

**Policy-oriented research impact assessment (PORIA) Case Studies:
Methods and Planning Workshop
20-21 February 2007, IFPRI HQ, Washington DC**

Participants:

Mywish Maredia (SPIA Member), Bruce Gardner (University of Maryland), Robert Paarlberg (Wellesley College), Carol Weiss (Harvard Graduate School of Education), Elisabetta Gotor (Bioversity), David Raitzer (CIFOR), Jock Anderson (IFPRI), Jere Behrman (University of Pennsylvania/ IFPRI), Simeon Kaitibie (ILRI), Debbie Templeton (IRRI), Diemuth Pemsil (WorldFish), David Schimmelfennig (ERS/USDA) and Tim Kelley (SPIA Secretary)

Regrets: K. Shideed (ICARDA)

Objectives of the Workshop

1. Enhance the scope and quality of data analysis in the PORIA case studies subject to constraints in data availability, budget and time;
2. Identify common issues and methodological constraints in the case studies;
3. Support case study teams in developing appropriate methods for the assessment and a reasonable workplan for finalizing the studies in the time frame laid out by SPIA.

Programme Agenda & Timetable

Tuesday, 20 February

Overview:

8:45 – 9:00	Welcome by IFPRI (Joachim von Braun) and SPIA (Mywish Maredia) Introductions
9:00 – 9:15	Overview of PORIA scoping study (Tim Kelley)
9:15 – 9:30	Main Phase Initiative – case studies (Mywish) Objectives and Structure of the Workshop (Bruce Gardner)
9:30 – 9:45	Discussion
9:45 – 10:15	Review of methods proposed for documenting IA in the case studies (Bruce)
10:15 – 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 11:15	Commentary on methods proposed for assessing impact (Rob Paarlberg /Carol Weiss)
11:15 – 12:00	Discussion

Case Study Presentations (Bruce Gardner chairs):

12:00 – 12:20	IFPRI Case Study presentation ¹ (Jock Anderson /Jere Behrman)
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¹ Focused on the specific approach and methodology planned for documenting influence/impact, highlighting any major gaps or constraints (methods-wise) faced.

12:20 – 13:00	Commentary (Bruce, Rob, Carol) and Discussion
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 14:20	Bioversity Case Study presentation (Elisabetta Gotor)
14:20 – 15:00	Commentary and Discussion
15:00 – 15:20	WorldFish Case Study presentation (Diemuth PemsI)
15:20 – 16:00	Commentary and Discussion
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30 – 16:50	ILRI Case Study presentation (Simeon Kaitibie)
16:50 – 17:30	Commentary and Discussion
17:30 – 17:45	Emerging issues from 4 case studies presented (Bruce)
17:45	Adjourn for light refreshments in IFPRI library

Wednesday, 21 February

Case Study Presentations (cont.)

8:30 – 8:50	IRRI Case Study presentation (Debbie Templeton)
8:50 – 9:30	Commentary and Discussion
9:30 – 9:50	CIFOR Case Study presentation (David Raitzer)
9:50 – 10:30	Commentary and Discussion
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:00	General discussion: -key issues/common methodology challenges -reasonable expectations of impact (influence) -decide on break out groups (3)
12:00 – 13:00	Refining methods and workplan: One-on-one consultations Group I: 2 case studies + Bruce Group II: 2 case studies + Rob Group III: 2 case studies + Carol
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Refining methods and workplan: One-on-one consultations (cont.)
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30 – 17:00	Concluding comments from consultants
17:00 – 17:30	Next steps/timetable and deliverables/publication options
17:30	Adjourn

Brief Synopsis of PORIA Planning Meeting Workshop

Overview Session:

1. Joachim von Braun, Director General of IFPRI, welcomed the group and underscored a few key points related to PORIA:

- importance of effective communications of and advocacy in policy research;
- need for a solid understanding of impact pathways and, in particular, identifying the constraints within the policy-making process;
- need for IA studies that encompass a broader set of research activity, e.g., thematic;
- need to draw more lessons from IA work and synthesize;
- critical reflection: What's the optimal level of investment in IA? What is the impact of IA? What are the opportunity costs of doing IA?

