

# IDS Bulletin

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## EXPLORING RESEARCH–POLICY PARTNERSHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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# Foreword

The important role of R&D investment in ensuring global economic and societal success is well recognised. In the private sector, this is clearly correlated with growth, innovation, and enhanced performance. DFID has, too, long recognised that the deployment of advances in science, social science, technology, and innovation is a critical enabler for development progress. Our strategic investment in research and the delivery of global public goods has delivered high returns, saved millions of lives and, equally importantly, informed policy and delivery design by development actors on what works (and what does not).

We know that success in this mission depends on very careful consideration, at the outset, of the problem to be addressed, the potential impact that can be enabled by high-quality research, and the step-by-step route to achieve success. This is about well-thought-out design, establishing and nurturing the right relationships, and building in sufficient flexibility to adapt your approach as you go (given what you do not necessarily know at the outset).

The ESRC-DFID Strategic Partnership has been successful in demonstrating what approaches are effective, being sharply focused on the combination of relevance and academic rigour with targeted, well-planned research uptake methods.

I am delighted to have been asked to write a foreword for this issue of the *IDS Bulletin* which brings to life some of the successes and challenges of getting traction from research that has enabled key actors to make well-informed choices, based on a much more rigorous knowledge base. The articles take you on a journey through different sectors and partnerships and, in doing so, tease out common themes with the potential to help many others in their research design.

The issue also shows that donors themselves have a critical role to play in creating an enabling environment for interdisciplinary research designed and implemented in partnership with potential users and beneficiaries. In summary, it illustrates plainly that the most effective research–policy partnerships are built on common agendas, sustained interaction, and evidence sensibly and logically framed for decision makers and practitioners.

Diana Dalton

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