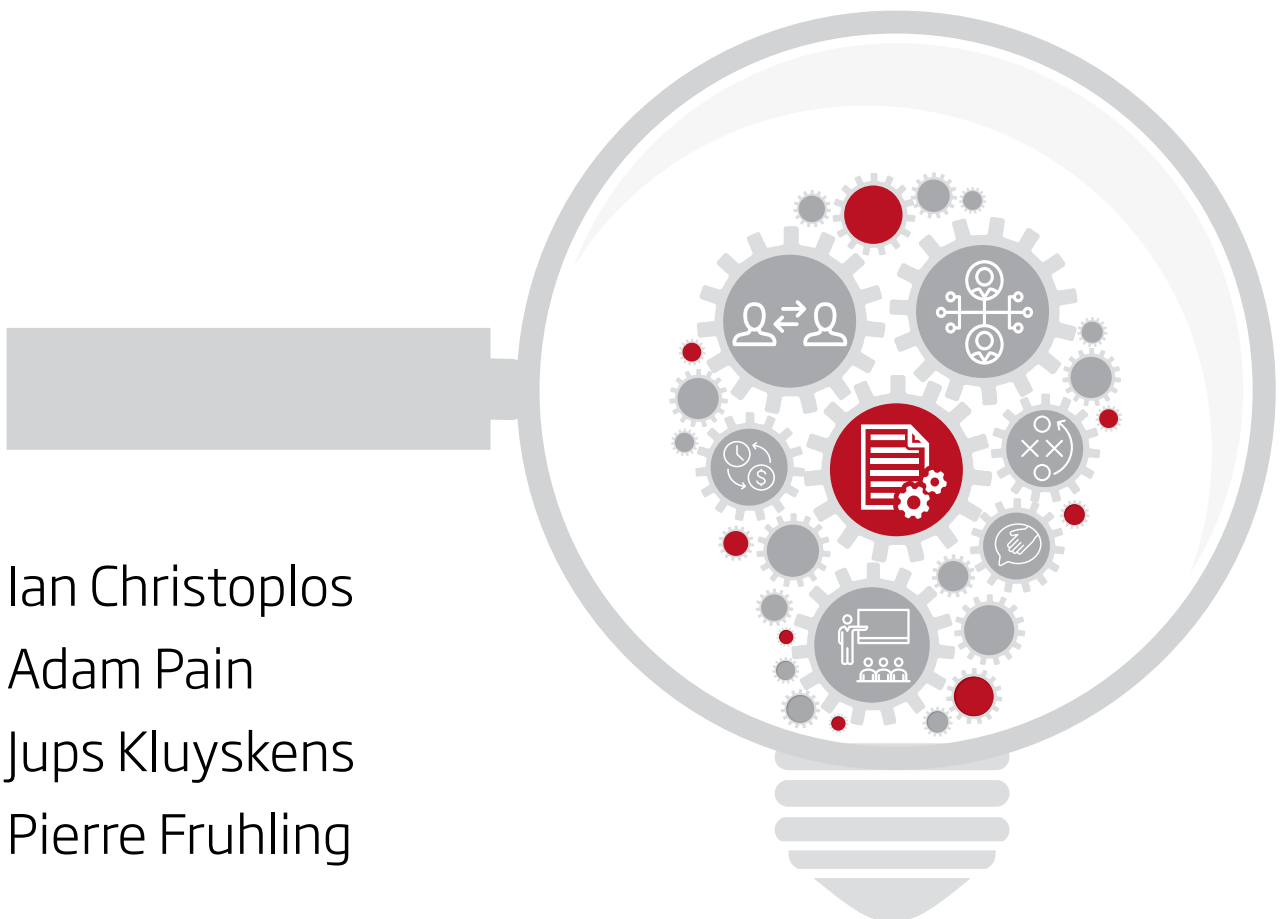


FINAL REPORT, April 18, 2019

External Evaluation of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) Phase Two, 2014-2019



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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the overall findings, conclusions and recommendations from the external evaluation of Phase Two (2014-2019) of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI). Conclusions related to effectiveness, outcomes and impact are presented, as well as lessons to be learned from the TTI experience.

The Think Tank Initiative (TTI) was a remarkably ambitious, large and long-term effort with the purpose of supporting selected think tanks. It ran over a period of ten years (2008-2019) and provided support for 43 think tanks in 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with a total budget of well over CAD 200 million. The overall goal was to strengthen independent policy research institutions in developing countries “to ensure that research results inform and influence national and regional policy debates”. The main part of the support provided consisted of core, non-earmarked funding. This modality was then combined with capacity development, monitoring and advisory support from TTI staff located in the different regions and from external experts, focusing on three broad areas: research methods and skills, policy engagement and communications and organizational effectiveness.

TTI support modalities and their different contributions

The greatest effects from the overall TTI intervention came from the core grant, for its instrumental value, its flexibility and how it created an enabling space to put strategies into action. Grantees have used their core grants in different ways in response to their strategic interests and there is little evidence to suggest that it has created a culture of dependence on core funding.

The trajectories of change that each of the TTI grantees has followed over the past decade vary considerably but at the aggregate level four categories or typologies can be discerned. The kind of change experienced by the grantees ranged from transformational progress at one end of the spectrum to survival amid turbulent conditions at the other. However, most grantees were found in the intermediate categories of accelerated change and consolidation.

- For grantees that went through *transformational change*, core funding gave them an opportunity to make a major leap in establishing a critical mass of human resources and in so doing expand the quality, quantity and range of their research.
- For grantees that experienced a period of *accelerated growth with a significant change*, core funding enabled them to develop existing research and focus more on better communications and policy engagement.

- For grantees that could be regarded as having *consolidated their position*, core funding enabled them to reinforce their financial resilience while undertaking long needed investments in basic organizational and physical infrastructure.
- For grantees for which TTI support helped them ‘keep afloat’ or to *survive and persevere*, core funding enabled them to maintain at least a minimum level of staffing, make critical investments in organizational systems and infrastructure, and maintain a sufficient level of quality and quantity of research to be seen as active and credible actors in the policy sphere.

Apart from core funding, TTI’s greatest contributions relate to the accompaniment role provided by the Regional Program Officers (RPOs). The stimulation of demand and subsequent tailoring of capacity development interventions and efforts to ensure synergies and coherence across the different support modalities depended on this guidance. The continued accompaniment role of a trusted and capable external resource person has provided some of the greatest dividends to strengthening think tanks.

Other supplementary capacity development interventions have yielded mixed results. Some grantees report significant benefits, but for many these interventions have not been seen as an important input. Despite concerted efforts to respond to grantee demands and needs, it is difficult to discern clear outcomes. It is questionable whether a global initiative with an extremely heterogeneous range of grantees, such as TTI, can be sufficiently tailored to so diverse needs.

Sustainability

Progress towards sustainability presents a mixed picture. Most grantees have a somewhat more stable situation today than before receiving TTI support. However, only a few have achieved major progress on resource mobilization. Some are already struggling to deal with the end of TTI funding, falling back to past reliance on more consultancy work and/or a shrinking number permanent senior staff. Sustainability remains strongest among the grantees that already had a fair degree of financial stability even before TTI, often due to long established endowments.

The lynchpin of organizational sustainability has been the ability of grantees to build (and retain) a core of high quality staff who can deliver high quality research outputs and maintain internal mechanisms within the organization for research quality. Where funding volatility is threatening this capacity, there is cause for concern. Implicit assumptions or hopes that long periods of core funding could prevent future funding crises does not hold.

Most grantees emphasized that TTI contributed to strengthening an institutional culture for producing quality research and policy engagement, a culture that is expected to live on after TTI. They judge that these reinforced processes and systems are unlikely to disappear, even if resources decline and their organizations are forced to downsize. However, if key leaders and senior researchers cannot be retained on long-term contracts, and young researchers lose the space they have enjoyed to set their own research agendas, the underpinnings of this culture of engaging with policy makers based on strong evidence may be endangered.

Outcomes in enhancing organizational effectiveness

Organizational strengthening within TTI has significantly transcended technical and administrative aspects. Access to a large, stable grant has generated conditions that allow grantees to act more strategically and intentionally in strengthening research quality to achieve policy influence. Context counts, and so does the capacity to strategize in navigating that context. TTI support (notably core support) was particularly effective in encouraging critical reflection and stakeholder consultation as a basis for continuous strategizing.

Effective organizations, high quality research and policy influence are all fundamentally dependent on attracting and retaining high quality researchers, and continuously strengthening staff skills. An important element of ensuring that grantees remain competitive in this regard has been investing in creating attractive working conditions, and TTI core support has had a major impact in this regard. For grantees that went through transformational change or experienced a period of accelerated growth with a significant change, TTI resources helped significantly to 'put the grantee on the map' in terms of having a critical mass of researcher staff and in some cases even being more visible on the map due to better physical infrastructure. For grantees for which TTI support was of great importance for 'keeping them afloat' - or to survive and persevere in the face of adverse conditions TTI often helped to reach at least a minimal level of staffing and attractive working conditions.

Outcomes in enhancing research methods and skills

For policy think tanks, research quality is multi-dimensional, requiring both scientific merit as well as properties of relevance and perceived independence. The TTI grantees have followed diverse paths to achieve this. But the relationship between research quality and policy influence is complex. Influence depends on their standards of credible evidence and solid argument, together with the relationships that can be built with policy actors. TTI has contributed to grantees' capacities to produce credible analyses and to develop relationships with other research institutions and with policy actors, further underpinning their credibility. This reflects the grantees' awareness of the need to tailor their quality focus to those areas that are expected to enhance their influence on policy.

Through its emphasis on research quality, TTI has clearly raised attention to its significance. For many grantees it has encouraged a move towards more systematic and formal procedures to ensure good research quality. Given the different dimensions of research quality and the diffuse processes of policy engagement and influencing, tracing the effects of the TTI contribution through to outcomes is difficult. Among all of the grantees who have achieved transformational or accelerated change, research quality is not in question. They can often be seen as subject leaders or influencers in the areas in which they work. That cannot always be said of grantees who have consolidated or simply survived, although they generally do meet appropriate quality standards. Improving research quality is a difficult and long-term process.

Grantees have a range of approaches to assure the quality of their research. Formal external peer review is common, but is by no means the same cornerstone of quality assurance as it is with academic institutions. Informal and often internal peer discussions, staff seminars and coaching of junior researchers by senior colleagues are generally more important, as is validation with stakeholders from the policy community. This illustrates how research quality is specific to purpose.

At the end of TTI the main overall research quality outcomes were a combination of stronger researchers being in place and greater commitments to ensuring research quality as part of a culture that encourages and rewards research quality. However, there is a risk with a few grantees that they may lose research coordinators and senior researchers who currently ensure that procedures are followed and who can provide quality peer review and coaching of junior staff

Outcomes in communications and grantee positioning for policy engagement

The position of a given think tank in the 'policy ecosystem' determines what research qualities are likely to generate influence. This positioning demands a high degree of nimbleness given the instability of institutional and political landscapes. Unpredictability about what is recognized as 'truth' and 'evidence' frames their positioning. The grantees have shown a diverse and impressive array of positioning tactics and strategies to keep the policy dialogue going amid often adverse and shifting conditions, with a strong emphasis on maintaining their independence. Relevance is a key value for the grantees and is seen as a central aspect of the bridge between efforts to pursue research quality and policy influence. But relevance is a contingent quality and is influenced by shifting politics and interests. Grantees have to work continuously to maintain relevance through their networks and relationships.

TTI contributions to policy influence have often been indirect but significant. Not least by emphasizing the need for systematic and strategic thinking around policy engagement, TTI has encouraged greater intentionality and overt reflection on policy influencing processes. The specific support that TTI has provided to developing communication capacities has undoubtedly enhanced policy engagement, widened the audience with which the grantees engage and increased their ability to convene key policy discussions. In terms of outcomes, for those grantees that have gone through transformational change or accelerated growth, their ability to engage in specific policy arenas and widen their reach has undoubtedly been a result of a more deliberate approach to policy influencing. For those who have consolidated their position or have simply survived there may not be so obvious a shift. Policy engagement has almost universally been strengthened, but outcomes are less evident.

In the field of communications almost all grantees show clearly positive results. Most grantees have improved their output of 'traditional' communication products - media releases, publications, websites and participation on social media. Many have also evolved beyond past approaches that saw these outputs as a support function or ends in themselves, and now perceive communications as a core dimension of strategic importance in the effort to use research and evidence to

achieve policy influence. While the end of TTI is likely to imply fewer resources for communication activities, most grantees state that the skills and the new approach acquired will continue to be a central priority for their organizations.

Overarching lessons

The complex story in this evaluation report reflects a decade-long learning experience. The length of this relationship and the space for grantees to make their own decisions have been foundational. During this period grantees have in many cases transformed their organizations. At the end of the decade of TTI support, the large majority are stronger and most have been able to use these strengths to play a more central role in the policy discourse.

A first overarching lesson from TTI is that, for a transformational change to occur, ten years has proven to be an appropriate timeframe. The values of core funding have been about being able to think (and act) in an intentional manner based on the grantees' own strategies. For those that, at the outset, did not have a clear role in the 'policy ecosystem', or lacked staff capacities to assume those roles, a ten-year timeframe was essential. For those that already had a strong position, such a long timeframe was useful but probably not essential. For those that have only just managed to survive, it has taken a decade to clearly determine whether they would transform or merely survive. Even if in hindsight a long-term grant failed to 'make a difference', this could not have been accurately predicted at the outset. Risks, such as investments in weak think tanks, require a long-term perspective and a willingness to accept that some will not prove to be sustainable or successful.

Flexibility and grantee discretion have been central to achievement of outcomes since the choice of what is the most appropriate public policy to adopt on a specific issue at a given time and context is never predictable or straightforward, even under the best of circumstances. There are usually many uncertainties regarding the potential effects of specific policies. Often there is no consensus among civil society, experts and decision makers as to how to prioritize competing or conflicting policy goals. For these reasons, what constitutes 'good' evidence underpinning a policy choice and the interpretation of what that evidence means is always up for debate. While some may wish to conceive of think tanks almost as impartial, rational, evidence producing 'machines' that generate the truth, this is not what they actually do. TTI has contributed to enhanced conditions for grantees to take part in salient policy debates, particularly as they are more respected as being relevant, engaged actors with credible, experienced and well-educated researchers.

Supporting think tanks in complex and volatile environments

Implicit in the policy-influencing model of TTI is something of a linear concept that moves from good researchers working in an enabling environment, to good research products, to policy influence and impact. Moreover, there are also inherent assumptions about the demand for evidence,

about the rationalities of bureaucracies in responding to ‘good evidence’, and about what it means to engage in different but interlinked state, private sector and civic spaces. The efforts of the TTI grantees reflect a recognition of how policy influencing processes are based on relationships and networks. That is why ‘*Who you are*’ and ‘*Where you stand*’ in the policy debate can override ‘*What you say*’ – regardless of the quality of the research products. Furthermore, the relevance of these relationships and positioning for influence waxes and wanes as governments change.

Manoeuvring within this landscape requires iterative engagement and relationship-building. Strategic practices of policy engagement range from direct dialogue with senior politicians ‘under the radar’ of the public debate, to public data activism and partnerships with advocacy organizations, to formal evidence-informed debate. All these modes substantively address the ‘political’, recognize the need for a short-term tactical and long-term strategic game, and recognize the inherently conflictual nature of politics in policy debates. In sum, a holistic vision of how policy influencing works in different political communities is needed in order to understand what a program like TTI could and should do.

What lessons does this carry forward for how best to support the sustainability and influence of think tanks in the future beyond TTI?

Firstly, core funding devoted to organizational strengthening and giving think tanks the flexibility to be both tactical in the short-term and strategic in the long-term is the best investment. The think tanks themselves know how to manage their own tactics and strategies and they should be empowered to act accordingly. They need a modicum of financial sustainability to apply their contextual knowledge and be skilful in policy engagement.

Secondly, TTI’s other forms of support have been most effective when built around ongoing advice and dialogue. Our analysis clearly shows the importance of bilateral dialogues between the grantees and the RPOs for bringing the TTI instruments together. By contrast, there is evidence which questions the overall utility of much of the specific capacity development initiatives for such a diverse cohort and range of contexts. Networking has shown to be highly valued by many grantees, but this has primarily been successful when the grantees have found their own partners, rather than necessarily via participation in TTI-led efforts.

Thirdly, investing in think tanks will always be risky due to the volatile nature of the ecosystems in which they operate. The TTI experience shows that enabling think tanks to foster awareness and respect for research can significantly improve the likelihood of making policy dialogues more transparent and evidence-based. But the risks involved are ultimately about becoming more influential in ongoing processes within these largely national ecosystems. It is not a matter of simply being able to register policy influence ‘wins’.

As TTI comes to an end, for a significant proportion of the grantees there is uncertainty about whether and how they are going to be able to maintain and build upon the advances achieved with TTI support. In this context it must be recognized that no form of assistance, with the possible

exception of investments in sizeable endowments, can vaccinate against threats to financial sustainability and related challenges to staff retention in competitive environments. If senior researchers can be retained and key research coordination, financial management and support to junior researchers are maintained, prospects are good. If not, research quality, credibility and also sustainability may be increasingly threatened.

Summary of recommendations

- Enhancing the effectiveness of think tanks should be supported through core funding. If this is not possible, alternative approaches should be designed that explicitly focus on predictably supporting think tanks to make their own decisions about how to position themselves in the policy debate and for investing in their own human resources over time.
- Capacity development should not be pursued through one-size-fits-all or piecemeal efforts.
- Investments in policy influence should be about positioning. Communication is a major aspect of this. Efforts that focus on achieving specific 'policy wins' (rather than longer term and flexible capacities to engage) ignore the ongoing role that think tanks play in their respective ecosystems.
- Contextually appropriate support for think tanks requires a presence and an ongoing dialogue. Funders should ensure that they have means to provide this.
- Think tanks need to have the confidence (and courage) to tell funders what they really need. TTI has provided an evidence base that they can now use to make these arguments. The TTI legacy relies on the think tanks themselves leveraging this experience to demand changes and not falling back into acceptance of 'business as usual'.
- This will require changing the narrative so as to transcend expectations that a project can produce a specific policy change, to instead emphasize the capacities that need to be fostered to underpin their credibility and relevance within ongoing policy dialogues.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ARSD	Annual Review of Social Development
ATR	Annual Technical Reports
CAD	Canadian dollar
CADEP	Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya
CBGA	Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability
C&E	Strategy for Program Communications and Engagement
CPR	Centre for Policy Research
CRES	Consortium pour la Recherche Économique et Sociale
CSEA	Centre for the Studies of the Economies of Africa
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EDRI	Ethiopian Development Research Institute
FC	Full cohort
FUSADES	Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de El Salvador
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
Grupo FARO	Fundación para el Avance de las Reformas y las Oportunidades
HR	Human resources
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IEA Ghana	Institute of Economic Affairs
ILAIPP	Latin American Initiative for Public Policy Research
IPAR Rwanda	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
IPS	Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MISR	Makerere Institute of Social Research
NAEB	National Agricultural Export Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OO	Outside Observer
PCS	Policy Community Survey
QA	Quality assurance
RPO	Regional Program Officer
RTI	Right to Information
SC	Sample cohort
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
Sol	Story of influence
SPDC	Social Policy and Development Centre
ToR	Terms of Reference
TTI	Think Tank Initiative
TTIX	TTI Exchange
WATTNET	West African Think Tank Network



**PART ONE:
POINTS OF DEPARTURE**

1. Introduction

This report presents the overall findings, conclusions and recommendations from the external evaluation of Phase Two (2014-2019) of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI).

The report is structured to provide an overview of higher-level findings related to the thematic issues of (i) effectiveness; (ii) outcomes and impact, and; (iii) lessons to be learned from the TTI experience. *Chapter One* introduces the context and the evaluation objectives; *Chapter Two* provides a comprehensive and detailed assessment of TTI's modalities and contributions to capacity development and sustainability; *Chapter Three* analyzes TTI efforts and outcomes in enhancing grantees' research quality; *Chapter Four* looks at how the grantees are positioning themselves for greater policy engagement; while *Chapters Five, Six and Seven* present conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

a. What was the Think Tank Initiative?

The Think Tank Initiative (TTI) was a remarkably ambitious, large and long-term effort managed by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and funded by six donors,¹ with the purpose of supporting selected think tanks. It ran over a period of ten years (2008-2019) and provided support for 43 think tanks in 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America,² with a total budget of well over CAD 200 million.³ Total financial support to each grantee varied from CAD 500,000 to almost CAD 2,500,000.⁴ The overall goal was to strengthen independent policy research institutions in developing countries "to ensure that research results inform and influence national and regional policy debates".⁵

The think tanks selected by the program (in this Report hereafter called *the grantees*) were perceived as drivers of change, "working for better policies in their countries, experimenting with new approaches to help solve the most challenging problems of their fellow citizens".⁶

The main part of the support provided consisted of core, non-earmarked funding. This modality was then combined with supplementary capacity development, monitoring and advisory support from TTI staff located in the different regions and from external experts, focusing on three broad areas (often referred to as TTI's 'three pillars'):

- research methods and skills
- policy engagement and communications
- organizational effectiveness

The program was divided into two phases, Phase One from 2008 to 2014 and Phase Two from 2014 to 2019. The design of Phase Two was informed by the lessons from the evaluation of Phase One,⁷ which had found that TTI's support to the grantees had mainly resulted in progress

towards establishing or consolidating a critical mass of key staff. This had contributed to achieving well-functioning organizations, building capacities to produce quality research and fostering the self-confidence from a position of credibility to engage proactively with the policy community.

The transition from Phase One to Phase Two required grantees to reapply for continued funding. In applying for Phase Two they had to specify and make explicit their goals for the coming five years. Although most Phase One grantees were selected for continued support, within TTI this was seen to be a transition that enabled the program to significantly refine and tailor support to grantees in a stronger and more intentional manner. Thus Phase Two of TTI, which is the object of the present evaluation, was justified by the following overarching assumption:

“Among the key lessons learned from international development experience to date, one in particular stands out – that public policies work best when they are designed and implemented by local actors. Without locally generated data and analysis, well-intentioned programs often do not respond to realities on the ground. Furthermore, without experts in place on the ground to monitor implementation, the most thoughtfully designed projects may lose momentum or even collapse over the longer term. Although donors, both international and domestic, recognize increasingly that local ownership is critical to successful development interventions, they often fail to invest in those national organizations that can do the ongoing research and analysis needed by policymakers and activists to effect societal improvements over time.”⁸

Taking the findings of the Phase One evaluation into account, the results framework for Phase Two of TTI was revised at the start of the evaluation. The long-term goals to be achieved towards the end of this second phase can be summarized as:⁹

- Think tanks see the program as credible, successful and transparent.
- Researchers produce relevant, high-quality, objective research.
- TTI-supported think tanks are recognized as credible.
- Participating think tanks are effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable.
- Think tanks are able to assess and improve their performance, and are financially viable.
- Researchers understand the policy context within their field and are linking with policy-makers to influence the agenda or stimulate policy debates.
- Research is used in policy debates and policy development.
- Other think tanks adopt lessons emerging from the program.

b. Evaluation objectives

The purpose of this evaluation has been to “investigate the relationship between provision of TTI support and strengthening of think tanks, as well as the relationship between strong think tanks and changes in social and economic policy.” In addition, the evaluation was also expected to offer advice and suggest course corrections to the TTI management team.

Based on discussions with the TTI Executive Committee during the Inception Phase, two sets of questions were agreed on for the evaluation. The first set of questions focused on **effectiveness**:

Q.1: In what ways does TTI support lead or fail to lead, to stronger and more sustainable think tanks? How has this been achieved? Where evidence exists that TTI support has failed to contribute to the strengthening and improved sustainability of think tanks, what are the reasons?

The second set of questions focused on **outcomes and impact**.

Q.2: To what extent do stronger and more sustainable think tanks lead to changes in policy and practice? How has this been achieved? If evidence does not exist that strong, sustainable think tanks lead to changes in policy and practice, what are the reasons?

In addition, issues related to lessons and learning were grouped around a third evaluation question to provide an overall perspective on what the TTI experience reveals regarding effective support to think tanks.¹⁰

Q.3: What lessons can be drawn from the TTI experience regarding effective support to think tanks?

c. Stages of the evaluation

Three rounds of interviews were carried out over a three-year period, primarily with a sample of grantees and to a lesser extent with the full cohort. Interviews were also held with the Regional Program Officers (RPOs) and with outside stakeholders and observers. In addition, the Evaluation Team reviewed a wide range of TTI's own monitoring data, reporting from the grantees and other secondary sources.¹¹ The methods, coverage and objectives were subject to some variation across the three rounds, as outlined in the next section (and more fully described in Annex 1).

The evaluation began¹² with an inception period which started with the participation by the Evaluation Team in the meeting of all major stakeholders at the TTI Exchange (TTIX) on the theme of *Research Quality Approaches, Outreach and Impact* held in Istanbul in 2015. This allowed the Evaluation Team to appreciate the diverse linkages among the three program pillars. Research quality relies on strong organizations, and it was clear that the grantees were investing in enhancing different 'qualities' according to their various pathways towards policy influence. Consequently, the Inception Report¹³ argued that TTI's ultimate impact, and legacy, would be determined by the grantees' abilities to sustain and build upon the critical mass of key staff and organizational changes that had been developed in Phase One. It was assumed that this would be achieved by grantees through the eight processes defined in the box below.

Box 1: Eight key processes of grantee development

- Developing capacity and 'space' for thinking strategically
- Strengthening leadership and governance
- Supporting various technical aspects of capacity development
- Improving their physical and organizational working conditions
- Increasing the number of well qualified staff
- Developing greater capacities and commitments to engage with the policy community
- Moving towards 'business models' that could sustain these processes
- Creating networks of think tanks to work more synergistically

In the first stage of data collection¹⁴ the Team made visits to 13 sample grantees¹⁵ and extensively reviewed the existing documentation. A key finding was that the existing TTI monitoring data was insufficient to provide a basis for establishing full quantitative baseline indicators against which to assess change over the Evaluation period. It was therefore decided that the evaluation would focus primarily on qualitative baseline evidence from the sample grantees, supplemented with brief interviews with the full group of grantees on emerging themes.

A second stage of data collection¹⁶ was dedicated to monitoring against the initial baseline indicators. This stage of data collection was adjusted to give greater weight to growing concerns within TTI about grantee sustainability, given the approaching end of the program.

The final stage of the evaluation (July to October, 2018) was undertaken as TTI had begun to phase out. At this point the TTI Executive Committee showed a growing interest in assessments of the program's effects on research quality. Accordingly, attention and evaluation resources were shifted to focus more on this aspect. At the same time the Evaluation Team maintained its emphasis on understanding the specific policy environments in the grantee regions and countries, and how research quality affects the entry points for policy influence in each context. In the last stage of the evaluation the team conducted more than 120 interviews - 71 interviews with sample cohort staff, 37 interviews with outside observers, 5 interviews with other individuals connected with IDRC or TTI and extended interviews with all 9 (present and former) RPOs.

