



# THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Professor Olufemi Taiwo  
([dg@niser.gov.ng](mailto:dg@niser.gov.ng))

Director-General  
Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER)

Presentation at the JPB/NCDP Meeting, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State,  
October 29–31, 2013





# Outline

1. Introduction
2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions
3. Policy Formulation
  - Concept, Content and Types of Policy
  - Policy Formulation Cycle
    - Role of Research in Policy Formulation
4. Policy Implementation
  - Procurement and Operations
  - Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)
5. Case Studies on Research-Policy Linkages
6. Some Recent NPC-NISER Research Initiatives
7. Key Challenges and the Way Forward





# 1. Introduction

- **Need for a systematic approach to policy formulation and implementation**
- **The Nigerian experience:**
  - ❖ Research, policy and industry
  - ❖ Policy consistency and coordination
- **Objectives of this presentation**
  - ❖ To explain the role of research in policy formulation and implementation; and
  - ❖ To draw attention to factors that tend to undermine the impact of research on policy formulation and implementation





## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### Nature of Research

- As expected, there are various definitions of research
- Broad and narrow definitions
- Examples of broad definitions
  - “Any systematic effort to increase the stock of knowledge” (Court and Young, ODI, 2003:4)
  - “The collection and evaluation of information about a particular subject” (<http://grammar.about.com/>)
  - “Any gathering of data, information and facts for the advancement of knowledge” (<http://explorable.com/>)





## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### Nature of Research

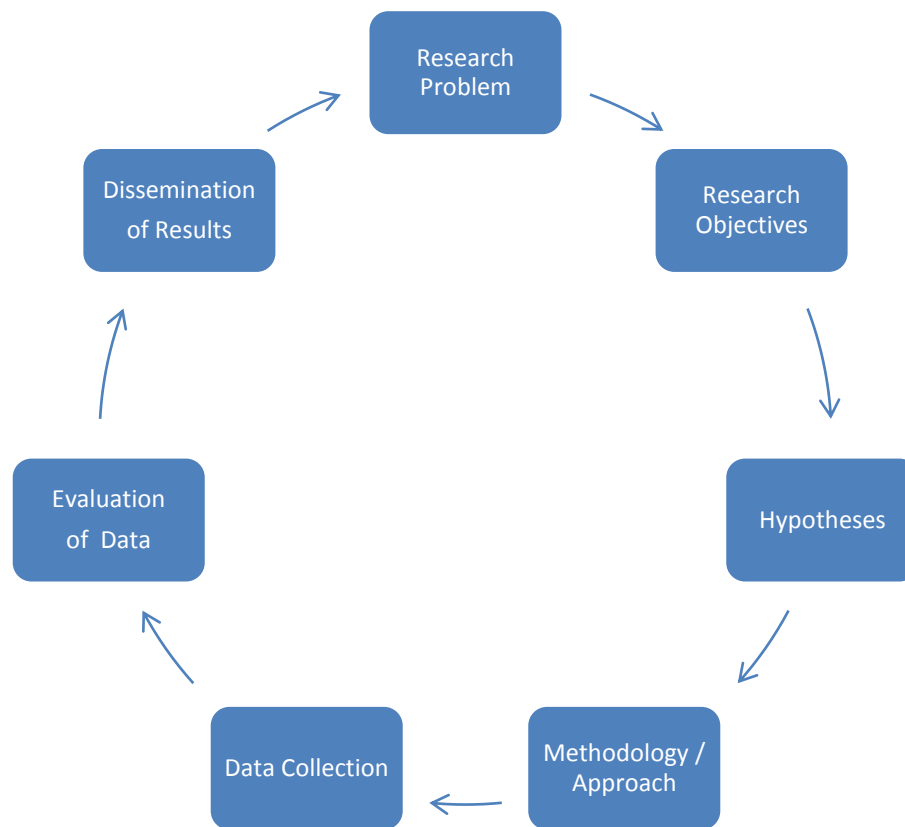
- Examples of narrow definitions
  - “Research is performing a methodical study in order to prove a hypothesis or answer a specific question” (<http://explorable.com/>)
  - “A careful and systematic study in some field of knowledge undertaken to establish facts or principles” (Grinnell, 1997)
  - A methodological and systematic approach to the acquisition of new knowledge” (Adhy Kumiawan)
- Universities and Think Tanks tend to lean toward the narrow definition and to adopt a **research cycle**





## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### A Typical Research Cycle





## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### Purpose of Research

- Research is an **information tool** about the behaviour of phenomena such as economic growth
- In particular, it is the process by which we seek to **observe and describe, explain, predict** and **control** the behaviour of phenomena
- **Observation and Description:** The assumption is that nature is observable and that we can provide a description of each phenomenon, **e.g. economic growth in Nigeria**





## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### Purpose of Research

- **Explanation:** Scientific explanation provides answers to the question: why? It attempts to establish general laws covering the behaviour of the phenomenon being studied, i.e. **the causes of particular effects**
- **Prediction:** It answers the question, what happens if certain actions are taken, i.e. **the effects of particular causes**
- **Control:** The process of **modifying** the behaviour of a phenomenon to a preferred state.







## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### Types of Research

The area of interest and purpose determine what type of research should be conducted

#### ● Basic versus Applied Research

- Policy analysis is **a class of applied research** that produces information for addressing specific policy challenges

#### ● Qualitative versus Quantitative Research

#### ● Experimental versus Non-Experimental Research

#### ● Longitudinal versus Cross-Sectional Research





## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### Institutions

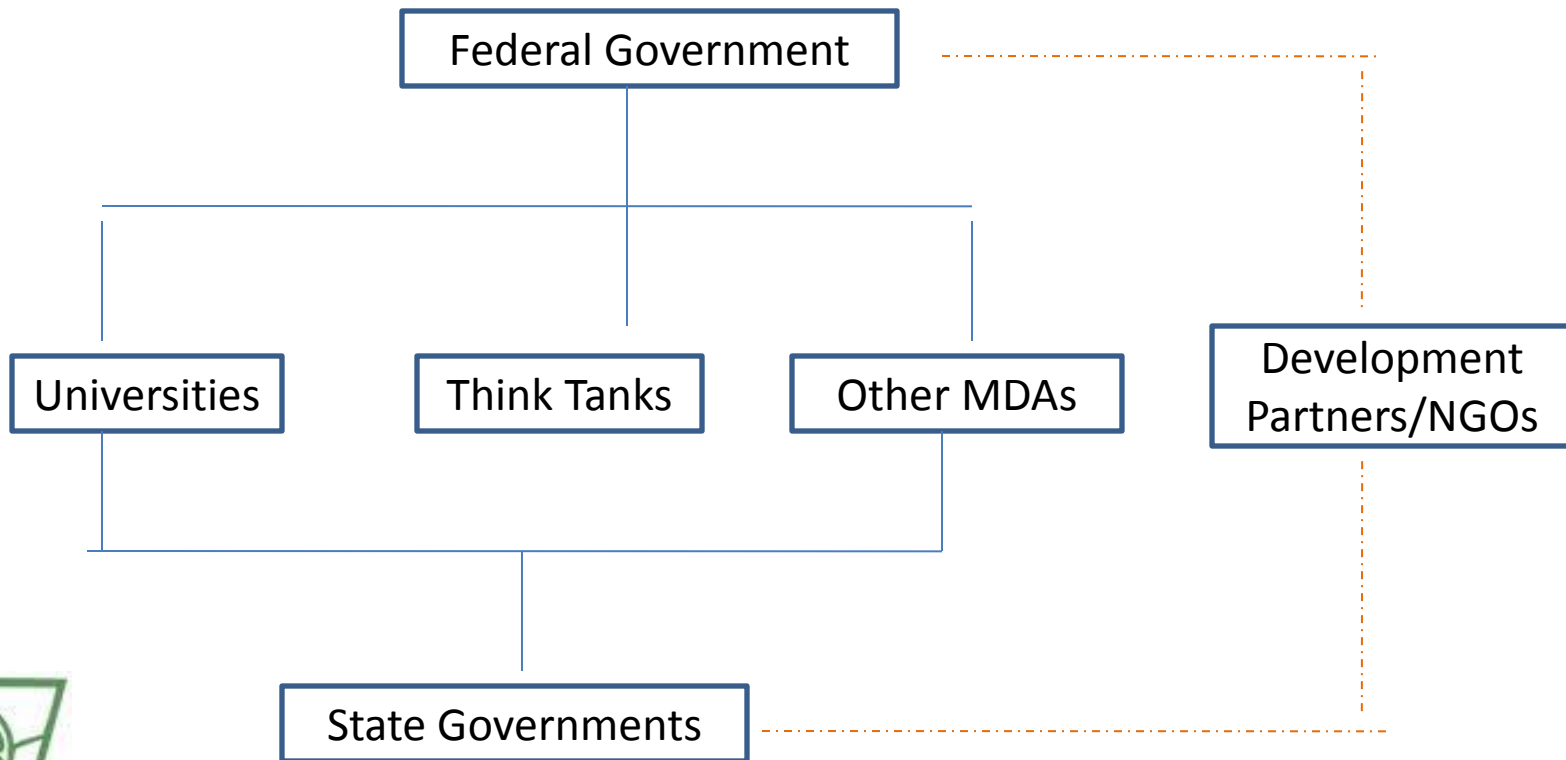
- In Nigeria, research institutions are dominated by Federal Government agencies: Universities, Think Tanks and core MDAs
- State Governments have Universities and MDAs but there is a dearth of Think Tanks at this level
- Development partners and NGOs also engage in serious research work
- Local Governments appear dormant in research activities