2. Mywish Maredia welcomed the participants and consultants to the meeting on behalf of SPIA and thanked IFPRI for hosting the meeting. She emphasised that the next two days would provide an excellent opportunity for centre case study leaders to interact closely with expert consultants (Bruce Gardner, Robert Paarlberg, Carol Weiss) in developing appropriate methods and planning their studies. SPIA considers this an extremely important but challenging exercise and looks forward to documenting the impact of POR within these case studies and hopefully publishing these in a special issue of a professional journal. She outlined the timeframe for completing the study.

3. Tim Kelley provided background to the PORIA study, initiated largely in response to an expressed need for demonstrating accountability for the large and growing investments in POR (OED /World Bank study, 2003; AGM, 2003). A Scoping Study was initiated in August 2005 to clarify terminology, review methods and evaluate the available evidence of direct and indirect impacts from CGIAR POR. The study found the range and number of PORIAs conducted to date was inadequate (only 24 were identified of which only three measured impact in economic terms). Although this was partially attributed to the higher degree of difficulty and methodological challenges inherent in this type of work, the study concluded that a more credible set of studies documenting influence and impact further down the impact pathway is both desirable and feasible. Seven case studies were selected by SPIA for this second phase initiative after a call for proposals went out in late 2006. These case studies give priority to 'impact' versus 'influence', although contributions that offer new insights into policy-making processes and that advance best practices in documenting 'influence' are also deemed important. It also gives priority to 'demand-led' approaches over 'supply-led' ones.

4. Bruce Gardner outlined the objectives for the meeting (see program agenda), which focuses on enhancing the quality of the impact assessment in term of: a) facts and information, and b) approaches and methods of analyses. There are five key components of the impact pathway and in the context of the 7 case study proposals they have received relatively consistent treatment:

- 1) inputs (light treatment)
- 2) outputs (strong)
- 3) uptake (mixed)
- 4) influence (weak)
- 5) impact (somewhat weak)

The goal was to produce and present ‘convincing evidence’ of influence or impact. Bruce went through each of these five components. In the discussion that followed, some key points were raised.

5. Carol Weiss highlighted the role of other, non-research related factors that influences policy and the challenge of assigning attribution to research in this context. In particular, she identified the four *i*’s that enable or constrain policy making: (i) competing interests, that both promote and inhibit policy change, e.g., what are the rival influences, the competing stakeholders?; (ii) ideology; (iii) other information/research; and (iv) institutional arrangements in the decision making. Rob Paarlberg supplemented this list of factors with others that can be characterized as dynamic factors that can cause policies to change from the ones generated by the four *i*’s, i.e., the six *c*’s: political change, policy copying, collaboration/partnership, coercion, compensation, and crisis. Some key points emerging from this discussion included:

- constructing a set of hypotheses about the policy making process within each of the case studies, i.e., positing which factors are most operative;
- the value of laying out in fairly detailed fashion the impact pathway as the backbone to guide the investigation (using a schema/diagram of what happened, with linkages);
- identifying the factors that were working in opposition to the change
- well developed (and argued) counterfactuals provide the most credible basis for impact/influence assessments
- researchers themselves are often the transmission belt, especially as they find their way into government positions, although this is more observed in developed countries
- consider opportunity for SPIA to generalize across the case studies.

6. Rob Paarlberg emphasized the value and credibility inherent in using a demand-side approach, i.e., starting with the policy change and working back to the influences, using an external consultant to document the case. He also mentioned the value and importance of partnerships and giving credit to the partners. David Schimmelpfennig introduced the Bayesian approach and [how it might be used in documenting influence and attribution]

7. Although there was some discussion about identifying the conditions that advance research effectiveness in the policy making process, i.e., how to make research more influential, this aspect will not be the focus of this study.

