

Innovation, Policy and Science

a program area of the International Development Research Centre

IPS Newsletter

January 2006

“The unbalanced distribution of scientific activities generates serious problems not only for the scientific community in the developing countries, but for development itself.”

Kofi Annan
Secretary-General, United Nations
Science, Vol. 299, 7 March 2003

Director's Message

It is a great honour for me to have the opportunity to serve as the inaugural Director for the new Innovation, Policy and Science (IPS) Program Area at IDRC. I have long admired IDRC's pragmatic approach to supporting research in developing countries, as well as its commitment to scientific, technical and social innovation. The IPS program area represents an exciting opportunity for IDRC to build on past success in its contributions to science and technology policy research in developing countries. IPS has also been mandated to enhance the influence of IDRC within the Canadian research community and facilitate the development of new strategic research partnerships between Canadian and developing country researchers. The objectives of the IPS program area thus present considerable challenges to address, but also incredible opportunities to make a real difference in the quality of lives for citizens of developing countries.

Richard Isnor, Director IPS

IDRC Board approves new Program Area: Innovation, Policy and Science

IDRC's Board of Governors approved the creation of the new Innovation, Policy and Science Program Area in 2005. The IPS Program will complement IDRC's three other Program Areas: Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D), Environment and Natural Resources Management (ENRM), and Social and Economic Policy (SEP).

IPS will focus on supporting the development of science, technology and innovation policies to alleviate poverty in developing countries. IPS-supported research will aim at strengthening the evidence base for science, technology and innovation policy-making processes at local, national, regional and international levels.

The Program Area will also support research on questions of governance, public understanding, access and benefits associated with new transformative technologies like biotechnology and nanotechnology. IPS will encourage the involvement of all

concerned stakeholders in order to bring the perspective of low and middle income countries, as well as marginalized groups in addressing the social, environmental and economic impacts of new science, technology and innovation policies. IPS will also serve as a platform within IDRC to ensure that Canadian research and science policy communities maintain international cooperation and development as important priorities for Canada's research efforts. IPS will also be overseeing strategic directions for the new IDRC Challenge Fund, which was created to provide a financial incentive to strengthen research partnerships between developing country scientists and Canadian researchers. In 2005, the Challenge Fund was used to support the launch of a major new partnership initiative, the Teasdale-Corti Global Health Research Partnership, involving the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), CIDA, Health Canada and IDRC (see Challenge Fund below).

Staffing

Richard Isnor is Director of the Innovation, Policy and Society Program Area. Dr. Isnor joined the Centre in July 2005 from the National Research Council of Canada.

At the end of August, IPS welcomed **Ellie Osir** who joined as Senior Program Specialist located in the Singapore Regional Office. A biochemist, Dr. Osir was most recently Principal Scientist and Head, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Department at the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology in Nairobi, Kenya.

Paul Dufour, Senior Program Specialist with IPS, has been serving a dual role as Senior International Advisor to Dr. Arthur Carty (Canada's Prime Minister's National Science Advisor) since June 2004. Paul's secondment to the Office of the National Science Advisor (ONSA) has recently been extended to June 2007 in a full-time capacity. He will, however, continue to work closely with IPS as advisor and collaborator. Under the terms of the new Memorandum of Understanding between ONSA and IDRC, Paul will be overseeing collaborative projects that the two organizations can jointly undertake to help strengthen Canadian R&D support for developing countries. See below '**MOU with the Office of the National Science Advisor**'.

Finally, **Linda MacWillie** began as the Executive Assistant for the Innovation, Policy and Science Program Area in September 2005. She brings to IPS a lot of experience from her previous work as a Grant Administrator.

(Please, see short bios of the IPS staff members at the end of this newsletter).

IPS News

New RoKS Competition

Internationalization of research across borders: the changing role of universities in the South is the theme of the 4th RoKS grants competition to be launched in Winter 2006. The Research on Knowledge Systems (RoKS) grants competition, now managed within IPS, will continue to serve as an ongoing mechanism to explore potential future programmatic areas and to expand IPS'

research network. Since 2001, RoKS has awarded 21 research grants.