## 2. Research: Nature, Purpose, Types and Institutions

### Institutions





## 3. Policy Formulation

### (Concept, Content and Types of Policy)

#### Concept

- There is a variety of definitions
- Examples:
  - “Declarations of actions as well as actions on the ground” (ODI, 2003: 4)
  - “A set of ideas and proposals for actions culminating in a government decision” (Pearson Education)
  - “A set of decisions which are oriented towards a long-term purpose or to a particular problem” (ALPAN)
  - “A deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcome(s)” (Umar, Ph.D)





## 3. Policy Formulation (Concept, Content and Types of Policy)

### Concept

#### ● Examples:

- “It consists of a course of actions and measures deliberately taken to direct the affairs of society towards the realisation of predetermined goals or objectives” (OHCSF: 6)
- “Policy needs to be seen as a transformation tool, changing the way we think about the world and in so doing changing people’s behaviour and responses to environmental situations” (IUCN, 2002: 7).
- “A policy is a principle or rule to guide decisions and achieve national outcomes” (wikipedia)





## 3. Policy Formulation (Concept, Content and Types of Policy)

### Policy Content

According to Umar, a policy consists of the following elements:

- A purpose statement, outlining why the policy is being issued, and what its desired effect is.
- An applicability and scope statement, describing who the policy affects and which actions are impacted by the policy.
- An effective date which indicates when the policy comes into force.
- A responsibilities section, indicating which parties and organizations are responsible for carrying out individual policy statements.





## 3. Policy Formulation (Concept, Content and Types of Policy)

### Policy Content

- Policy statements indicating the specific regulations, requirements, or modifications to organizational behaviour that the policy is creating.
- ❖ Some policies may contain additional sections, including
  - Background indicating any reasons and history that led to the policy, which may be listed as motivating factors
  - Definitions, providing clear and unambiguous definitions for terms and concepts found in the policy document.





## 3. Policy Formulation (Concept, Content and Types of Policy)

### Types of Policy

- A variety of classifications
- Examples:
  - Classification by broad government objective
    - Regulatory policies, e.g. Local Content Policy
    - Redistributive policies, e.g. National Youth Policy
    - Stabilization policies, e.g. Exchange Rate Policy







