

Country coordination meeting: the transition to PERii

Hawkwell House, Oxford, 13th-15th May 2008

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1. Introduction: aims of the meeting

The aims of the three day workshop were to:

1. Develop a shared understanding of the needs of country coordination teams in relation to their work with INASP
2. Develop a shared understanding of the possibilities, constraints and priorities for the next phase of INASP's programme work—PERii
3. Develop an outline of how we can best work together to manage and coordinate PERii, addressing issues such as:
 - i. roles, responsibilities and expectations;
 - ii. effective communication (between CCs and INASP, and within countries);
 - iii. managing and implementing a country-wide programme;
 - iv. understanding needs (by INASP and within countries);
 - v. maximising uptake of opportunities;
 - vi. cooperative working;
 - vii. continuity
 - viii. sustainability
4. Strengthen relationships between INASP ⇄ Country Coordinators ⇄ Country Coordinators

2. PERI → PERii

2.1 PERI

PERI (the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information) was developed over an 18-month period in 1999/2000 with input from research partners from 31 countries. Its aim was:

“To support capacity building in the research sector in developing and transitional countries through strengthening the production and dissemination of, and access to, information & knowledge utilising ICTs”

The initial partner countries were Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe and there were four key components

- Deliver information: ICT-enabled national access to international research
- Disseminate national and regional research: increased visibility of national research outputs
- Enhance ICT skills: in using electronic resources and tools
- Strengthen local publishing: better and more viable national publishing

Via PERI in 2007 alone:

- researchers downloaded over 2.4 million full text papers
- journal editors and publishers made over 300 journals titles published developing and emerging countries available online, with over 5,000 articles delivered
- over 1,500 librarians, journal editors and researchers from more than 300 organisations took part in training, the majority of it administered and facilitated by previous participants

It is a great credit to all involved in achieving this, and one of the key groups of these is of course the Country Coordinating teams.

2.2 PERii

Now, PERI is entering a new 5-year phase: to be called PERii. The reasons for this evolution are that the majority of funding for PERI ended in Dec 07/Mar 08 and this provided an opportunity to

- review and respond to current demand from partners
- review, develop and link relevant work across all INASP programmes
- tap into renewed development interest in Higher Education

PERii will build on and link successes and best practice from PERI, and integrate in Bandwidth Management and Optimisation, Publishing Support and Library Development. This will create a holistic and interdependent set of activities that will allow us together to expand use of existing opportunities and to focus/extend support from 'research information' to 'research communication'.

Why research communication?

"Scientific skills and knowledge enable countries to find their own solutions to their own problems, and bring about step-changes in areas from health, water supply, sanitation and energy to the new challenges of urbanisation and climate change. And, critically, they unlock the potential of innovation and technology to accelerate economic growth, and enter the global economy."

Commission for Africa report

PERii's outputs and aims

- Strengthening **human capacities**
- Supporting **networks** of people & systems
- Improving **policy and practice**

...so that together we contribute to an enabling environment for research communication that is owned and driven by a sustainable global network of partners

2.2.1 PERii approach

Key to all of this work together are the following core themes:

Equity: working with all actors in the research communication cycle: researchers, librarians, journal editors and publishers, and ICT professionals; offering the same holistic set of activities in all 'partner countries'; transparently sharing information about why this long-term commitment from both partner countries and INASP means that we can't work in every country or in every institution in every country and how decisions are made.

Stakeholder participation: Country Coordinating teams are central to supporting this by being the 'voice' for stakeholders in their countries; INASP will also seek advice from other stakeholders through, e.g. M&E, participation in strategic meetings, etc.

Strategic partnerships: to extend the reach and impact of the work, e.g. successful work with CLACSO, INFORM, IFLA Africa Section.

Social responsibility: take full consideration of how activities contribute to sustainable development, seeking to balance environmental, economic, political and social concerns.

Sustainability: the ultimate goal of PERii is to strengthen or build capacity/networks/policy environment, so that the activities become country owned, driven, managed, funded and implemented.

2.2.2 Summary of PERii

Aim: support a sustainable network of stakeholders that owns and drives an enabling environment for research communication

Actors: researchers, librarians, journal editors, publishers, ICT professionals

Activities: strengthen human capacity, build networks, improve policy and practice

Approach: equity, social responsibility, stakeholder participation, strategic partnerships and sustainability

3. Participants

The following people participated:

