

Harnessing Natural and Human Capital 2009–10





Who we are

The Natural Resources Institute (NRI) is a specialist institute of the University of Greenwich.

We provide research, consultancy, training and advisory services to underpin sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction. The majority of our activities focus on the harnessing of natural and human capital for the benefit of developing countries, though much of our expertise has proved to be of growing relevance to industrialized nations.

The Institute is located in Chatham, approximately one hour from central London, and has over 60 professional staff in disciplines ranging from anthropology and enterprise development to entomology and food science. Specialist associates also work with us on specific programmes. NRI is registered by the British Standards Institute to ISO 9001.

What we do

Working in partnership with development agencies, we contribute to pro-poor policy formulation and undertake research and technical evaluations that underpin planning and investment decisions. Through our practical experience of identifying and exploiting economic opportunities for the poor in the natural resources sector, we have strong links with private sector players and the intermediary organizations that represent them.

Where we work

NRI works globally, with a focus on countries with less developed economies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The Natural Resources Institute is committed to providing distinctive, high quality and relevant consultancy, learning and advice in support of sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction



Selected programmes

Making agriculture work for the poor

An overwhelming number of the world's poorest people are involved in farming that does not meet their basic food needs or generate enough income to lift them out of poverty.

NRI and its network of partner organisations throughout the world are working to develop better agricultural technologies and improved systems that will have a real impact in reducing poverty and malnutrition.

Examples of our work include:

- Improved crop production by smallholders through the development of improved farming systems and new technologies;
- Supporting the production of high value products by smallholder farmers;
- Developing better research and advisory services for poor farmers that integrate farmers' and consumers' knowledge with input supply and marketing information.

Food and trade

For decades, weaknesses in post-production food management, enterprise development and marketing have been a major constraint to agricultural growth and trade, and its potential to reduce poverty in developing countries. Since the early 1990s, the Natural Resources Institute has played a leading role in helping to develop food marketing systems in collaboration with local partners.

Examples of our work include:

- Development of warehouse receipt systems in East and Southern Africa;
- Supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to turn cassava into a higher value commodity;
- Understanding and resolving the impact of standards on smallholders in Africa;
- Developing branding strategies for the fisheries sector in Vietnam.



Change and vulnerability

Today's world is one of unprecedented change and issues such as climate change, globalisation, conflict, emergent diseases and major migratory pests can all increase vulnerability and threaten the livelihood and health of poor people. NRI is working to understand, quantify and mitigate these major challenges so as to help the world's poorest to withstand these potentially disastrous multiple threats.

Examples of our work include:

- Investigation of impacts of drought on pastoralists in southern Ethiopia;
- Assessment of the livelihood impacts of humanitarian land mine removal in Yemen;
- Contributions to the 2007 Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;
- Strengthening local agricultural innovation systems to adapt to climate change and variability.

Capacity strengthening

Recent studies have confirmed that absence of capacity represents one of the major constraints to growth in the African agriculture and natural resources sector. NRI and its network of partner organisations in Africa are addressing capacity constraints in the sector through a range of interventions, involving development and management of pan-African capacity building programmes on the one hand and through targeted technology transfer on the other.

Examples of our work include:

- Facilitation and backstopping of a pan-African capacity strengthening programme for research in agriculture;
- Working with African university networks to strengthen capacity in leadership and management;
- Strengthening capacity in fisheries testing laboratories in ACP countries.

Examples of current work

Research:

- Product development and marketing component the of HarvestPlus Challenge Program in Africa, HarvestPlus, (2006–2010).
- Vector-based control of human African Trypanosomiasis using bait technology, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, (2007–2010).
- Small-Scale Producers and Standards in Agrifood Supply Chains, DFID (2005–2008).

Technical assistance and consultancy:

- Management of support to fisheries policy, DFID, (2005–2008).
- Namibia: Technical assistance to Rural Poverty Reduction Programme, EC, (2005–2008).

- Appraisal of implementation of IFAD programme of support to post-tsunami reconstruction in the Maldives, (2006–2007).
- Uganda: Technical assistance to the Agricultural Commodity Exchange, EC, (2006–2009).

Capacity building, teaching and training:

- Enhancing the capacity of the Department of Agriculture, Education & Extension of Makerere University to offer innovative courses, British Council, (2007–2008).
- Strengthening capacity for agricultural research and development in Africa, FARA with DFID, (2007–2010).
- Taught MSc programmes in Natural Resource Management and Food Safety.
- PhD training at NRI – currently 35 students registered.



Key contacts

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2008



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D2017-9E December 09

