

Some reflections on ESPA programme experiences

Participants; NERC, DFID, ESPA

ESPA participants *2

'Other' *3

Main topics of discussion

North-South interactions / Capacity strengthening

Publications with partners

Interdisciplinarity

North-South interactions / Capacity strengthening

Fast turnover of staff (at field sites, in stakeholder organisations – Govt, NGOs, donors)

Lack of post-doc positions in some countries (especially Africa?) – hard to find equivalent levels of researchers to work with UK post-docs

Junior researchers on short-term contracts, may not stay in dept / academia

Academic institutions can support continuity by training students who then move into govt positions

PhD opps would be welcomed (SHEAR programme example highlighted) – PhDs build good legacy, competitive calls can recruit top researchers

(GCRF not funding PhDs)

Fellows scheme worked well to build on impact in policy and practice

Positive feedback about several training exercises held through ESPA (some with practitioners, some with communities, some for writing)

Publications with partners

Barriers; Incentives missing, partners busy (multiple partners), entry barriers (language / research background, literature, etc.), papers don't address in-country demand for information

Agreements about authorship – good example of ESPA Deltas Vancouver Protocol at outset of project

Experiences with predatory open access journals

Open Access problems early on – to some extent resolved later in ESPA

Interdisciplinarity

Already subject of earlier meeting – Valaria to share report

Challenges on shared understanding of problem definition

Usual issues with cross-disciplinary interactions but self selection in ESPA-type projects means partners often positive

Soe concerns about departments not recognizing interdisciplinary PhDs, job prospects...