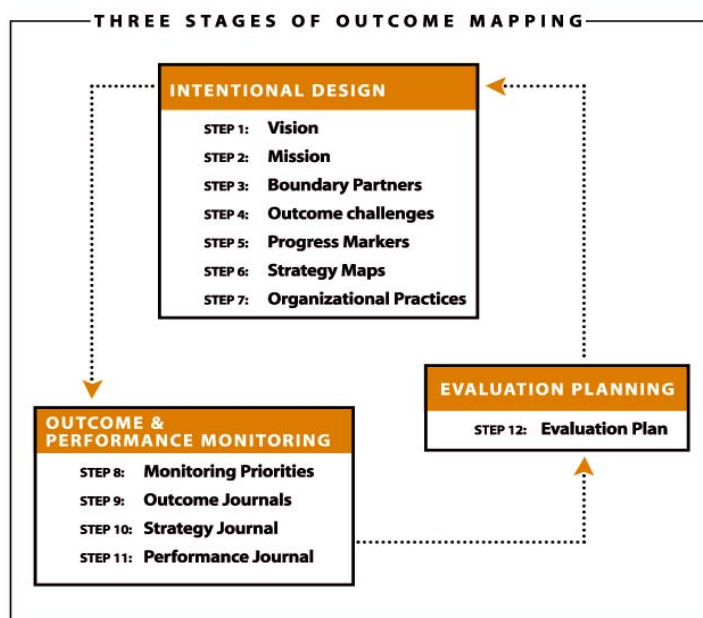
Name	From...
Prof Naiyyum Choudhury	Bangladesh
Dr Mohammad Mazed	Bangladesh
Concepción Díaz Mayans	Cuba
Wondimeneh Mammo	Ethiopia
Helena Asamoah-Hassan	Ghana
Patricia Villalobos	Honduras
Olga Coello	Honduras
Jacinta Were	Kenya
Chaminda Jayasundara	Sri Lanka
Mapasane Lephoto	Lesotho
Noel Jambo	Malawi
Freddy Aleman	Nicaragua
Ruth Velia Gomez	Nicaragua
Hassan Zaidi	Pakistan
Buhle Mbambo-Thata	South Africa (former CC for Zimbabwe)
Alice Nkhoma-Wamunza	Tanzania
Faith Akiteng	Uganda
Dr Maria Musoke	Uganda
Nguyen Viet Nghia	Vietnam
Francina Makondo	Zambia
Agnes Chikonzo	Zimbabwe
Martin Belcher	INASP
Lucy Browse	INASP
Peter Burnett	INASP
Sioux Cumming	INASP
Egbert de Smet	INASP
Liam Finnis	INASP
Caroline Good	INASP

Sara Gwynn	INASP
Tag McEntegart	INASP
Anne Powell	INASP
Rebecca Priestley	INASP
Trish Sheehan	INASP
Julie Walker	INASP

4. Methodology

The meeting was facilitated by Chris Addison, of [Communiq](#), using the Outcome Mapping methodology originally developed by the [International Development Research Centre](#).

'Outcome Mapping establishes a vision of the human, social, and environmental betterment to which the program hopes to contribute and then focuses monitoring and evaluation on factors and actors within its sphere of influence. The program's contributions to development are planned and assessed based on its influence on the partners with whom it is working to effect change. At its essence, development is accomplished through changes in the behaviour of people; therefore, this is the central concept of Outcome Mapping.'¹



The focus of the meeting involved looking together at the first six steps of Outcome Mapping, considering the following questions:

Step 1: Vision

- Imagine that in 3-5 years the program has been extremely successful. What changes will you have helped bring about? What are your partners doing differently? What have they achieved? In essence, what would total success look like?

Step 2: Mission

- How can the program best support or contribute to the achievement of the vision? What areas do you need to work in? What do you need to do?

Step 3: Boundary partners

- In which individuals, groups, or organizations is your program trying to encourage change so that they can contribute to the vision? With whom will you work directly?

¹ Extract from an introductory leaflet on Outcome Mapping, available at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-62234-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Step 4: Outcome challenges

- Ideally, in order to contribute to the vision, how would the boundary partner be behaving?
- What would your boundary partner be doing to contribute maximally to the vision?

Step 5: Progress markers

- How can the program know the boundary partner is moving toward the outcome? What would they be doing?
- What milestones would be reached as the boundary partner moves towards their intended role in contributing to the vision?

Step 6: Strategy maps

- What will be done to produce an 'immediate' output?
- What will be done to build capacity?
- How will sustained support, guidance, or mentoring be provided?
- What will be done to change the physical or policy environment?
- How will you use the media or publications?
- What networks/relationships will be established or utilized?

Before the meeting, all country partners and INASP staff were asked to complete questionnaires (see appendix 1). These questionnaires essentially asked people to look at how PERI was working now in their country/programme area, and how they would ideally like it to develop. The answers then fed into posters which were on display throughout the meeting. A session bringing together the common threads from these posters was facilitated by Buhle Mbambo-Thata and provided strong collective themes (see below for more detail). Many of the ideas expressed in the posters were then confirmed as we worked on the joint vision for PERI.