MOU with the Office of the National Science Advisor

IDRC-IPS has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the National Science Advisor (ONSA), which is located in the Canadian Federal Government's Privy Council Office (the Office of the Prime Minister of Canada). The MOU will focus on joint efforts between IDRC and ONSA to strengthen Canada's research in support of international development. It will also enable the two organizations to collaborate on joint projects and meetings with key developing country institutional partners. Early collaborative efforts have identified a range of areas for potential collaboration including joint work on science indicators in developing countries, statistical analysis of Canadian R&D expenditures in support of international development, strengthening science academies in developing countries, and nanotechnology for development.

IDRC responds to the Canadian Prime Minister's challenge

As a follow-up to a retreat held by the Prime Minister of Canada in September 2005 with Heads of Canadian development agencies, IPS collaborated with the Policy and Planning Group of IDRC to produce a short strategic proposal from IDRC to respond to the Prime Minister's Challenge that Canada should dedicate at least 5% of its R&D efforts towards international development. The Chair of IDRC's

Board of Governors sent the proposal directly to the Prime Minister. Ideas contained in the IDRC paper have been shared with Dr. Carty, Canada's National Science Advisor, and work is continuing in partnership with other key federal organizations to refine specific proposals for a possible Fall financial update or Spring federal budget.

IPS participates in the 2nd S&T Ministerial Conference held under NEPAD

In late September 2005, IPS participated in the 2nd Science and Technology Ministerial Conference held under the auspices of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Conference took place in Dakar, Senegal, where Ministers adopted an ambitious new Consolidated Action Plan on S&T for Africa. IPS has been instrumental in supporting the core Secretariat for the NEPAD S&T effort, as well as key research project activities carried out by the Secretariat. IDRC was explicitly recognized by the Chair of the Minister's Conference for its support of the NEPAD S&T process.

IDRC Challenge Fund

The heads of the founding organizations involved in the Canadian Global Health Research Initiative (GHRI) have collectively decided to launch a major new partnership initiative -- the Teasdale-Corti Global Health Research Partnership program. This initiative involves expansion of an existing partnership between IDRC and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), CIDA and Health Canada. IDRC and other GHRI partners are also developing plans whereby the entire

GHRI and new Teasdale-Corti initiative could be significantly expanded and linked with additional Canadian health research funding and performing organizations such as the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF). The IPS-managed Challenge Fund will be providing \$3M in 2005-06, and \$2M in 2006-07 to the Teasdale-Corti initiative.

Visit of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

In September 2005, IPS' Director, Richard Isnor, met with a delegation of 20 representatives from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Ottawa. He made an overview presentation of IDRC's research programming efforts and history of supporting research in China during a joint meeting with representatives of the National Research Council of Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Networks of Centres of Excellence Program, Industry Canada, and the Ottawa Carleton Centre for Research and Innovation.

Selected Activities

Global Dialogue on Nanotechnology and the Poor

In partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation, this project implemented by the Meridian Institute will raise awareness about nanotechnology, emphasizing in particular the importance of examining both potential benefits and risks of nanotechnology for the poor

through multi-stakeholder dialogues initiated by a commissioned White Paper. The awareness raised of the impacts of nanotechnology through the dialogue will also include an action plan recommending specific projects or activities that can be undertaken as a group or independently to address the benefits and risks of the technology to the poor. More generally, the project will also inform how technologies can be effectively integrated into development strategies. For more information: www.nanoandthepoor.org.

Peer-to-Peer Support of Science Journalism in the Developing World

Following the success of the 4th World Conference of Science Journalists held in Montréal in October 2004 -- for which IDRC was a key partner -- IPS is funding the creation of a worldwide supportive network for science journalists in developing countries. This network will build on contributions of experienced science journalists and association members of the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ). Through association-to-association and journalist-to-journalist training activities and mentoring, the network will strengthen science journalism in developing countries and help ensure that S&T contributes in the best way possible to the well-being of societies.

Results

The journal **Research Policy** will publish a paper by Dr. Daniel Chudnovsky, Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Industrial of Argentina, that originates in the RoKS project titled 'Research, Development and Innovation Activities in Argentina in the 1990s: Changing Roles of the Public and Private Sectors and Policy Issues'. The project analyzed the Argentina S&T experience in the 1990s: trends in R&D funding and performance and innovation activities, as well as policy experiences to stimulate more endogenous efforts in R&D and innovation.

