

<p><b>Institution: University of Reading</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 17 Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology: Geography</b></p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The unit consists of human geographers, social anthropologists, and spatial and development economists; research focuses on international development, justice and sustainability with a particular focus on areas linked to the University's key themes of climate change, food security, poverty and health. The Unit encompasses the Human Environment Research Group (HERG), the Livelihoods Research Group (LRG), the International Centre for Housing and Urban Economics (ICHUE), and the Centre for Institutional Performance (CIP). The four groups focus on the three complementary themes of (i) <i>Geographies of Justice, Care and Responsibility</i>; (ii) <i>Development, Environment and Sustainability</i>; and (iii) <i>Geographies of Resilience and Transformation</i>. The groups are linked together through numerous collaborative research initiatives facilitated by the Walker Institute for Climate Systems Research, the Centre for Food Security and the newly established Centre for Developing Economies and Emerging Markets (DEEM).</p> <p>Our research is aimed at beneficiaries in the public, non-profit and private sectors, at international, national (UK) and local levels. <i>Internationally</i> our research engages governments, NGOs and international research organisations such as the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Labour Organisation (ILO), and UN Habitat. <i>Nationally</i>, members of our group work with the Department for International Development (DFID), the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). At the <i>local</i> level, we engage with local community groups, and municipalities, on socio-political, cultural and political economy aspects of environmental change, housing, migration, education, labour issues, agricultural systems and health in Africa, Asia and Latin America.</p> <p>Our work is designed to inform policy decisions and to make genuine, credible and long-lasting improvements to people's lives, for example through partnerships with international NGOs such as Oxfam, Save the Children, Practical Action, Farm Africa and the Prolinnova network.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The primary target groups for our research are the public, not-for profit and private sectors. Our approach has been to develop mechanisms to maximise the societal impact of our work.</p> <p><b>1) The development of policy networks</b> and engagement with the policy community. Our policy networks are pervasive throughout our 4 research groups and are sustained via new and on-going funded projects, as well as through mutually beneficial, long-standing collaborative relationships. For example, Meen regularly meets with Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for a two-way interchange with key civil servants involved in housing policy analysis, which provides input to future research programmes (e.g. Burrow's new research on mortgage debt).</p> <p>Further examples include engagement with DFID UK and in country policy networks for building climate resilience in Africa (e.g. Arnall, Boyd, Evans, Okereke, Osbahr, Dorward) facilitated by funding from the Walker Institute and Africa Climate Exchange. There are extensive policy networks in Sudan developed in partnership with the pan-African Met Centre (ACMAD), United Nations Environment Programme country office, World Meteorological Organisation and DFID. Okereke's work with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report brings with it critical engagement with a high-level policy arena at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.</p> <p>Ainslie has active connections with the scenario development work undertaken by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security. Osbahr and Dorward have supported capacity building and the delivery of climate information to farmers and products for policy makers in Africa, including frameworks to support climate smart agriculture in practice in East Africa. Dorward's research has further delivered practical tools for communicating climate risk in Zimbabwe,</p>

Tanzania and Lesotho in collaboration with Government departments, and International agencies such as ICRISAT, and outputs directly influencing practice and behaviour by international policy makers and donors. In the UK, Geoghegan is involved in the UK Environmental Observation Framework panel for citizen science, specifically offering a social science perspective.

Networking activities by our economists operate at national and regional level and include: i) Kambhampati's engagement as an academic advisor for the Government Economic Service, ii) a collaboration with Slough Borough Council to address social cohesion amongst migrant communities with support from the European Integration Fund, iii) our contribution to the Local Economic Assessment for the Reading Diamond area, iv) our work with the Reading Climate Change Partnership and Reading Borough Council which has been instrumental in establishing incentives to reduce carbon footprints among local communities.

**2) Engaging with practice communities** This takes three forms; **first**, through embedding external policy staff within the Schools, **second**, public engagement and **third** dissemination.

**i) Embedding external policy staff within the Schools.** An innovation has been the appointment of senior officials as Visiting Professors. Andrew Ross, formerly Deputy Head of the Government Economic Service, was appointed in 2012 and Neil Jackson (Chief Statistician at DfID) in 2013. The latter is particularly important in helping to shape our work programme in development and to ensure that our research priorities address issues of real concern to DFID. This agenda is further promoted by a full Professor of Public Policy, Razzu, who was until October 2012 a senior official in the Government Economic Service, working in the area of poverty, inequality and development, both in the UK and international contexts. The real and perceived gap between the intellectual outputs and focus of universities and the rapidly evolving needs of government is widely acknowledged and Professor Razzu's remit includes building stronger relationships between the University and government in order to address this. We host a regular series of *Policy in Practice* seminars in the Economics Department in which senior public servants address staff and students in the School. In 2012/13 four former Permanent Secretaries and a former Minister have given presentations to staff and PhD students.