As part of the final stage of the evaluation the emphasis of the reporting also shifted to areas of higher level learning. The Evaluation Team had extensive discussions with the TTI leadership and the Executive Committee which led to agreements on applying a revised evaluation matrix, which is presented in Annex 2. Data sources for the final report have continued to emphasize the sample cohort, most notably case studies of research initiatives (see Annex 4). This data was triangulated with extensive RPO interviews about the full cohort of grantees, analysis of grantee Annual Technical Reports and RPO monitoring reports, a variety of reports on specific initiatives, IDRC controller assessments, and interviews with outside observers. The Evaluation Team attended the TTI 2018 in Bangkok, which provided an opportunity to verify emerging findings at the end of the program.

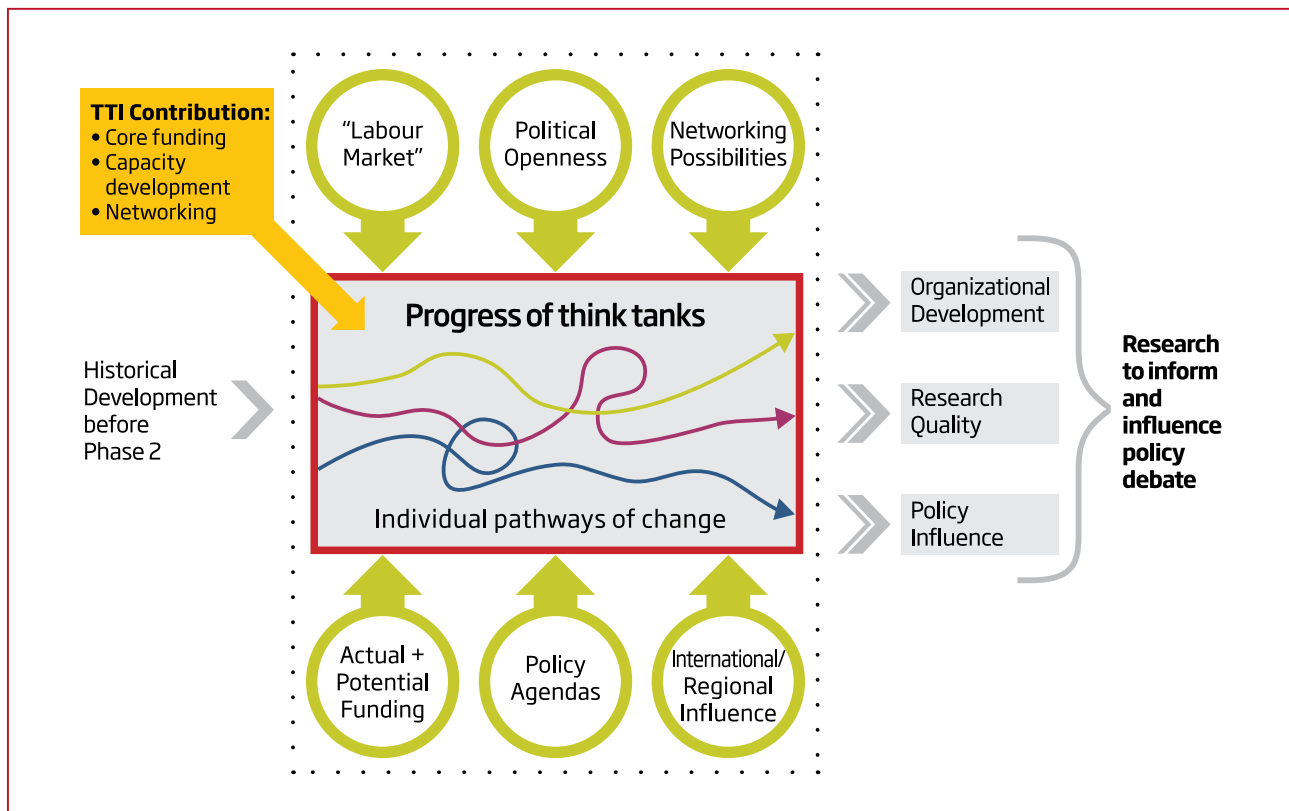
Throughout this report the relevant baseline, interim and final evaluation findings are briefly summarized as they relate to the overall analysis.

d. Methods

The following is a brief summary of the methods applied in the evaluation. A full description of the methods can be found in Annex 1.

This realtime evaluation has followed a theory-based design, assessing program performance against what the Evaluation Team judged to be the implicit TTI theory of change (see Figure 1) and its revised results framework.¹⁷ The methodological approach – one of “realist evaluation” focused on “contribution”¹⁸ – has helped the evaluators get to grips with a non-directive program working with a complex theory of change in diverse contexts. It has allowed investigation of how the grantees juggle organizational development, enhancement of research quality and policy engagement as part of their own capacity development processes, while at the same time addressing their specific risks and opportunities.

Figure 1: Contribution analysis framework



The evaluation has worked in detail with the sample cohort of grantees and more lightly with the full cohort. For practical reasons a sample of approximately 12 grantees was foreseen from the outset and 13 were finally selected against criteria specified by the Evaluation Team. The challenge was to establish the appropriate balance between coverage of the overall program and the full cohort of grantees on the one hand, and the more in-depth analysis of a more restricted ‘representative sample’ of some 30% of the total of 43 grantees on the other (the full selection criteria is described in Annex 1). The coverage of the overall cohort needed to be as comprehensive as possible, with the sample studies going more deeply into a range of contextual explanations, hopefully “ground-truthing” findings from the overall monitoring base.

Box 2: Grantees selected to constitute the sample cohort for the evaluation

AFRICA:

Centre for the Studies of the Economies of Africa (CSEA, Nigeria)
Consortium pour la Recherche Économique et Sociale (CRES, Senegal)
Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI, Ethiopia)
Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA Ghana)
Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR Rwanda)
Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR, Uganda)

LATIN AMERICA:

Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya (CADEP, Paraguay)
Fundación para el Avance de las Reformas y las Oportunidades (Grupo FARO, Ecuador)
Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de El Salvador (FUSADES, El Salvador)

SOUTH ASIA:

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA, India)
Centre for Policy Research (CPR, India)
Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS, Sri Lanka)
Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC, Pakistan)

The 13 sample institutions listed above were taken through three rounds of interviews exploring the specific histories and contexts of each grantee, assessing their overall trajectories of change and deducing some of the underlying factors -TTI-related as well as others- that might account for these changes. Within each of the sample grantees, specific case studies of research and communication activities that have been directly supported by TTI in one way or another were purposely selected to explore TTI influence in relation to research quality, organizational change and policy engagement. These case studies of specific activities are included in Annex 4. In addition, the Directors of each of the 43 grantees were interviewed in round 2 of the evaluation, and this full cohort was also extensively reviewed with the RPOs in rounds 2 and 3 of the evaluation. Finally, a limited number of outside observers were interviewed in conjunction with the sample grantee visits. These interviews revealed a variety of perspectives on the positioning of the sample grantees and highlighted how grantees were responding to what were often very challenging environments.

The evaluation has also drawn on a range of internal TTI documentation and commissioned studies. The internal documentation included the TTI monitoring data noted above which largely focuses on activities, resources and outputs as self-reported by the grantees. Also reviewed were the grantee application forms for Phase Two and external assessments of these and three rounds of the Annual Technical Reports (ATRs) drafted by the grantees and the monitoring reports from the RPOs during Phase Two. It was noted that these varied both in detail, quality and focus and in the final round of the evaluation in some cases more recent monitoring reports were not always available. In addition, reports on various assessments of TTI initiatives (e.g. *The Young Leaders Fellowship Programme*, The mid-term report on *Capacity Development for South Asia*, etc.) were reviewed.

In addition to the internal documentation, TTI has commissioned various studies including that on *Understanding Think Tank-University Relationships in the Global South*¹⁹ with country case studies in India and Bangladesh, and the *Policy Community Survey (PCS)* which has been undertaken over three rounds since the beginning of the program. This effort was aimed to provide a better understanding of policy communities in specific countries and provide strategic direction to grantees on how they can best contribute to the quality of policy making in the countries where they are situated. It also provided assessments of the use of evidence from think tanks as well as assessment of their research quality. The Evaluation Team has had access to the overall global PCS reports and some summary regional assessments. After the completion of the first draft of the final report access was provided also to the PCS individual grantee assessments.

It is important to note how the evaluation has used the findings on the sample grantees and the case studies of their selected research and communication activities to contribute to building generalizations. We have used this concrete data to reflect on the concepts of research quality, organizational change, policy engagement and context. Thus, these concepts have structured our empirical enquiry and in turn we have used the empirical data to test and refine our understanding of the concepts. In arriving at higher-level lessons, we have applied this developed understanding to think about the lessons that can be drawn and applied to potential future support to think tanks. These inform our framing of the conclusions and recommendations.

e. Limitations

The Evaluation Team's work in the first stage highlighted two key limitations. First, the existing TTI monitoring data was insufficient to provide a suitable baseline. Second, there are important limits on comparability among TTI grantees. The wide diversity among the grantees and their respective contexts clearly made it inappropriate to evaluate against over-generalized standards. As one example, standards applicable to more 'advocacy' oriented grantees were frequently not suitable for the more 'technical' or 'academic' grantees and vice versa. Consequently, these constitute two important limitations, which apply to the entire evaluation of TTI Phase Two.

Of equal importance was the fact that any attempt to impose assumptions of standardized approaches to think tank development on grantees would be incompatible with the basic 'aid-effectiveness' expectations of ownership that underpinned the initial TTI design, and would be resisted by these autonomy-minded organizations.

Further, the Evaluation Team was careful to minimize the additional workload it asked of grantees, and has sought ways to build confidence and offer added-value in its dealings with the sample cohort grantees in particular. A continuing limitation was the need to collect additional data directly from the full cohort of grantees in a way that reflected the need to ensure modest demands on their time and to optimize the use of time and resources available to the Evaluation Team.

The evaluation was also committed to addressing the overall effects of the program and not the performance of individual grantees. However, these are not entirely separate processes and

judgements have had to be made about grantee-specific factors that were relevant to overall programmatic outcomes. We have anonymized as much as possible our reporting on grantees, even if this has posed some challenges in terms of working with evidence and argument.

A notable challenge has been to trace the contribution of TTI towards outcomes, most notably those related to policy influence. A meta-conclusion of the evaluation has been that TTI has been highly effective in creating conditions for such influence (sometimes referred to as a “culture of research impact”²⁰), partly due to strengthening capacities and commitments for more proactive communications and related positioning in the policy discourse. It has been moderately effective in creating conditions for greater sustainability and enhancing research quality. However, actual outcomes have derived from the grantees’ own efforts. These have drawn on their (often pre-existing) capacities, support from other sources, leadership skills and other assets. In this report we have tried to be very transparent about the plausibility of whether the conditions generated with TTI support have been leveraged or are likely to be leveraged in the future to attain relevant outcomes. Nonetheless, clear attribution of outcomes to TTI efforts is seldom possible to claim.

A further limitation to assessing outcomes has been that the Evaluation Team was not able to undertake a larger number of interviews with outside observers.²¹ Furthermore, the observers who were interviewed had highly varied awareness and levels/types of interactions with the grantees. Therefore, although the outside observer perspectives were enlightening, they could not be effectively quantified or directly compared. This limitation, together with Evaluation Team concerns about the relevance of the PCS data (see Section 3.a below), have meant that the analyses of research quality and policy influence have relied heavily on the perceptions of the grantees themselves. Nonetheless, the Evaluation Team encountered highly self-critical and introspective perspectives among most of the grantees, who were generally very open and frank about how their work was perceived within the wider policy community.

Finally, as will be described further in this report, the TTI approach is primarily based on core support, supplemented with additional capacity development interventions. This combination of support modalities has allowed, enabled and encouraged grantees to select their own development paths and experiment if relevant. The Evaluation Team has received some comments suggesting that core support modalities exemplify commitments to ownership and alignment that were more prevalent at the start of TTI than they are now. The Evaluation Team has received requests to present reflections on how to improve upon alternative, less flexible and more instrumental approaches that reflect the current policies of many funders. In the recommendations we do present some suggestions as to how to retain a degree of commitment to the essence of TTI approaches within other modalities. However, we cannot present a comprehensive alternative model since our empirical data is about the TTI model and we therefore choose to be cautious in speculating about the potential efficacy of other models that we have not observed.



PART TWO: RESULTS & OTHER FINDINGS

2. TTI as a Mechanism for Enabling Stronger Think Tanks

Introduction

This chapter addresses the first set of the evaluation questions: *In what ways has TTI support led or failed to lead to stronger and more sustainable think tanks? If grantees have become stronger how has this happened and what has been the TTI contribution? If they have not, what are the reasons for this and what does it reveal about the appropriateness of TTI support?*

The chapter starts with our summary assessment of the trajectories of change that the various grantees have followed. We then unpack the effects of the different dimensions of support while taking into account the intended synergies among TTI's three modalities - core funding, accompaniment by the RPOs and more formal capacity development interventions.

a. Trajectories of change

Key findings

The trajectories of change that each of the TTI grantees has followed over the past decade vary considerably but at the aggregate level four categories or typologies can be discerned. The kind of change experienced by the grantees ranged from transformational progress at one end of the spectrum to survival amid turbulent conditions at the other. However, most grantees are found in the intermediate categories of accelerated change and consolidation. This outcome has implications for understanding the inherent and unknowable risks in investing in different types of think tanks.

The group of think tanks initially selected among the applicants by TTI comprised a mix of high and lower risk investments. In many cases, most notably in South Asia, the selection included 'picking potential winners' in the sense of supporting grantees that were already well established. Others in South Asia and elsewhere, however, were more high-risk investments. Of these, some were very young and could be characterized as start-ups with potential. Others were older but considered to be underperforming, with indications of significantly greater potential. Finally, many others were found somewhere in between. In sum, the grantees were at distinctly different starting positions at the beginning of the grant period, reflecting age, their relations to government and other policy actors, previous history of core grants and other characteristics.

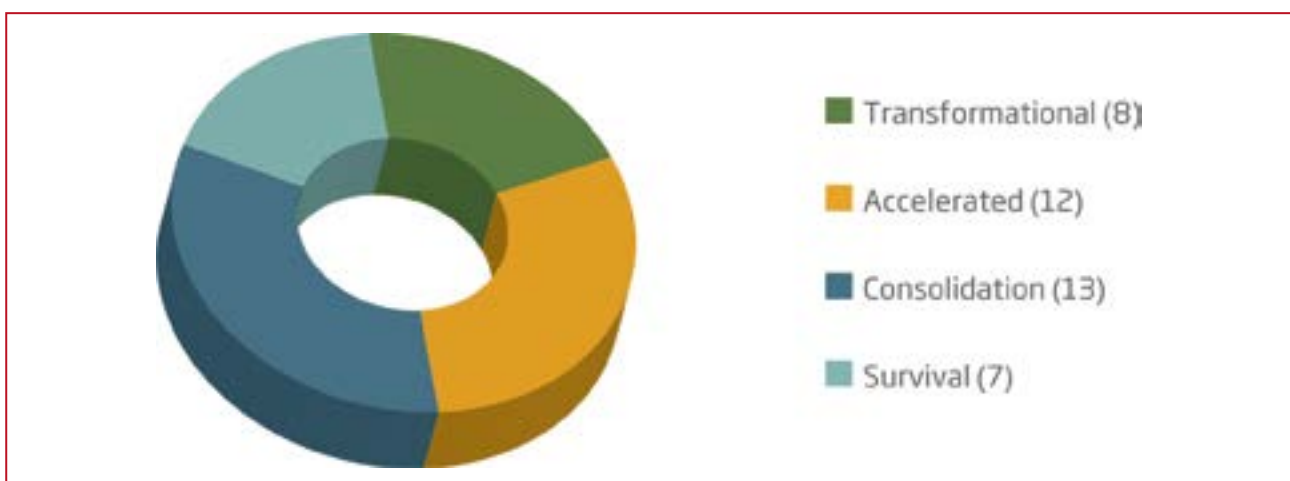
Further, the trajectories of change that each of the TTI grantees has followed over the past decade vary and the TTI intervention is only one of many factors contributing to that change. In the final analysis of our data we have discerned certain trends or typologies of change within the group of grantees. The robustness of this assessment for a given grantee is mixed, given the complex contributing factors. However, for the full group of grantees the typology is well supported by our data.

The assessment that follows is intended to support reflections on how support such as that provided by TTI can lead to stronger think tanks. Sorting the grantees in this way frames much of the analysis of this report regarding the relative role of exogenous and endogenous factors that influ-

ence patterns of change within the grantees. Overall, four different patterns have been identified in the trajectories of change in 40 of the 43 grantees.²²

- (i) Grantees that went through *transformational change*, effectively becoming significantly different organizations from what they were at the start of TTI. This is reflected in various aspects such as a sizeable growth of their non-TTI funding, diversity of funding sources, staff levels and quality of staff, research outputs and policy engagement. The grantees which have undergone such transformational change are often what might be termed start-ups or in some specific cases 'phoenixes that have risen from the ashes'.
- (ii) Grantees that experienced a period of *accelerated growth with a significant change* or increase in their weight in policy influencing. At the outset, they already had a strong established base both with respect to research quality and funding. This is a quite heterogeneous group and many of them have long institutional histories. For some the changes are more visible in terms of research funding and profile, for others systemic organizational change has made them notably more effective.
- (iii) Grantees that could be regarded as having *consolidated their position*. They are today relatively secure in their funding but have not visibly changed or repositioned themselves during the grant period. This covers a spectrum of both large and small grantees, some well-established and some that are more recent.
- (iv) Grantees for which TTI support was of great importance for 'keeping them afloat' - or to *survive and persevere* in the face of adverse conditions. TTI provided the financial means of survival and some degree of 'political protection' in hostile settings, as well as access to exploring new ways of repositioning. The grantees in this category may or may not have gone through major change (even of a transformational character), but at the end of the TTI program they are still struggling to survive. This last category is somewhat different from the other three in terms of its defining elements.

Figure 2: Four different trajectories within the grantee group (40 grantees assessed)



Thus, for half of the grantees we could assess there was either transformational or accelerated change while one third had consolidated their position. Behind these diverse trajectories of

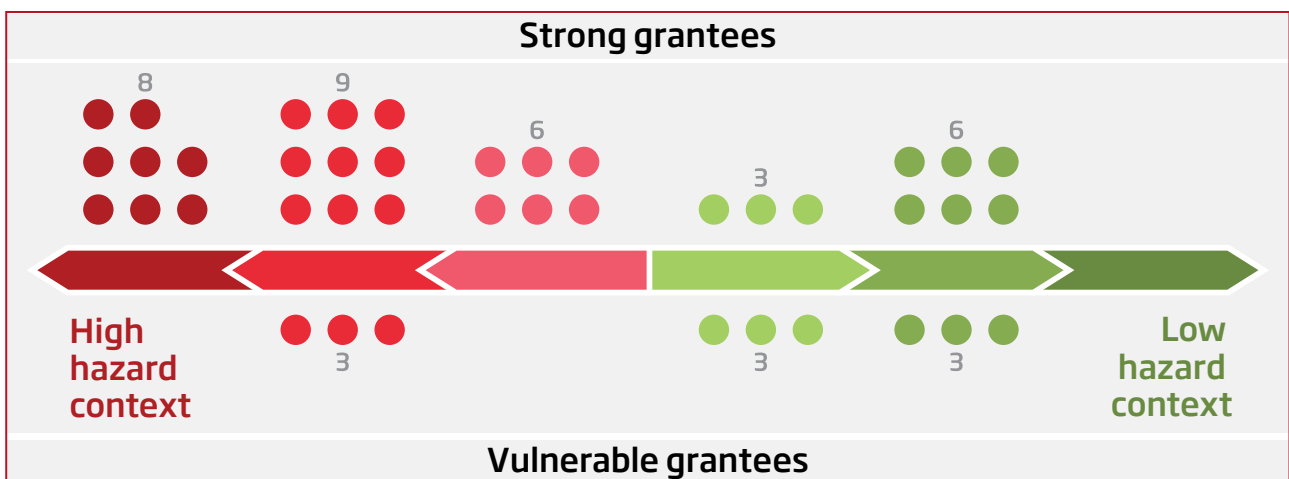
change are a number of potential causes or determining factors. TTI did not start with a ‘blank slate’ and its contributions need to be weighed within the frame of each grantee’s particular context, institutional history, path dependency (how current choices are influenced by decisions of the past), ambitions and efforts to adapt and position itself for influence.

Factors affecting the influence of TTI support, the importance of which varies by grantee, include:

- Formal and informal relationships between grantees and their governments
- The ability to engage in alternative niches of the policy sphere when dialogues with governments have been disrupted
- Access to other core grants and internally generated resources (generally endowments) to enable stability beyond TTI support
- The degree of competition grantees face in exercising influence and attracting senior researchers
- The extent to which an area of research perceived of as ‘technical’ may provide some protection for a grantee in a politically charged environment
- The degree of institutional collaboration (e.g. with universities or international research institutes) that may enable a small grantee to ‘punch above its weight’
- Diverse leadership styles and engagement of governance among the different grantees

We will return to examine TTI’s contribution to these diverse trajectories at the end of this chapter. But the current position and strengths of the different grantees also signals their ability to survive and perhaps prosper under present and future conditions. A special consideration is the potential vulnerability of each of the grantees in relation to the political and financial hazards in their operating environment, and their resilience in handling these pressures through informal and formal strategic practices. Figure 3 below summarizes the Evaluation Team’s assessment of the relative level of contextual hazards facing grantees and their internal vulnerabilities/strengths (together constituting their overall level of risk) at the close of TTI. This mapping provides a summary judgment about adaptive capacity and concludes that the majority of grantees are now strategically strong in relation to their risk environment. It indicates that, in the view of the evaluation, the majority of the grantees are in a strong position to navigate their contextual challenges.

Figure 3: Assessing grantees’ vulnerability and their contextual hazards
 Each circle represents one grantee (41 grantees)



b. Strategy and synergies among the three pillars

Key findings

Organizational strengthening within TTI has significantly transcended technical and administrative aspects. Access to a large, stable grant has generated conditions that allow grantees to act more strategically and intentionally in strengthening research quality to achieve policy influence. Context counts, and so does the capacity to strategize in navigating that context. Findings across the range of grantee trajectories suggest that this is often an informal process.

TTI support was mostly effective in encouraging critical reflection and stakeholder consultation as a basis for strategizing rather than in formal monitoring and evaluation or strategic planning processes, even if the latter was also strengthened, partially due to RPO nudging.

Given the landscape of contexts and hazards described above, it is important to understand how organizational strengthening feeds into research quality and ultimately affects policy influence. Acknowledging this context provides a basis for learning about the challenges faced by grantees in jointly strengthening the three dimensions of capacity development promoted by TTI (organizational effectiveness, research methods and skills and policy engagement and communications). At the start of the final stage of the evaluation it was agreed that the analysis would take account of the effects of the following contextual factors that would influence TTI's achievement of its objectives:

Box 3: Contextual factors influencing the prospects of TTI achieving its objectives

Organizational effectiveness

- The 'space' for free debate in the policy discourse, and what this implies for strategic planning/ thinking
- The nature of the 'marketplace' for policy research and what this implies for strategic planning/ thinking
- The implications of this 'marketplace' for defining a grantee's 'value proposition' and related resource mobilization strategy
- The varied, and often limited, leverage for accessing an appropriate range of revenue on realistic costings
- Profound challenges in maintaining core functions and securing their position within the policy research community given the phasing out of core support from TTI and others
- The effects of competition in policy research with the presence of more think tanks and international consulting firms, especially impacting on grantee capacities to attract and retain respected senior researchers

Research methods and skills

- The sometimes low demand for quality research, limiting the extent to which quality assurance processes can actually augment policy influence
- The struggles that some grantees face in balancing investments in 'academic' and 'accessible' products, e.g., reaching intended audiences while helping researchers build their reputations and qualifications for careers that include more academic paths
- The threats to maintaining grantees' enhanced capacity for research quality when the 'quality of funding' diminishes with shrinking access to core funding and capacity development support

Policy engagement and communications

- The effects of overall decline in core funding and trends toward, and greater dependence on, commissioned research, threatening the independence and the credibility required to influence policy
- The fact that some partners may only fund outputs and reduce support for proactive policy influence after the outputs have been produced
- The diversity of grantee policy discourse relationships, ranging from broad public influence to the indirect focussed on civil society or academia, to confidential one-to-one discussions with political leaders

The influence of each of these factors has to be taken into account if we are to understand TTI's contribution to grantee development over time. They are also relevant to higher level lessons about the general role of external assistance to think tanks given the contested, competitive and dynamic environments in which these organizations operate. A working meta-hypothesis for the evaluation has been that external support is important (sometimes very important) to grantee development. But to comprehend how and why, we must understand the effects of external assistance in each specific context. The centrality of the contextual factors listed in Box 3 to TTI related results was confirmed in subsequent data collection.

Strategic thinking and intentionality

Any think tank needs a strategy for how to develop internal capacities and position itself in order to be listened to and respected in the face of political and economic volatility. At the beginning of Phase Two a significant number of grantees were developing new strategic plans with support from the program. Grantees often noted, when asked about the practical implications of these plans, that they were finding greater space to think strategically and remain nimble amidst contextual volatility. Throughout the evaluation, a variety of comments were made by the grantees indicating that TTI contributed to an incremental, but significant,²³ process of more intentional approaches to strategy. One grantee described this as simply becoming '*smarter*'. The results of this strategic 'smartness' can primarily be seen in the enhanced positioning in the policy arena, described in Chapter 4 below.

TTI support for enhanced strategic planning and thinking has consisted of advice from RPOs, resources to hire consultants and investment in consultative processes.²⁴ These inputs interacted with internal and often informal processes of strategy development, including leadership and governance transitions. Annual Technical Reports (ATRs) submitted by grantees clearly emphasize the use of core support to strengthen governance, coordination and leadership as the main ways through which TTI contributed to strategic planning and thinking.

In a couple of cases, sample cohort grantees described how TTI had a significantly different and more positive role in this area compared to support from other donors. TTI effectively supported the grantees' own strategic thinking, while other donors were often seen to promote strategic planning to serve donor aims, sidetracking needs-driven internal processes.

Approximately half of the sample cohort interviewees highlighted the importance of the advisory role of the RPOs in strategic planning. This was often in the form of gentle nudging, reminders or more subtle contributions to internal conversations. Where strategies focused on plans for organizational change, RPOs have been more directly influential. Where strategies mainly focused on contextually-driven prioritization of policy areas for research, the TTI contribution was instead usually in the form of resources for stakeholder consultations. For both aspects, TTI has often covered the costs of annual workshops and retreats, which were seen as vital.²⁵

Towards the end of the program, grantee comments suggested a fairly modest and perhaps declining role of RPO conversations on strategy, with comments indicating that strategic planning had become more of an internal discussion.²⁶ It is notable that the recent ATRs contain relatively few references to developing strategic plans *per se*, which could be interpreted as confirming that these processes have now been internalized after a strong program focus during TTI Phase One.