RoKS 2nd Competition

Developing countries complain that **Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures** are the most important impediment to their food and agricultural exports to regions like the European Union. Small States are generally not involved in the standard setting process.

The Caribbean & Latin America regional centre of [CAB International](#) (a non-profit organization based in the UK dedicated to research and publishing in applied biosciences), thanks to a ROKS research competition grant, studied how standard setting and implementation works in practice in 4 East African and 6 Caribbean States. The CAB team focused on the standard that applies to the import and release of biological agents to control pests: the ISPM3 or International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures number 3). From 1996 to 2002, for example, Kenya has imported 30 biocontrol agents to fight major pests like water hyacinth, cassava green mites and sugarcane white grubs.

CAB researchers found that farmers and key ministries knew little about these standards. They found that the private sector's knowledge of ISPM3 'was based more on an effort to make profits than to protect the environment'.

CABI has noted that several of the countries involved in the study have participated in the consultation process undertaken to revise ISPM3.

Bios

Richard Isnor (Director of IPS) holds a PhD in Science and Technology Policy Studies, University of Sussex, UK; MA Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, Canada; and BA Biochemistry, Mount Allison University, Canada. He has held science and technology policy and management positions in a variety of federal government organizations, including the National Research Council of Canada, Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada and the Privy Council Office. Dr. Isnor joined IDRC in July 2005.

Ellie Osir (Senior Program Specialist located in IDRC's Singapore office) holds a PhD in biochemistry/molecular biology from the University of Arizona and post-doctoral training from the Universities of Washington and Harvard. Ellie worked 16 years with the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology (Nairobi) as head of the biotechnology program and coordinator of a Pan African biotechnology/biosafety network. His research work centered on molecular taxonomy, and diagnostics and assessment of ecological impacts of GM crops. He has co-authored more

than 60 journal articles and trained a large number of MS and PhD students.

Paul Dufour (Senior Program Specialist) is also Senior Advisor for International Affairs at the Office of the National Science Advisor in the Government of Canada's Privy Council Office where he is on secondment from IDRC. He was educated at the Université de Montreal and Concordia University in the history of science and science policy. At IDRC, Paul has managed the Research on Knowledge Systems exploratory research activity since its inception. Prior to this position, he was senior analyst with the Science and Technology Strategy Directorate at Industry Canada.

Jean Woo (Program Officer) coordinates two exploratory activities: New Technologies and Research on Knowledge Systems (RoKS) which deals with areas related to indigenous knowledge; science and technology innovation policy issues; and science communication. Jean also manages the annual RoKS small-grants research competition. She holds an undergraduate degree in BIB and a graduate degree in International Political Economy focusing on biotechnology, intellectual property rights, and developing countries from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs in Ottawa, Canada.

Linda MacWillie (Executive Assistant to the Director) has nearly twenty-five years of experience at IDRC, mainly in the legal and grant administration areas. Her career highlight was working on the CIDA-funded South Africa-Canada Programme on Governance project from 1996-2000, which was administered

from IDRC's former Regional Office for Southern Africa in Johannesburg.

Jean-Marc Fleury (Senior Communications Adviser for Programs at IDRC) has been with IDRC for many years where he held a number of positions and was until recently Director of Communications. A graduate in Physics Engineering he worked as a science journalist prior to joining IDRC. He is Executive Director of the World Federation of Science Journalists.

Amélie Bélanger has recently joined the Centre as a new Grant Administrator. Before joining IDRC, she worked at the Association of Canadian Community Colleges where she held various functions as an administrative coordinator. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with a specialization in finance and is currently working toward a master's degree in business administration specialized in financial services.

Carla Yanez is the Program Assistant for the Gender Unit and Research on Knowledge Systems. She joined IDRC in 2002. She holds a BA on Tourism and Administration from the University of Oriente, Venezuela.

Lynne Richer is the Grant Administration Officer for IPS, as well as for IDRC's Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies program and its Middle East Initiatives. She has worked at IDRC for seventeen years and over that time has travelled to IDRC's Nairobi regional office and former Johannesburg office to provide training in project management information systems.

Contact us at: ips@idrc.ca