8. A number of questions were raised by the case study leaders seeking advice when using qualitative methods, e.g.:

- interview methods, techniques, protocols and strategies;
- ensuring quality responses, how to handle known and unknown biases;
- need for developing/establishing the timeline of events;
- interviewer and the analyst (should be the same if possible)
- interviewer - external consultant (for successful demand-led approach), or from the centre?
- using written questionnaire – when to send;
- interview style, establishing good rapport;
- reconciling different accounts;
- confidentiality issue.

There was considerable discussion on each of these issues, including pros and cons of different strategies and approaches.

9. The art of asking questions to policy makers/informants was discussed. The main suggestions given were:

- A formal introduction of the study (ideally only one page) on official letterhead should precede the interview.
- The policy change, and hence the assessment of this policy change, should be put in a positive light, if possible.
- Interview as many people as possible including the senior most technocrat from each institutions even if they aren't the policy-makers per se.
- The need to ask more generally about the issues that affected the policy change, not just focus on the original research paper.
- The need to carefully draft the questions to determine influence – although there is no hard and fast rule.
- The need to be mindful of the fact that different informants may give us different answers to the same questions.
- The need to consider the role the key informants played in the policy decision-making process.
- Where possible, see if you can have a follow-up session – may be just on the phone – in case you have further queries.

Case Study Presentations Session:

Case study leaders gave presentations (Powerpoints available from Tim Kelley) which were followed by discussions in the plenary. Major points from these discussions and those following in the one-on-one sessions with the consultants were captured by the case study leaders and are summarized below.

IFPRI: Transfers out of poverty (Jere Behrman & Jock Anderson)

Relevant discussion points were directly incorporated into the Project Workplan at the meeting.

Bioversity: Impact of the In-Trust Agreements between FAO and the CGIAR centres

Rober Paarlberg provided feedback on what to prioritize in the study, and specifically in emphasising the following:

- The research role of Bioversity International in the Policy making process
- Make a clear distinction between Influence and Impact
- Distinguish between research before and after the policy took place
- Bioversity operated together with other players and often covered a moderator role in the policy making arena. Include this in the impact pathway.
- Use questionnaires and interviews in order to define the counterfactual and the main variables that will subsequently help in modelling the actual value of CG genebanks
- The impact of a multilateral system of germplasm conservation could go beyond accession and distribution of material. Need to capture other indicators generated by the policy in place that could have an impact on germplasm availability and value.

Bruce Gardner helped in defining the methodological approach for measuring the impact. David Schimmelpennig provided guidance in defining the proposed Bayesian hierarchical correlated count data model. Specifically, they advised on:

- Exploring other viable quantitative methodologies. The Bayesian approach is not necessary to pursue my objective even though it would be interesting to address an impact study with Bayesian statistics
- Gather more data through interviews or questionnaires in order to add more information into the equations.
- Look carefully at the trend of data already collected and explain the reason of it.
- Try to capture through an in-depth analysis what is the real value of the agreement in place besides acquisition and distribution of germplasm.

Carol Weiss provided additional advice on the following:

- Be as precise as possible in drawing impact pathways and identifying the underlying role of Bioersity
- Working with external consultants at the issue from an outsider's point of view.
- Record interviews asking previous permission to the interviewed

WorldFish: Community-based fisheries mgmt in Bangladesh

The consultants agreed that this is a very interesting case because not only is there influence/impact on the policy level, but in addition the micro-level impact of policy change can be quantified from the pilot sites. However, there were a number of questions and suggestions how to improve the conceptual framework and implementation of the study

