

Research for Development - measuring impact at multiple scales

Neil Lazarow¹, James Butler¹, Jeff Connor¹, Seona Meharg¹, Shuang Liu¹, John Kandulu¹, Christian H. Roth¹, Kate Duggan²

¹ CSIRO Land and Water Flagship

² Griffin NRM Pty Ltd

The DFAT-CSIRO Research for Development (R4D) Alliance is a strategic partnership that aims to reduce global poverty by improving the impact of Australia's aid through evidence-based research and growing capability in partner country institutions. Research efforts focus on complex global development challenges in the domains of climate, water resources, sustainable cities, and food security. These challenges are dynamic and multi-sectoral, impact across borders and hit poor people hardest. After an initial scoping phase, six major projects were implemented over a 4-year period from 2009. These projects have underpinned partner government initiatives in climate adaptation (Indonesia and Vietnam), water security (Bangladesh and Vietnam), sustainable cities (Indonesia and Vietnam), food security (South Asia) and multi-scale futures research and scenario planning in the Mekong region. Measured benefits of the partnership include:

- Co-produced knowledge generated is leading to improved adaptive capacity and the avoidance of maladaptation at local and national scales.
- Building an enduring legacy of local capacity, which is leading to increased sustainability of research knowledge and development investment decisions.
- Research results have informed Australian aid programs. In addition our research is influencing the international donor community, such as the World Food Program, Save the Children and the Red Cross, through improved evidence based decision making for programming.
- Adaptation strategies conservatively returning positive Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) at project completion, with anticipated increases in positive BCA out to 5 and 10 years respectively.

The current phase of work (until June 2015) is aimed at evaluating and documenting the R4D partnership model, with a commitment to improving the quality and effectiveness of Australian aid. This presentation will outline our mixed methods approach to impact evaluation, provide an overview of the results and describe key lessons, outcomes and benefits.