## 3. Policy Formulation (Concept, Content and Types of Policy)

### Types of Policy

#### ● Examples:

##### ● Classification by sector

● Economic policy, e.g. Monetary Policy

● Social policy, e.g. Education Policy

● Regional and environmental policy, e.g. Urban Policy

● Security, Law and Order, e.g. National Defense Policy





## 3. Policy Formulation (Concept, Content and Types of Policy)

### Types of Policy

#### ● Examples:

#### ● Classification by tier of Government

- Federal policy, based on the Exclusive List of Responsibilities, e.g. exchange rate policy
- State Government policy, based on the Concurrent List of responsibilities, e.g. housing policy
- Local Government policy, based on the Fourth Schedule , e.g. agricultural policy





### 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

#### ● The policy cycle depends on the policy model adopted

##### ● Examples of policy models:

- Elite model: Policy is formulated based largely on the interests of the ruling class
- Group model: Policy is the outcome of a compromise among diverse interests of groups of people
- Incrementalism: Policy making focuses on minor changes to the status quo
- Institutional model: Policy is determined by institutions that give it legitimacy, i.e. political institutions
- Process model: Policy is the outcome of a logical sequence of steps or processes
- Rational model: Policy making focuses on the achievement of a given objective subject to a given set of constraints.





## 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

### ● The Process Model

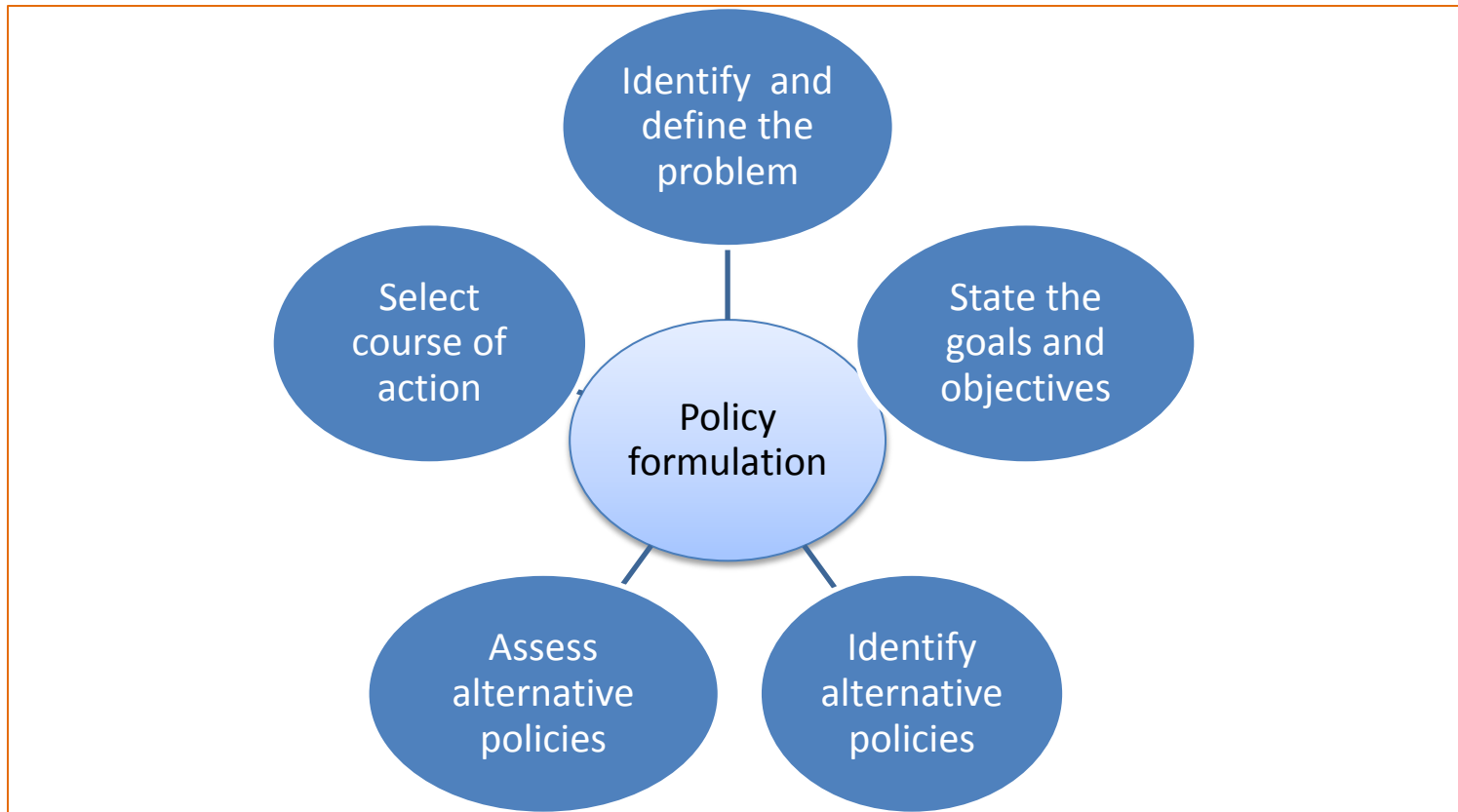
- Policy making involves a logical sequence of steps or processes
- There is no unique number of steps
- The five-step process (Nadi, 2007)
  - Identify and define the problem
  - State the goals and objectives
  - Identify alternative policies
  - Assess alternative policies
  - Select course of action