During TTI Phase Two, strategic thinking, particularly in Latin America and Africa, was partially driven by reflections over 'business models'. This somewhat debatable term refers to efforts to focus on refining the organization's 'value proposition' about what the grantee contributes to the policy discourse (and why it therefore deserves financial support). This is then used to frame priorities and define a cogent resource mobilization approach.

The participants in the TTI *African Action Research on Business Models* reported having used that activity to inform relevant parts of their strategy development. The accompaniment role of the facilitator in this initiative was particularly appreciated, and reportedly helped the grantees to gradually reflect on the ways that a business model could help incorporate resource mobilization practices within strategic planning. The grantees also developed greater confidence in presenting their arguments for appropriate costing and investments in applying their strategies.²⁷ Interviews indicated that, at the end of TTI, they were developing and presenting stronger arguments. Although a few comments were made that suggested donors were listening, there is no firm evidence to indicate that this is leading to funding, for example, of higher overhead costs to cover actual costs inherent in their business model. But outcomes from negotiations may take time to emerge and depend on the leeway that donor program officers have to respond. The Evaluation Team judges that it is plausible that full cost funding may materialize in the future, even though this currently remains uncertain.

Grantees in Latin America were also active in developing their thinking on business models with advice from TTI, sometimes engaging consultants and generally seeing this as central to their strategic planning. In South Asia there was some discomfort with framing their often strong but informal thinking and practice under the label of 'business models'. In part, this emanated from a negative reaction to a training workshop in Phase One. This presumed to teach grantees in South Asia the basics of resource mobilization, failing to clearly distinguish between the financing landscapes of NGOs and think tanks or appreciate that many grantees were already highly skilled at working with the prevailing systems in their specific contexts.

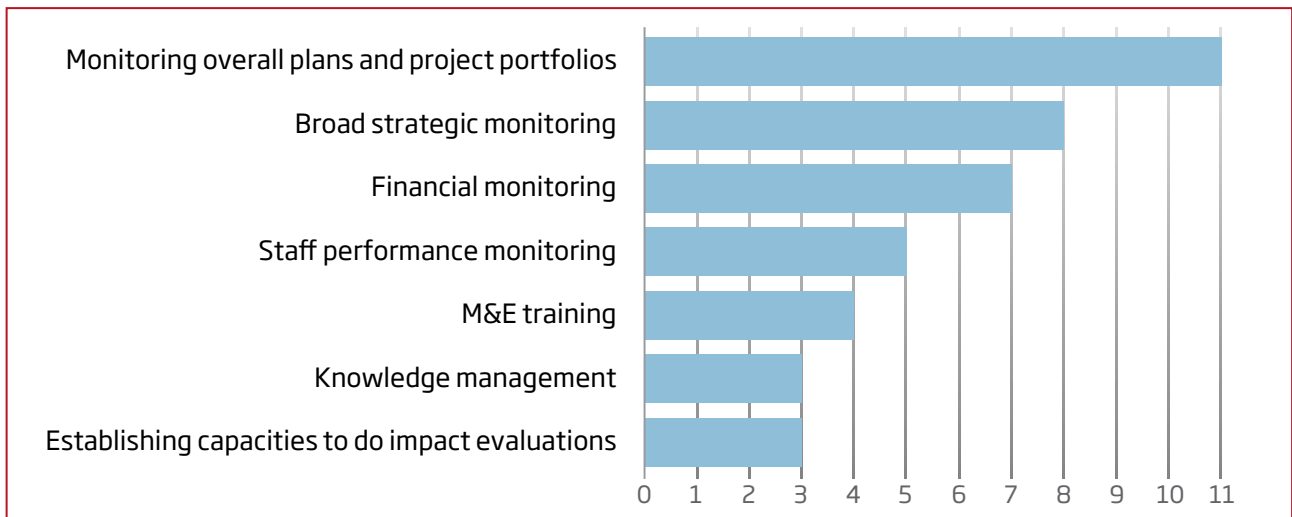
In sum, TTI has played a significant role in generating stronger intentionality in grantee strategizing and recognizing priorities and 'value propositions'. However, intentions are not outcomes. In

Chapter 4 below we analyze the positioning of grantees for policy influence, which is where the Evaluation Team judges that TTI has helped to generate conditions for these strategies to be applied in achieving outcomes related to policy influence.

Monitoring and evaluation: a tool feeding into strategic thinking?

A frequent question (and concern) in relation to strategic planning is to what extent it is being informed and guided by monitoring and evaluation systems (M&E). Our findings suggest that M&E among the TTI grantees does contribute in this respect, though with some significant caveats. Grantees’ selected priorities (and conceptualizations of what ‘M&E’ consists of) varied considerably, as did the ways TTI support was used. In this context, the ATRs make reference to progress in the following main areas:²⁸

Figure 4: Grantee emphases related to monitoring and evaluation (number of grantees reporting)



Overall, grantees were positive about the incremental progress achieved with M&E and its use to inform strategy. One grantee described the current state as a “culmination”, whereas others described a path towards more systematic efforts and a stronger culture of evaluation.²⁹ This progress was reflected in the first two interim reports, and largely confirmed in the last round of interviews in the latter half of 2018.³⁰

However, in the sample cohort interviews some reservations (and self-criticism) were also expressed about the limited extent to which M&E was used in practice to inform internal thinking.³¹ At the same time, though, it was also indicated that TTI pressures to move beyond process reporting to describe outcomes has been beneficial in transcending past narrower perspectives on the role of M&E. The Evaluation Team judges that TTI support has made a significant contribution to most grantees becoming more intentional in developing M&E systems to learn from their work. Actual outcomes in applying this learning in a consistent manner have been fewer. The following summarizes the progression over time concerning the grantees’ approaches to M&E during TTI Phase Two:

Development over time: *Strategic thinking and M&E*

Baseline (2015): Strengthened capacities and space for strategic thinking; some having been strong at the outset, whereas others were weak.

Interim findings (2017): Internally driven and locally consultative strategic planning dominating, supported by RPO advice.

Final evaluation findings (2019): Strong ultimate benefits from modest funding and advice which has fed into what must ultimately become a locally driven process.

Leadership, governance, coordination and management

Strategic planning and thinking should of course be led by a grantee's leadership and governance teams. Given that TTI dialogue was largely held with the leadership (but less often with the board or governance level), TTI's influence has been more diffuse, although still significant.³² Dialogues within grantee organizations between management and governance have sometimes revolved around whether to enter new research areas (in response to new demands and trends) or to focus on consolidation in areas of pre-existing strength.³³

In the second half of 2017, TTI launched a *Fund for Strengthening Organizational Leadership, Management and Governance* to enable board members, executive directors and senior management staff to engage in capacity development opportunities of their choice. Grantees could apply for financial support up to CAD 25,000 for defined projects, to match their own contribution of a minimum of 25%. About one third of the full cohort of grantees did so, but since many projects were delayed and reporting is still incomplete, it would be premature to draw any conclusions concerning outcomes from this initiative.

Strategic thinking is often perceived as directly related to leadership and vision. In this context, the experience from the Ugandan grantee MISR is both interesting and challenging, as the organization succeeded in developing a strong and forward-looking strategy despite what can only be described as a governance vacuum.

Box 4: MISR, Uganda - developing a vision within a governance vacuum

It might be assumed that strong governance is a precondition for strategic planning and achieving visionary reforms in a think tank. The MISR experience suggests that this is not always true. Both before and after TTI support began, MISR had been operating without a clear and operational governance structure. Despite this, the organization has undergone a fundamental restructuring and has a clear vision for its work.

At the start of TTI Phase One a new director was appointed who 'inherited' a strategic plan for 2007-2017 that was weak and completely unaligned with the needed reforms. Furthermore, MISR's governance structure as a somewhat autonomous institution within Makerere University had ceased to function. TTI Phase One and the beginning of Phase Two have involved MISR using the 'space' provided by TTI core support to take the time and allocate human resources for exploring ways to continue internally-led strategic planning even without a governance structure in place to approve formal plans. Until early 2016 this planning primarily involved building structures and institutional arrangements within MISR focused on critical reflection over pressing research needs and defining responsibilities for guidance and direction in the absence of more formal governance oversight.

TTI support has proven vital for both enhancing the physical facilities at MISR and creating conditions for flexibly exploring new and more appropriate areas of research. The RPO also provided a discussion partner throughout. During 2017 an independent commission reviewed MISR's work and concluded that MISR had achieved extraordinary results in raising the standard of MISR social science and humanities research. MISR's innovative approaches were even cited as a lesson for broader university reforms.

This process highlights how TTI's flexible core support can create conditions for finding alternative paths to forming a strategic vision and decisive management, even without the underpinnings of governance and strategic planning that often are assumed to be essential.

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

There is no doubt that TTI has made contributions through its various interventions to (i) organisational effectiveness, (ii) research methods and skills, and (iii) policy engagement and communication. The strength of that contribution to each pillar is variable and has depended on how the intervention builds on the pre-conditions in the grantee. The ability to build synergies across specific pillar support and leverage broader outcomes has been largely determined by the grantee itself. We would judge that leadership has played a crucial role here. For those grantees that have experienced transformational change or accelerated growth, we would judge that the synergies have been greatest. For those grantees that have either survived or consolidated their position, while strengths have been built within specific areas, it has not been possible to leverage broader effects, due to both contextual conditions and leadership issues. The lessons from these outcomes are that support to these three pillars or domains can be seen as a necessary condition for transformational change, but outcomes are dependent on grantee leadership, vision and conducive contextual conditions.

c. Human resource development across the three pillars

Key findings

Effective organizations, high quality research and policy influence are all fundamentally dependent on attracting and retaining high quality researchers, and continuously strengthening staff skills. Transformation and accelerated growth require sizable and steady investments in human resources. At the same time, failure to maintain this trajectory can lead to organizations falling back on survival strategies wherein individual researchers respond to demands from their financiers. This inevitably decreases their accountability to their institutions. An important element of ensuring that grantees remain competitive has been investing in creating attractive working conditions, and TTI core support has had a major impact in this regard.

A central finding of the evaluation is that TTI's contributions to organizational effectiveness, research quality and policy engagement all converged in supporting grantees' investments in human resources. TTI enabled grantees to recruit, retain and develop their staff through various means including training, advice, salaries and improved working conditions. In some cases, this capacity development was not just beneficial within the grantees' organizations. It also provided educational opportunities that have contributed to increasing the quality, credibility and influence of their policy research, more policy relevant university engagements, and strengthened collaboration with civil society.³⁴ Capacities developed have even helped to establish a broader capability in the policy research community to reframe how policies are perceived and how their implementation is examined.³⁵

It is important to note that, as 'knowledge organizations', it is difficult to differentiate the outcomes of investments in the individual capacities from the outcomes in enhancing their organizations' effectiveness. The two are interconnected. The Evaluation Team judges that TTI has contributed to outcomes in both, and that retention of high quality senior and promising junior researchers is a strong proxy indicator for the overall health of the grantee organizations.

The core grant allowed grantees to assess where best to invest in human resource development. This yielded dividends for several grantees in supporting transformational change through growth in the quality and quantity of their human resources, while positioning them for strikingly stronger roles in the policy debates.³⁶ For others it allowed them to address serious gaps in existing staff skill sets, most notably in communications and finance and administration. Sample cohort grantees highlighted the following ways in which TTI funding contributed to human resource development:³⁷

- Attracting highly qualified staff
- Providing advanced degree training
- Providing opportunities to pursue self-determined research priorities
- Enhancing job security through longer contracts
- Establishing new or stronger administrative systems
- Providing networking opportunities
- Providing on-the-job training for younger researchers and administrative staff

After rapid growth during TTI Phase One, the quantity and mix of staff remained largely stable during Phase Two. At the start of Phase Two TTI data indicated a predominance of male senior fulltime staff,

better gender balance at mid-levels and a slight predominance of women at junior levels. During the second and third stages of the evaluation the sample cohort grantees reported no significant changes. The majority of sample cohort grantees expressed satisfaction with the gender balance among senior researchers. Where a gender balance has not been achieved, it was attributed to contextual challenges. In Ethiopia it was difficult to convince women to return to the organization after higher education and in Sri Lanka, there are a disproportionately high number of women graduates in economics so IPS has few male staff.³⁸ Within the category of young researchers – which constituted an important percentage of staff recruited with TTI funding – the proportion of female professionals is generally reported as having increased as compared to overall staff composition before TTI.

Competition and retention

TTI made major contributions to staff retention through opportunities for professional development and training, as well as by top-ups and other support enabling grantees to pay competitive salaries.³⁹ Better physical working conditions were also a major factor. Some grantees also mentioned benefits such as health insurance as important for staff well-being.⁴⁰ Finally, as described in Box 5 below, TTI contributed to the grantees' own commitments to provide space for young researchers to pursue what they see to be salient and stimulating research.

Retaining the capacities that have been strengthened during the TTI years has not been (and will not be) easy. Investment in human resource development is not a timebound activity, and declining access to flexible funding negatively affects grantee ability to sustain incentives, such as salary top-ups and long-term contracts for staff who have been trained. Flexible funds had provided the ability to design research programs that reflect what researchers (rather than funders) deem to be important, but this 'wobble room' for extra researcher leverage in research design is diminishing. These strains are already being felt.⁴¹ Although TTI investments in human resource capacities made the grantees more competitive in attracting and retaining staff, in a few cases this also inadvertently made staff more attractive for 'poaching' by wealthier organizations.

Throughout the evaluation, individual researchers in sample cohort interviews noted that a major reason for staying with the grantee was the organization's reputation and strong position in the policy debate. They described, in various ways, a mutually-reinforcing relationship between having a position and a voice in the policy discourse and enhanced research quality and organizational sustainability.⁴² Researchers interviewed were proud that their role in respected organizations gave them a voice in the political discussions. This pride can be presumed to be a significant factor increasing the attractiveness of think tank employment for senior and proactive junior researchers. Occasional comments suggested that this was also one of the reasons why working for a think tank was more satisfying than working for a university, even though the latter could offer greater employment security and longer-term contracts.

A less tangible aspect of the 'competitiveness' of grantees, but one which was strongly stressed by a few of the sample cohort grantees, is how access to TTI resources gave young researchers some space to pursue their own research interests. By not being locked into donor or government-imposed priorities, or being forced into lecturing roles in universities, researchers have been able to

develop their own research portfolios around issues that they consider important for the future of their countries (and careers), even if these issues are not yet part of the current policy debate.⁴³

Box 5: Giving young researchers the space to find their own roles in the policy arena

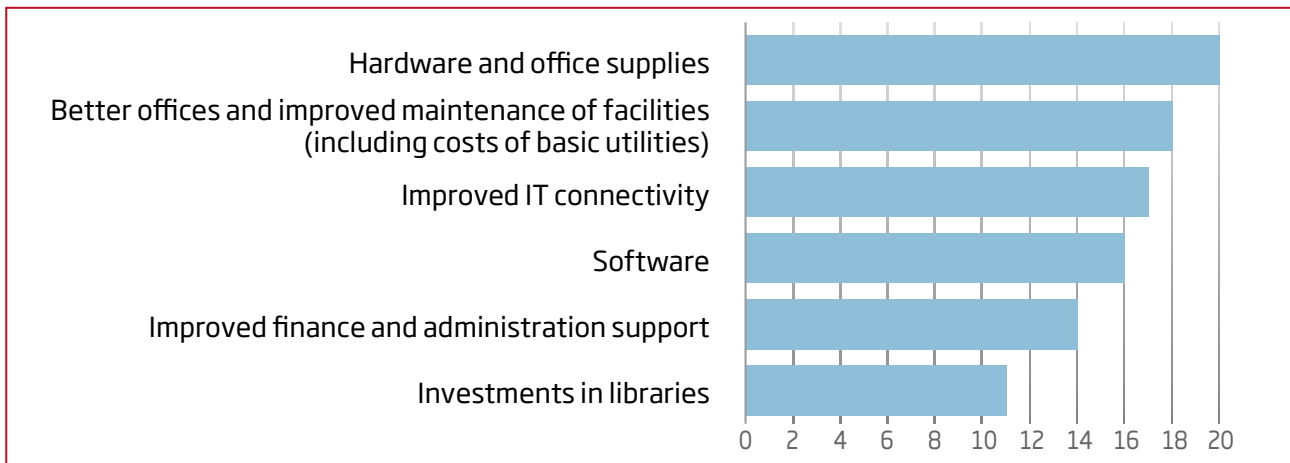
EDRI in Ethiopia and MISR in Uganda, though very different types of organizations, both demonstrate strong commitments to providing young researchers with the space they want and need to define what policy issues they judge to be salient for the future of their countries. This is central to developing their own roles and careers in informing this discourse. As shown in the case studies (see Annex 4, case studies 7 and 18) MISR does this through a doctoral program with broad themes that give researchers the space to redefine key policy questions to reflect broader historical and cultural evidence. EDRI has done this by using TTI (and other funding) to arrange international degree training for promising junior staff who, upon their return, have been given considerable leeway in pursuing projects and partnerships that reflect aspects of Ethiopian development policy where they identify knowledge gaps.

When asked why these outstanding young researchers stay at EDRI when they return, despite low salaries, the researchers and leadership emphasize that it is this freedom which provides the incentive to continue.

TTI provided considerable support for improving physical working conditions among the grantees. Sample cohort interviews indicate that this was (and is likely to remain) a major factor in attracting and retaining staff and creating an appropriate milieu for stakeholder engagement.⁴⁴ References in ATRs indicate that these investments include the following:

Figure 5: Investments in improved working conditions among grantees

(number of grantees reporting, many recording more than one investment)



Interviews with the sample cohort brought out the pride that grantees feel when they have well maintained, functional and modern offices to work in. They stated that this had a positive impact on their attractiveness as an organization. While increasing the ability of staff to work efficiently (IT and libraries are particularly noted), these investments also contributed to being perceived externally as a credible partner in high level policy discussions. Consequently, the benefits of having a good physical working environment should not be underestimated.⁴⁵

The following summarizes the overall findings of the evaluation regarding changes in staff retention during TTI Phase Two:

Development over time: *Staff retention*

Baseline (2015): Staffing significantly strengthened and retention improved due to the creation of more stimulating intellectual environments, better working conditions and also access to resources to pay competitive salaries and top-ups.

Interim findings (2017): Overall a stable situation, but with emerging concerns about future staff retention. Partly due to the ending of TTI, but also because of loss of other core/flexible funding sources.

Final evaluation findings (2019): No major change among most grantees, with some notable exceptions where loss of TTI funding was worsened by loss of other flexible funding streams.

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

For grantees that went through transformational change or experienced a period of accelerated growth with a significant change TTI resources helped significantly to 'put the grantee on the map' in terms of having a critical mass of researcher staff and some cases even physically being more visible on the map due to better physical infrastructure. For grantees for which TTI support was of great importance for 'keeping them afloat' - or to survive and persevere in the face of adverse conditions TTI often helped to reach at least a minimal level of staffing and attractive working conditions. But at the end of TTI support these basics were now at risk. At least two grantees had no national staff with doctorates, which exemplifies the sometimes diminishing chances of maintaining even a minimal critical mass of senior researchers.

d. The contributions of TTI core funding

Key findings

The greatest effects from the overall TTI intervention come from the core grant, for its instrumental value, its flexibility and how it created an enabling space to put strategies into action. Grantees have used their core grants in different ways in response to their strategic interests. At the end of TTI there is little evidence to suggest that it has created a culture of dependence on core funding.

TTI's supplementary modalities in relation to core funding

The question we ask in this section is: *To what extent and in what ways have these various elements of the TTI intervention contributed either individually or through synergies to changes in organizational performance, research quality and policy engagement?* This question is asked in relation to the full range of interventions, but the dominance of the core grants has meant that

the other modalities are analyzed in terms of how they contribute to trends that are driven by the availability of core support.

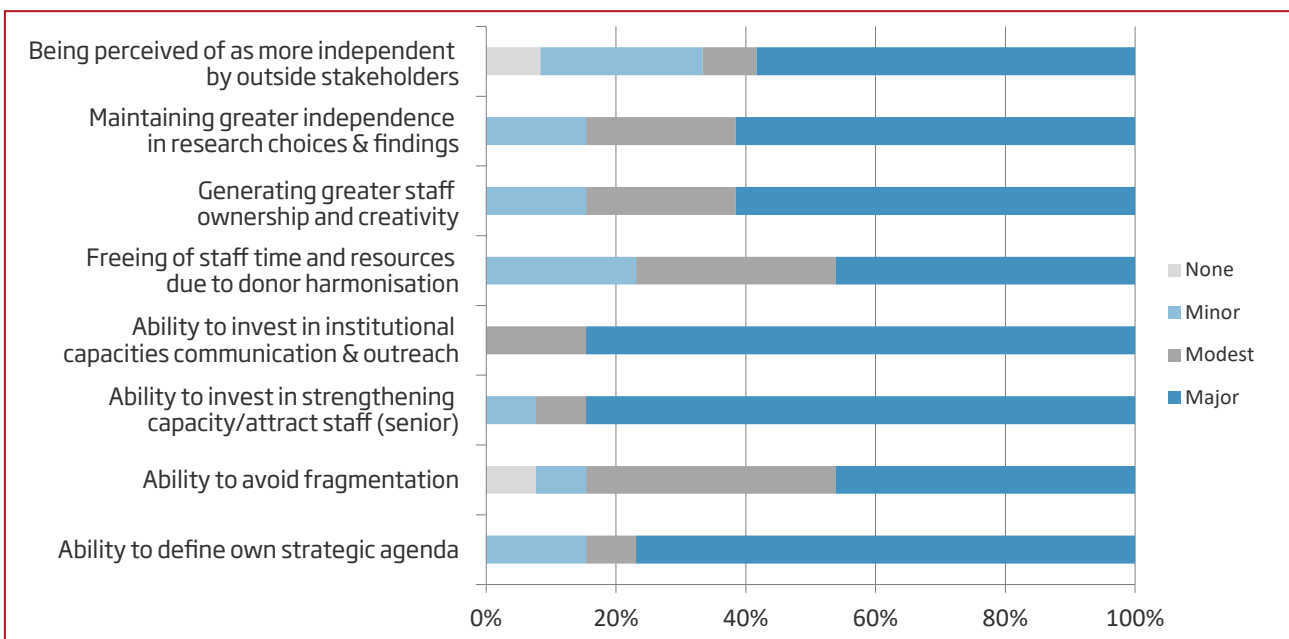
The TTI intervention was composed of core, non-earmarked funding combined with continuous advice and accompaniment by RPOs; training and specific capacity development events and activities; other capacity development support through the special window called Opportunity Funds and; finally, networking and exchange opportunities facilitated by the program, among and beyond the TTI community.⁴⁶ As an intervention, TTI contrasts strongly with more common project interventions that are of short duration.

The core grant

Core funding⁴⁷ has been at the centre of TTI efforts to support stronger ownership, greater transparency and accountability, improved governance and internal control, creativity and innovation, enhanced collaboration and ultimately improved performance and increased sustainability of grantees.⁴⁸ Of particular importance is its value in providing predictability, flexibility, allowing a focus on own priorities, creating conditions for long-term stability, bridging financial gaps, and enabling internal development. The evaluation found that core funding gave the grantees the ability to make decisions and allocate resources according to strategic needs, foresight and vision.

In essence, what core funding offered was the ability to choose and determine what is relevant in terms of research, organizational development strategies and paths to policy influence for responding to national or sub-national development agendas. As such, core funding brought with it a strong sense of independence. Grantees within the sample cohort consistently stressed these qualities. Moreover, there is no verifiable evidence to suggest that a different funding model would have worked as well or better to achieve these aims.

Figure 6: Values of core funding in the sample cohort (grantee statements of priorities)



Data from the ATRs show that the grantees pursued these aims through diverse means. Spending on infrastructure, staff recruitment, improving internal systems, developing communication capacities, networking, exploring new research areas and generally taking risks to explore new approaches were pursued within all three components. Also seemingly small and mundane improvements in working conditions, such as air conditioning or providing tea for staff, had a positive effect on staff morale, and was reported to yield substantial benefits both in performance and attractiveness to potential recruits.

ATR reporting suggests⁴⁹ that funds from the core grant were particularly important when invested in new or existing research areas with significant dividends in terms of output and contribution to the public debate, as well as in positioning the grantee for the policy discourse of the future. The “big data” analysis by CPR or the work on education budgeting by CBGA (both grantees in India) are two such examples from India of effective use of core funding as seed money. In Senegal, CRES profited from improving internal systems as well as retaining senior researchers to win new research projects that included project management responsibilities. A similar case is with CADEP in Paraguay, where improved internal capacities enabled the organization to present well-prepared responses to calls for proposals and to secure important funding from the national research council. Among various East African grantees, core funding enabled the use of senior researcher time in otherwise underfunded initiatives to enhance research quality and ensure that their institutions (rather than donors) were framing the research questions and agenda.

Many grantees invested core resources to establish their communications units. Where these units were already in place, core funding was used to increase communication capacities, differentiating and increasing outputs to reach a larger and more diverse audience. Many made infrastructure investments, either deploying grant funds directly or indirectly (through releasing reserves) to invest in buildings and develop IT infrastructure. Most African grantees have benefited from investment in access to internet.

Grantee strategies for managing their core funding varied. Some South Asian grantees had deliberately taken a higher proportion of their grant at the start of TTI Phase Two, and tapered it down over the funding period as part of their preparations for the phasing out of TTI funding. Some African grantees requested adjustments to address volatility in their broader funding environment.

Core funding is not without dependency risks, and these may only become apparent in the near future when the impact of the withdrawal of this funding is felt. Dependency naturally relates to how much the TTI funding consisted of as a proportion of total resources. This varied considerably among grantees, although it was substantial in all cases. For a variety of reasons, there was a threefold difference between the absolute value of the greatest and the smallest grants awarded to individual grantees.

An illustration of concerns about dependency risks can be found in a recent comment on lessons related to the ending of TTI,⁵⁰ which suggested that there were six potential risks and dangers with core funding. In Box 6 below we reflect on these risks in relation to the evaluation findings. Overall, our assessment is that all the risks highlighted are present, but that the influence of TTI’s core con-

tributions in the grantees’ overall budgets has not been as great as implicitly suggested by the commentator. In light of the grantees’ foresight in their strategic planning for using their core funding, the Evaluation Team judges that the risks of the different forms of dependency may be overstated.

