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## Chapter 1 Introduction

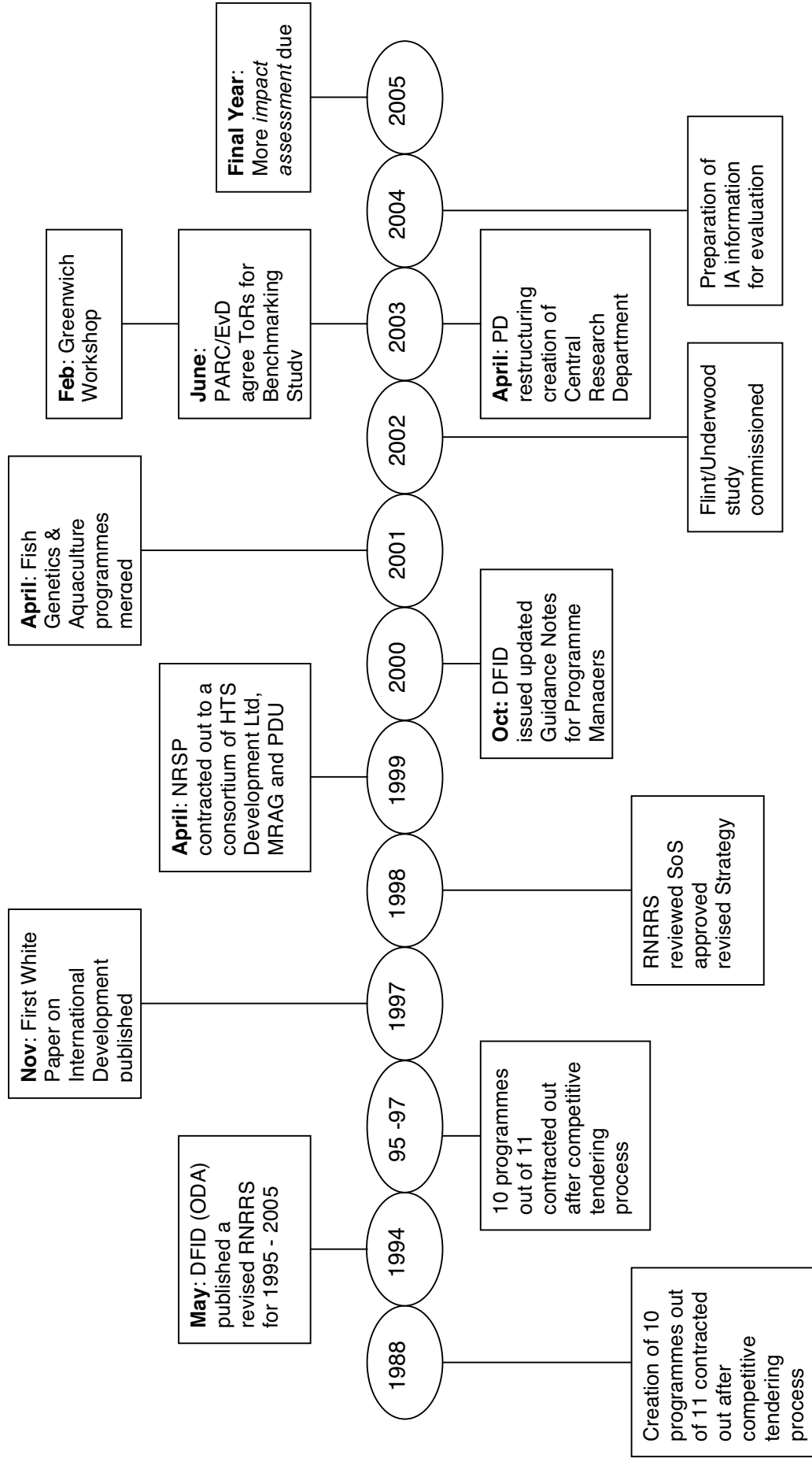
### 1.1 The Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRRS)

