



**COMMUNICATING RESEARCH FOR UTILISATION**  
**A PROGRAMME SCOPING STUDY**

INORMS  
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**COMMUNICATING RESEARCH FOR UTILISATION**

- **Introduction and Background – Diana Coates**
- **Research Utilisation - models and some empirical data - Johann Mouton**
  - Discussion
- **The CRU on-line survey – John Kirkland**
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  - Discussion
- **Next Steps**

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## Background to the CRU Scoping Study (1)

- DFID and other international development funders require research to have impact
- Communication and dissemination of research is now required and funded ( eg DFID 10% policy)  
[http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/Consultation/ResearchStrategyWorkingPaperfinal\\_communications\\_P1.pdf](http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/Consultation/ResearchStrategyWorkingPaperfinal_communications_P1.pdf)
- DFID scoping of the Regional Research Communication Support Facility in 2009
- Stellenbosch Seminar September 2009  
<http://www.research4development.info/SearchResearchDatabase.asp?projectID=60694>

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## Background to the CRU Scoping Study (2)

- DFID support for the scoping for a programme to underpin other initiatives, and build specialist professional research communication capacity in African universities and research institutions
  - DFID R4D Reference:  
<http://www.research4development.info/SearchResearchDatabase.asp?projectID=60694>
- This study will provide some baseline information about current and future capacity, and the interest in and for demand for the programme in sub-Saharan Africa

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## SCOPING STUDY

**Small-scale and indicative**



**The Institutions**


- Universities in sub-Saharan Africa**


**The Process**

- Focus Groups**
- Interviews**
- Online Surveys**

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## COMMUNICATING RESEARCH FOR UPTAKE AND UTILISATION

**A Working Definition**

**“a two-way process (and related strategies and mechanisms), whereby researchers interact and communicate with potential or actual intermediate and end users of research with the aim of making research more relevant for users, and to facilitate the understanding and application of research by users.”**

Learning lessons on research uptake and use: Donor review on research communication for DFID

16 October 2009

Main Author: Barbara Adolph , Tripleline Consulting



## **MANAGING COMMUNICATION RESEARCH FOR UPTAKE AND UTILISATION**

### **A working definition**

- **Scientific research with a focus on application and impact**
  - A ‘research cycle’ focus
  - A designed and managed process
  - Incorporates a multi- stakeholder identification and relationship-building strategy
  - Incorporates a strategic communication strategy
  - Incorporates a monitoring and evaluation strategy
  - Delivers relevant knowledge and information in formats that are appropriate for the readership(s)/audience(s) and users for whom it is undertaken
  - Delivers evidence that the results of research have been taken up and that utilisation has the potential for impact for the beneficiaries



## **Research utilisation** Models and some empirical data


**Johann Mouton, CREST**

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# The CRU Online Surveys

John Kirkland - ACU






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# The CRU Online Surveys

John Kirkland - ACU



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## RESEARCH UTILISATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

### The Role of the Institution

John Kirkland

Julie Stackhouse

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## BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS

- Increase concern amongst donors and governments about the use and impact of research
- Recognition that additional skills and expertise needed
- Willingness to invest to achieve this
- Academics have a key role, but may need support
- Much of this could be provided at institutional level



## THE ROLE OF DFID

- International development agency of the UK government
- Hugely expanded its support for development related research
- Recognises the link between *undertaking* research and developing *research capacity*
- Requires that dissemination and utilisation strategy included from the outset
- Keen to develop locally based research – programmes are untied
- Significant emphasis on evaluation, dissemination and utilisation



## METHODOLOGY

- Scoping study – undertaken mid-February to mid-March 2010
- Electronic survey sent to almost 200 contacts – in central offices with *some* responsibility for external communication in African universities
- 36 responses, from 29 institutions in 11 countries
- 13 from RM type offices; 7 communication type; 6 senior faculty; 8 senior management; 2 other
- Supplemented by small researcher survey, focus groups and interviews



## AWARENESS AND WILLINGNESS

- 70% had mission statements referred *specifically* to making research available to wider community
- 63% had a specific post or office with responsibility in this area
- 59% said that research active staff were provided with training and guidance
- 57% said the numbers of staff in the office concerned had increased during the past five years
- 24 respondents cited specific new initiatives during that period



## EXAMPLES...

- *We have linked with an international NGO to teach researchers how to communicate findings through mass media*
- *We have good links with print media and radio, and regularly invite researchers for talks. We publish a research report which showcases research activities within our strategic research themes and report the latest news on our web site. We are in daily communication with our researchers. But it is a question of us contacting them, and not so much them giving information on their own*
- *An IPTT office was established. Annual research fairs are held*
- *In order to make research more real to the man in the street, we initiated a series of articles to be used in the weekly newspaper. This has proved very successful in raising the profile of individual universities and the university generally*



## EXAMPLES...

### *BUT .....*

- *Communication issues between office and academic departments – activities not always well known*
- *support more likely for proposal writing and academic dissemination than promoting wider utilisation*
- *uncertainty / overlap in roles of research and communications offices*
- *offices still small – 26 had less than 10 staff; 15 less than 5*
- *awareness of their work low amongst funding bodies*



## POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE MORE WIDELY...

- **Commitment is there – at least in theory**
- **Real examples of good practice – but not universal**
- **External communications office well placed within their institutions – most report at a senior level**
- **Investment is increasing – although from a low base**
- **Professionalism appears to be increasing – with outside PR offices and journalists being appointed in some cases**



## **FUTURE PRIORITIES...**

- More time for planning and carrying out communication strategies
- Training for office staff in media and communication work accredited, but mostly short course and on the job
- Support for developing direct links with NGO's and other relevant external bodies
- Support for internal database development



## **PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS**

- Institutions recognise that they do not perform well in this area overall – however
- They also recognise the importance of the work, and that they should take responsibility for its development
- Some investment has already taken place
- Recognition that – although academics ideally should take the lead, many will always need support
- Significant unmet demand exists for training



## IMPLICATIONS FOR DONORS

- Institutional support can provide a vital link between what academics can do themselves, and what donors can do at programme level
- Institutional support has the potential to lead to sustainable outcomes, given that institutions are already investing in the area
- Given current levels of operation, support is likely to be needed over the medium, rather than short term
- Support needs to include measures at institutional level, and development of more widely recognised professional training



## The CRU Focus Groups and Interviews

Diana Coates - OSD

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## The CRU Focus Groups and Interviews

**Focus Groups**

- Universities and DFID-funded Research Programmes
  - Senior Academic and Administrative Managers


**Interviews**

- Funders
- Government S&T Ministries
- Development NGOs
  - Senior Programme and Directorate Managers

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## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIVERSITIES

- Large, research intensive, centralised management and administration
- Large, research oriented, centralising management and administration
- Medium, research aspirational, de-centralised and federalised management and administration
- Medium, research aspirational, centralised management and administration
- Mission –driven
  - Teaching, research and stakeholder/community service
- Strategy –driven
  - Formal articulation with their national development and socio-economic growth policies

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## STRUCTURES TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH, COMMUNICATION


**Academic**


- Faculties, Departments, Institutes, Centres and Units
  - external research funding a powerful driver of the types and purposes of research undertaken
  - sustainability of ResComm resources dependent on external context?

**Administrative**

- Publicity/Communications/Public Relations
- Research Management, including quality assurance
- Libraries and ICT
- Advancement/Development Offices
  - sustainability of ResComm resources dependent on internal strategy?

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## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT (1)

**STRUCTURES**



- Present in all universities but one
- Tend to be organised in 'silos' with weak cross-functional capabilities


**RESOURCES**

- Some human resource capacity present in all universities but one
  - Tend to be strongly directed toward 'traditional' outcomes
- Technical resource capacity eg. ICT, Institutional Repositories

**POTENTIAL FOR CROSS-FUNCTIONAL ALIGNMENT AND RESOURCE RE-ALIGNMENT**

- Strong in all universities but one

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**STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES  
OF ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES TO  
UNDERTAKE RESEARCH COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT (2)**

**Human Resource Capacity in University Management**

- Publicity/Communications
- Research Offices
- Other Offices
  - Generalist
  - Specialist

**Human Resource Capacity in Programme Management in Universities**

- Generalist
- Specialist

**Sustainability of Resources**

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**DEMAND FOR BUILDING SPECIALIST CAPACITY IN  
RESEARCH COMMUNICATION**

**INSTITUTIONAL**

**ORGANISATIONAL**

**INDIVIDUAL**

**EMBEDDING, ALIGNING AND BUILDING SPECIALIST CAPACITY**

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## DEMAND FOR BUILDING SPECIALIST CAPACITY IN RESEARCH COMMUNICATION

**MULTIPLE TARGET GROUPS**


- **ACADEMIC**
  - POST-GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
  - FUNDED PROGRAMME PERSONNEL – CONTRACT
  - EXTENSION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- **UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**
  - PUBLICITY/COMMUNICATIONS
  - RESEARCH

**DEMAND FOR ACCREDITED, SHORT COURSES**

**DELIVERY MODES**

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## INTERVIEWS




**FUNDERS**


**NGOs**

- **DEMAND FOR CAPACITY BUILDING**
  - IMPACTING POLICY AND PRACTICE

**NATIONAL STI MINISTRIES AND COMMISSIONS**

- **DEMAND FOR CAPACITY BUILDING**
  - MONITORING AND EVALUATING IMPACT

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RESEARCH COMMUNICATION FOR UPTAKE AND UTILISATION

- **COMPLEMENTARY INTERVENTIONS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY**
  - **AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL**
    - **NO UNIFORM OR 'IDEAL' STRUCTURE**
    - **ENGAGEMENT OF THE WHOLE INSTITUTION AND SPECIFIC UNITS**
    - **INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUILDING – MODULARISED AND SPECIALISED**
- **INTENSIVE SUPPORT OF SELECTED INSTITUTIONS**
  - **SOME ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS**
- **COMBINE WITH CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES**
  - **EXISTING REGIONAL DISSEMINATION STRUCTURES**
  - **OTHER DONORS**

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