

## **DFID RESEARCH STRATEGY 2008-2013**

### **Proposal to publicise the e-consultation in the South**

#### **Process Report**

**10 March 2008**

## **Background**

In 2007, the Department for International Development (DFID) developed a new research strategy, for which it launched a public consultation.

Beginning in September, Euforic was contracted to publicise the e-consultation process; extend the reach of the consultation to Southern research suppliers, users and knowledge intermediaries; and enable feedback and interaction among different elements of the consultation process. This work continued until the end of January 2008.

The following main outputs were expected:

- Matrix of actors
- Email and web announcements through at least 30 significant targeted distribution channels
- Active encouragement and promotion of the survey and its importance by groups active within the South
- 150-200 contributions mobilized to the questions posed by the consultation, via the blog and email
- Increased awareness of the R4D portal and its products
- Wider awareness of DFID as an active research funder

## **Process and Tools**

This was to be a small project that utilized 1) the power of some new 'social' media to capture contributions and 2) the reach of existing networks beyond DFID's immediate orbit.

The main 'tools' we used were a blog (<http://r4d-consult.wordpress.com>) and a Dgroup ([www.dgroups.org/groups/r4d-consult/](http://www.dgroups.org/groups/r4d-consult/)). Email and RSS alerts for the consultation were set up using Feedburner, a specialised tool in this area.

We started by 'populating' the blog with the various consultation questions, encouraging people to contribute their thoughts and experiences using the 'comment' functionality of the blog application.

Later in the process, we added the names of all the people commenting to the blog or participating in a face to face meeting to the Dgroup. The idea is that the group is a simple 'repository' of people and email involved, who can be reached occasionally. So not a discussion space as a dissemination space. The people on this list were sent a targeted email message inviting them to sign up for email alerts or RSS feeds on the consultation process generally, or on specific thematic alerts from the R4D portal.

We identified networks and groups likely to be interested in the issues and to be willing to re-disseminate information about the consultation and the questions to their stakeholders. We also contacted some groups in developing countries asking for similar outreach and encouraging them to organize a small national consultation if desired. Several rounds of dissemination were done.

As the consultation progressed, and particularly as results came in from the other elements of the process, we posted additional messages and reports that served to generate further comments. People who had signed up to the consultation e-mail alert received a notification of each story.

## Who Did We Reach?

In the initial proposal, we identified the following 'targets':

- **research and research support networks** in development, including in key development sectors, encouraging those groups to pass the message on to their constituents.
- **information intermediaries** working in development practice and policy, encouraging them to promote and publicize the consultation with their different user groups.
- **umbrella organizations** and networks at national, regional and international levels, leveraging their contacts.
- **specialist 'media coverage'** on DFID research – eg from IPS, ID21, SciDev.net.
- **existing e-mechanisms** - communities and discussion forums - discussing or exchanging information on topics relevant to the consultation.

The messages on the consultation were sent to:

- Euforic members, mainly development organizations in Europe, including some networks in their own right
- EADI, European development research and training institutions, and its members
- CGIAR, via the 'information' and 'communication' communities
- Global Forum on Agricultural Research and its regional/national constituencies
- FAO, information/communication community
- R4D portal of DFID
- Global Forum on Health Research
- COHRED, Council on Health Research for Development
- IRC, international water and sanitation center
- GNet Africa
- Several Dgroups discussing health, agriculture, research, and information
- SARDC and CODESRIA, regional social science research networks in Africa

The message asked them to contribute themselves and to pass the news on to their interested stakeholders to also contribute. Most said they sent the message out, in some cases we saw the message.

In general therefore, we did reach some of the target groups except the specialist media. For some of them, they already seemed to be aware of the process.

From the questions gaining most comments, health and agriculture, as well as 'research communication' communities seem to be more engaged/reached than others. This is perhaps a reflection of the somewhat easier/better structure of these communities than in other areas (it was difficult to identify clear governance communities).

The CGIAR was particularly active in contributing and tracking the consultation. Some data from the consultation report was cited in the research communication background document for a meeting in The Hague in February 2008.

## Results and Process Indicators

120 comments were contributed on the Blog/Dgroup. Two organizations also contributed substantial papers with comments:

- DNet Bangladesh, which supports a research community in the country
- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa.

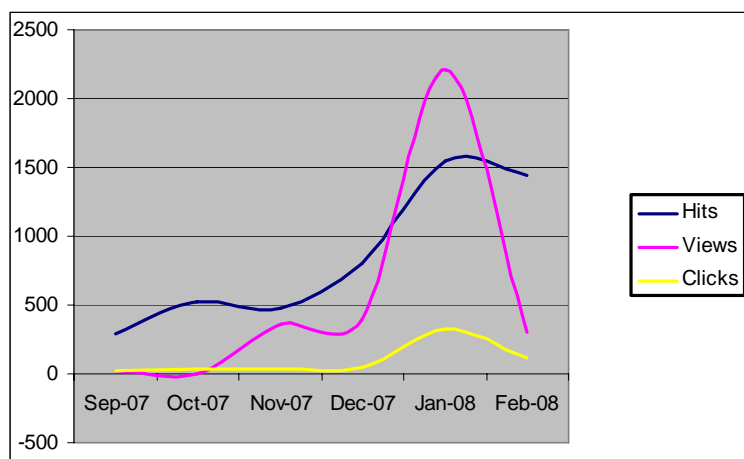
All of these contributions were brought together into a report and provided to DFID.

