any updates to ROS. This information will be replicated into institutional repositories for the REF, on DFID R4D and on the ESRC website. PIs will receive twice yearly reminders to update ROS.

- It is acknowledged that many publications are published after the end of the award, and projects will be reminded to update ROS for up to two years after the award has finished.

- Researchers will make it easier for DFID to draw upon the scheme’s outcomes.

- Researchers will also benefit from ROS, enabling them to draw upon what other people have done, helping to build a community of practice and learning. ROS will help projects and the Scheme to have a clear quality and impact story. The impact of the programme is far greater than currently shown, and gathering evidence will help realise this. Work is underway to enable information from ROS to be embedded into project websites, e.g. as a list of publications. ISI citation feeds are also planned for the next year.

Impact stories

The SAT is currently producing a series of “Alleviating Poverty” impact stories about Phase 1 projects. These stories are a gateway to create interest, which can be followed up by looking at project publications and other outputs on the ESRC-DFID web pages. A collaborative process is currently being trialled; consisting of a phone interview between a member of the SAT and the PI, to cover information beyond that which is formally reported. It was suggested that two stories could be produced, one during the research and one at the end. Suggestions for improvements to the process would be well received. The SAT is recruiting a Communications Officer who will be the contact for these stories.

Breakout session two – thematic

Participants were split in two groups according to themes suggested in the morning session: Social media (including Twitter and blogs), and Models and relationships between research and policy. Please see Appendix C for a record of the sessions.

Feedback from the breakout sessions

As many points were raised both during the breakout sessions and in feedback at the end of the workshop, these have been compiled with other questions into a single document. Please see the Post-Workshop Feedback document for feedback from the discussions.

Final thoughts and close

Paul van Gardingen emphasised that the impact agenda is not intended to be the main part of a project. The focus of ESRC/DFID awards is on producing quality outputs, and researchers are encouraged to focus on research. But impact pathways are important, and projects must consider who might find their research most useful and relevant. Blue skies research which is relevant to global development, even if not currently part of the global debate, is hugely encouraged.

It should be noted by everyone that the ESRC-DFID Poverty Alleviation Scheme and related schemes are regarded as exemplary and seen as models for other interdisciplinary funding programmes within the Research Councils.
Appendix A - Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPA</td>
<td>Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESRC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEFCE</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council for England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4D</td>
<td>Research for Development (DFID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF</td>
<td>Research Excellence Framework (HEFCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROS</td>
<td>Research Outcomes System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Notes from regional breakout groups

East Asia

• This scheme is important in addressing inequalities in middle income countries.
• The key is knowing where opportunities are and being able to respond. For example, a newly appointed minister may want to make a difference, so have the information ready for such an occasion: e.g. these are my partners, we’re doing x, and I’m ready to work with you.
• Opportunities to share lessons cross border and regional issues. Develop collaboration between regions and between the different collaborators to address development issues.
• It would be useful to bookmark where relevant people are.
• Having branding for the scheme would help to raise the profile.
• Keeping a diary of interactions, e.g. with policy makers, could be beneficial.
• Politics between different agencies can be huge, e.g. government not being open to data on domestic violence.
• We cannot make decisions for people, but we can feed into the debate, and influence peoples’ views. The emphasis is on producing world class research and evidence which is relevant to: real world problems, low income countries, and policy.
• This is a research programme, it is about the generation of knowledge and working with others who can put this knowledge into use.
• What can Africa learn from China? Development experience in China is relevant to the African context, also the direct involvement of China in Africa – e.g. the social and economic impact of Chinese workers in development work in Africa would be an interesting research question.
• DFID has a protected budget, and needs to consider ‘what does it mean for the UK’?
• Impact is important to the REF.
• Open access journal publication requires funding.
• Projects need better guidance on what budgets should look like, to set out expectations for developing country partners and also for UK researchers – being realistic.
• What is going to exist at the end of the project which will remain, will make people say ‘wow’, e.g. being cited by the UN panel on x.

South America

• Strong support for the idea of some kind of Scheme ‘follow on funding’ - smallish awards to fund particular impact/dissemination activities. Many opportunities to create impact are not easy to anticipate when applying for funding, such a pot of money to bid to could allow PIs to take up such opportunities as they arise during the research project.
• Suggested that the scheme could identify and keep a database of possible secondary funders who might provide additional top-up funds for getting the research into practice etc. One interesting suggestion was for a SAT-led event inviting such secondary funders, such as NGOs, World Bank etc., and PIs going into final year of scheme funding - to facilitate matchmaking for further funding/impact. Suggested these funders would be assured of the quality of this research as it has come through the RC peer review process and thus would be more likely to want to engage.
• Improve the on-line ‘footprint’ of the Scheme, e.g. a Twitter link on the Scheme web portal.
• Project reporting beyond the project end. It would be helpful for funders to make HEIs/departments aware that this is a requirement of funding; as such reporting has workload implications and PIs have no time allocation or budget to do this work.

• Emphasised the importance of local linkages to policy makers and serendipity to getting research findings into policy.

• Suggested political pitfalls of some engagement with policy makers - if your findings are taken up by one administration the opposition may oppose them as a matter of course. This highlighted the need to try to remain a "critical friend" to policy makers and try to influence more by getting research findings into the 'public space' but not becoming too closely aligned with any political grouping.