Box 6: The potential drawbacks of core funding

Dangers of core funding?	Comments in relation to the evaluation findings
<p>Delayed reform: Did core support, as a temporary ‘escape’ from project funding, encourage grantees to put off the need to have a better project-based business model?</p> <p>Day dreaming at the wheel: Was TTI just a temporary respite from the ‘reality’ of a bad system (while the competition were refining their skills)?</p>	<p>For a few grantees, a return to their pre-TTI reliance on chasing projects suggests that this may apply. For the majority, TTI was not such a large funding source to have made them ignore needed reforms.</p> <p>There is little evidence of grantees ignoring ‘reality’. Instead, TTI allowed them the resources to test where the system could be influenced or where they could work around systemic dysfunctions.</p>
<p>Unreal costs: Did the reduced pressure to focus on the ‘bottom line’ lead to acceptance of inefficient or unsustainable costing models?</p> <p>Unsustainable (staff) bills: Did core funding allow salaries to grow beyond what the market might bear?</p>	<p>Time will tell with both questions. Some grantees had certainly grown beyond what their costing model would bear. One grantee commented that “our suit became too large”. However, the alternative for some was a ‘race to the bottom’ by lowering research quality and joining the ranks of institutions focused on survival through quantity rather than quality of the research they undertake. The search for sustainability can thus be dysfunctional if it involves reduced commitments to quality. Taking the risk of an expansive strategy of investing in capacities to maintain high standards may prove to have been worthwhile for some grantees.</p>
<p>Fewer incentives to collaborate: Were grantees able to afford to ‘go it alone’ when collaboration could have enhanced quality and efficiency?</p>	<p>Without a counterfactual reference it is hard to draw firm conclusions, but there is evidence that quality can incentivize collaboration. The enhanced quality of staff and the refusal to take on menial ‘field hand’ roles in international research projects, made grantees more attractive for more appropriate partnerships, as did opportunities to travel to conferences and network to meet more international partners.</p>
<p>Core funding addiction: Is there an alternative approach (a ‘rehab’ strategy rather than an exit strategy) that would have lessened the shock some grantees are experiencing?</p>	<p>Many grantees, particularly those that have undergone accelerated or transformational change have diversified their funding outside the core grant, so we question whether the addiction/rehab metaphor is appropriate for the realities faced by the grantees.</p>

The dangers listed above can generally be said to reflect an often implicit but questionable assumption that a substantial period of core funding should have been expected to generate capacities for grantees to be sustainable without further core support. Even though it is too early to draw definite conclusions, the evaluation found no indications that periods of core funding consistently lead to greater sustainability and can point to specific grantees (particularly those categorized as 'surviving') where it has not. Think tanks are likely to always need a modicum of flexible and stable funding to be dynamic and effective. A period of core funding cannot 'fix' this challenge.⁵¹

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

Though these findings are likely to have general applicability, there are some differences in how the different categories of grantees have benefited from the core funding. Overall Evaluation Team impressions of the outcomes of core funding point to the following:

- For grantees that went through *transformational change*, core funding gave them an opportunity to make a major leap in establishing a critical mass of human resources and in so doing expand the quality, quantity and range of their research.
- For grantees that experienced a period of *accelerated growth with a significant change*, core funding enabled them to develop existing research and focus more on better communications and policy engagement.
- For grantees that could be regarded as having *consolidated their position*, core funding enabled them to reinforce their financial resilience (e.g., by allowing their endowments to remain untouched and grow) while undertaking long needed investments in basic organizational and physical infrastructure.
- For grantees where TTI support was of great importance for 'keeping them afloat' - or to *survive and persevere* in the face of adverse conditions, core funding enabled them to maintain at least a minimum level of staffing, make critical investments in organizational systems and infrastructure, and maintain a sufficient level of quality and quantity of research to be seen as active and credible actors in the policy sphere.

Across all of these categories, core funding generally contributed significantly to grantees improving the physical, intellectual and/or financial working environment for staff. As such, it created a foundation for grantees to subsequently take advantage of the additional forms of capacity development support that they received.

e. The contributions of other TTI modalities

Key findings

Apart from core funding, TTI's greatest contributions relate to the accompaniment role provided by the Regional Program Officers. The stimulation of demand and subsequent tailoring of capacity development interventions would have been more generic and less successful without this gentle guidance. On the other hand, and despite concerted efforts to better respond to grantee demands and needs, ownership of most supplementary capacity development efforts has been mixed and outcomes difficult to assess. Decentralization to the regional level during Phase Two has not been sufficient to tailor training and other initiatives for a very diverse set of organizations. Finally, efforts driven by grantees' own individual networking interests have been shown to be the most effective way to promote peer-to-peer learning and exchange. These were primarily supported by the core grant.

A flexible approach to supplementary capacity development initiatives

The Evaluation Team perceives that TTI has applied what can be described as an 'adaptive management' approach to the design and implementation of the supplementary (i.e., non-core funding related) capacity development efforts over the years. This has been part of efforts to continuously respond and adapt to grantee priorities and needs. This is exemplified by the Opportunity Funds,⁵² which were used for a variety of purposes, including support to grantee networking, joint research initiatives, regionally led training and even some 'do tank' activities (i.e., applying their 'thinking' in practical development initiatives).⁵³ TTI has stated that the emphasis of the Opportunity Funds was explicitly on stimulating processes and ownership, rather than generating actual outcomes.⁵⁴ This can be seen as a major reason that funding was ultimately used for so many different activities, since they reflected varied grantee interests.

Reporting on the supplementary efforts (both the ones included in grantee reports on their use of these resources and TTI's own reporting) is of mixed quality and focuses largely on describing activities rather than outcomes. This makes it difficult to trace the evolution of this adaptive management approach. Furthermore, this 'adaptive management' has resulted in a variety of initiatives that are difficult to categorize and compare. The TTI website describes capacity development, apart from core funding,⁵⁵ as consisting of only three categories of support, mentoring, learning events (focused on TTIX) and Opportunity Funds.⁵⁶ The Evaluation Team has found a more complex range of activities to exist, as will be described below.

Accompaniment and dialogue

A central but somewhat intangible aspect of the intervention has been the accompaniment and advisory role of the RPOs in their regular engagement with the grantees. It cannot be emphasized enough that, without the continuous contact between grantees and RPOs, the overall TTI approach would not have been viable. The active engagement of the RPOs was the mechanism through which the different instruments of the TTI intervention came together and, via a transparent and trusting dialogue, were made to largely pull in the same direction.

The RPO role included an element of monitoring, given the requirements for annual reporting and the setting of annual structured objectives as well as handling practical budgetary and management issues with grantees. But it was the opportunity for dialogue around a range of issues that was most highly valued by grantees, and this was largely driven by demand (although sometimes framed in relation to a discussion around budgetary priorities or linked to the tailored objectives for Phase Two). This dialogue was referred to as being important for helping directors think about overall strategy, how to deal with governance challenges, providing an opportunity for responding to rapid changes by adjusting plans and budgets, and also as a channel for TTI to exert subtle nudging, especially about the importance of strengthened commitments to communications and engagement with policy actors. One director stated that RPO dialogue was “the element that I will miss the most”.

This comment, which was widely reflected by other directors in various ways speaks not only to the specific qualities of the RPOs but to a more general lesson. Namely the fact that being the director of an independent think tank is a lonely and demanding business. The opportunity to discuss the internal and external challenges of institution management with an independent third party was for many invaluable, and perhaps particularly so for the younger grantees at an earlier stage of their growth that have not had the institutional history to build on. The RPOs were in many cases drawn deep into grantee institutional development discussions, offering dialogue and advice, opening up new possibilities and in the process becoming trusted partners – in some cases even helping resolve internal conflicts. Equally, the RPOs learned from the grantees and were able to spread lessons and understanding from one grantee to others.

Outcomes from this dialogue with RPOs were, however, subtle. This aspect of TTI was largely about creating a foundation of transparency, flexibility and trust that in turn provided a basis for more concrete outcomes from other forms of support.

Supplementary capacity development targeted to grantee needs

At the start of Phase Two, TTI prepared a capacity development strategy⁵⁷ that sought to address lessons from Phase One. These four lessons, summarized in Box 7 below, emphasized strategic targeting towards grantee needs and stimulating their demands.

Box 7: Lessons on targeted capacity development from Phase One

1. Readiness

Critical attributes of readiness include: willingness, interest, commitment, management buy-in, appropriate timing and resource allocation. A key factor is the depth to which grantees are able to strategically identify capacity gaps, and identify needs.

2. Think tank self-assessment

Support is necessary to strengthen organizational efficiency and effectiveness in terms of governance, management, staffing and leadership, the sustainability of the organization’s business model and the ability to engage in strategic planning and self-assessment.

3. Demand-led versus offer-led

There needs to be a balance between providing grantees with tools, knowledge and assistance and allowing space for them to develop their own processes, including respecting their timing and pace.

4. Collaboration & peer learning

Collaborative opportunities and facilitated spaces for learning from peers, both within the TTI-network and beyond were highly valued. TTI should broaden the scope and size of modalities that foster collaboration.

The above lessons all emerged from the TTI Phase One evaluation⁵⁸ and were primarily applied in better adapting various training and workshops, together with the Opportunity Funds, to focus more on grantee needs and demands. The need for this was widely recognized and mentioned by both grantees and some RPOs. The first interim report of the present Phase Two Evaluation also noted the importance of better targeted training and the value of the action learning modality.

Building on efforts that began in Phase One, one dimension of this tailoring in Phase Two was to move the selection and provision of training closer to the grantees through decentralization to regions. The network ILAIPP in Latin America, which was partially financed through the Opportunity Fund, exemplifies these efforts. As summarized in Box 8 below, this experience yielded mixed results, suggesting that the challenges in targeting are more related to the heterogeneity of the grantees in general, rather than to differences between the geographical regions.⁵⁹

Box 8: ILAIPP - developing capacity for capacity development

ILAIPP - *Iniciativa Latinoamericana de Investigación para las Políticas Públicas* - is an association of the eleven think tanks supported by TTI in Latin America. It was founded in 2010 but achieved a new level of activity through the Guatemala City meeting of the Latin American grantees in 2013. ILAIPP has three broad objectives:

- Develop knowledge and proposals to enrich public policy and development debates
- Create an exchange, discussion and learning space for think tanks in the region
- Promote institutional capacity strengthening actions for the member think tanks

The first two objectives (generating knowledge and creating spaces for exchange) are pursued through the creation of research networks while the third objective (building capacity) is achieved through various consultancies, mainly related to business models, and through training modules provided by researchers from the ILAIPP members.

TTI encouraged ILAIPP in developing its role as a regional hub for peer-to-peer capacity building. The year 2016 was a particularly active period as the ILAIPP Secretariat designed and organized seven training modules, most of which were offered by one or two TTI grantees for researchers from other members of the ILAIPP network.

When the data on ILAIPP was collected for the Second Interim Evaluation Report (towards the end of 2017) it was judged too early to assess the overall outcomes. Interviews among ILAIPP members regarding their priorities and their views on the future prospects for ILAIPP suggested that differences in their pre-existing capacities and learning priorities were making it difficult to select and design a package of support that could generate broad demand among ILAIPP members.

One year later, during the last round of data collection for this evaluation, ILAIPP had encountered serious challenges and was largely inactive. The network coordinators (at Grupo Faro) acknowledged that it was difficult to get the members to participate, even in virtual meetings, and some member grantees stated that the network perhaps no longer had 'any real existence', adding that it had become bureaucratic, with no funds of its own. This situation was largely confirmed by the Final Report in January 2019 on TTI's capacity building initiative through ILAIPP, which dedicated considerable space to *What did not work well* and identified key challenges for the organization in the future.⁶⁰

A second regional example was the call for bids in South Asia to design and lead on the delivery of regional capacity development activities. This came half way through the second grant period and two grantees were selected, each with a set of partners. An external evaluator⁶¹ was contracted to monitor them and a final report is expected early in 2019. This has been a pilot exercise, coming towards the end of TTI, and of relatively short duration, and the lessons from it are not yet clear.

A third regional training initiative used a different approach and may suggest useful lessons, taking into account differing regional conditions. The project on *Action Research on Business Models in Africa* drew lessons from a Phase One pilot and reflected suggestions made in the First Interim Evaluation Report in Phase Two. It was based on a regional, demand-driven approach and included an important built-in accompaniment function that served to overcome the one-size-fits-all limitations observed in other regional initiatives. Participants were enthusiastic about the opportunity provided for ongoing dialogue with the consultant as they devised their plans. The close dialogue and follow-up over time thus proved highly effective in avoiding shortcomings that existed in the Latin American and South Asian initiatives.

A final major TTI initiative was the *Fund for Strengthening Organizational Leadership, Management and Governance*. Launched in the second half of 2017, this fund provided funding for approved projects in the hands of the individual grantees themselves to decide how to contract support tailored to their needs - and with a minimum grantee contribution of 25% of the total cost. From the reporting submitted so far, it appears that several grantees seized this opportunity for tailor-made training of management, while others applied the resources to facilitating the succession process when changing their executive director. This initiative was undertaken too late in the TTI process for the Evaluation Team to observe or judge potential outcomes.

Other smaller initiatives include the launch of a competitive call for young think tank leaders to take part in a capacity building initiative, which supported 24 individuals to attend TTI in Bangkok, and a subgroup of ten to be further supported over a period of nine months through one-to-one mentorship and attendance in the On Think Tanks Winter School in Geneva in 2019.⁶² Various gender and other types of training were provided over the course of Phase Two, some of which were ongoing

and/or reporting was not yet complete at the time this report was prepared. TTI has expressed considerable pride in its support to gender responsive budgeting, but the Evaluation Team has found no evidence in available reporting⁶³ to show significant outcomes on the the ability of either the individuals or the grantee organizations to influence policy. Another gender-focused project, TTI's Gender Action Learning Project, used a Gender Action Learning modality with think tanks to support their work to advance gender equality. As this project was still underway at the time of the evaluation, available reporting described the achievement of activities rather than identifying outcomes.

Reporting on capacity development initiatives tends to note how individuals indicate that they benefited and at times have applied new skills, but the evidence is inevitably too anecdotal and it is too early to determine an overall contribution to the grantees' capacities. The Evaluation Team's efforts to triangulate this reporting in interviews of the leadership within the sample cohort have generally indicated that awareness of the value of this support (as well as the overall interest) was generally quite low. Several directors were unable to recall if they had sent anyone to attend, and if they did they were unaware of how the attendees (much less their organizations as a whole) may have benefited.

While the intention in design was clearly to complement core funding, in reality it has proven more challenging to link such support to the broader capacity development trajectories in a given grantee organization. These initiatives were also somewhat fragmented, serving a limited number of grantees and with uncertain follow-up (with the notable exception of the accompaniment function in the business models support described above). Based on a review of the reporting on these initiatives the Evaluation Team concludes that, as they were time-bound and piecemeal, they are therefore unlikely to constitute a significant contribution to future outcomes.

Collaboration and networking

The final (and overlapping) area of capacity development has been support for collaboration and networking between grantees and with other policy research actors for peer learning and to establish joint initiatives. Networking within the TTI community has operated at a regional level through annual regional grantee meetings in South Asia, and globally through three *TTI Exchanges* (TTIX) over the course of the full TTI period. One particularly notable outcome of TTIX 2015 was the opportunity it afforded to Southern Voice to bring its members together in sustained policy engagement related to the Sustainable Development Goals. Other regional networking initiatives included ILAIPP, support to some smaller networks through the Opportunity Fund and informal networking that has occurred as part of training events. In West Africa, grantees initiated plans for a regional network, the West African Think Tank Network (WATTNET), which was launched in September 2015.⁶⁴ Thus far WATTNET has not gained significant traction. Bilateral partnerships between grantees,⁶⁵ usually financed through the Opportunity Fund, however, did generate some concrete research initiatives and sustained collaboration.

TTI stated intentions for support to networks were primarily to leverage networking to generate partnerships and broker collaboration (as opposed to establishing networks *per se*). Although some

collaborative initiatives have emerged, outcomes in this regard have been modest. With the exception of Southern Voice,⁶⁶ the networks that would be expected to provide an institutional infrastructure for sustained collaboration have not generated strong ownership. The Evaluation Team judges the prospects for achieving further outcomes from the relationships created with TTI support to be limited.

Feedback from grantees nonetheless suggests that TTI-related networking and collaboration fora have clearly been valued, primarily for the informal contacts and discussions. They have certainly supported the exchange of experience and knowledge and in a few cases grantees have led to the development of joint plans. It is less clear, though, how much they may have been able to contribute to creating more significant collaborative efforts based on a sense of common identity or interests of grantees, given the diversities of institutional size, history, thematic areas, intellectual and contextual positioning.

An additional aspect of networking, that the Evaluation Team judges to have been more influential, has been the large range of investments that the grantees have made from their core funding in establishing their own networks and collaborative initiatives beyond the 'TTI family'. Data from ATRs and interviews with grantees from the sample cohort revealed a very large number of examples of how access to flexible funds has allowed young researchers, administrative staff and grantee leaders to travel to conferences, meetings and other activities where they have developed their own networks and collaborative research initiatives, largely sectorally defined. This aspect of networking and collaboration has perhaps been 'under the radar' in TTI discussions, but has been of vital importance, especially for younger researchers. Based on interviews with young researchers the Evaluation Team judges that outcomes of this aspect of networking in terms of collaboration are significant and likely to be sustained (even though this cannot be verified).

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

The following summarizes the findings of the evaluation of the process around evolving capacity development initiatives during the course of TTI Phase Two:

Development over time: *Capacity development modalities and initiatives*

Baseline (2015): Capacity development modalities had been broadly targeted and therefore (with the exception of core funding) had not responded sufficiently to individual grantee needs and expectations.

Interim findings (2017): Notable progress in targeting through the Action Research on Business Models in Africa; but mixed results from Opportunity Funds and growing concerns about whether ILAIPP would become a relevant and sustainable mechanism.

Final evaluation findings (2019): Capacity development efforts were successful when built around an accompaniment model and clear demand from grantees; otherwise they showed to be of questionable value.

It is evident that the contribution made by RPOs through their accompaniment and advisory role with grantees has been a highly valued component of the TTI intervention. The evidence suggests that the more formal capacity building has been less appreciated, although it has not been without value. However both the formal and informal networking that has been generated has helped contribute to grantees' knowledge, thinking and strategizing. Without question there are those grantees who have gone through accelerated or transformational change who can speak to the critical role that the RPOs have played as interlocutors during that process.

Other grantees that might be more within the consolidation or survival trajectory of change have valued a range of support, but for reasons of context and/or leadership have not necessarily been able to leverage it to significantly change the outcomes. The implications of this are that, apart from the obvious benefits of core funding, it may well be the continued accompaniment role of a trusted and capable external resource person that provides the greatest dividends to think tanks strengthening as grantees are better able to engage with institutional capacity issues. Equally, more formal capacity development interventions need to be designed in a way that is linked closely to longer-term capacity development trajectories. It is questionable whether a global initiative with an extremely heterogeneous range of grantees is an appropriate vehicle for this tailoring.

f. The struggle towards sustainability

Key findings

Progress towards sustainability presents a mixed picture. Even among the grantees that have undergone transformational change, only a few have diversified and grown their funding sources during the TTI period; have in place a working resource mobilization plan; and now enjoy relatively certain funding for their core functions into the future. Many grantees have made modest progress, most are in a more stable situation than before receiving TTI support, but funding levels overall remain endemically insecure. Some are already struggling to deal with the end of TTI funding, falling back to past reliance on more consultancy work and/or depending on a shrinking number of permanent senior staff. Sustainability remains strongest among the grantees that already had a fair degree of financial stability before TTI, often due to long established endowments.

As highlighted in the discussion of human resources, the lynchpin of sustainability has been the ability of grantees to build (and retain) a core of high quality staff who can deliver high quality research outputs and maintain internal mechanisms for research quality within the organization. Where funding volatility is threatening this feature, there is cause for concern. Consequently, it appears that any implicit assumption or hope that long periods of core funding could prevent future funding crises does not hold.

Funding environments and uncertainties about exits

The majority of grantees appear to be somewhat more sustainable today than they were before TTI, but a significant proportion will respond to the end of TTI with downsizing or a focus more on short-term projects in the near future, largely due to a reduction in flexible and long-term, predictable funding. Overall revenue levels are generally being maintained so far, but the quali-

ty of funding is declining, i.e., projects with insufficient overheads and costing that fails to cover administrative and research coordination functions are becoming a larger proportion of financial portfolios. Most grantees are optimistic that research quality will be maintained, but the Evaluation Team sees grounds for concern. The competition for funding and for attracting and retaining high quality staff is intensifying, just as the TTI grantees' comparative advantage shrinks with reduced access to flexible funding.

TTI's approach, as it was originally envisaged by its funders, was a way of testing the value of the selected modalities to apply in subsequent programming. Indeed, the focus on ownership and capacity development that characterized TTI can be seen as a distillation of lessons (long known, but perhaps seldom applied) about how to promote sustainability more generally. Recent research into sustainable institutional support suggests that investments in capacity and ownership should be applied as part of a final 'exit strategy'. This implies that TTI in many respects applied a highly appropriate 'exit strategy' from the start of Phase One, even if it was not formulated or explicitly labelled as such.⁶⁷

Despite this, some grantees felt that a more explicit, articulated and sequenced support both to sustainability challenges and resource mobilization should have been more integral to the design of Phase Two. While the decision to end TTI after ten years was made clear to grantees from the outset of the program, some felt that this 'warning' was not sufficient to support their planning. There were considerable variations in the extent to which grantees were intentional in their preparations for the end of TTI support. In South Asia, for instance, the question of *'Is there life after TTI'* was discussed formally in March 2013, including subsequent engagement with the Indian Council for Social Science Research.

In general, during the course of Phase Two the intensity of the sustainability discussion increased, and with this the pressure to find solutions. RPOs helped grantees to think through options and provided advice, but with mixed results. Some grantees at TTIX 2018 pointed out that closing of the programme and discussing the sustainability challenge should have been perceived of as more a joint responsibility between TTI management and grantees, and that mere warnings about the impending end of support were insufficient. The grantees acknowledged that they themselves had a large degree of responsibility for insufficient preparation for the ending of TTI, but they also felt that a closer dialogue would have been beneficial.

In addition, grantees reported that in their view neither TTI management nor its funders had a clear vision on how TTI support should end.⁶⁸ Several directors from sample cohort stated that they had not been involved or actively consulted in the process when the last phase of TTI was designed. One of them commented:

"Of course they should have made us participate. But fact is we did not ask to be included, either. In hindsight, we should really have been more proactive here, that should have been our responsibility. This last phase could certainly have been designed in a better way in relation to life after TTI, at least for many of us."⁶⁹

These frustrations were partly a result of changing conditions underway over the past decade. At the beginning of TTI, there were hopes that prevailing commitments to aid effectiveness and long-term, predictable core funding would lead to TTI becoming a model for widespread application of new modalities after TTI. This is one of the reasons that TTI as a whole was not seen to need an exit strategy *per se*, since other funders were expected to fill the gap post-TTI as part of applying their commitments to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.⁷⁰

As these hopes faded along with declining donor commitments to these principles, a vacuum appeared that could not be sufficiently addressed by the sustainability-related initiatives of Phase Two. New hazards were appearing, but the TTI response was seen by grantees to be insufficient. For example, in South Asia the increasing tendency by some donor agencies to contract large international consulting firms for research and analysis was seen as a major threat to some grantees. In Africa donors began to withdraw from long-standing basket funds and various core funding initiatives relied on by some grantees.⁷¹ In Latin America there was a dramatic reduction in funding from traditional donors, as many countries no longer qualified for aid due to their middle-income status.

Resource mobilization

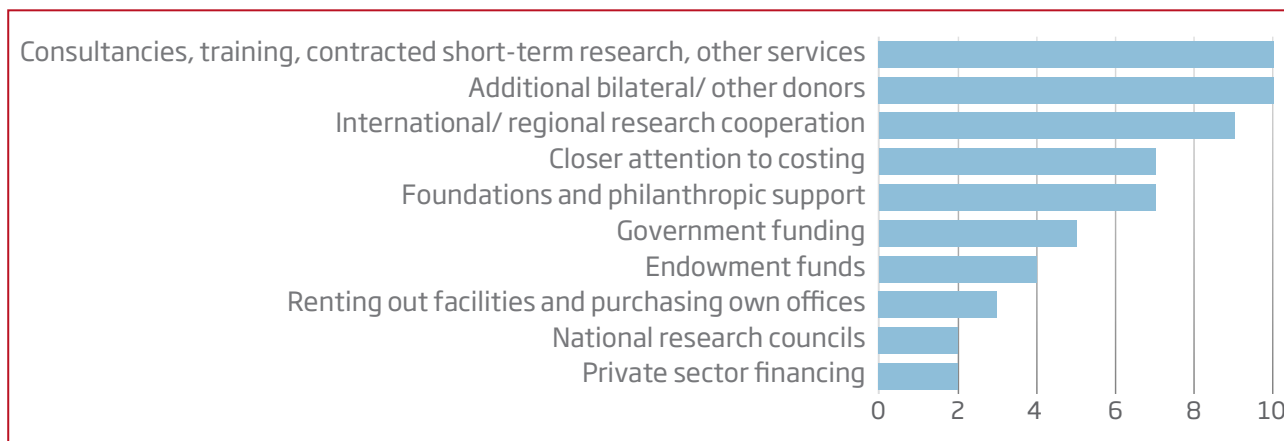
At the end of TTI Phase One, many grantees lacked clear resource mobilization or business plans and, where these existed, data show that levels of implementation were low.⁷² At the beginning of Phase Two, the focus of grantee efforts to achieve sustainability was often on individual components of a 'business model' rather than an integrated strategic approach. Concerns about sustainability and resource mobilization were leading many grantees to revisit their resource mobilization approaches. But this was frequently done in an *ad hoc* manner.

The Action Research on Business Models was the most comprehensive effort made to address this deficiency. Interviews showed that this combination of training and follow-up advice was highly effective in stimulating a broader perspective based on identifying and developing strategies that reflect a grantee's 'value proposition'. However, at the end of TTI the Evaluation Team could not trace concrete outcomes (in terms of enhanced access to resources) to this activity. The Evaluation Team judges that it is plausible that this attitudinal change towards resource mobilization may generate financial results in the longer term, but these outcomes will result from a longer process of conversations between grantees and their funders, and these conversations have only recently begun.

At the end of Phase Two, grantees' approaches to resource mobilization varied depending on their (often pre-existing) capacity, networks and the opportunities that arise. Grantees from the sample cohort described how resource mobilization is now more diversified than before TTI, but that this also reflects the fact that research funding has become more project and consultancy based over the past decade.⁷³ Grantees were negotiating a difficult balance between (a) 'healthy' diversification, focused on finding a larger range of financiers ready to provide reasonably flexible and long-term support that is aligned with the grantee strategies; and (b) 'survival-oriented' diversification, focused on accessing a greater volume of short-term projects from various 'clients'.

The following figure summarizes the main resource mobilization sources being targeted by grantees in the sample cohort.