**ii) Public Engagement.** Team members have engaged extensively with members of the public, and with public, private and third sector agencies at the international level. For example, the International Symposium on Food Security and Poverty Alleviation under Changing Environmental Conditions, Khartoum, Sudan (December 2011) was organised by Evans and colleagues (see Environment Statement for details). Evidence of our commitment to public engagement is our work with local communities in Africa, which shows that local residents want and are capable of handling information about climate, health or food security and seek a stronger voice in urban planning and development decisions. Through public engagement we strive to assist communities to have more input to government and business plans for development. For example, in a project in Maputo local people have started a new community recycling centre, and have helped clean and maintain drainage channels to prevent potential flooding problems. Our public engagement is facilitated by methods such as stakeholder workshops, embedding research capacity building (e.g. training of trainers), and engaging with different forms of media; such work is amply illustrated by Evans' engagement with professionals working with families affected by HIV (see Case Study 2).

**iii) Dissemination.** Results from our policy work are published in accessible forms in government and University of Reading/Walker Institute reports and are disseminated to the public through seminars, the media, School websites and social media (supported by a dedicated Communications Officer). Our unit participates in the annual University series of public lectures; Della Giusta spoke on *Happiness Economics* (April 2012) and her work in this area was also featured in RCUK's publication *Big Ideas for the Future*. Seminar series, such as that of ICHUE, act as a forum for the dissemination of research results to public and private sectors. For example, we have hosted workshops on Housing and Migration (February 2008), Sub-national Housing Models and their use in Policy (March 2010) and Housing and the Economy: The Crisis and Beyond (September 2013). The University's Walker Institute for Climate System Research is

## Impact template (REF3a)

a crucial conduit to the public, providing opportunities to highlight our work in their annual report and social media.

### c. Strategy and plans

Impact is integral to our research: the research we do has clear societal relevance and we will continue to develop and promote this strategy of encouragement of impact-relevant research at international, national and local levels. This will involve **further nurturing of relationships with public, non-profit and private sectors**, through knowledge exchange opportunities, taking up fellowships in public policy institutions, and building on our diverse funding portfolio. We will include appointments of additional Visiting Professors to provide policy direction and expanding the number of invited senior policy makers presenting seminars at UoR. More broadly, our strategy will be to enhance impact by encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations in the University's strategic areas in the post-REF period. Importantly, we wish to both increase the size of our research groups and strengthen/deepen their interactions with each other and with external partners.

An expanding area will be in international development. Here a priority will be to **develop the next generation** of postgraduate students to engage with participatory research and impact approaches. We will **build on existing interdisciplinary research programmes across Schools**, as well as consolidating the world-class development research conducted at Reading. As a first step, we will move ahead with plans to **establish an International Development Portal (IDP)**, a new initiative which will serve as a platform to further integrate international development work between our 4 research groups and the Henley Business School. Internationally, we expect to **expand research links and institutional partnerships with Universities in Africa, India and Latin America**. Public policy impact will be a key element in each of these developments. Research into Housing has long been a strength in Economics (see Case Study 1) and we will expand links with the School of Real Estate and Planning (REP), which also has a strong tradition of housing research. A joint research seminar programme has already been set up and collaborative research grant applications, with a high impact focus, are beginning to be developed.

A priority for senior researchers is to **improve 'the impact training' of ECRs**, in order to support their engagement with policy arenas and enhance opportunities for relationship building with policy advisors and external practitioners.

### d. Relationship to case studies

The three case studies exemplify our approach to impact and illustrate the Team's close engagement with policy-relevant research. **Case Study 1 (Meen)**, developed important analytical tools used by the Department of Communities and Local Government and related organisations for the analysis of housing policy. A Framework Agreement was awarded because of the track record of the team in the field and the recognition by DCLG that it could deliver not only high-quality technical research, but also research that was geared directly towards the government's requirements, generally presented in non-technical terms. The experience of the programme, over 5 years, also influenced the subsequent research agenda of ICHUE. **Evans's research (Case Study 2)** has raised awareness of a group that is often overlooked in policy and practice: young carers and families affected by HIV. It has revealed the factors that influence involvement and outcomes in young caregiving and identified the support needs of young people and those for whom they care. The research has led to newly funded support services in East Africa and the UK, as well as international and national practice guidelines and opportunities for capacity-building among professionals. **Research by Dorward and Osbahr (Case Study 3)** has supported the development of smallholder agriculture, particularly focusing on providing climate and weather information. The research has had impact on the policies and activities of organisations responsible for the design and delivery of climate information and services in over 10 countries in Africa and South Asia and benefitted thousands of farmers.