- Detailed description of timeline of CBFM in Bangladesh
- Check wider history of community based management (globally)
- Description of the laws and regulations that were in place before the research (and then a clear objective statement of the research)
- Clear distinction between research and extension (proof of concept)
- Account of the current situation (which policies have changed or are expected to change in the near future? How likely is such a change?). Does and if so how does change depend on the outcome of the election? On what level are relevant decision made → determine key persons for expert interviews on this level.
- What is the status of law enforcement (of related policies)?
- Distinguish between ex ante (upcoming national policy changes) and ex post (impact of CBFM in the project/pilot sites).
- Specify the influence of the CBFM project on policy makers
- Impact pathway diagram would be useful
- Also account for negative impact (e.g. reduction in government revenues)
- Take equity impact into account (pro-poor impact?) by comparing different income groups with regard to project impact.
- Check whether CBOs receive(d) any payments/subsidies and assess how sustainable these will be after the project has ended.
- Do CBOs make use of existing institutions/management groups?
- Establish IPG character of research output → spill-over to and lessons learnt for other countries?
- Check how much of the increase in household income is due to tax/lease reduction (or other direct project support)?
- Not only present average impact but give variability of benefits/impact across sites and make "worst case" and failures transparent.
- Careful description of the counterfactual: decreasing fish stocks & production in all sites?
- Check if water quality is an issue?

Additional comments from the one-on-one sessions on day two:

- Give clear specification what the research output really is
- For estimation of IRR extrapolate but don't overstretch
- Enough data for a double delta approach?
- Give some evidence on biodiversity changes (not necessarily with number on it)
- Assessment whether the policy (change) is advisable (e.g. after figuring in changes in government revenues and all costs)
- How much of the CBFM is attributable to WorldFish rather than others?
- Sustainability of the approach
- Outline what needs to be done and what can be done ...
- Do expert / key stakeholder interviews myself (to maximize information), prepare a timeline and bring this along, send a list of questions to the respondents before the interview. Tape record the interview if possible.
- Prepare set of hypotheses of how influence spread and "who talked to whom"

ILRI: Dairy marketing in Kenya & East Africa

ILRI proposed a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the impact of the new Kenyan Dairy Policy, which is yet unwritten, but has led to changes in the way small scale milk vending activities are regulated in Kenya. The new policy emphasizes training in milk handling as a means to licensing, which, in turn, leads to a reduction in transactions costs for small scale milk vendors (SSMVs). The qualitative assessment will describe and chronicle the activities of ILRI researchers, NGO partners, policy makers, enforcers, and SSMVs which led to the new policy, while the quantitative approach will use a multi-market framework to estimate economic benefits of the policy change on producers, consumers, and milk traders.

Issues arising from the meeting with respect to the ILRI proposal include the following:

- Initial discussions focused on making the multi-market model more tractable, e.g, there were suggestions that the number of food commodities be reduced to milk alone.
- May need to extrapolate 1-year ex-post results to estimate ex-ante benefits.
- While the multi-market model may be appropriate, especially with its emphasis on distributional impacts of the new Kenyan Dairy Policy on poor and rich urban and rural households, limitations on huge data requirements, time and other resources required to build and analyze a credible model, make it necessary for ILRI to consider using a simpler, possibly econometric, approach.
- A simple econometric approach can be used to estimate welfare gains for consumers and producers, but also to determine how the gain from reduced transactions costs is reflected in the new consumer and producer price changes.
- The cost of the Smallholder Dairy Project needs to be taken into consideration, vis-à-vis the benefits derived from project activities. Some of the benefit stream may not necessarily be tangible.
- Can the analysis separate small producers from large producers?
- What proportion of the informal market and formal market were exposed to informal payments?
- How much of Kenya's milk is in the low priced markets?
- ILRI will need to put a handle on time frame in which the policy came into effect, given that the policy is not a written policy. This should also include an outline of the processes involved in effecting the policy change, and a clear specification of what research outputs were extended to agents who previously enforced the old policy. For

- example who talked to whom, who gave instructions that the old policy must no longer be enforced, what was the specific instruction, when was the instruction issued. This should be accomplished by the lead researcher interviewing the people involved in the policy change work, i.e., government authorities, street-level bureaucrats, etc.
- A look at the effect of the new policy by investigating price and quantity movements over time, including the periods before and after the policy came into effect is in order.
 - Need to document both influences and economic impacts.

CIFOR: CIFOR's influence on policy and practice in the pulp and paper sector

- A number of questions were asked so as to clarify the nature of the research, and the timing and pathways of influence.
- Clarify the nature of the research – how is it more than investigative journalism?
- Clarify whether there could have been alternative providers of similar research results.
- Clarify the IMF's role in influencing the debt restructuring process.
- If possible, use welfare economics to quantify gains (and losses) to different groups.
- Although the research publication itself may not be an IPG, the potential environmental benefits are IPGs.