• It is important to engage with policymakers/practitioners at a variety of levels, from senior to on the ground, to ensure maximum opportunity for influence.

• Is the percentage of budget recommended for impact/dissemination activities (up to 10% on ESRC awards) sufficient to cover such activities?

• Media/website/blogging etc. training would be really helpful - generic training (e.g. ESRC online media training and communications toolkit) but also 1:1 would be especially helpful.

• Data management and ESDS - more information on requirements of ESDS (and links to existing information) would be valuable so that the data can be prepared in the required way during the project, saving much time and effort when the time comes to deposit it.

**North and West Africa**

• There are a range of policy spaces that research needs to speak to.

• Informing policy is not the same as changing policy - these are different things and require a range of actors, processes and time scales.

• The dialogue spaces are sometimes not there if you are generating uncomfortable messages.

• The discussion of impact is equal to a politicisation of aid where aid becomes part of a culture of success. We need to think about aid and research in the context of a rebalancing world. Is DFID willing to hear the harder messages/failures?

• The impact summary is the 'Pollyanna' product - we need to think of a range of outputs, not only those in journals.

• We must recognise that there are drivers for selective use of evidence and understand what these are.

• Policy is not always the right target - sometime you need to change the law for example so that things can endure beyond changes of government.

• The following points from the South America group were also highlighted here:
  
  o Emphasised the importance of local linkages to policy makers and serendipity to getting research findings into policy.

  o Suggested political pitfalls of some engagement with policy makers - if your findings are taken up by one administration the opposition may oppose them as a matter of course. This highlighted the need to try to remain a "critical friend" to policy makers and try to influence more by getting research findings into the 'public space' but not becoming too closely aligned with any political grouping.

  o It is important to engage with policymakers/practitioners at a variety of levels, from senior to on the ground, to ensure maximum opportunity for influence.
Appendix C – Notes from thematic breakout groups

Models and relationships between research and policy
Experiences of engagement, particularly with things people do not want to hear.

- There was specific discussion about the draft Impact Strategy - please see the Workshop Feedback document for details.
- The focus of the Draft Impact Strategy is publication at a high standard. It is important to recognise the deconstruction of knowledge in different ways. Knowledge still needs to be theoretically coherent and evidenced. We need to think about the level at which one can influence policy. This scheme is about generating high quality research and evidence that might have influence on policy; this is about changing the way people think about things and influencing the quality of the debate.
- There are many different ways that policy can be informed, and these might be conflicting. For example research might be ignored by Government, but perhaps taken up by the opposition party.
- There are different ways to change hearts and minds, not necessarily just at the top level.
- How much policy is wanted in peer-reviewed journals, is there a tension between the requirements to publish and policy?
- The importance of making suggestions rather than being directive was noted. The group discussed ways to engage and shared experiences.
- Will the view from the research be welcome? There is an existing narrative of how things are. Will the presentation of a different view be accepted?
  - A common response from policy makers is ‘why are you working in that area- we already know all about it’.
  - If the research suggests that a change of tack is required, i.e. rather than just a slight modification of policy, it can be very difficult to get change. For example, one local authority could be convinced but there might not be overall agreement, it can be too complex to integrate all of the different elements.
  - There is often high turnover in policy roles.
  - We should remember that researchers are not consultants, researchers are not bringing a resolution/intervention. Researchers are either breaking up the component parts, or analysing in new ways; this brings added value. The academic’s role is not to change policy but to analyse it.
  - There can be anxiety amongst academics, a feeling of not being ready to share and worrying that sharing will mean losing control of the research, that the research might then be used to make a different point, for example by a journalist.
- Focus on impact worthy outcome, it is not about bang for buck quickly, this will not have as much value in the long run
- Could the scheme include in its criteria the requirement to write a press piece – i.e. to present the research in such a way that could be published in the Daily Mail?
Social media

- Projects are widely using publicly available, free online software such as Skype and Google documents/Dropbox in order to co-ordinate research with remote partners.
  - There are issues here with bandwidth (particularly Skype) as well as security and longevity of work (with online documentation).
  - These products are not designed for academics.
  - Could the Research Councils host online documents for projects to work on, that is more secure than Google or Dropbox (e.g. JISC)?
- Could there be snapshots taken of project websites at the end of their lives which could then be held on Research Council websites to ensure longevity?
- Can we offer help for researchers with social media? (e.g. LSE guide to twitter for academics)
- ESRC-DFID should have a twitter account and agreed hashtags
- Project websites can generate lots of traffic using academia.edu (global traffic, not just from US)
  - Could traffic data be used as part of impact reporting? Or is there a danger of bias towards those who are more internet-savvy if metrics are introduced?
- Do we need an ESRC-DFID social media policy? What happens if something is said online which is embarrassing to the programme?
- Need an ESRC-DFID media contact – someone who can put the media in contact with a useful project faster than going through RC channels.
- We must remember with any online tools that many stakeholders in ESRC-DFID research do not have access to high-bandwidth internet.

Please see the feedback document for questions asked during and after the event, and agreed responses.