Figure 7: Approaches to mobilizing resources, sample cohort (references made by grantees)



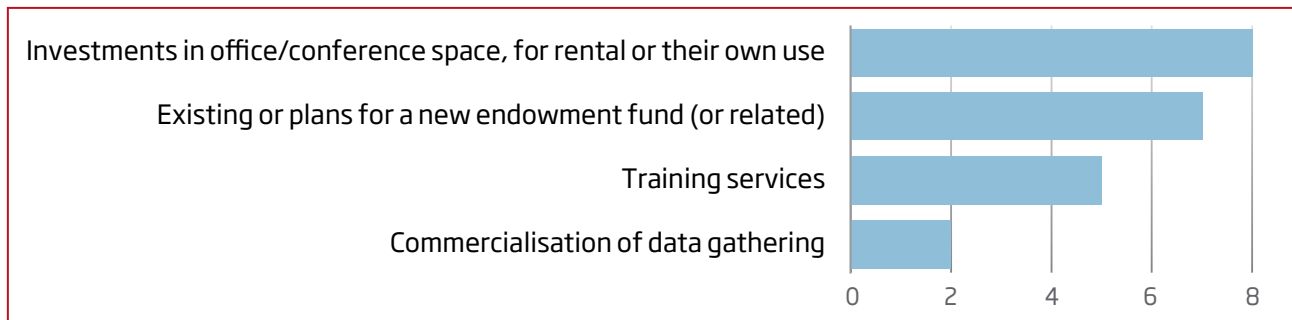
Source: Sample cohort interviews 2016-2017

RPOs report⁷⁴ that, in addition to resource mobilization plans, grantees have also undertaken activities to expand their networks, mobilize their Board members in support of their work, and improve their research proposal-writing in order to increase the range of funding opportunities. Also, RPOs have helped grantees with introductions to potential funders, which in some cases has led to positive results, including research funding from IDRC.

Those grantees that are in the process of creating endowment funds find that this requires considerable time and foresight. In South Asia, endowment funds and a focus on building reserves from ‘savings’ were common pre-TTI, and TTI core funding was sometimes used as a cushion to make savings and increase their future capacity to contribute to sustainability.⁷⁵ IPS in Sri Lanka, for example, now has a sufficient endowment fund to secure all core operating costs since they could leave their endowment to remain untouched over the past decade. In other regions that were starting from scratch in TTI Phase Two, it is unlikely that revenues will be sufficient to build viable endowments. One grantee commented: “We would have had an endowment fund now if we had started creating it at the beginning of TTI”.

Apart from relatively minor income generated by providing training courses and selling data, a considerable number of grantees have primarily focused research mobilization efforts on increasing their capacity to bid for and win research projects. There is an expectation that such short-term types of research offer their best prospects for maintaining a modicum of financial stability. The main options for resource mobilization being considered in the full cohort are summarized in the figure below. It should be noted that the actual financial outcomes of these strategies remained uncertain among most grantees at the end of TTI.

Figure 8: Examples of resource mobilization strategies, full cohort (number of grantees reporting)



Source: Full cohort interviews 2016-2017

Beyond the priority potential sources listed, some stated intentions to focus on the private sector and local philanthropy to generate resources seem more of a hope than a reality, both in Africa and Latin America, despite some diversification to local sources of funding. In India it may become a more secure route.⁷⁶ Particularly in Africa, funding from governments remains significant, and RPOs reported having urged grantees to redouble their efforts to access more support from governments (with little apparent success). In Latin America and South Asia such approaches are seen as creating a relationship with government that is ‘too close for comfort’, although a number of the older Indian grantees still have some staff costs covered from the Indian Council for Social Science Research.

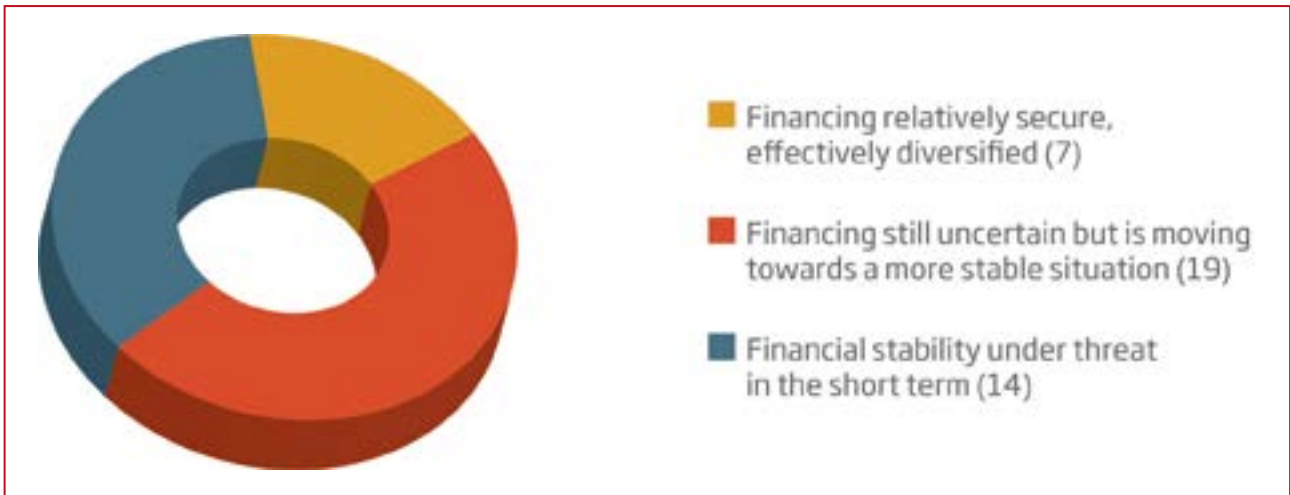
The RPOs portray⁷⁷ a wide spectrum of grantees at different stages of dependency on TTI funds and differing levels of associated risks. IDRC has also undertaken synthesized risk assessments of all the TTI grantees and findings show that despite some variations over the years, the overall levels of risk have changed only marginally. Hence, of the 43 grantees in Africa, South Asia and Latin America only 4 were judged to have reduced their risk one level, another 4 grantees had actually deteriorated while the remaining 35 were assessed at the same level as when they entered the program one decade ago.⁷⁸

At first glance, this may sound quite negative, but this lack of change could also be seen as a success, considering that most grantees have grown over the past decade (particularly during Phase One) and given that the overall funding environment they face has largely deteriorated. ‘Standing still’ may therefore be seen as a success. It also suggests that even a ten-year grant will not ‘vaccinate’ against financial risk, but it is just one element of an ongoing struggle that for almost all grantees began before and will continue long after TTI.

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

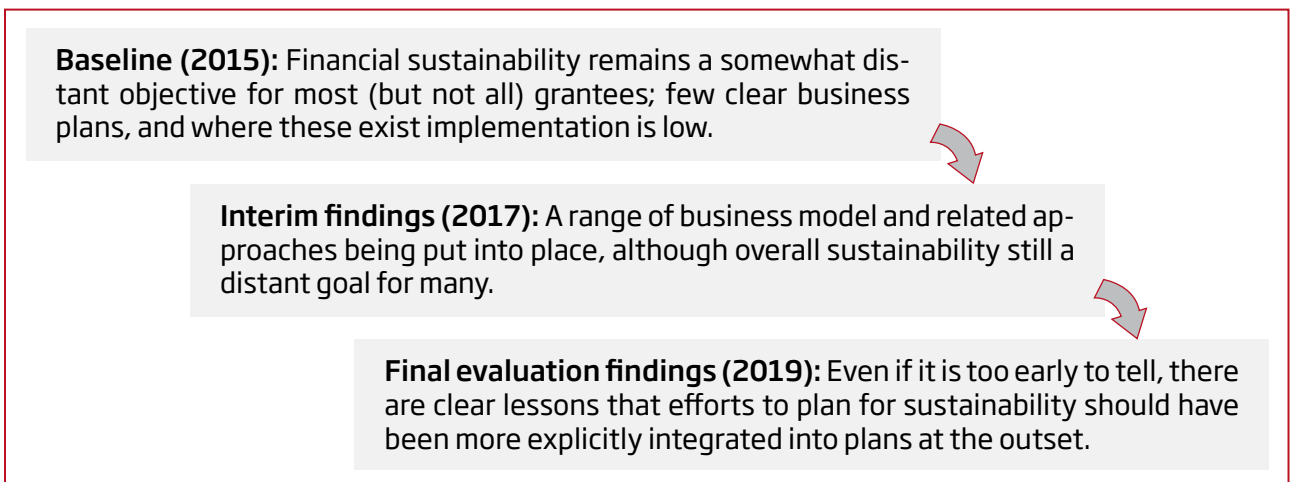
The Evaluation Team’s collective assessment of the proportions of grantees facing different levels of financial risk is presented in the figure below.

Figure 9: Financial sustainability and stability at the end of TTI (40 grantees)



The following summarizes the findings of the evaluation concerning changes in resource mobilization during TTI Phase Two:

Development over time: *Financial sustainability and resource mobilization*



Most grantees emphasized that TTI contributed to strengthening an institutional culture for producing quality research and policy engagement, a culture that is expected to live on after TTI. They judge that these reinforced processes and systems are unlikely to disappear, even if resources decline and their organizations are forced to downsize.⁷⁹ TTI is credited with providing an important supportive function in their thinking about sustainability of processes and systems (in addition to narrower concerns for financial sustainability). However, these two aspects of financial and institutional sustainability are inter-related. If key leaders and senior researchers cannot be retained on long-term contracts, and young researchers lose the space they have enjoyed to set their own research agendas, the underpinnings of this culture of engaging with policy makers based on strong evidence may be endangered.⁸⁰

3. Enhancing Research Quality for Policy Influence

Introduction

This chapter investigates the evidence in relation to the second set of evaluation questions: *To what extent do stronger and more sustainable think tanks lead to changes in policy and practice and if so how?* As discussed in the previous chapter, the majority of grantees are visibly stronger and some markedly so, although prospects for sustainability remain elusive. The chapter reviews the evidence of changes in research quality and the implications of this for policy influence.

a. TTI outcomes in the context of broader processes of using research to influence policy

Key findings

For policy think tanks, research quality is multi-dimensional, requiring both scientific merit but also properties of relevance and perceived independence. The TTI grantees follow diverse paths to achieve this research quality, and have notably strengthened the processes by which they do so. But the relationship between research quality and policy influence is complex. Influence depends on the standards of credible evidence and solid argument, together with the relationships that can be built with policy actors. TTI has contributed to grantees' capacities to produce credible analyses and to develop relationships with other research institutions and with policy actors, further underpinning their credibility.

This reflects the grantees' awareness of the need to tailor their quality focus to those areas that are expected to enhance their influence on policy, understanding that there may be a tension between a focus on internal standards and efforts to focus on qualities that lead to influence.

TTI support to research quality for policy influence

A central realization which came out of discussions at TTI 2015 in Istanbul (and as IDRC has also found more broadly⁸¹) was that the quality of research for policy has multiple dimensions. While scientific merit is a necessary condition, it is still not sufficient to fully judge research quality. Relevance, legitimacy, usefulness and impact are other key dimensions, and the assessment of these qualities is not just in the hands of researchers. The findings on research quality from this evaluation are fully in accord with this broad view of what constitutes research quality. Moreover, the comments of external observers interviewed by the Evaluation Team on individual grantees frequently speak precisely to these dimensions of relevance and usefulness.

The Policy Community Survey (PCS) data collected by TTI shows a considerable variety of positive and negative perceptions of the changes in the quality of the work of the grantees, due presumably to the varied dimensions of research quality that the respondents value. Furthermore, the PCS findings on the role and credibility of policy research as a whole in a given country show considerable continuity over time. Changes in the policy discourse that have occurred appear to primarily relate to the chang-

ing nature of policy information flows and levels of freedom of expression (e.g., due to the rise of social media, shrinking of civic space, etc.), rather than the roles of individual think tanks themselves. This is interpreted by the Evaluation Team as further underlining the importance of understanding the importance of an initiative such as TTI as part of long-term and contextually dependent processes. This also speaks to the value of steady, long-term investments in policy 'ecosystems', and the illusory nature of belief in the wider value of projects that aim for specific changes to a single policy.

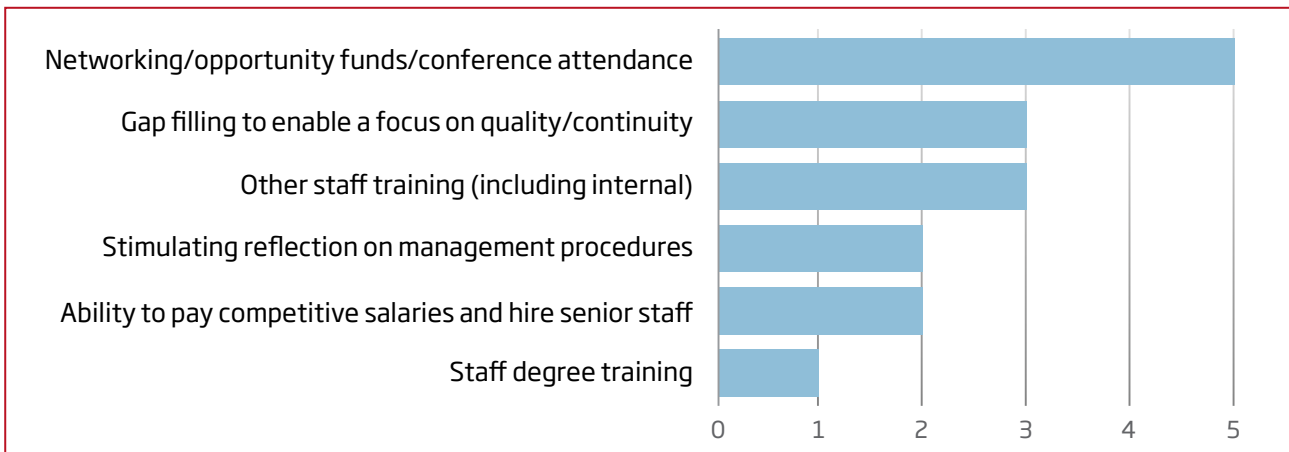
Outside observers naturally judge relevance and credibility in relation to what they themselves find to be relevant or credible, i.e., in relation to their own needs and expectations. The Evaluation Team has analyzed the PCS data for the sample cohort grantees and has not found any overall congruence with our own assessments of changes over the years. We attribute this divergence as being related to these different perceptions, and also due to a probable time-lag, as outside observers primarily judge grantees based on past engagements and use of their outputs, including before TTI Phase Two. The Evaluation Team also interprets this discrepancy between PCS findings and our own findings as constituting evidence of how the results of TTI investments may relate more to positioning within specific themes (i.e., within specific 'ecosystems') where changes in research quality have been more apparent. This contrasts with the views of the overall so-called "policy community", which in fact consists of many communities, wherein awareness of the work of a given think tank is likely to be far more diffuse.

The span of research activities carried out by the grantees stretches from the empirical to the theoretical and from data compilation and analysis to qualitative and quantitative field research, to more conceptual and abstract investigations directed at 'theory making'. They cover a wide range of epistemological frameworks, ontologies, methods and values. This is reflected in the very diverse range of grantee publications that stretch from putting information in the public sphere using data analysis, to bringing accessible evidence into the public discourse, to publications in international journals and books directed more at influencing the academic discourse. Publications in refereed journals and academic books often respond primarily to criteria of scientific merit rather than wider research quality considerations. Most TTI grantees have few such publications, and focus their work more on direct policy influence or (in some cases) the demands of a given user or client. Indeed, even at the end of TTI, some grantees produce relatively few publicly available publications at all.

But in the view of the Evaluation Team, publications only represent part of the story. Published or not, research activities should all have a common requirement and commitment to ensuring clarity over what was done, how it was done to enhance credibility, and the interpretation and the logical consistency of the claims made from how the research was undertaken.

As Figure 10 shows, grantees used TTI funding in diverse ways to maintain their standards of research quality in their organizations. It needs to be borne in mind that the grantees were at very different starting positions at the outset of the grant period with respect to levels of research quality, in terms of the available human resources and the robustness of internal processes to ensure quality. The measures taken to invest in research quality ranged from using the funds to train new PhDs, to recruiting (with the help of attractive salaries) high quality researchers, both those who were young and promising and those who were senior and established. Staff training, mentoring and opportunities to learn from peers through conferences were also supported.

Figure 10: TTI support to research quality, sample cohort (number of grantees reporting)



Source: Interviews with sample cohort 2016-2017 From second interim report

In addition, processes were initiated, some more formal than others, to improve internal mentoring and review processes and to support a research culture that critically debated the nature of data, methods and interpretation. For some, these processes were already inherent to the culture of the grantee, in others they were less well established at the start of the grant period but have become more so given the emphasis on these research quality dimensions. As the case studies show,⁸² all grantees maintain acceptable research quality, and approximately half can be judged as good.

Indeed, most grantees from the sample cohort reported that the core grant had enabled them to follow their own research and strategic plans and in so doing continue to develop their cultures of research. The case studies also illustrate how grantees took steps to ensure the rigor of their research by selecting and investing in appropriate data sets, learning about and applying new data collection and analysis methods, and applying tighter supervision of enumerators and field level data collection procedures. These improvements cannot be traced directly to TTI, but it can be plausibly inferred that the TTI financed strengthened research coordination, internal peer review and increased exposure to international research standards have all contributed to a focus on rigor.

Context and the relationship between ‘quality’ and influence

The ability of different grantees to leverage improved research quality and reputation into engagements in the policy realm has varied in relation to the levels of freedom of expression and other contextual factors facing them. Grantees report a high degree of volatility concerning demand and respect for research in general (and their own research in particular), but generally state that overall the demand is increasing.⁸³ Furthermore, grantees are very clear that TTI helped them to become more intentional in leveraging quality research for influencing policy. TTI is seen by the grantees to have played an important role in helping them to focus greater attention on how to produce different types of quality research to achieve policy influence within these complex and dynamic arenas.

However, implicit in the policy influencing model of the TTI Results Framework⁸⁴ is a somewhat questionable linear model that moves from good researchers working in an enabling environment, to good research products, to policy influence and impact. There are also inherent assumptions

about the demand for evidence, about the rationalities of bureaucracies in responding to ‘good evidence’, and about what it means to engage in different but interlinked state, private sector and civic spaces. In real life, strategic practices of policy engagement and influence range from direct dialogue with senior politicians ‘under the radar’ of the public debate, to public data activism and partnerships with advocacy organizations, to ‘proper’ evidence-informed debate.

Each form of engagement has its specific set of demands for different ‘qualities’ of research, as well as implications for the coalitions of actors (beyond the grantee itself) that will generate these qualities. For example, both CPR in its accountability initiative and CBGA (both in India) produce evidence and data that are used by advocacy organizations for policy engagement. CBGA gathers and analyzes the government data, while the advocacy organizations put ‘the adjectives’ on this data analysis. Efforts to maintain quality cannot be kept separate from the political processes that drive such collaborations and determine entry points for influence. There are benefits to having both a short-term tactical and long-term strategic game to develop research qualities that underpin the relationships needed to exert this influence.

An additional dimension to how grantees have engaged in these short and long-term approaches to finding entry points for policy influence is when researchers look even further ‘outside the box’ and use research to reframe fundamental ways that policy is perceived, as described in the following box:

Box 9: Two contrasting entry points for using research to reframe the policy discourse

EDRI researchers had observed that the quality of the national bureaucracy was deteriorating due to shrinking salaries and performance incentives. As a result, there was a growing disconnect between the intentions of high-level policy, which in Ethiopia has been oriented towards following a development path similar to that in East Asia, and the reality of impoverished and disillusioned frontline bureaucrats. There was a recognized need to fill the knowledge gap around the nature of this disconnect. One researcher stated that “We saw a need to delve into this deeply to understand the state industrial apparatus. As a developmental state we realized that the narrative has to trickle down to the frontline; analyze whether the altruism that underpins the developmental state narrative is really there.” When the research was presented, authorities recognized its relevance, even if they were sceptical of the likelihood that underlying structures could be changed.⁸⁵

Research by MISR into the history of land restitution in Burundi is an example of how their research is designed to reflect a long-term historical perspective, relating issues to the precolonial and colonial periods as well as the different phases of the development of the Burundi Land Commission. Also, the overall research program of which this study is a part (*Beyond Criminal Justice*), emphasizes a perspective outside of the narrow focus on victims and retribution pursued elsewhere. The research was designed to take the reader through the history of how land issues have been addressed and help to understand the limitations of continuing on similar paths. In research such as this, MISR situates its analysis as “theory making”, which is intended to take a distinctly different stance than from what MISR refers to as the “how-to guides”, which dominated MISR’s work before becoming part of TTI.

This “theory making” is, by nature, somewhat removed from the immediate concerns of most policy actors, but it exemplifies the range of entry points that grantees apply in their efforts to reframe policy discourses -from stimulating academic debate on underlying theoretical perspectives to discussing the concrete dysfunctions of incentives inherent in public sector salary scales that are out of sync with grand developmental ambitions.⁸⁶

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

Through its emphasis on research quality, TTI has undoubtedly raised the flag on its significance and for many, but not all of the grantees, it has encouraged a move towards more systematic and formal procedures to ensure good research quality. Some grantees already had a strong research culture that promoted and valued quality. Given the different dimensions of research quality and the diffuse processes of policy engagement and influencing, tracing the effects of the contribution through to outcomes is difficult. It is also the case that research quality does not necessarily lead to policy influence, which is subject to many other factors. There is no doubt that in all of the grantees who have achieved transformational or accelerated change, research quality has contributed to the specific policy influence that they seek to attain. They can often be seen as subject leaders or influencers in the areas in which they work. That cannot always be said of grantees who have consolidated or simply survived, although this does not necessarily mean that they do not meet appropriate quality standards. Improving research quality is a difficult and long-term process. As much as anything it is a recognition of the need to invest in a think tank's ability to recruit, retain and build on the capacities of high quality staff who can contribute towards a research culture that may be the most useful lesson from TTI's support.

b. Quality assurance and outcomes in research quality and credibility

Key findings

Grantees have a range of approaches to assure the quality of their research. Formal external peer review is common, but is by no means the same cornerstone of quality assurance as it is with academic institutions. Informal and often internal peer discussions, staff seminars and coaching of junior researchers by senior colleagues are generally more important, as is validation with stakeholders from the policy community.

The research quality of about half of the publications assessed was judged to be good or high while the others were acceptable. Specific weaknesses related to adequate accounts of methods and critical engagement with relevant literature. However research quality is specific to purpose. Credibility of policy relevant research is not directly determined by quality and grantees stressed that the quality of a given publication is not representative of the quality of the overall research processes that they are engaged in.

A multifaceted approach to quality assurance

TTI support to organizational systems for quality assurance has contributed to outcomes in terms of improved systems for ensuring the quality of outputs from individual researchers. The case studies and sample cohort interviews have both demonstrated that TTI influence on quality assurance has had various elements, including:

- The introduction or strengthening of peer review processes
- The exposure of researchers to training and networking
- Internal mentoring
- Greater efforts to hold regular internal seminars to provide feedback

- Association with universities and affiliated senior research associates
- Financing of external peer reviews
- Recognition that validation with external policy stakeholders can enhance quality

Throughout Phase Two, grantees made steady progress in creating effective systems for peer reviewing of concept notes, research proposals and research papers. To assure the quality of various stages (preparing, conducting and editing research papers), grantees developed policies, standards and procedures to guide and formalize the peer review processes and systems. Grantees were applying clearer institutionalized processes for peer review, as well as more concerted (but not always successful) efforts to engage appropriate external peer reviewers.⁸⁷

In the case studies for this evaluation the grantees particularly emphasized what they described as relatively informal internal and external seminars as being the main channels for receiving feedback to ensure rigor. Internal seminars provided peer feedback. In the case of younger researchers, mentoring was significantly contributing to the maintainance of rigor. These internal review mechanisms were often informal through workshops and meetings and may include board members, heads of departments, directors and senior researchers in general. Some grantees used TTI financing to appoint research coordinators to ensure that these reviews were given appropriate attention in institutional plans and that advisory links were established between senior and junior researchers. In these generally informal settings, younger researchers have received feedback, sometimes engaging a mentor from inside or outside their institute. This enhances the research capability considerably and contributes to attaining standards required for publications.

External review processes tended to be more formal, often in a workshop setting with government, civil society organizations, funders and other stakeholders. Case studies for this evaluation illustrate in various ways how external seminars, presentations and workshops have often provided a validation function. A second, related category which also has become more frequent consists of external peer review. Locally organized external peer review was sometimes seen as a 'warm up' for the junior researchers, who may go on to publish in international academic journals. In some instances, peer reviewers from multilateral banks, funders and specific academic specialists provided advice as well.

Box 10: CRES qualifying for support from NOPOOR

CRES in Senegal has strengthened and expanded its scientific research production through applying its own quality assurance mechanisms combined with the independent judgement of an EU supported project, NOPOOR, which finances research across the globe. That fact that CRES qualified for support from NOPOOR was a direct result of TTI support. CRES was able to meet the standards of NOPOOR, including the number of CRES publications in international refereed journals. Also, the fact that CRES was a TTI grantee and had gone through significant organizational development was beneficial in the selection procedure.

As a result, CRES researchers received grants for a period of 5 years which increased the number and quality of its research outputs. The research publications generated, and CRES involvement in dissemination activities through conferences, enhanced both the organization's reputation and its influence on policy makers. CRES asserted that it had strengthened its position and NOPOOR created more opportunities to present their work to national and international policy makers.

Quality assurance was interpreted in various ways. In sample cohort interviews a few grantees described their quality assurance as setting and monitoring standards and tracking staff performance, largely related to the success rate of research proposals and the number of research papers accepted by national and international refereed journals. Grantees have also stressed how they have invested resources in professional editing for readability among a diverse audience. This also facilitates the development of policy briefs and other material for distribution to different types of stakeholders.

Finally, grantees have also initiated cooperation with temporary senior research associates, often university-based, to ensure quality in areas where their staff lack expertise. These arrangements may provide fresh input and technical expertise in areas where the think tank lacks experience. Grantees with limited senior staff have found that such arrangements are unavoidable if they are to prepare competitive proposals and conduct research with elements outside the skill sets of available staff. Overall, however, the benefits from this type of arrangement are mixed. Challenges may arise due to a lack of identification with the grantee's mission by the research associate, and high costs. Concerns were also noted that research associates coming from an academic environment may have insufficient commitments to producing outputs relevant to policy makers. Moreover, continuity of the research programs may suffer when research becomes too dependent on temporary research associates.⁸⁸

Publication quality

Given the limited range of publications that the Evaluation Team was able to assess, based on the material reviewed our analysis should be seen as only indicative. Nonetheless, in the case studies the evaluation judged approximately half of the publications reviewed to be of good or high quality, while the other half were of acceptable quality with some deficiencies as described below.

When discussing publications reviewed in the case studies, some grantees were insistent that the outputs they were most proud of and saw as most influential built on a consistent track record of high quality research, even if the publication itself might be judged as of lower quality due to it being written so as to engage with non-academic and non-specialized readers. The Evaluation Team judges that in most cases an appropriate balance was found, but the varied audiences for the research makes this difficult to confirm.