Comments on CIFOR case during individual consultations

- Use a tape recorder for interviews. For most informants, this will not pose problems, and it may even open up the conversation when the recorder is turned off.
- Although the interviews need to be carefully conducted to avoid bias, there are limits to the degree to which they can be structured.
- Always ask for a follow up interview.
- The basic policy problem is that the royalties are too low. The Ministerial Decree, if implemented, is a second best solution.
- It may be most productive to focus on the quantifiable benefits in Indonesia, as the global pathways are less likely to be conclusive.
- Clarify whether WWF approached CIFOR to conduct the case, or whether the idea of the case originated with CIFOR.
- The case is an interesting example of CGIAR collaboration with NGOs. Do not shy away from highlighting the partnership aspect of the case.

IRRI: Pesticide use & Philippine farmer health (Debbie Templeton)

Key points emerging from the discussion after the presentation:

- The PORIA for pesticide use and health of Philippines farmers looks promising.
- The framework for measuring impact looks sound. Regardless there is still a need to get a clear picture on the correct counterfactual when re-estimating the HC function and economic surplus model.
 - The research appears to be one that 'sped up' the policy process – but by how much?
 - Examine the change in pesticide subsidies in the Philippines and in other countries over time. Is there a strong relationship between pesticide use and subsidies?
- The framework for determining influence needs more work including:
 - A well-developed timeline & documentation of all relevant changes that took place.
 - Role of NGOs. Did they have any influence?
 - Role of the release of pest-resistant varieties in the policy makers decision-making process.
 - More documented evidence of media releases.
 - Interviews with journalists if possible.

- Increased understanding of the other policy changes that were underway prior to the health work. For example, during 1981 to 1983, the FPA banned 17 pesticides for use in the Philippines. These included Paris Green, the OCs DDT (in mosquito coils), DBCP and endrin, the OPs parathion ethyl, and, and some sodium compounds. IPM pronounced national crop protection policy
- Time frame of the existence of, and changes, in pesticide subsidies in the Philippines.
- The role of donors. Were donors' decisions to fund IPM also influenced by the pesticide use-health cost study?

ICARDA *Fertilizer use on barley in Syria (Kamel Shideed)*

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the case study leader was unable to attend the meeting.

Wrap up Session

A proposed timeframe for completing the study was presented and discussed:

Detailed case study workplans with full methodology details submitted: 15 March
 Consolidated project leader's / consultants' comments back to case study leaders: 10 April
 Progress report submitted to SPIA: 30 May
 First draft report submitted to SPIA: 15 August
 SPIA comments sent back to centers: 15 September
 Revised draft reports submitted to SPIA: 30 October
 Final Workshop (results presented): 15 November
 Selected case studies presentation at AGM: December
 Publication in special issue (e.g., Food Policy): 2008

There was discussion on what the purpose of the final workshop was and whether an earlier workshop to discuss preliminary results and draft reports might not be more useful – as was done for the SPIA NRMR impact assessment study. It was agreed that SPIA would assess the need and timeframe for a second workshop in early September after reviewing the first draft reports. If a workshop is deemed useful, other venues will be considered, e.g., at IFAD or Bioversity in Rome, or at CIFOR in Indonesia (three case study leaders located in SE Asia)

No decision was taken on whether to publish the case studies in a professional journal or in a book as a group but the various outlets for publishing were described:

- 1) SPIA 'green cover' report (where case studies are summarized) and 7 case study Briefs (2-4 pages) and 1 synthesis Brief [following the NRMR IA study model] – this is a requirement.
- 2) Centre publications (full length study) – this is strongly advised.
- 3) Journal – special issue where intro, methods, individual case studies and synthesis articles would be published, e.g., in Food Policy, or New Directions in Evaluation, or possible in a book – either of these would be feasible and highly desirable from SPIA's perspective.