5. Common themes

The presentation given by Buhle Mbambo-Thata really drew together elements from the posters and showed that as a group, people were heading in the same direction:

- In all the countries represented at the meeting, there was some form of library consortium, whether formal or informal, well-established or just starting out.
- Across all the countries, there is a huge potential for research output (reflected in the number of journal titles and higher education institutions, and the size of the academic community).
- Some kind of ICT infrastructure exists in all of these countries.

Generally, ideas for what total success would look like encompassed the following:

- Improved local publishing
- Improved and increased research output
- Changed culture (relating to the research communication cycle)
- Enhanced promotion
- Improved access to information
- Deeper collaboration
- Enhanced management capacity

These ideas converge well with the essence of the vision developed during the meeting:

All stakeholders recognise the value of research communication cycle for development.

6. The way forward

A wealth of ideas was generated during the meeting and it is important that there are tangible outcomes.

INASP staff, in cooperation with country coordination teams, will work further to streamline the vision and mission statements developed during the meeting so that these can appear on the INASP website and leaflets.

It is hoped that information from the posters can enrich the country-specific web pages on the INASP website, so that each has its own identity and can provide useful and tailored information to that country's research community.

Many participants felt that some way of communicating between these annual meetings would be beneficial and an electronic discussion forum was suggested. While such a forum does exist, INASP will look more closely at if and how this could be developed to allow more experience sharing and mentoring between coordinators.

One of the key outcomes of holding a face-to-face meeting was the building and strengthening of relationships between INASP and the country coordinators, as well as between the country coordinators themselves. There was a strong sense of a real network of professionals, working together, albeit in different contexts, to achieve the same goals. It is hoped that next year's meeting will be held in one of the partner countries and the Bangladesh team have already put themselves forward to host it.

7. Further information

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Appendix 1: Poster questionnaires

Questionnaire for country coordination teams:

Thinking of the academic library community in your country...	
What consortia are there?	
When were they formed?	
What types of members do they have?	
How many members do they have?	
What is their web address?	
What professional associations or networks are there?	
Thinking of the ICT infrastructure and community in your country...	
Is the overall network connectivity and ICT infrastructure poor, adequate, good or excellent?	
What professional associations or networks are there?	
Thinking of academic publishing in your country...	
How many journals titles are published?	
What professional associations or networks are there?	
Thinking of the research community in your country...	
How many institutions are there?	
Approximately how many active researchers, Masters students, PhD candidates, staff, undergraduates, etc are there?	
What professional associations or networks are there?	
What national policies/strategies, if any, are there for research, libraries, publishing, HE, ICT etc in your country?	
In the last year, what organisations, groups or individuals have you worked with, turned to for advice, given information to, etc, in your role as coordinator? (either types or specific names is fine. We will use the answers to develop a 'network map' to see how we all do, or could, link together)	
What organisations/groups/individuals would you <i>ideally</i> be:	
Supporting?	
Partnering with?	
Keeping informed?	
Ensuring support from?	
What could INASP do/not do/ do better to support your Country Coordination?	

What national or international organisations/programmes should INASP work with or harmonise with to help you in your work?
What is the most difficult/frustrating thing for you in your role as Country Coordinator?
What gives you the most satisfaction in your role as Country Coordinator?
What one piece of information/advice would you give a new Coordinator?
What information/advice would you like from your fellow Coordinators?
Imagine that in 3-5 years your CC team has been extremely successful. What changes will you have helped bring about? What are your users/partners doing differently? What have they achieved? In essence, what would total success look like?

Questionnaire for INASP staff:

Activity name	
Description and objectives	
Staffing and funding for 2008	
Which countries have there been substantive activities in and when	
Quantitative data to present on activities in last 24 months (or over 5 years?)	
In the last year, which organisations, groups or individuals have you worked with to support implementation? (either types or specific names is fine. We will use the answers to develop a 'network map' to see how we all do, or could, link together)	
What organisations/groups/individuals would you <i>ideally</i> be:	
Supporting?	
Partnering with?	

Keeping informed?	
Ensuring support from?	
What do INASP do well in this area?	
What could INASP do/not do/do differently to support activities in this area?	
What could CC teams do/not do/do differently to improve or support the design, implementation and management of activities?	
What national or international organisations/programmes should INASP work with or harmonise with to help partners?	
What is the most difficult/frustrating thing about working for INASP in relation to implementation of activities and programmes?	
What gives you the most satisfaction in your activities work at INASP?	
What information/advice would you like from Coordinators?	
Imagine that in 3-5 years PERii has been extremely successful. What changes will you have helped bring about? What are partner countries and organisations doing differently? What have they achieved? In essence, what would total success look like?	