- 1.1.1 In May 1994 the Department for International Development (DFID), then the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), published a new Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRRS) for 1995-2005, the so called “Yellow Brick”.<sup>1</sup> The RNRRS emerged and built on previous research funded by the ODA. The Goals of the RNRRS framework were to be the alleviation of poverty, the promotion of economic growth and of economic reform, and the mitigation of environmental problems. Achievement of the goals required the research to be wealth creating and/or improving the life for beneficiaries in developing countries.
- 1.1.2 In generic terms, the outputs were to be the removal of researchable constraints to economically and environmentally sustainable renewable natural resource development or resource management, with demonstrable impact on productivity, productive potential and/or production achieved within a 10 year timescale.
- 1.1.3 Research projects were to be demand-led, contributing to the achievement of a programme purpose by responding to the clearly defined problems of a closely specified group of beneficiaries.
- 1.1.4 The RNRRS was to adopt a geographic focus, mirroring a list of Core Countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe), and Niche Countries/Regions (for forestry –Belize, Cameroon, Guyana, Honduras, Malaysia; for aquatic resources – Pacific, Caribbean, SE Asia; for livestock/wildlife – Botswana, Gambia, Horn of Africa, Yemen).
- 1.1.5 The RNRRS was to adopt a production systems perspective, with all research focussed on one or more of seven RNR commodity/resource production systems (semi-arid, high potential, hillside, tropical moist forest, forest-agriculture interface, land-water interface, peri-urban interface).
- 1.1.6 The RNRRS is structured around ten contracted out research programmes:
- Natural Resources System (NRSP)
  - Livestock Production (LPP)
  - Animal Health (AHP)
  - Crop Post Harvest (CPHP)
  - Crop Protection (CPP)
  - Plant Sciences (PSP)
  - Forestry Research (FRP)
  - Aquaculture and Fish Genetics (AFGP)
  - Post Harvest Fisheries (PHFRP)
  - Fisheries Management Science (FMSP)

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<sup>1</sup> Overseas Development Administration, 1994. Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy 1995-2005, Final Report, Research Task Group, May 1994.

**Figure 1: Timeline of the RNRRS (Source: PARC 2004)**



- 1.1.7 The strategy evolved over time (Figure 1). A major revision took place in 1998 following the publication of the White Paper ‘Eliminating world poverty: A challenge for the 21st century’ in late 1997. This led to formal reviews of the programmes and revision of the programme logframes, and triggered further reflection and evolution both inside DFID and among Programme Managers (PMs). The December 2000 White Paper on ‘Eliminating world poverty: Making globalisation work for the poor’ also had some impact, manifested as a more recent preoccupation of some programmes with institutional change, marketing and business linkages.

## 1.2 The Evaluation Terms of Reference

- 1.2.1 The aim of the evaluation of the RNRRS is for an objective assessment of how effectively the ten bilateral programmes have responded to deliver the agreed outputs of the strategy (what has been met, what will be met, what will not be met and why). In addition, the evaluation seeks to identify components of the programmes which have made, or have strong potential to make, an impact on poverty, including impacts on science, policy and communication, and whether or not these components might be continued and how. The evaluation also seeks to learn lessons from programme and project cycle management, institutional partnerships and communications systems operated by the ten Programmes. The ToRs are in Annex 1.