# 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

## ● The Process Model





## 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

### ● The Process Model

#### Step 1: Identify and define the problem

- Determine the scale and spread of the problem
- Develop a database on the problem
- Develop a problem statement
- Problem identification can emerge from several quarters:
  - The President and Cabinet
  - MDAs
  - Political parties
  - The public, including NGOs.
  - Professional bodies and the academia
    - Research is particularly useful in this area





## 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

### ● The Process Model

#### Step 2: State the goals and objectives

- Goals are the broad outcomes that a policy is intended to achieve
- Objectives are relatively specific, measurable, realizable and time-bound
- Setting the objectives
  - What is the status quo?
    - ❖ Desirable
    - ❖ Undesirable
  - The primary objective
    - ❖ Explanation of the status quo
    - ❖ Causes-effect relationships and the problem tree
    - ❖ Source of the problem as the policy objective
    - ❖ What are the complementary policy objectives?
- Research can help deal with these issues
  - Sometimes, it is the only way of dealing with them





## 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

### ● The Process Model

#### Step 3: Identify alternative policies

- Policy targets versus policy instruments
- The identification process
  - ❖ Professional advice
  - ❖ Public opinion
  - ❖ Lessons from other jurisdictions
  - ❖ On-the-job experience
  - ❖ Quick surveys, literature review and case studies
- Research can also be helpful for this stage







## 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

### ● The Process Model

#### Step 4: Assess alternative policies

##### ● Develop assessment criteria

- Economic criteria, e.g. economic growth and employment
- Technical criteria, e.g. feasibility and effectiveness
- Political criteria, e.g. political support and legality
- Administrative criteria, e.g. coordination and capacity
- Ecological criteria, e.g. water quality

##### ● Analytical tools, e.g. forecasting techniques, cost-benefit analysis, environmental impact assessment and risk analysis

##### ● This is perhaps the aspect of policy formulation that research is most useful





## 3. Policy Formulation (The Policy Cycle)

### ● The Process Model

#### Step 5: Selection of the preferred alternative policy

- Review of the Policy Analysis Matrix (PAM)
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative
- Review of national parameters
- Adoption of selection methods:
  - Paired comparisons, Grading method, Weighted decision criteria, etc.
- Research could help in the choice of method and its application





## 4. Policy Implementation

### Procurement and Operations

- Develop an implementation plan, particularly for major policy change
  - Build **policy constituency** through consultative forum with stakeholders
  - Determine the lead agency
  - Assign responsibilities
  - Ensure that policy reform proceeds in tandem with legislation
  - Determine the personnel and skills requirement for the tasks
  - Map out the financial implications of the policy reform
- **Research could help determine what works, and what doesn't work**





## 4. Policy Implementation

### Procurement and Operations

- Several alternative methods of implementing a policy (OHCSF)
  - Pilot Model:: New policy is first experimented for a segment of the target population
  - Phased Approach: New policy is implemented in a sequence or platform
  - Parallel Model: New system runs *pari pasu* with the existing one
  - Cutover Method: New policy overrides the old one on a particular date.
- Research could also be useful in determining which method suits a particular policy