The evaluation found that the methods were all judged to be good or acceptable, with an approximately even distribution between these two categories. None were judged to be unacceptable by the Evaluation Team. Strengths noted generally referred to the quality of the local contextual analysis and the related anchoring of the analysis in a policy discourse that is relevant to national concerns.

The most widespread weakness, noted with several publications reviewed, was that the methods were insufficiently described (or not described at all), which naturally makes it difficult to judge the research quality. There were also some gaps noted in referencing broader empirical and the-

oretical literature, and in a couple of cases insufficient source critique. In one instance the report failed to acknowledge potential vested interests of the research institute itself. In a few cases, the limited quantity of data collected was of concern, with claims being made that were judged by the Evaluation Team as going beyond what the data could support.

As stressed throughout this evaluation report, the extent to which research is perceived as being credible by users is, in the view of the Evaluation Team, the most important metric of research quality. Other more standard categories of research quality, such as the credibility of the data sets, are important, but not sufficient on their own. The case studies and interviews with both researchers and outside observers brought out how targeting and tailoring outputs to a clearly defined set of users, together with proactive stakeholder engagement to validate and encourage ownership of findings were perceived as by far the most important approaches for ensuring credibility. The other most common determinant of credibility is that of the pre-existing reputation of the individual researchers, the grantee's leadership and the grantee institution itself. The flip side of this, as will be discussed further below, is that where a grantee is not respected due to being associated with the 'wrong' set of stakeholders or political camp, credibility may be questioned regardless of the rigor employed in the research itself.

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

Changes in quality assurance of research during the course of Phase Two have been incremental rather than dramatic and can be summarized as follows:

Development over time: *Quality assurance*

Baseline (2015): Actual implementation of formal research quality assurance measures uncertain, whereas it is clear that an organizational culture of critical discussion on research quality is firmly established.

Interim findings (2017): Quality assurance procedures largely in place and continued progress in reinforcing a 'culture of research' through internal and informal dialogue on research quality.

Final evaluation findings (2019): Steady progress in quality assurance, i.e., formal and informal peer review and mentoring integrated into approaches; some possible risks though due to loss of resources for internal research coordination and dialogue functions.

At the end of TTI the main overall research quality outcomes were a combination of stronger researchers being in place and greater commitments to ensuring research quality as part of the organizational culture of the grantees. Although it is difficult to assess the consistency with which review systems were being used,⁸⁹ the procedures and policies were mostly well in place.⁹⁰ How-

ever, there is a risk with a few grantees that, without core funding covering the costs of common functions, they may lose research coordinators and permanent senior researchers who currently ensure that the procedures are followed and who have the capacity to provide quality peer review. At the end of TTI support, some examples of increasing staff loss were noted. Although the large majority of grantees appeared to be stable, at least two no longer had any national staff with doctoral degrees.

The meaning of research quality varies greatly across the grantees given their thematic focus and where they are positioned along a spectrum from theoretical to practical knowledge generation. In addition to more common academic standards, grantees and outside observers also see relevance, independence and credibility as core attributes of research quality. While TTI's attention to standard measures of research quality was a priority with some grantees, it is in linking quality to influence through active engagement and communications that TTI's contributions were most visible and valued.

It is certainly true that those grantees that went through processes of accelerated and transformational change produce quality research, but with diverse attributes of 'quality'. Some of the grantees that have not undergone such change might only meet sufficient quality standards, but this may reflect their chosen ambitions and niche. The links between research quality and policy engagement remain tenuous due to exogenous factors. Even more attenuated are the links between research quality and policy change and practice. While research quality in its various dimensions is clearly an attribute of credibility, policy influencing practices are heavily based on networks of personal relationships, and these have been fortified by the integration of a communications approach. It is investments in these skills and networks that are foundational to policy engagement, as discussed in the following chapter.

4. Positioning for Policy Influence

Introduction

This chapter investigates further the second set of evaluation questions: *To what extent do stronger and more sustainable think tanks lead to changes in policy and practice and if so how?* The chapter reviews the evidence of how changes in grantee efforts to maintain research quality, relevance and independence create conditions for policy influence. It explores the effects of context and discusses the effects of new capacities and approaches to communication and strengthened commitments in contributing to policy influence.

a. Results and relevance in attaining policy influence

Key findings

The position of a given think tank in what some refer to as the 'policy ecosystem' determines what research qualities are likely to generate influence. This positioning demands a high degree of nimbleness given the instability of institutional and political landscapes. Unpredictability about what is recognized as 'truth' and 'evidence' frames their positioning. The grantees have shown a diverse and impressive array of positioning tactics and strategies to keep the policy dialogue going amid often adverse and shifting conditions, with a strong emphasis on maintaining their independence.

Relevance is a key value for the grantees and is seen as a central aspect of the bridge between efforts to pursue research quality and attain policy influence. But relevance is a contingent quality and is influenced by shifting politics and interests. Grantees have to constantly work to maintain relevance through their networks, both formal and informal.

Core support from TTI has made a significant contribution to grantees' much needed manoeuvring room. A meta level outcome to which TTI has made a major contribution is that grantees are demonstratively better placed to engage in their respective policy ecosystems due to their increased credibility, respected staff, financial independence and enhanced communications skills.

Understanding positioning versus looking for 'wins' in assessing policy influence

With regard to policy influence, the Evaluation Team judges that the outcomes to which TTI has contributed can be most clearly and verifiably discerned in relation to 'positioning', as opposed to directly triggering policy change *per se*. Actual policy change is part of the TTI sphere of interest, but is almost entirely outside of TTI's sphere of influence. Grantee positioning reflects the conditions that TTI has helped to create for eventual policy influence, but the highly politicized realm of how that positioning is successfully or unsuccessfully used to leverage change is beyond what TTI can be expected to have significantly influenced.

Largely for these reasons, the Evaluation Team has chosen to primarily focus on positioning as a proxy indicator for influence on policy. We judge that greater and more strategic engagement in rele-

vant aspects of the policy discourse is the most likely indicator of plausible influence on policy. Where more direct examples of policy influence have been recorded these are duly noted, but in the view of the Evaluation Team, in a broader perspective it is the positioning of a given think tank that determines its more sustainable, strategic and profound role in the 'policy ecosystem'. The outcomes of this positioning are impossible to measure in the short-term, and given political volatility are uncertain in the long-term. It is for this reason that the evaluation notes the importance of seeing positioning as part of both short-term tactical and a long-term strategic approaches to policy engagement.

This is best illustrated by the role that grantees play in providing an evidence base for civil society led advocacy. Some grantees have proudly and openly collaborated with civil society organizations to directly influence policy. More often, however, this is seen to create risks to perceived independence, credibility and to attaining their desired niche in the 'policy ecosystem'. In several interviews the sample cohort grantees have expressed discomfort at pressures they have felt to demonstrate direct 'impact' on policies, when they have not seen that as their role. Furthermore, the focus on a specific 'win' in the policy arena may distract attention from their longer-term efforts to stimulate greater and more transparent discussion around evidence and a trusting relationship with policy actors. Case studies emphasize how grantees have tried more to start (and in some cases convene) a public conversation on a policy issue and raise awareness about its implications, but are less comfortable with suggestions that they might drive that discussion to a specific conclusion.

In the analysis concerning the case studies the grantees were therefore notably hesitant about claiming credit for policy 'wins', as they preferred to describe their roles as part of ongoing processes within their respective policy ecosystems.⁹¹ Of the case studies discussed with the grantees and analysed by the Evaluation Team (see further Annex 4) the following categories can be discerned in relation to their respective 'results':

- ✓ only two cases were described as having resulted in direct influence on policies;
- ✓ six cases were interpreted to be policy ecosystem engagements rather than results *per se*;
- ✓ two cases were claimed to having raised general awareness of evidence related to the policy in question;
- ✓ two cases were described as feeding into civil society efforts to influence policy;
- ✓ two cases had highlighted concerns that evidence and research were not likely to have significant influence on policy;
- ✓ five cases were judged not to have had any actual influence (while acknowledging that it was plausible that they could be contributing to changes that would only become apparent in the long-term).

These findings illustrate (at least indirectly) how the grantees perceive the outcomes they have achieved in relation to what has sometimes been referred to as a "culture of research impact", described in Box 11 below.

BOX 11: Did TTI contribute to a ‘culture of research impact’?

A recent blog from the London School of Economics and Political Science,⁹² based on case studies from the *Grow Research Programme* (supported by the UK Department for International Development’s Economic and Social Research Council), highlighted areas of a ‘culture of research impact’ that largely parallel what we have categorized here as the dimensions of ‘positioning’. The studies emphasized five features of such a culture, which evidence from this external evaluation of TTI strongly supports.

<p>Five areas of a culture of research impact</p>	<p>Relevant evidence from the present external evaluation of TTI</p>
<p>1. <i>Focus on collaboration, co-creation and iteration</i></p>	<p>The aspect of positioning most strongly stressed by grantees as being stimulated by TTI nudging has been to engage more closely and proactively with different stakeholders in government and civil society. As noted above, this is seen as a major contribution to what they perceive to be ‘research quality’.</p>
<p>2. <i>Emphasising national scholarship</i></p>	<p>A perhaps unstated undercurrent to much of what the grantees have leveraged TTI support to achieve has been that of assuming their rightful place in the policy ecosystem. Their rejection of ‘field hand’ roles has been welcomed by policy actors and is starting to shift the balance of power in the landscape of policy analysis.</p>
<p>3. <i>Networking is crucial</i></p>	<p>One reason that collaborative and iterative approaches led by local scholars have been essential is that a precondition for achieving impact is to be part of a conversation within an inevitably nationally driven conversation. In all four categories of grantees, this networking has been significantly strengthened. Being part of international networks has added credibility and perspective, but just as ‘all politics is local’, it can also be said that if policy analysis is to have impact, it must be part of a conversation at national level.</p>
<p>4. <i>It’s all about the quality of the evidence</i></p>	<p>As stressed in Chapter 3, attaining higher standards of evidence quality is recognized as essential, but (a) it does not come cheap, and (b) quality of evidence varies according to the observers. TTI has enabled grantees to fill gaps and top up research budgets to ensure that data is trustworthy. Furthermore, policy actors may scrutinize the quality of data, but many also look at the track record and reputation of senior researchers in the think tank as a proxy to indicate whether the quality of the evidence is to be trusted.</p>

<p>5. <i>Sometimes, more is more</i></p>	<p>Building a track record and reputation is a long-term process. The ten year investment made by TTI is valuable in that it led to a cumulative impact on credibility, building of networks, providing education and experience for junior researchers and giving researchers the time to engage in an iterative manner with policy actors. TTI has shown that more is indeed more when it comes to providing the conditions for a culture of policy impact to grow.</p>
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Relevance and independence

In the First Interim Evaluation Report on TTI Phase Two it was already noted that for many grantees ‘doing the right thing’ (relevant research) receives at least as much attention as ‘doing things right’ (in terms of rigorous research). Subsequent findings have consistently reinforced this early finding. Grantees see relevance as a core value.⁹³ A large proportion of the grantees have proactively used the ‘space’ afforded by TTI core support to reposition themselves in their regional or national policy debates for greater relevance and potential influence on existing and emerging issues. Case studies provide examples of how support to communications has been an important element of grantee efforts to become more intentional in their search for what is relevant in these debates.

Relevance is a moving target, and grantees highlight how TTI core funding in particular has helped them to apply their own foresight and tactical awareness of constant shifts in the landscape of policy debates. Positioning is an ever-present challenge based on building relationships and trust, as well as abilities to function in networks. Interviews with grantees and outside observers emphasize how these networks are overwhelmingly (though not entirely) in the domestic sphere.

Think tanks are more influential if they are national because they have a built-in legitimacy due to assumed relevance. But within the national sphere, there are innumerable complexities over what different actors view as relevant. The boundaries between the state and non-state spheres are highly permeable; and within these, long-term relationships and partnerships are key to influence. That is why ‘*Who you are*’ and ‘*Where you stand*’ in the policy debate can override ‘*What you say*’ - regardless of the quality of the research products. These factors impinge on independence in various forms. Grantees see their independence as important for defining their relevance, ensuring their credibility, and with that driving policy influence.

When discussing TTI contributions to efforts to maintain relevance, grantees bring out that this is not cheap. Other sources of funding do not give resources to actively engage in both the policy and academic networks and debates on key issues. TTI funding has been used to cover the additional staff time and travel needed for researchers to engage in relevant fora, and has also covered costs to coordinate more internal institutional discussions and peer review advice on policy relevance. Staff have also had the flexibility and seed money to pursue topics that they see a relevant in their countries, even if potential funders are unaware of these emergent priorities.

Relevance in relation to factors of gender and exclusion received mixed levels of attention within TTI. At the beginning of TTI, interviews suggested that in Latin America support had stimulated considerable reflection within a few grantees, whereas elsewhere there was less satisfaction. TTI was not seen as a major influence in developing more relevant gender engagement by most grantees. Over the course of Phase Two, gender became a stronger priority for TTI, and at the end of the program additional initiatives were underway. Reporting reviewed⁹⁴ primarily describes activities, so further conclusions cannot be drawn.

Independence in relation to governments is a central challenge in almost all cases, but the findings show a striking diversity in strategies for keeping a healthy distance without blocking dialogue.⁹⁵ For example, IPS in Sri Lanka has been able to maintain its independence and reputation to the extent that not many outside observers are aware that it was originally founded by government which also appoints its director. By contrast, IPAR Rwanda has struggled over the period of TTI to overcome its past identity as a government-supported think tank. A strikingly different example is represented by CADEP in Paraguay, whose reputation as an independent think tank was hardly affected by the fact that one of its most well-known and senior researchers held the post as Minister of Finance under two different governments.

In different ways, interviewees from the sample cohort stress that maintaining quality is about another form of independence, i.e., being able to define their research questions independently from politicians and funders.⁹⁶ MISR Uganda in particular characterizes their independence as being rooted in their ability to determine how to frame their research questions so as to take a broad, historically-informed and critical stance on policy issues.⁹⁷

Outside observer interviews have consistently drawn attention to how independence (together with rigorous data collection and well-respected researchers) is central to credibility. They generally describe grantees as being quite independent, while in some cases noting caveats with regard to the need to manage shifting political pressures and the influence of government funding. Some also describe the grantees as being more independent and objective than NGOs, which are perceived to have more predominant advocacy agendas.⁹⁸ One outside observer stated his respect for a grantee's stance: "I saw {...} researchers in a meeting arguing with ministers, that is incredible here!"⁹⁹ Core funding was important in creating conditions for independence.

As the EDRI example in Box 9 above illustrates, even those grantees that are close to government have been able to engage in potentially controversial research into the major questions facing national development. In these cases, even if overall national policy objectives were not questioned, critical questions were being asked about the effectiveness and potential negative effects of the means by which policy goals were being pursued. This has included social or economic exclusion, distorted reporting or perverse incentives within the bureaucracy. Several grantees described efforts to maintain clear independence without becoming adversarial.¹⁰⁰ Others deliberately encouraged their researchers to publicly present contrasting views on policy matters to so as to preempt perceptions that they are promoting one, specific position. In several instances strategies reflected efforts to be perceived as technical -rather than political- advisors on policy. In these

cases, the credibility of data sets (often reinforced with TTI support) was seen as a way to defuse political confrontations.¹⁰¹

Experience (primarily in Latin America and South Asia) highlights how, after changes in government, grantees previously seen to be close to government have suddenly had to confront perceptions that they are aligned with the opposition. Some grantees describe how they have struggled to manoeuvre in such a way as to overcome being associated with a specific political party either in power or in opposition. For others such associations are unavoidable, and they have had to strive to manage the consequences.

Finally, some think tanks stress strongly that independence from Northern agendas is at least as important as independence from government. One grantee described how their credibility as a trusted advisor of government was related to their independence from donor pressures. Notably, some grantees avoid relations with certain donors to elude suspicions of being aligned with the donors' interests. With cases such as these, TTI core funding is seen as standing out from most other donor support as enabling independence. However, in some contexts characterized by extreme levels of political polarization -like that in Bolivia and (until recently) in Ecuador- the mere fact that the organization receives foreign funding may be used by government to question the credibility and even to depict the institution as 'an ally to the enemy'.¹⁰²

The importance of independence from aid donors is changing, however, as the power of aid as a political tool diminishes. In Latin America and parts of Africa and South Asia, aid financing (or access to it due to governments tightening the rules on foreign funding) has shrunk to the extent that donor political agendas have become a lesser risk to perceived independence, though this is still more important in parts of Africa. Some sample cohort grantees in particular see a capacity to refuse inappropriate consultancies and (to quote one grantee) 'field hand' roles on projects led by international research institutes, as vital for demonstrating independence and retaining credibility in their national policy discussions.

From thinking to doing: where should think tanks 'draw the line'?

One of the ongoing debates within TTI has been concerned with if and how far grantees should also seek to position themselves to include engagements beyond the policy research arena -offering training, partnering in implementation of development projects, or through other initiatives. The underlying logic has generally been that such engagements can be part of efforts to put research into use, demonstrate the value of research, test findings in 'the real world' and help different actors to learn and apply research. For example, a few grantees are branching out beyond research *per se* into providing training for mid and higher-level civil servants. This is seen as a way to enhance the capacity of the broader policy community to make informed decisions using appropriate processes. Additional benefits include showing the value of their organizations to authorities and perhaps generating income.¹⁰³

Box 12: Opportunity Fund 'do-tank' activities

One component of TTI support that has been used by grantees to undertake 'do-tank' activities was the Opportunity Fund. With this the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIP-PRA) used resources from the Opportunity Fund to develop capacities and methods for engagement with local government. Given the devolution process underway in Kenya, this filled a clear niche in demands from both local and national actors, and built upon KIP-PRA's research role.

Three other Opportunity Fund initiatives involved grantees working directly with communities to respond to development concerns. From the available reporting the Evaluation Team was unable to detect a similarly clear niche related to contributing to or drawing on grantee research.

Other examples of think tanks engaging operationally include larger-scale bilateral engagements, as described in Box 13. In cases such as these there may be clear opportunities for accessing funding to link 'thinking' and 'doing' in a comprehensive manner, and paths towards diffusion of the models being developed are more evident, as they may lead to more long-term partnerships between think tanks and agencies that undertake operational activities in which (applied) research is relevant.

Box 13: Doing as diversification

The efforts undertaken by CRES in Senegal to expand and diversify its portfolio of work revealed the interplay between quality of research and the quality of management and nature of relations with partners, particularly in a context of rapid growth. CRES was selected by the UK Department for International Development to lead a development initiative called '*Live with Water*'. The selection process was rigorous, and CRES was required to meet various requirements, including a due diligence test. CRES would not have met these standards without TTI support over the years and across its organization.

While it was financially lucrative for CRES in the short-term and brought new skills to the organization, it also strained capacities, which suggests a risk of being drawn into operational activities where capacities to maintain research quality may be overstretched. At the same time CRES increased its visibility, network and learned to collaborate with new partners, including local government. It was able to demonstrate impact based on its research with clear results of improved water and flooding mechanism in urban areas of Dakar.

Impact of consultancies and contracted research on perceived credibility

Choice of business models has profound implications for the perceived quality and reputation of any think tank, and with financial concerns increasing towards the end of TTI some grantees were getting worried. During the TTI years, grantees had a greater ability to 'just say no' to assignments that could damage their credibility and quality. As TTI drew to an end, this was coming into question as accepting more consultancy and contracted research assignments became unavoidable. A major and growing topic of interest among several of the grantees from the sample cohort related to if, how and how much to pursue contracted research and consultancies; and how to harness this type of work within their strategies.¹⁰⁴ Although providing some cash flow, these kinds of assignments were seen by some grantees as a factor that has in the past weakened their credibility

for attracting more long-term and significant funding.

Opinions on consultancy assignments varied across the spectrum of grantees. At one end there was an absolute refusal to do consultancies in order to break with a past negative reputation as ‘just consultants’ or producing outputs of no more than ‘just acceptable quality’. Others were striving to be selective and refuse (a) consultancies that are not related to the grantee’s strategy, and (b) consultancies where researchers are just used as data collectors by Northern partners. Some grantees also viewed consultancies as an important way to influence the policy agenda, especially when the client was an international organization that had the ear of governments. Interestingly, the consultancy issue was notably not a significant concern in South Asia, in part for reasons of relatively secure funding, but also because of the relative lower importance of aid financing.

There is also a concern with contracted research. Within many grantee organizations, researchers rely increasingly on pursuing a steady flow of commissioned research projects for their own job security, to achieve an acceptable level of income and to maintain their reputation. If their incentives become skewed strongly towards searching for a relatively short-term and potentially scattered range of projects, it inevitably has a negative effect on their attention to their own organization’s roles and reputation. There can be a slide towards being perceived of as what one interviewee referred to as a ‘research hotel’, where the think tank becomes a place where different researchers and donors place their projects, but with little strategic direction. TTI had contributed to alleviating this risk by financing directors and coordinators of research and programs, and other leadership positions who could seek to provide common direction. But financial capacities to keep these functions going without core funding were rapidly decreasing after the end of TTI.

The findings of the changes in relation to being perceived as ‘just consultants’ in the course of Phase Two can be summarized as follows:

Development over time: *Financial pressures and independence*

Baseline (2015): Significant Phase One progress in stemming financial pressures to assume roles that lead to grantees being perceived as ‘just consultants’ or being co-opted by Northern donor agendas.

Interim findings (2017): No major changes, but a growing sense among some grantees that this was the ‘calm before the storm’ when these pressures would increase.

Final evaluation findings (2019): No change with some grantees; others shifting more towards reliance on contracted research and consultancies (with as yet uncertain consequences).

Responding to shifting obstacles and opportunities for policy influence

Grantees mentioned that in times of rapid change in national policies, demand for policy advice can increase as politicians look for evidence upon which to anchor decisions on policy realignment.¹⁰⁵ Flexible support from TTI enabled them to respond quickly to these windows of opportunity for policy influence. Some grantees framed their pursuit of new research areas, enabled by TTI support for researcher salaries and pilot studies, as a matter of foresight. Instead of responding to demands, they were working to redefine the research questions so as to be ready for what is salient for future policy issues.

Political polarizations have significant implications for the waxing and waning demand for research and evidence. Over a third of the sample cohort grantees mention the political polarization that they have had to manage as a central challenge to promoting an evidence-informed discussion in their policy work. Other grantees have emphasized that TTI has enabled them to establish a higher degree of continuity and strategic vision that has helped them to navigate and weather these storms.¹⁰⁶

Box 14: How to reach decision-makers who are hostile and don't listen to you?

FUSADES in El Salvador was already a sizeable and well-established organization prior to TTI. Founded in 1983, during the country's civil war, FUSADES was an initiative by the private sector with decisive support from the United States. The war ended in 1992 but no reconciliation was achieved, and political polarization remained intense. This was not a problem for FUSADES, however, as the country had right-wing governance for many years, and FUSADES enjoyed a privileged relationship with government.

Then, in 2009, everything changed when a leftist government came to power. FUSADES now saw its access to government blocked and also found that almost everything they produced was rejected at the very outset, as it carried their logo. At the same time, FUSADES also experienced financial problems. How to survive -not only financially but also in terms of how to stay relevant and how to reach key audiences- suddenly became an acute issue. FUSADES confronted a crisis and started a series of internal reflections on how to address this new situation.

With the support from TTI, FUSADES both survived and came out of the crisis stronger, with a good positioning in the public debate. Key in breaking the threat of becoming isolated and perceived as irrelevant was the new approach applied on how to influence public policies.

Instead of working alone and directly focusing on government and decision-makers, FUSADES started an intense effort on two levels: (a) seeking alliances, and (b) finding the means to get in touch and communicate directly with key segments of the population - not least with the youth. As summarized by a high-ranking staff member at the organization:

'Instead of depending on being received or not by government, we learnt how to work indirectly. Focusing on how to influence the public debate we could sometimes succeed in generating political demand, to which government had to respond.'

There is no apparent panacea for manoeuvring amid conflict and polarization, but grantees from the sample cohort often referred to broadening communication efforts across the political spectrum and engaging with different actors in designing and implementing research. These efforts point towards a higher degree of sophistication in how they reposition themselves over time in a

volatile political landscape.¹⁰⁷ With some notable exceptions (primarily in South Asia) grantees attribute increased capacities to manoeuvre to TTI's flexible and long-term funding commitments.¹⁰⁸

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

TTI's contribution to policy influence by their grantees has been indirect but significant. Not least by emphasizing the need for systematic and strategic thinking around policy engagement, TTI has encouraged the grantees to apply greater intentionality and overt reflection on policy influencing processes. However many directors of the grantee organisations are sophisticated political operators and have long years of practice and appropriate informal social networks to enable them to work the policy system. In these cases TTI-related outcomes have been more modest.

In terms of outcomes, for those grantees that have gone through transformational change or accelerated growth their ability to engage in their specific policy arenas and widen their reach has undoubtedly been a result of a more deliberate approach to policy influencing. For those that have consolidated their position or have simply survived, and those which have faced major challenges in managing polarized discourses, shifts may have been more modest or uncertain.

b. Increased capacities and new approaches to communications

Key findings

In the field of communications almost all grantees show clearly positive results, including quite a few cases where the process continued well beyond what was initially expected, achieving close to transformative advances. Most grantees have improved their output of 'traditional' communication products - media releases, publications, websites and participation on social media. Many have also evolved beyond past approaches that saw these outputs as a support function or ends in themselves, and now perceive communications as a core dimension of strategic importance in the effort to use research and evidence to achieve policy influence.

While the end of TTI is likely to imply less resources for communication activities, most grantees state that the skills and the new approach acquired will continue to be a central priority for their organizations.

The need for increased and broadened capacities within the area of communications was already seen as a core aspect of enhancing policy influence within TTI Phase One. It was initially seen as a mechanism primarily for scaling up the dissemination of outputs, but later on also perceived as useful for achieving greater policy influence. The push for grantees to acquire or improve their communication skills started with funding for the elaboration of communication strategies, often with the support of external consultants. Conditions for implementing these plans were then provided through special training efforts, support for the purchase of equipment and the recruitment of staff - mostly financed through the core grant and hence meant to reflect the priorities of each individual grantee.

The emphasis on communications by TTI was initially met with scepticism from some grantees (“Real good research spreads by itself!”),¹⁰⁹ but overall seemed to receive a cautiously positive response. “There is much evidence that grantees are improving their capacity and investment in communications and policy engagement”, concluded the Phase One evaluation,¹¹⁰ and communications was one of the few components which did not appear in the evaluation’s list of required program adjustments. In terms of the proportion of the core grants provided by TTI, the grantees (by 2013) reported that they so far had allocated from 18 to 27% for communications and outreach –showing that substantial amounts were being spent in this field.¹¹¹

However, the development was not linear and the First Interim Report from the evaluation of Phase Two highlighted that while almost all of the grantees now had a communications strategy in place, less than 60% of the plans showed significant signs of implementation and one grantee expressed “strong dissatisfaction with what was seen as somewhat mechanistic TTI support from a technical advisor”.¹¹² At the same time it was also noted that grantees largely recognized that TTI had been instrumental in nudging them (mainly through the RPOs) towards more thinking on policy influence and communications and the report concluded that:

“TTI ‘money and conversations’, i.e., support to employ a communications officer, produce more reader-friendly outputs and gentle ‘nudging’ ...have led to greater results than the creation of formal policies and procedures.”¹¹³

This gentle nudging in combination with financial support continued and seems to have been one of the key factors triggering internal processes in which many grantees both reinforced capacities for ‘communication products’ but also went beyond that dimension, developing their own strategic thinking around communications and its role within their structure, planning and routine activities. Part of this process was captured by the Second Interim Report, when it stated that “the findings show a clearly positive trajectory”¹¹⁴ with well over half of all the grantees having strong, proactive communications efforts. The Report also emphasized that there was a learning process underway in this field and then shared an observation on something beyond the traditional focus:¹¹⁵

“[Evidence suggests] that there are synergies emerging where communicating research results to different audiences in different forms both informs these audiences and generates demand for further research.”