## 1.3 The Evaluation Team

- 1.3.1 **The Core Team** of four members (Annex 2) had overall responsibility for developing the evaluation framework, leading the analysis of this information and drawing out lessons from the thematic and technical programme areas. The Team addressed the overriding aspects of the research strategy including research management and development, “good science”, governance including institutional and organisational aspects and the goal of linking these facets into strategies to eliminate poverty.
- 1.3.2 **The Specialist Support Team** was established with eight experts to cover the individual research programmes (Annex 2). Working with criteria established in consultation with the Core Team, the Specialists assessed the scientific quality of each research programme, identifying areas of success and failure, the extent to which programmes had been conducted in a participatory mode, the degree of innovation in the research. The Specialists were selected on their development science qualifications and expertise in evaluating scientific research programmes. (Specialists’ reports Annex 10)
- 1.3.3 **The Performance Assessment Resource Centre (PARC)** was separately contracted by DFID in 2003 to provide initial information on the programmes and their governance. PARC initiated the evaluation process by updating the impact assessment of each of the individual programmes using their benchmarking tools. (PARC Report Annex 9)
- 1.3.4 **An Evaluation Researcher** was included in the team to help with data analysis, particularly the analysis of publications from the programmes. (Citation Analysis Annex 11)
- 1.3.5 **The LTS International Project Manager** was responsible for the logistics and overall administration of the evaluation process.
- 1.3.6 **An Evaluation Steering Group (ESG)** was established by DFID consisting of independent international specialists to advise and support the evaluation team to ensure objective assessment of the RNRRS (Annex 3 for ESG ToR).

## 1.4 Evaluation Work Plan and Time Table

- 1.4.1 The evaluation commenced in early October, 2004 with a meeting of the ESG (Annex 4). In October the Core Team received background information from PARC, developed the criteria to be used in the evaluation of programmes, and commenced data collection from stakeholders in the UK. In November Specialists were briefed and commenced detailed assessment of the programmes. The Core team and Specialists received the PARC report in December, and continued data collection in the UK. Country visits by the Core Team took place in January, followed by analysis and preparation of a draft evaluation report in February 2005. Following the February ESG meeting and their advice and direction, comments from all UK stakeholders, and a change to the original ToR to not restrict the report to 50 pages, a final draft of the report was delivered to DFID in April 2005.

## **1.5 Scope of the Evaluation**

- 1.5.1 The ToRs required an evaluation of the RNRRS Programme as a whole and, as a route to secure this, evaluation of the individual research programmes that contribute to this whole. The three key elements in the evaluation, as defined by the ToRs, relate to the quality of the research supported, the governance and management of the programmes and to the impact that has been achieved.
- 1.5.2 This evaluation is not an Output-to-Purpose Review of the whole programme, nor were the Specialists' reviews ever intended to be Output-to-Purpose Reviews of the individual programmes. Still less were they intended to undertake formal evaluation of individual projects within the programmes. The aim was to utilise selected sample projects to secure an overview of the individual programmes and thence facilitate evaluation of the RNRRS as a whole.
- 1.5.3 This report aims to provide DFID with a comprehensive analysis to assist in learning lessons from the past and to guide the future direction of RNR Research. It makes observations and recommendations that DFID itself will need to consider and then decide whether and how to take up. It is not meant to provide a definitive, ready-made decision for DFID on the future of RNRRS.

## **1.6 Outline of the Report**

- 1.6.1 Chapter 2 of this report presents the methodology used for the evaluation. It lays out the issues concerning sampling and data collection and presents the criteria for the assessment of Science Quality, the Impact on Livelihoods and for Programme Governance and Management. The chapter ends with a presentation of the key challenges involved in undertaking the evaluation.
- 1.6.2 Chapter 3 presents an assessment of the programme purpose through a description and an investigation into the 'nested' logical frameworks of the RNRRS. The following chapters 4, 5 and 6 are the key elements for the evaluation. They lay out the evidence, analysis and assessment of Research Quality and Scientific Achievement, Poverty Focus, Contribution to Programme Purpose and the Governance and Management within the RNRRS.
- 1.6.3 Chapter 7 focuses on a Strategic Review and determines possible Ways Forward. It looks at the balance between scientific knowledge and livelihoods impact, the global research context and the RNRRS' comparative advantage. The chapter concludes by looking at some alternative options for research funding and management to support the way forward.
- 1.6.4 Chapters 8 and 9 draw together the conclusions from the evaluation and determine recommendations for DFID to act on.
- 1.6.5 Annexes 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 to the report contain the evidence trail for the evaluation including the summary reports of the Specialist reports and the Core Team evaluations of programme performance and management, the Country Reports, the PARC report and the full Specialists report.