## 4. Policy Implementation

### Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)

#### Purpose of M & E

- The purpose of M & E is to achieve the following (UNDP, 2002; World Bank):
  - Measure and assess performance of an intervention
  - Promote accountability through evidence-based reporting system
  - Improve resource allocation
  - Draw lessons from experience
  - Improve service delivery





## 4. Policy Implementation

### Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)

#### Criteria for M & E

- A typical M & E would focus on the following issues:
  - **Relevance:** Consistency with development agenda
  - **Effectiveness:** Whether intended objectives are being achieved
  - **Efficiency:** Whether there is value-for-money
  - **Impact:** Whether goals/outcomes are being achieved
  - **Sustainability:** Whether policy will support or undermine its own context.





## 4. Policy Implementation

### Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)

#### M & E Methods

- Survey Methods:
  - To collect data before and after an intervention
  - To solicit perceptions on an intervention
- Public expenditure tracking surveys: to track the flow of an intervention and determine if it actually reaches the target groups
- The logical framework approach (LogFrame): Establishes the logical link between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact
- Cost-Benefit Analysis: Computes the net benefit of an intervention
- Each of these tools has some elements of research.
- Research could also be used to identify the preferred method





## 5. Case Studies on Research-Policy Linkages

### **Research-policy links in the health sector: case study of two Caribbean Experience (Court and Young, ODI, 2003)**

This case study examines two attempts to link research to policy in the Caribbean. One is in the area of maternal health care in Jamaica; the other is in health finance reform in two eastern Caribbean countries (St Lucia and St Vincent). Comparison of these two experiences is instructive. While both research efforts enjoyed political legitimacy and were actively supported by the policy-makers, research clearly influenced policy in the former case. In the latter, relevant research results were ignored, or at least not implemented. The main conclusions from this comparative exercise were that successful bridging of the research policy divide was largely due to the active involvement of policy-makers in all stages from design through to the programme intervention and impact evaluation stages.







## 5. Case Studies on Research-Policy Linkages

### **Development of small- and medium-scale industries (SMIs) with a cluster approach Indonesia (Court and Young, ODI, 2003)**

This was a policy research project under a United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) programme to support the restructuring and competitiveness of small and medium industrial clusters in Indonesia. The main objective was to help the Indonesian government cooperate with the private sector in the formulation and organisation of a national programme to support the restructuring and competitiveness of industrial clusters, with emphasis on agro-based SMIs. To support the UNIDO programme, an overall review of SMI-based clusters in Indonesia was conducted, and then field studies (cluster diagnosis) were conducted on four clusters in four different sub-sectors in four different provinces. The programme has had an impact on existing policies, as the government has revised its industrial policies and introduced new national industrial strategies based on a cluster approach in 2000.





## 5. Case Studies on Research-Policy Linkages

### **Agricultural research and policy change in Ghana: comparing effectiveness of two research projects Ghana (Court and Young, ODI, 2003)**

Many developing countries, including Ghana, have a fairly established institutional set-up for agricultural research. However, many policy-relevant research results end up on the shelves of researchers and policy-makers without being considered for implementation. This case study discusses two research projects from Ghana undertaken by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research institutes (one dealing with the water hyacinth problem, and the second, on introducing soil and water conservation methods) but which met with different levels of success in implementing the results. Key factors affecting the varied relative success included differences in the significance of the problem; the nature of short-term versus long-term gains; social relevancy; project consultation and formulation process; networking and partnerships; level of public education and awareness about the problem; ownership of the identified problem and building of commitment; available research capacity; availability of financial resources and researchers remuneration system





## 5. Case Studies on Research-Policy Linkages

### **Inserting the dam communities into the development agenda: a case study of Shiroro Dam communities Nigeria (Court and Young, ODI, 2003)**

Nigeria relies for its power supply on two main sources: thermal and hydro sources. Hydropower is derived mainly from three dams . Kainji, Jebba and Shiroro, all in Niger State. In 1996, the Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), an NGO, organised a workshop for fishermen in the Shiroro Dam area. CAPP thereafter decided to undertake a study of the problems of the dam communities to establish a firmer ground for advocacy around these problems. The major outcome of the study is a publication entitled *Damned by the Dam: The Story of Shiroro Communities* (CAPP, 1998). CAPP and the community organisation it assisted in establishing in the area, Nychesa, used this document along with other publications by the organisation in their advocacy efforts. From 1999, the focus of the advocacy, which has now been embraced by other communities in the dam areas covering five states has expanded to include the setting up of a Hydropower Producing Areas Development Commission. This case documents the research-driven advocacy for policy reform in Nigeria.