Data from field visits and interviews with RPOs over the course of the evaluation indicate that the positive trajectories within the field of communication have continued and become further consolidated. The tables below are based on responses both from RPOs for all the 43 grantees and interviews with staff from the 11 grantees in the sample cohort concerning three key questions:¹¹⁶

1. *To what degree have your capacities and approach changed during the period of TTI support?*
2. *To what extent has this been due to TTI support?*
3. *Do you think these gains will be maintained also after TTI?*

Degree of change in communication capacities and approach during the period of TTI support?

	Significant	Some	Not really
Number of grantees	26	16	1

As seen above, all but one of the grantees were judged to have experienced significant or some degree of change. In concrete terms this implies that they had developed and/or intensified their output of what may be called ‘traditional’ communication products - media releases, publications, web-sites, policy briefs, seminars, tweets, participation on social media, etc. Furthermore, for over half of the grantees the changes within this field were judged to have been ‘significant’. Part of this refers to the fact that some grantees (generally the ones which already had before TTI some kind of communications unit) today even produce their own radio programs and videos.

Another more fundamental dimension of this change relates to the way communications is now understood and applied within the organization. It represents a substantial change in the approach to communications, clearly moving beyond the focus on ‘products’ to a recognition that these efforts are key to influencing policies. Within the sample cohort, several senior staff (not from the Communications Units) concurred in their descriptions of the most important characteristics of the change:

“Communications has now become integrated into our core work, it is a strategic dimension constantly present, not just a support function for better reach. This has actually transformed the way we work.”¹¹⁷

“I would say we have moved from making (often rather technical) communication strategies to constantly work with and apply strategic communication.”¹¹⁸

One director, working in a country characterized by intense political polarization, stated that without this new perspective and their enhanced skills they would never had been able to break the isolation resulting from a hostile government.

The case studies on CPR (India) and FUSADES (El Salvador) in Box 15 below illustrate what the combination of increased technical skills and a new approach to communications can achieve.

To what extent has the change been due to TTI support?

	Entirely or very much	Somewhat	Not really
Number of grantees	39	3	1

Nearly all grantees agree on the key role played by TTI in starting this process of change. The funding of communications staff and the constant discussions with (and ‘nudging’ from) TTI staff is highlighted in particular. TTI Phase One was judged by many to have been too formalistic and sometimes not “planted in our reality”. However, the fact that the support to communications - and to overall strategic planning at the institutional level - continued, seems to gradually have enabled a genuinely home-grown process to take off in quite a number of the grantees.

Will these gains be sustained?

	Yes - definitely	Yes - but with uncertainties	Maintained at a low level
Number of grantees	28	11	4

In spite of the fact that most grantees are likely to experience financial strains post-TTI, almost all were confident that the gains within communications will be sustained. This contrasts with concerns noted earlier by the Evaluation Team regarding the many grantees that were heavily reliant on TTI funds for financing staff and other costs within their communications units. At the end of the program, this still applied to a number of grantees.

Box 15: What new capacities in communication can achieve

FUSADES (El Salvador): Government forced to revisit their proposed pension reform

In February 2016, El Salvador's government presented a bill to parliament for a radical reform of the country's pension system. The proposal suffered from two major shortcomings. Firstly, the main actors had not been consulted at all on changes which were so substantial as to outrage a wide range of interest groups, from workers and retirees to the business sector. Secondly, in spite of this fact, government insisted the bill should be submitted for approval by parliament within 60 days. Critical comments immediately filled the media, and within days public protests erupted in the country. Soon a broad coalition (Citizens Initiative on Pensions) addressing this issue was established, in which FUSADES played a very active role.

Key in all the activities undertaken by FUSADES was their new approach to communications and their considerably enhanced capacities within this field. Apart from traditional news releases and conferences, FUSADES made extensive use of social media, carefully focusing on different and much wider audiences than usual. Video clips produced in-house, as well as brief tweet-like messages, were posted almost daily, engaging with feedback from audiences and integrating it in the continued communication efforts.

The initiative was extremely successful and in September 2017, the Parliament of El Salvador approved a national law on the pension reform which satisfied all the main critical points raised by the civil society platform. Moreover, the law was approved *unanimously*, with the MPs belonging to the governing party now accepting the revised proposal.

CPR (India): Disclosing legal reform proposals hidden from the public

In 2017 the Namati Environment Justice project at CPR wrote a series of ten blogs on India's coastal regulation law, triggered by the plans for a new law which was likely to dilute the traditional safeguards for the coastal environment and traditional livelihoods.

The blogs captured stories from the ground and provided a history of the law. Most importantly, they also disclosed the revisions proposed in the new law, which the project team had accessed through a Right to Information (RTI) application. The piece disclosing the revisions generated intense media attention. The media also did deeper case studies on the potential impact of the dilution of the law by speaking to affected communities in states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.

Communicating the proposed changes to the law and their consequences in a sustained manner, and engaging with the media throughout, led to action from affected communities and promoted public debate. Submissions were also made to the responsible ministry by fisher groups, coastal communities, environmentalists and urban planners opposing the suggested changes. Should the ministry attempt to insert any further changes it is likely to be discovered swiftly as they would now come under direct scrutiny.

TTI contributions, outcomes and implications for support to think tanks

The two reasons generally provided by the grantees for their decidedly optimistic view on the continuation of their work within communications is that communications has generated positive and tangible results, and it has become integrated into their way of working. This may inspire cautious optimism for the future when access to fewer funds is likely to require some tough choices over priorities.

The progress of strengthening capacities and commitments to communications over the course of Phase Two can be summarized as follows:

Development over time: *Communications commitments*

Baseline (2015): A range of progress in developing and using communications strategies; signs of stronger efforts to enhance communications, but the depth of these commitments uncertain.

Interim findings (2017): Considerable staff volatility, but strong signs of commitments and prioritization of communications functions.

Final evaluation findings (2019): With a few exceptions, very strong commitments to seeing communications as a core and essential function; even though some realize that available resources for communications units will shrink in the future.

Tangible and often extensive progress has been made in the field of communications by grantees from all four of the trajectory categories identified. For the ones which have achieved transformational change, communications both reflects this change and has played an important role in attaining it. For the group of grantees which has struggled to survive and persevere, increased capacities and new approaches to communications also seem to have been vital – for defending their space and finding new ways of coping with adverse and turbulent conditions.



PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Conclusions and Lessons Learned from the TTI Experience

Introduction

We conclude this report by presenting our overall conclusions regarding *what lessons can be drawn from the TTI experience regarding effective support to think tanks.*

We first draw conclusions and suggest lessons regarding TTI's contributions to **effectiveness:**

In what ways does TTI support lead or fail to lead, to stronger and more sustainable think tanks? How has this been achieved? Where evidence exists that TTI support has failed to contribute to the strengthening and improved sustainability of think tanks, what are the reasons?

This is then related to what this effectiveness has meant for ultimate **outcomes and impact.**

To what extent do stronger and more sustainable think tanks lead to changes in policy and practice? How has this been achieved? If evidence does not exist that strong, sustainable think tanks lead to changes in policy and practice, what are the reasons?

Finally, these conclusions are then considered in relation to lessons regarding appropriate modalities for support to think tanks and prospects for sustainable outcomes for organizational effectiveness, research quality and policy influence.

Effectiveness: Are the grantees more capable and better positioned to drive change, and if so what has TTI contributed?

The complex story in this evaluation report reflects a decade-long learning experience. The length of this relationship and the discretion allowing the grantees to make their own decisions have been foundational. During this period the grantees have in many cases transformed their organizations. Junior researchers have evolved into senior researchers with a respected position in the policy discourse. For many grantees communications efforts have moved from being an after-thought to being an integral part of their strategies. At the end of the decade of TTI support, the large majority are stronger and most have been able to use these strengths to play a more central role in the policy discourse. It could be inferred that this has resulted in greater policy influence, but the Evaluation Team judges that it would be inappropriate to claim that actual policy influence can be directly attributable to TTI. Furthermore, given the contextual factors that are central to the degree of influence that any think tank can bring to bear on policy, even the failures to achieve influence should not be attributed to deficiencies in the TTI approach.

A first overarching lesson from TTI is that, at least for a transformational change to occur, ten years has proven to be an appropriate timeframe. The values of core funding have been about being able to think (and act) in an intentional manner, that is one which reflects the grantees'

own strategies. Operationalizing those strategies takes time. For those that did not have a clear role in the policy ecosystem, or lacked staff capacities to assume those roles, the Evaluation Team judges that a ten year timeframe was essential. For those that already had a strong position, such a long timeframe was useful but probably not essential. For those that have only just managed to survive, it has taken a decade to clearly determine whether they would transform themselves or merely survive. Even if in hindsight a long-term grant failed to ‘make a difference’, this could not have been accurately predicted at the outset. Taking risks, such as these investments in weak but important think tanks, requires a long-term perspective and a willingness to accept some failures.

Outcomes: *Factors governing influence on evidence-based policy formation*

Flexibility and discretion have been central to the achievement of outcomes since matching research to the choice of what is the most appropriate public policy to adopt on a specific issue at a given time and context is never predictable or straightforward. There are usually many uncertainties regarding the potential effects of specific policies. Often there is no consensus among civil society, experts and decision makers regarding how to prioritize competing or conflicting policy goals. The different actors who will be affected by the policies may have divergent views based on their values, needs, preferences and interests. For these reasons, what constitutes ‘good’ evidence underpinning for a policy choice and the interpretation of what that evidence means is always up for debate. Grantees have had the space to position themselves well in these debates, even if the outcomes have been uncertain. Many see their role as not necessarily pressing for policy change, but rather increasing transparency around the available options. In such instances the meaning of ‘policy influence’ is inevitably diffuse and very different from striving for ‘results’ in terms of actually triggering changes in policies.

While some may wish to conceive of think tanks almost as impartial, rational, evidence producing ‘machines’ that generate the truth, this is not what they actually do. TTI has contributed enhanced conditions for grantees to take part in salient policy debates, particularly as they are more respected as being relevant, engaged actors with credible experienced and well-educated researchers. This has also included more mundane investments as, for some, simply having nicer, air conditioned offices has helped them join this arena.

Individual think tanks engage in policy discourses within networks of actors that together generate new policy narratives. TTI has contributed to the grantees’ abilities to selectively engage in their respective networks, but this has mostly occurred at national levels and within the sectors in which they have expertise. Despite some collegial friendships and collaborations developed during the TTI years, the TTI grantees do not form an epistemic community.¹¹⁹ With the notable exception of Southern Voice, they rarely act jointly as a network of knowledge-based experts who help decision makers to define the problems they face, identify the various policy solutions and assess the policy outcomes.

In part this is because the political communities in which they work never entirely provide a conducive environment for rational, deliberative policy making. Moreover, the grantees’ own engage-

ments, as we have found, are part and parcel of a dynamic political landscape. Manoeuvring within this landscape requires iterative engagement and relationship-building. This relationship building is a highly context specific process that proceeds from an acceptance of the complex relationships that emerge in a complex social and political environment.¹²⁰

Was the TTI theory of change appropriate?

We have noted significant regional variations in what constitutes effective support to think tanks.¹²¹ In Africa, it appears that ability to attract, retain and even to directly train senior and promising junior researchers has come out as the strongest aspect of effective TTI support. In Latin America and South Asia the grantees tended to invest their support somewhat differently. Evidence highlighted how flexible support was most effective in enabling these grantees to become sufficiently nimble and better at communications so as to adapt to the rapid ups and downs of government engagement and hostility. Given the growing risk of more governments trying to shrink the civic space (including putting restrictions on external funding), the ability to be nimble may become a more serious factor in the future (in all regions), which donors may have limited power to address.

Implicit in the policy-influencing model of TTI is something of a linear concept anchored in a series of investments: from hiring/training good researchers, who are able to work in an enabling environment, to systems for producing good research products, to policy influence and impact. We judge that this assumes a more central role for donor assistance than is actually the case. Throughout the interviews, the grantees acknowledged the great importance of TTI support for all of these areas, while highlighting a number of “buts” when referring to the other factors (in many cases related to the overall donor landscape) which impacted on whether these investments would actually contribute significantly to intended outcomes.

Moreover, already when starting the evaluation at TTI 2015 in Istanbul we heard many stories about the complex factors impinging on research relevance, credibility and policy influence. Nonetheless, there was still a tendency in the discussion about findings to fall back on simpler and flawed assumptions about the demand for evidence, about the rationalities of bureaucracies in responding to ‘good evidence’, and about what this implies when engaging in different but inter-linked state, private sector and civic spaces (i.e., the ‘ecosystem’). On the one hand, this tension between linear intentions and convoluted realities spurred critical reflection throughout the period of the evaluation. On the other, at the end of the evaluation it was not clear if there was a greater acceptance of these realities and their implications for design of future support. Some grantees feared that a return to greater reliance on projects might entail pressures to present their work within such problematic results frameworks. This suggests an important priority message about acknowledging these complexities as TTI seeks to inform future practice in support to think tanks.

The efforts of the TTI grantees (and the emphasis of much of the advice they have received from the RPOs) reflect a recognition of how policy influencing processes are also based on relationships

and networks; the boundaries between the state and non-state spheres are highly permeable; and long-term relationships and partnerships are key to influence. That is why *'Who you are'* and *'Where you stand'* in the policy debate can override *'What you say'* – regardless of the quality of the research products. Furthermore, the relevance of these relationships and positioning for influence waxes and wanes as governments change.

We also find that strategic practices of policy engagement range from direct dialogue with senior politicians 'under the radar' of the public debate, to public data activism and partnerships with advocacy organizations, to formal evidence-informed debate. All these modes substantively address the 'political', recognize the need for a short-term tactical and long-term strategic game, and recognize the inherently conflictual nature of politics in policy debates. In sum, a holistic vision of how policy influencing works in different political communities is needed in order to understand what a program like TTI could and should do.

Grantees are very clear that TTI has helped them become more intentional in influencing policy. It has played an important role in helping them expand their space for reflection and engagement to focus greater attention on how to achieve policy influence within these complex and dynamic arenas, frequently characterized by high levels of polarization and adverse conditions. This has included both concrete investments in communications, and also more low-key reflection on how they position themselves in the policy arena. Whether they are then ultimately effective varies significantly, as does the contribution of TTI relative to their own contextual struggles.

Choices of different support modalities

What lessons does this carry forward for the choice of modalities to support the sustainability and influence of think tanks in the future, beyond TTI?

Firstly, our findings support the notion that framed the original TTI concept, that core funding devoted to organizational strengthening and giving think tanks the flexibility to be both tactical in the short-term and strategic in the long-term is the best investment. The think tanks themselves know how to manage their own tactics and strategies. They need a modicum of financial sustainability and stability to apply their contextual knowledge and be skilful in policy engagement.

Secondly, TTI's other forms of support have been most effective when built around ongoing advice and dialogue. Our analysis clearly shows the importance of bilateral dialogues between the grantees and the RPOs for bringing the TTI instruments together. By contrast, there is evidence which questions the overall utility of much of the specific capacity development initiatives (notably training) for such a diverse cohort. Within that same logic, networking has shown to be highly valued by many grantees, but this has primarily been successful when the grantees have found their own partners, rather than necessarily via participation in TTI-led efforts. The Evaluation Team judges that the often rather piecemeal approach that has characterized a significant proportion of supplementary capacity development efforts has not been sufficiently effective.

Is greater effectiveness likely to generate sustained outcomes in volatile contexts?

The evaluation findings require us to question implicit assumptions about the (in)stability of institutional and political landscapes in which think tanks must operate. What does it mean if the disruptive or volatile is the norm, rather than stability? What does policy influence entail when political polarization completely overrides discussions based on evidence, or when a think tank's credibility is undermined by 'guilt by association' with an opposing political camp? Contrary to assumptions of stability, it is unpredictability about what is recognized as 'truth' and 'evidence' which often frames positioning and tactics of engagement in policy. Core support from TTI has made a significant contribution to grantees' much needed manoeuvrability during the program, but this is an endemic feature of the policy landscape and even after TTI, grantees will need to continually mobilize flexible support to maintain these capabilities.

As TTI comes to an end, for a significant proportion of the grantees there is uncertainty about whether and how they are going to be able to maintain and build upon the advances achieved with TTI support. In this context it must be recognized that no form of assistance, with the possible exception of investments in sizeable endowments, can vaccinate against threats to financial sustainability and related challenges to staff retention in competitive environments. If senior researchers can be retained and key research coordination, financial management and support to junior researchers are maintained, prospects are good. If not, research quality, credibility and ultimate sustainability may be increasingly threatened. 'Betting' on think tanks is, by definition, a risky business but it is a cause well justified.

Investing in think tanks will always be risky due to the volatile nature of the ecosystems in which they operate. The TTI experience shows that enabling think tanks to foster awareness and respect for research can significantly improve the likelihood of making policy dialogues more transparent and evidence-based. But this is ultimately about becoming more influential in ongoing processes within these largely national ecosystems, rather than a matter of simply being able to register policy influence 'wins'.

Box 16: A meta-lesson from the TTI experience - the importance of making 'big bets'

It may seem odd to conclude with lessons about 'betting', but this metaphor for the need for a new way of thinking about institutional investments is increasingly entering the philanthropic discourse. It highlights the necessity for an attitudinal change, and a departure from prevailing decision-making frameworks.

A recent editorial about the need for "big bets" in philanthropy reflects well the gist of several of the recommendations emerging from this evaluation.¹²² The article calls for "big bets" that reflect a different relationship with grantees working to support marginalized communities based on the following principles:

- Provide significant multiyear investment
- Focus on relationships
- Constantly communicate
- Be flexible on timelines and milestones
- Take risks, accept failure
- Capture lessons learned

6. Recommendations for Future Funder Support to Think Tanks

With regard to the value of sustained core funding in relation to other modalities

- Future funding decisions should be based in a recognition of the qualities that core funding imbues (see Figure 6 above, which describes grantee perceptions of these values). In particular, support should be explicitly designed to foster the qualities of (a) predictability, (b) strategic alignment with the think tanks' own agendas, (c) enabling (and certainly not undermining) their efforts to maintain independence, and (d) responding to the think tanks' own chosen commitments to organizational strengthening.
- Similarly, the sometimes perverse effects of project funding should be recognized. If project funding is unavoidable, measures should be put into place that address these negative features (see Box 16 below).
- Achieving capacity development outcomes is a long-term process. When working with well established grantees with modest intentions of incremental improvements, a somewhat shorter timeframe may be suitable, but for most a ten year perspective is appropriate.
- Traditional, timebound capacity development interventions are difficult to introduce in a manner that avoids piecemeal and unsustainable effects, and should therefore be avoided. This may be partially mitigated by linking training to accompaniment over time, but even with these modalities it is important to align efforts with longer-term trajectories in the development of the think tanks being supported. There is never a quick training or networking fix.

Ensuring strategic clarity and vision in pursuit of outcomes

- Grant-making should reflect measures to ensure that both program officers and grantees recognize that communications, internal research coordination, human resource development, networking and administration should be included and budgeted for in all proposals.
- Monitoring of positioning and policy influence within TTI has proven to be a challenge. Future efforts to document the role of think tanks should be designed in a way that recognizes the diffuse and indirect role that think tanks primarily play in convening, informing and stimulating conversations about policies, and less on attempting to measure direct influence *per se*.

Towards a contextually manageable cohort and close relations

- The struggles that TTI has had to ensure ownership and relevance of support to grantees has shown that a global program with 43 grantees may have been an overambitious scope.

For these reasons, a thematically defined and geographically less ambitious focus would be more appropriate for future support. This could be combined with provision of a significant proportion of resources for networking so that researchers (especially young researchers) can find and engage with their own respective global ‘policy ecosystems’. The principle should be to design support to enable grantees to find and create their own ecosystems, rather than seeing this as a role for funders.

- Contextually appropriate support requires a presence, as the role of RPOs in TTI illustrates. The RPO roles, that are essential in such a large-scale program such as this, center around providing a dialogue partner for think tank leadership, a way to nudge grantees to work towards overall strategic goals (while minimizing risks of lost ownership), and a way to ensure flexibilities that encourage grantees to be nimble. Those donors that are structured with a very ‘light footprint’, should find ways to replicate the TTI structure with respect to co-funding, e.g., by partnering with other donors/ philanthropists (ideally from the respective countries or regions) with a greater field presence.
- If an ecosystem approach is applied, it should be recognized that there are many ‘parallel ecosystems’ within which a set of think tanks (or individual researchers for that matter) operate. It is unlikely that a donor can influence and support more than a fraction of these ecosystems. It is therefore important to design approaches within an analysis of the policy landscapes facing a given think tank or research team, rather than assume that a more comprehensive intervention approach will necessarily be viable.

On learning about risky investments

- Given that investing in think tanks is inevitably a ‘risky business’, funders should recognize that there is no simple model for calibrating or mitigating risks, but several differentiated options: (a) if ambitions are to make contributions to incremental development, it may make sense to invest in large, well-established think tanks; (b) if there is a recognized need to respond to major gaps in the policy ecosystem, higher-risk investments in think tanks that are less certain to succeed are likely to be required; and (c) with both types of think tanks, political and financial volatility are inevitable, and a presence of program officers that can have an ongoing dialogue and leeway to adapt plans and budgets to changing realities can help think tanks as they strive to manage emerging hazards and opportunities.
- Given that the progression of efforts to replace core funding among the TTI grantees is only just beginning, it would be valuable to provide for a light *ex post* assessment of the trajectories of the grantees three to five years after this evaluation to analyze the longer-term effects of core funding (and the transitions that grantees experience in and out of this modality).

Box 17: Some negative features of project funding and possible mitigating measures

Negative features	Mitigating measures
Uncertainty and short-term thinking	Long-term projects (programs) and assurances that, barring the unexpected, contracts will be extended with future phases based on performance.
Failure to achieve cumulative effects	Invest over time in, e.g., multistakeholder collaboration and partnerships, building on past research, strong data sets, etc.; together with the human resources to manage these programs and contribute to ongoing processes to ensure research quality.
Weaker retention of key staff	Transparent discussions between think tanks and funders about human resource issues and how programming can be designed to allow for longer staff contracts, opportunities for capacity development and, if required, gap filling to enable them to pursue research between projects.
Insufficient ownership and independence	Flexible and non-directive calls for proposals that encourage a range of ambitions, from 'theory making' to questioning the 'nuts and bolts' of policy implementation. This should be paired with transparent discussions with think tanks about how they wish to position themselves in the policy landscape and how a given project contributes to those strategic efforts.
Projects end before policy influence gets underway	Longer-term projects that include outreach phases after the outputs have been produced.
The 'research hotel' trap, where individual researchers pursue their own interests at the cost of overall strategic direction	Ensuring that resources are available and allocated to common substantive functions, such as research coordination, internal seminars, etc., to support common vision and research quality.

7. Recommendations for Think Tanks in Engaging with Funders

The long and productive relationship with TTI has also generated a series of lessons for think tanks, of which the following merit special emphasis:

- The TTI experience has shown that respected think tanks have the power to negotiate with funders to maximize investments that contribute to program priorities and design while reinforcing their core organizational capacities. Think tanks should show confidence and proactively use this power. Passivity, on the other hand, leads towards a vicious circle where independence and research vitality are diminished.
- Think tanks need to sharpen their skills in making their value propositions clear and their true costs explicit to funders to strengthen their arguments for realistic budgets and overheads. This may include deep analyses of individual funders' policies and procedures to identify 'what buttons to push'.
- Investments in strong leadership and administration pay off. Meeting due diligence requirements can strengthen not only access to funding, but also independence and leverage in ensuring that programming reflects strategic priorities.
- Think tanks should not mince words when explaining what kinds of support they expect to be useful. Pointing out when a small, timebound initiative provides little added value to overall capacity development trajectories is an important way to share awareness of how to prioritize the use of limited capacity development resources.
- The evaluation has not found that funders are demanding that think tanks produce evidence that they are influencing policy *per se*, but they (and indeed other actors in the local policy landscape) are demanding evidence that think tanks are actively and productively engaged in national (sometimes also regional and international) policy discussions. Credibility is therefore enhanced by maintaining strong and visible commitments to communication and policy engagement.
- Think tanks should develop a forceful narrative about how they are investing in their organizations and their capacities to produce quality research and use this to contribute to evidence informed policies and practice. By defining and making transparent these 'values', funders will be more confident of what they are generating for their 'money'.
- The growth of interest in ecosystems recognizes that policy influence is a multi-stakeholder process. Think tanks should embrace this by building on, and making visible, partnerships with civil society, private sector and governmental partners. By explicitly presenting the stakeholders and processes with which the grantee intends to engage, programs can be

designed to support the partnerships and long-term, multistakeholder strategies that the think tank intends to pursue.

- Think tanks need to take charge of their own 'exit strategies'. This evaluation has shown that some grantees were proactive in this regard and others were not. Particularly in a large global program such as TTI, it is only the think tanks themselves that can judge where they need to be at the end of the program, what steps they need to take, and what help they need to get there. Participatory planning needs to be driven by the think tanks themselves.