The Dgroup has the details of 404 people having come in contact with the consultation process. This is not a complete record.

So far, 135 people have signed up for the R4D Consultation e-alert and RSS feed. The chart below shows the subscriptions over time and especially the increased take up after we advertised the alerts by email (The massive troughs are glitches in the Feedburner data).

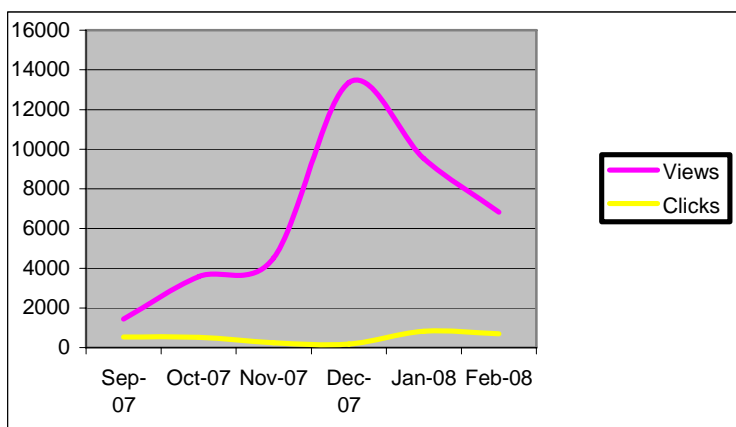


The feeds and alerts had 3432 views (the feed is looked at) and 639 'clickthroughs' (a link is opened). In addition, the blog pages had 3860 views. The graph below shows the take up of the consultation alert/feed, especially the boost in December/January after we advertised it. The recent decline is due to the absence of new news items.



One of our aims was to also promote the R4D portal and its services. We have done this by systematic cross-linking from the blog and the consultation messages to the portal. We have also advertised and promoted other R4D alerts via the consultation. These seem to have some impact, at least on the alerts and feeds of R4D.

The graph below shows **all R4D feeds views and clickthroughs** in the past 6 months. The same peak in December/January that we saw in the graph above can be partially ascribed to the additional subscribers obtained through the R4D consultation alerts (average monthly subscribers to all R4D alerts was 156 in November, 286 in December, and 680 in January).



## Who's Who Matrix in Research for Development

Here we provide a brief overview of different research actors/stakeholders in an effort to illustrate a) the complexity and b) potential points of leverage.

A few caveats:

In recent years we have seen a transformation in research and science and the actors engaged them. In developing countries, systems formerly based in the public sector and academia have broadened and diversified to include many more types of actors, such as private foundations, private companies, NGOs, and even local communities themselves (the notion of the 'experimenting farmer' has been around for quite some time).

Furthermore, emerging thinking on, for instance the importance of innovation systems, has helped to legitimate such participatory approaches in which all actors are recognized as having distinct roles and contributions to make to research creation and utilization. Research thinking in, for instance the CGIAR, talks of a 'research continuum' that encompasses advanced research institutes doing 'basic' research through international research centers and their national counterparts focusing on strategic and applied research to adaptive and participatory research by rural communities and development agents. Research 'creators' are more and more diverse; partly as a result, aggregators, enablers and 'communicators' of research outputs are appearing as a distinct class of actors.

To this (growing) complexity that makes it difficult to reach out to all potential research actors, we can add the likely differences between sectors and disciplines where research systems are likely to be set up differently to tackle different types of problems (on-farm research versus lab-based vaccine development for instance).

A final caveat is that this matrix gives priority to actors likely to be working on and interested in researching 'public goods', whether local, national or global. While such 'public' research is not only done by the public and development sector, it is likely that research conducted by a private company for the purpose of promoting the company's economic position is unlikely to attract DFID; and that DFID funds might be less attractive to such actors.....

	<b>Research enabler</b>	<b>Research implementor</b>	<b>Research communicator</b>	<b>Research Networker</b>
<b>Global</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFID</li> <li>• EC</li> <li>• SIDA</li> <li>• Gates</li> <li>• Carnegie</li> <li>• Rockefeller</li> <li>• IFS</li> <li>• GDN</li> <li>• UNESCO</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R4D</li> <li>• GDNet</li> <li>• ID21</li> <li>• INASP</li> <li>• SciDev</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICSU</li> </ul>
<b>Global Sectoral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA</li> <li>• FAO</li> <li>• WHO</li> <li>• GWP</li> <li>• UNEP</li> <li>• UNICEF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CGIAR</li> <li>• CABI</li> <li>• Initiative for Vaccine Research</li> <li>• Stop Tuberculosis Initiative</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GFHR</li> <li>• COHRED</li> <li>• GFAR</li> <li>• IRC Water</li> <li>• WSSCC</li> </ul>
<b>Regional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CODESRIA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SARDC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Euforic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EADI</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Sectoral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FARA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASARECA</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASARECA</li> </ul>
<b>National</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ODI</li> <li>• IDS</li> <li>• ESRF TZ</li> <li>• BIDS BD</li> <li>• KEMRI KE</li> <li>• CSE IN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ODI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ODI</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OXFAM</li> <li>• ACTIONAID</li> <li>• ICCO</li> </ul>		