## 6. Some Recent NPC-NISER Research Initiatives

### Informal Sector Study

- This study seeks to improve understanding of the country's informal sector, which the Nigeria Vision 20:2020 considers important for economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction.
- Study is conducted by NPC and NISER in collaboration with the CBN, NBS, SMEDAN and NASSI.
- Study is financed by NPC and UNDP
- The study is being implemented in two phases
  - Phase I: six States and the FCT (One State per geopolitical zone)
  - Phase II: The entire Federation
- Fieldwork is on-going





## 6. Some Recent NPC-NISER Research Initiatives

### Deepening of Socioeconomic Research at the State Level

- NISER, in collaboration with NPC, is developing a Technical Assistance Programme for State Governments
- The programme would involve the following:
  - A State Government and NISER will mutually agree on issues that require analytical work. This can be:
    - Demand driven
    - NISER driven
  - NISER will undertake the studies in collaboration with the State
  - NISER will also build the capacity of State officials in research methods
  - The State Government will finance the studies and capacity building programmes





## 7. Key Challenges and the Way Forward

### Contextual Issues

- Extent of commitment to development goals
- Extent of democracy and open governance
- The agenda setting process
- Level of science and technology culture and appreciation for research endeavour
- Degree of political contestation





## 7. Key Challenges and the Way Forward

### Institutional Issues in Research

- Incomplete set of research institutions, especially at the sub-national level
- Quality of research institutions
- Low level of synergy across research institutions
- Orientation of research institutions toward basic research rather than policy research
- Inadequate financing
- Inadequate understanding of the workings of Government





## 7. Key Challenges and the Way Forward

### Communication Issues

- **Extent of information asymmetry on the part of policy makers and researchers**
- **Timeliness of research reports**
- **Quality of advocacy coalitions**
- **Extent research activities are demand driven**
- **Issues of trust**







## 7. Key Challenges and the Way Forward

### Recommendations

- Establish State Research Institutes (SRI) under the guidance of the NPC
- State Planning Commission (SPC) and SRI to encourage DPRS to conduct research
- Research staff of DPRS to undertake Internship at relevant Think Tanks, including NISER
- Need for strong political support and resource allocation for research at all levels of Government, most especially at the State level
- Need to improve synergies across research institutions
- Research institutions need to pay more attention to advocacy activities





# References

Adhy Kumiawan; “Research Methodology and Project Proposal Preparation”, Gadjah Mada University

ALPAN – The African Livestock Policy analysis Network, ILRI, “Better Livestock Policies for Africa”

IUCN – The world Conservation Union (2002); “Policy Formulation and Implementation Processes in Southern Africa”, proceedings of the Regional Workshop held at Randburg Towers, Johannesburg, south Africa, 9-10 July, 2002

Joan Corkery, Anthony Land and Jean Bossuyt, “The Process of Policy Formulation: Institutional Path or Institutional Maze? European Centre for Development Policy Management, 1995

Julius Court and John Young, “Bridging Research and Policy: Insights from 50 Case Studies; ODI, London, UK, 2003

Muhammad Anwal Umar; “Policy Formulation and the Challenges of Implementation: The Case of Oil and Gas”

Nadi Fiji, “Policy formulation and Analysis”, Workshop for Staff of Regional Civil Society Organizations, 18-21 Dec, 2007, PIANGO/ADB RETA 6319

Taiwo Makinde; “Problems of Policy Implementation in Developing Nations: The Nigerian Experience”, J. of Soc. Sci. 63-68, 2007

The World Bank; Monitoring & Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches, 2004

UNDP ; handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results.2002