Endnotes

- 1 The donors included the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, UK Aid, Norad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Canadian International Development Research Centre. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands only contributed to the first half of the programme (2008-2014)
- 2 During Phase Two.
- 3 For an overview of financing provided to TTI, see Annex 6. During the period in question, the rate between CAD and USD was close to 0.9 (USD per CAD).
- 4 For an overview of TTI financial support per grantee, see Annex 7.
- 5 <http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/program/about-tti>
- 6 *TTI: Phase 1 in Review*. Think Tank Initiative Report (2008-2014), IDRC, 2014, page 15.
- 7 *Final Report of the External Evaluation of the Think Tank Initiative*, (ECDPM & ODI, Sep 2013)
- 8 TTI Phase Two Proposal 2014-2019, IDRC. September 11, 2013, page 5
- 9 Summarized from the TTI Program Results Framework (see Annex 3 to this Report).
- 10 Inception report, External Evaluation of Think Tank Initiative Final Inception Report, 30 June 2015 Indevelop AB, page 21.
- 11 The emphasis of different data sources varied over the course of the evaluation. As described in more detail in Annex 1, in the final stage of the evaluation, in addition to interviews, the main additional sources of evidence were the grantees' Annual Technical Reports, the monitoring reports prepared by the Regional Program Officers, a variety of TTI reports on specific initiatives and grantee publications.
- 12 The Evaluation Team produced three reports: an Inception report, (External Evaluation of Think Tank Initiative Final Inception Report, 30 June 2015 Indevelop AB: https://www.niras.com/media/1741/tti_external_evaluation_inception_report_30_june.pdf)
a First Interim Report, (External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Interim Report, 21 June 2016, NIRAS: https://www.niras.com/media/1740/nirasindevelop_tti_1stir.pdf)
and a Second Interim Report, (External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Second Interim Report. Ian Christoplos, Adam Pain, Jups Kluyskens, Francisco Sagasti and Anna Liljelund Hedqvist, 5 December 2017 NIRAS. https://www.niras.com/media/2685/tti-external-evaluation-2nd-interim-report-final_.pdf)
- 13 External Evaluation of Think Tank Initiative Final Inception Report, 30 June 2015 Indevelop AB
- 14 External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Interim Report, 21 June 2016, NIRAS: https://www.niras.com/media/1740/nirasindevelop_tti_1stir.pdf
- 15 For more on the sample group, see the section below on Methods and Annex 1
- 16 External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Interim Report, 21 June 2016, NIRAS: https://www.niras.com/media/1740/nirasindevelop_tti_1stir.pdf
- 17 http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/TTI%20Phase%202020Results%20Framework_revised_June%2026.pdf
- 18 Drawing, as indicated in the Inception Report, on the foundational work of Ray Pawson and Nick Tilley 1997, *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage, and John Mayne on contribution analysis, Mayne, J. The Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative, (2008). *Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect*. In essence, "realist" evaluation theory stresses how it is the reasoning and decisions of actors in response to the resources or opportunities accompanying the intervention that will determine whether or not, or to what extent, it works as intended. Contribution analysis recognizes that modern development interventions form only part of a complex web of influences affecting development change. Only rarely can an intervention aim or claim to directly achieve development results ("attribution") but instead should be realistically designed, measured and evaluated for its "contribution/s" alongside other factors.
- 19 TTI (2014) Understanding Think Tank-University Relationships in the Global South, Final Report
- 20 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/01/17/building-a-culture-of-research-impact/>
- 21 In total, 37 outside observers were interviewed.

22 Three of the grantees were difficult for the Evaluation Team to assess due to insufficient reliable data.

23 From Second Interim Evaluation Report:

TTI contribution to strategic planning, full cohort

TTI contribution to strategic planning					
	Very limited				Strong
2nd interim report findings	0	3	13	15	11

Data source: full cohort interviews 2016-2017

24 Sample cohort question 5.1: *Have there been changes in strategic planning processes since the start of TTI? If yes, how would you characterize these changes in strategic planning? Have the RPOs contributed to these processes, and if so how?*

25 Sample cohort question 5.1: *Have there been changes in strategic planning processes since the start of TTI? If yes, how would you characterize these changes in strategic planning? Have the RPOs contributed to these processes, and if so how?*, and sample cohort question 6.1: *Has TTI contributed to your strategic planning since January 2017? How much? (1-10 scale ranging from 1 indicating not at all to 10 indicating comprehensive support, with a mid-level consisting of modest advice and/or coaching).*

26 Sample cohort question 6.1: *Has TTI contributed to your strategic planning since January 2017? How much? (1-10 scale ranging from 1 indicating not at all to 10 indicating comprehensive support, with a mid-level consisting of modest advice and/or coaching).*

27 See <http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/blog/think-tank-sustainability-africa-early-reflections-action-learning>

28 These findings are substantiated by the sample cohort interviews where examples were cited that largely referred to either internal monitoring of output targets and staff or organizational performance monitoring. The use of reporting systems was emphasized, sometimes together with internal staff discussions. In some cases M&E was interpreted as being related to peer review and research quality assurance as well.

29 Sample cohort question 8.1: *How would you characterize changes in the use of M&E since the start of TTI?*

30 Sample cohort question 7: *7.1: To what extent are M&E systems used to follow up the extent to which strategic goals are being achieved? (1-10 scale with one indicating no link to strategic goals and 10 indicating strong links to strategic goals with explicit indicators) If so, please provide examples.; 7.2: What have been the effects of these changes and what has strategic planning contributed to the organization?; 7.3: What contextual factors influence your capacities to deploy these strategic plans?; Note that the diversity of interpretations of the scope of the concept of "M&E" sometimes makes comparisons inexact. See also findings from Second Interim Report:*

Use of M&E systems to inform strategy, sample cohort

Extent to which strategic plans are tracked and informed by M&E systems, SC										
	Very limited			Moderate				Strong		
Baseline findings*	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	2	0	0
2nd interim report findings**	0	0	0	1	1	0	5	4	2	0

31 As opposed to reporting to donors

32 From Second Interim Report:

Engagement of governance structures in strategy, sample cohort

Extent to which grantee governance structures are active and influential in strategic development efforts, SC										
	Very limited			Moderate				Strong		
Baseline findings*	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	3	1	2
2nd interim report findings**	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	3	0	1

Data source: *Sample cohort interviews 2015-16, ** Sample cohort interviews 2016-17

Engagement of governance structures, full cohort

Strengthened engagement of governance structures, FC					
	Very weak			Strong	
2nd interim report findings	0	5	13	17	6

- 33 Sample cohort question 5.1: *Have there been changes in strategic planning processes since the start of TTI? If yes, how would you characterize these changes in strategic planning? Have the RPOs contributed to these processes, and if so how?*; sample cohort question 12.1: *What constitutes a 'critical mass in your organization? Do you perceive that that a critical mass of senior and junior researchers and support functions to be in place that enables high quality research?*; sample cohort question 14.1: *What new research areas have you been able to pursue as a result of TTI support?*
- 34 Most notably with EDRI.
- 35 This includes MISR's doctoral program at Makerere University.
- 36 EDRI
- 37 Sample cohort preliminary question 2: *How would you characterise the changes in your organization since the start of TTI funding and now and what have those been due to? Continuity or change? What have key moments of change/ rupture been in your history.*
- 38 Sample cohort question 4.1: *Are there examples or is there quantitative data regarding improvement in the position of women (both researchers and administration) since the start of TTI?*
- 39 ATR, 12 references noted for these aspects, but analysis of the reports suggests that the actual proportion of grantees using TTI resources to enhance retention though these two aspects is probably much higher.
- 40 Sample cohort question 3.1: *What measures are being taken to improve working conditions? Are working conditions significantly different from before TTI? If so, how? Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?*
- 41 Three sample cohort grantees expressed worries that their current costing models may not reflect their recurrent cost challenges post-TTI. Also see sample cohort question 2.1: *What contextual factors impact on staff retention? Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?*
- 42 Noted in Struyk, R. 2015, *Improving Think Tank Management: Practical Guidance for Think Tanks, Research Advocacy NGOs and their Funders*, Results for Development Institute, page 61
- 43 Sample cohort question 2.1: *What contextual factors impact on staff retention? Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?*
- 44 Sample cohort question 3.1: *What measures are being taken to improve working conditions? Are working conditions significantly different from before TTI? If so, how? Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?*
- 45 Sample cohort question 3.1: *What measures are being taken to improve working conditions? Are working conditions significantly different from before TTI? If so, how? Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?*
- 46 Some of the training and networking activities initiated by the grantees themselves were effectively financed by the core grant.
- 47 There are many different definitions and categories of 'core funding'. In the TTI context this refers to grants that are largely untied to specific activities and for which priorities have been decided by grantees, in dialogue with RPOs.
- 48 For a recent evaluation of core funding modalities for civil society highlighted similar qualities, see Karlstedt, Cecilia, Megan Bick and Katarina Stolyarenko, 2015, *Evaluation of Sida Funded Programme of Core Support and Connected Projects in Ukraine*, Sida Decentralised Evaluation, 2015:2
- 49 Reporting includes a large number of references to new research areas, but it is difficult to verify what proportion of these new research areas were fully or partially TTI funded.

- 50 <https://onthinktanks.org/articles/core-funding-unexpected/> This post was followed by another post that presented positive outcomes. <https://onthinktanks.org/articles/core-funding-unexpected-positives/>
- 51 The exception of course may be where core funding is invested in ways to generate ‘more core funding’, such as endowments and income generation schemes.
- 52 Referred to during much of Phase One as *Matching Funds*.
- 53 The latter described further in section 4.a below.
- 54 <http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/learning/capacity-development/opportunity-funds>
- 55 It is important to note a semantic conflation in how “capacity development” is framed within TTI. The Evaluation Team judges that core funding has been the main way that TTI has contributed to capacity development, with the additional initiatives (which are labelled as “capacity development” or sometimes as “targeted capacity development”) having a supporting function. In this report we describe core funding as being a capacity development modality, alongside these other initiatives. In TTI’s own information, core funding is generally described as separate from “capacity development”.
- 56 <http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/program/approach>
- 57 *TTI: Phase 1 in Review*. Think Tank Initiative Report (2008-2014), IDRC, 2014,
- 58 TTI Phase 2 Capacity Development Strategy, 15 March 2015
- 59 Annual Report On TTI’s Capacity Building Initiative Phase 2 in Latin America, Coordinated by ILAIPP (Vanessa Weyrauch, 21 December 2017)
- 60 Final Report on TTI’s Capacity Building Initiative Phase 2 in Latin America Coordinated by ILAIPP (Vanessa Weyrauch, January 20, 2019)
- 61 Menezes, D. 2018, IDRC Think Tank Initiative (TTI) Capacity Building Initiative Phase 2 in South Asia. Mid-Phase Report.
- 62 OTT-TTI Fellowship Programme interim report - Jan 2019 covering the period September 2018 to 31 January 2019. Ajoy Datta and Enrique Mendizabal
- 63 First Interim Technical Report by David Kelleher, 31 July 2018. Gender Action Learning Project Gender at Work. Period of 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2018.
- 64 <http://isser.edu.gh/index.php/news/137-west-african-think-tank-network-wattnet-officially-launched>
- 65 Some of these were supported through the Opportunity Fund.
- 66 <http://southernvoice.org/>
- 67 Kibbe, Barbara 2017, Breaking up is hard to do, *The Foundation Review*, Volume 9, Issue 1, Exit Strategies, Article 7.
- 68 From evaluation feedback session at the third TTI in Bangkok, Nov 2018. TTI leadership has disputed this view, but the Evaluation Team judges that this perception is important to recognize.
- 69 Interview, Director within the LA SC.
- 70 <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandacraagendaforaction.htm>
- 71 The Action Research on Business Models was described by grantees as giving them the skills and confidence to argue against these changes, but this was seen to be a difficult, uphill struggle, with uncertain outcomes.
- 72 External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Second Interim Report. Ian Christoplos, Adam Pain, Jups Kluyskens, Francisco Sagasti and Anna Liljelund Hedqvist. 5 December 2017 NIRAS Indvelop, page 22.
- 73 Sample cohort question 10: 10.1: *What specific changes have happened due to the range of support provided through TTI (training, advice from RPOs, peer exchange, etc.) with regard to resource mobilization since the start of TTI?*; 10.2: *How would you characterize where you stand now in terms of resource mobilization, compared to where your organization was at the outset?*; 10.3: *Does your think tank have a ‘business model’ bringing together substantive research priorities, resource mobilisation and management and policy engagement/influence? (1-10 scale with 1 indicating none at all and 10 indicating comprehensive, integrated and*

applied, with the mid level indicated by relatively piecemeal approaches and/or a narrow focus on resource mobilisation).

- 74 RPO interview on sample cohort grantees, question 5: *5.1: How has reliance on TTI funding changed over time and do you perceive there to be a risk of any form of crisis after the ending of this support?; 5.2: Are there specific plans in place for transitions to the post-TTI funding environment?*
- 75 TTI funding cannot be used for creating an endowment fund as it is against IDRC policy.
- 76 See for example CBGA's funding for its education study from an Indian partner
- 77 RPO interview on sample cohort grantees, question 5: *5.1: How has reliance on TTI funding changed over time and do you perceive there to be a risk of any form of crisis after the ending of this support?; 5.2: Are there specific plans in place for transitions to the post-TTI funding environment?*
- 78 This internal assessment by IDRC contained three categories: low, medium and high risk. It is based on seven criteria, relating to aspects such as experience; financial position (including donor dependence and income streams); staff characteristics and staff situation; management and governance; auditing routines and records; and the type of external environment (concerning political-economic volatility and corruption).
- 79 From evaluation feedback session at the third TTI in Bangkok, Nov 2018.
- 80 From evaluation feedback session at the third TTI in Bangkok, Nov 2018.
- 81 Ofir, Z., Schwandt, T., Duggan, C. and McLean, R. 2016, Research Quality Plus (RQ+): a holistic approach to evaluating research. Ottawa, IDRC.
- 82 See Annex 4.
- 83 Sample cohort preliminary question 1: *How would you compare the context (interest in evidence and policy making practices) in which you operate at the beginning of TTI funding and now? What effects has this had on your organization?*
- 84 http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/TTI%20Phase%20%20Results%20Framework_revised_June%202026.pdf (See also Annex 3 of this report.)
- 85 See further case study no. 8 in Annex 4.
- 86 See further case study no. 18 in Annex 4.
- 87 In most cases TTI resources were used to pay for external peer reviewers.
- 88 Sample cohort question 1: *1.1: Has staff retention been a problem, if so at what level and has this changed? What do you see as its primary causes?; 1.2: If yes, what measures are being taken to retain staff (senior researchers, junior researchers, finance and administrative, communications, other) hired in recent years?; 1.3: Is this different from the way staff retention was encouraged before TTI? If so, how?*
- 89 Case study findings and interviews with researchers uncovered a number of cases where procedures were apparently not strictly followed.
- 90 Q16.2 external QA 3; More internal seminars 2; More senior researchers for internal quality enhancement 1; More systematic now 4; Not really 3; Totally new 1.
- 91 The term 'ecosystem' was not specifically used.
- 92 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/01/17/building-a-culture-of-research-impact/>
- 93 Sample cohort question 19.2: *To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'relevant' and what does this signify?*
- 94 ACODE. Center For Budget And Economic Governance (CBEG), Narrative Progress Report. Gender Responsive Budgeting In Africa: An Action Learning Project In Senegal And Uganda. October 2017 To September 2018.
Projet de recherche-action pour une systématisation de la budgétisation sensible au genre (BSG) au Sénégal. Rapport des activités menées dans de juin à Novembre 2018. IDRC Think Tank Initiative (TTI) Capacity Building Initiative Phase 2 in South Asia. Mid-Phase Report. Debbie Menezes, M&E Coordinator (South Asia). April 2018.
- 95 This reflects the mix of long-term strategic and short-term tactical approaches.

- 96 Sample cohort question 18.1: *How do you see your 'positioning' in the field of policy analysis and advice/advocacy to have changed over the past decade?*
- 97 Sample cohort question 19.1: *To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'independent' and what does this signify?*
- 98 Outside Observer question 1.1: *What factors do you see as underpinning quality in policy research?*; Outside Observer question 4.1: *Do you perceive the grantee to be sufficiently independent to prove credible?*; and various other interviews
- 99 Outside Observer question 2.1: *Do you judge that the TTI grantees reflect commitments to successfully address these qualities?*
- 100 Sample cohort question 19.1: *To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'independent' and what does this signify?*
- 101 Sample cohort question 20.1: *What contextual factors (e.g., the demand for high quality research, political polarization, ability to establish and maintain strategic partnerships, etc.) have influenced these abilities?*
- 102 Sample cohort, outside observer interviews.
- 103 Apart from the example described in Box 12, the intention to use these engagements to generate income were largely described by grantees as plans, and actual profits had yet to be realized.
- 104 The Evaluation Team has noted a continuum between consultancies and research. At the one end there are short, intellectually shallow assignments, sometimes just involving data collection without analysis, or presenting opinions without evidence. At the other extreme, there are some assignments involving completely free research chosen and designed by the researchers themselves. Each think tank has its own more or less narrow definition of the types of assignments that are categorized as 'consultancies'. The comments here reflect the flexible limits that they perceive regarding what constitutes a 'consultancy assignment' and what kinds of consultancies are perceived as being appropriate.
- 105 Sample cohort question 20.1: *What contextual factors (e.g., the demand for high quality research, political polarization, ability to establish and maintain strategic partnerships, etc.) have influenced these abilities?*
- 106 Sample cohort preliminary question 2: *How would you characterise the changes in your organization since the start of TTI funding and now and what have those been due to? Continuity or change? What have key moments of change/rupture been in your history.*
- 107 Sample cohort question 20.2: *Have your policies, procedures and activities changed so as to take advantage of opportunities and avoid obstacles to policy influence?*
- 108 Sample cohort question 20.3: *Has TTI support been relevant and enabling to respond to a changing environment for policy influence?*
- 109 Statement by the Director from one of the (few) grantees who initially was very sceptical - but soon became a champion within communications. (Source: RPO interview on sample cohort grantees, question 9: 9.1: *To what extent has the grantee's communications capacities increased over the past decade?*; 9.2: *How has TTI contributed to this?*; 9.3: *Do you expect these changes to prove sustainable after the end of TTI support?*)
- 110 *Final Report of the External Evaluation of the Think Tank Initiative*, (ECDPM & ODI, Sep 2013), page 17.
- 111 *Idem*, page viii.
- 112 *External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Interim Report* 21 June 2016, NIRAS Indvelop, page 51.
- 113 *Idem*, page 52.
- 114 *External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Second Interim Report*. Ian Christoplos, Adam Pain, Jups Kluyskens, Francisco Sagasti and Anna Liljelund Hedqvist. 5 December 2017 NIRAS Indvelop, page iv.
- 115 *Idem*, page 60.
- 116 Sample cohort interviews, question 22: 22.1: *To what extent and in what ways have your communications capacities increased over the past decade?*; 22.2: *How would you describe the focus of your communications efforts on a*

1-10 scale with 1 indicating rudimentary, a mid-level indicating a focus on producing more/better outputs, to 10 indicating a focus on policy outcomes and engagement?; 22.3: How has TTI contributed to this?; 22.4: Do you expect these changes to prove sustainable after the end of TTI support (particularly if TTI support is being used for staff salaries, publication costs or running costs of communications units)?; and RPO full cohort interviews, question 9: 9.1: To what extent has the grantee's communications capacities increased over the past decade?; 9.2: How has TTI contributed to this?; 9.3: Do you expect these changes to prove sustainable after the end of TTI support?

- 117** Sample cohort interviews, question 22.1: *To what extent and in what ways have your communications capacities increased over the past decade?*
- 118** Sample cohort interviews, question 22.1: *To what extent and in what ways have your communications capacities increased over the past decade?*
- 119** Hass, P.M. 1992, 'Introduction: epistemic communities and international policy coordination', *International Organization*, special issue: Knowledge, Power and International Policy Coordination. Cambridge Journals 46(1), 1-35
- 120** Eyben, R. 2010, Hiding relations: the irony of 'effective aid', *European Journal of Development Research* 22, 382-397
- 121** Summary of higher level findings presented at the third TTIIX in Bangkok, Nov 2018.
- 122** Bley, David and Vu Le. Viewpoint: *Equitable Bets for Marginalized Communities*, Stanford Social Innovation Review. Spring 2019



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Methods

Overall Approach

The Evaluation followed a theory-based design, assessing program performance against the TTI theory of change and its revised results framework¹. The methodological approach – of “realism” focused on “contribution”² – has proved to be appropriate in coming to grips with a non-directive program based on a complex theory of change in a highly diverse set of contexts. The approach has provided a means to investigate how the grantees themselves bring together organizational development, enhancement of research quality and policy engagement as part of their own endogenous capacity development processes, while grappling with their particular contextual risks and opportunities.

The evaluation approach recognizes that multiple causal influences are at work and has not tried to impose simple, linear attribution of results to the program interventions. Realist evaluation theory³ stresses how it is the reasoning and decisions of actors in response to the resources or opportunities accompanying an intervention that will determine whether or not, and to what extent, it works as intended. Neither the TTI Program nor the Evaluation has attempted to judge the progress of the grantees against any single ‘model’ of what a think tank should be, in recognition of the diverse trends and goals among the grantees. The Evaluation has accepted this complexity and built frank and evidence-based assessments of contributions. Thus, different underlying influences in each grantee’s context are central to understanding performance.

Sampling

The evaluation has worked in detail with a subsample of grantees and in less detail with the full cohort of grantees. The following sections explain the strategy for selecting the sample and the use to which the evidence from the sample can be put.

Sample strategy

Both the Request for Proposals for the evaluation and the response to the tender envisaged that a sample of grantees would be chosen for more in-depth follow-up. This would allow an examination of the progress of a more manageable group of grantees in relation to the results framework; to generate and ‘ground truth’ hypotheses about these change processes and to develop case studies to effectively convey TTI results to intended audiences. In order to underpin an accurate overview of TTI results, as well as to assess the varying pathways for organizational development, research quality and policy influence that have been taken by the grantees, the following sampling strategy was adopted.

For practical reasons a sample of approximately 12 grantees was the working assumption from the outset. A challenge for the Evaluation was to establish the right balance between coverage of the overall program and the full cohort of grantees on the one hand, and the more in-depth analysis of a

1 <http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/simplified%20results%20framework.pdf>

2 Drawing, as indicated in the Inception Report, on the foundational work of Ray Pawson and Nick Tilley, *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage, 1997 and John Mayne on contribution analysis, Mayne, J. The Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative, (2008). *Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect*.

3 Pawson, Ray and Tilley, Nick (1997): *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage

more restricted 'representative sample' of some 30% of the total of 43 grantees on the other. The coverage of the overall cohort and program needed to be as comprehensive as practically possible, with the sample being used to go more deeply into a range of contextual explanations, while also hopefully "ground-truthing" findings from the overall monitoring base.

In using the term 'representative sample' this does not imply that this selection is representative in a statistical sense not least since the sample does not include comparison with non-TTI supported think tanks. Nor is it random which in a strict statistical sense of representative it should be, but rather purposive to ensure coverage of the diverse types of grantees. Thus, the objective of the sample selection was to establish the most rigorously representative sample possible given the heterogeneous cohort of think tanks and the overarching evaluation objective of assessing the difference made by TTI Phase Two to think tanks with a range of key characteristics that are salient to such support in different functional contexts. Regional distribution was assumed not to be a key consideration in itself. To guard against possible biases, the criteria for categorization needed to be sufficiently objective as well as being supported by the best available baseline and time series data.

On this basis, the Team adopted a combination of stratified, cluster and random sampling approaches as outlined below. First, it analysed a range of possible criteria and their distribution and data availability across the Phase Two cohort and found the following criteria (listed in order of priority) to be the most relevant to the purpose and robustly supported by data.

Primary criteria: essential to have good distribution, data are adequate to support.

- a. Size - (Latest Budget: \$ M .2-.5; .5-1.0; 1-2; 2-3; 3-4; 4+)
- b. Phase Two TTI Grant as a share of Latest Budget (percentages 5-10; 10-15; 15-25; 25-35; 35-45; 45+)
- c. Longevity (Years since foundation: 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, 20-30, 30+)
- d. Research Focus (Economics; Socio-Economics; Sustainable Development/Environment; Science, Technology, Innovation; Governance; Social Issues; Multiple)
- e. Key leadership base at the start of Phase Two.

Secondary criteria: desirable to have reasonable distribution, but generally less well-supported by clear categorization and data.

- f. Mix of research and advocacy work (%s: Self-reported and less-defined but still useful)
- g. Emphasis on Gender issues in research portfolio. Extracted from research priorities/ Annual reports.
- h. Size - (Research Staff numbers, correlates strongly with Budget. Breakdown by levels not fully clear)
- i. Affiliation (Independent, University-affiliated, Government or established under legislation) 80% report as independent, but some boundaries are unclear
- j. Gender staffing profile (Women in research staff and management, levels) Data highly incomplete.
- k. Size - (Full-time Employees numbers: correlates with Budget, some disconnects with research staff.)

Practical criteria: all things being equal from applying the primary criteria for representative distribution, informed by distribution across the secondary criteria, the following final criteria were applied.

- l. Phase One case-study: Limit the burden on grantees visited, but have some basis for comparing findings.
- m. Regional and geographical distribution: accessibility for missions and convenience for Evaluation Team workload distribution.

Adhering to this transparent and objective selection design, the following sequence of sampling steps was followed.

- i. The first three criteria were scored together and ranked groups assembled. It was recognized that criteria a. and c. were positively correlated to each other while b. was negatively correlated, but the net result was a reasonably balanced set of ranked groups.
- ii. With proportional representation across those groups, criterion d. on research focus was then applied to select randomly a group of 12 in proportion to the distribution of the different field of focus across the entire cohort.
- iii. At this stage, two “cluster” checks were integrated around the existing assessments of the key leadership base at the start of Phase Two (where the different levels proved quite well-distributed) and proportional regional representativeness (which also worked well, without yet looking at practical issues of distribution by individual countries).
- iv. The final filters applied to this group of 12 were those of the research/advocacy “mix” reported by grantees in the Annual Monitoring Questionnaire for 2012, and the relative emphasis on gender issues in the research portfolios of this projected sample, where distribution again proved acceptably close to the estimations across the entire cohort.

On the basis of this selection approach, the robust representative sample of 12 that emerged included the following grantees. To this was added a 13th grantee (CRES) grantee to provide representation of a Francophone country:

Final list of sample cohort grantees:

AFRICA:

Centre for the Studies of the Economies of Africa (CSEA, Nigeria)
 Consortium pour la Recherche Économique et Sociale (CRES, Senegal)
 Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI, Ethiopia)
 Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA Ghana)
 Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR Rwanda)
 Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR, Uganda)

LATIN AMERICA:

Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya (CADEP, Paraguay)
 Fundación para el Avance de las Reformas y las Oportunidades (Grupo FARO, Ecuador)
 Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de El Salvador (FUSADES, El Salvador)

SOUTH ASIA:

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA, India)
 Centre for Policy Research (CPR, India)
 Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS, Sri Lanka)
 Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC, Pakistan)

The final check, around any decision to include or exclude grantees that were the subject of Phase One evaluation visits, yielded the following finding: five of the 17 visited in the 2013 evaluation would be included in this sample: CSEA, MISR, EDRI, FUSADES and CADEP. This representation was seen to yield a good mixture of continuity and variation in “case-study” coverage.

Looking at the implications of the different, narrowing steps in this sample selection, it is important to reiterate the caveat that the sample could not cover all the key evaluation issues in a sufficiently representative way to itself allow for generalized conclusions or to substitute for the results of the cohort wide and program level analyses that must cover all aspects of performance. Nonetheless, there are grounds for confidence that this sample would provide a solid and objective basis for deepening and validating those wider findings.

Generalization from the sample cohort

The 13 case study grantees have been taken through three rounds of interviews exploring the specific histories and contexts of each grantee, assessing their overall trajectories of change and examining some of the underlying factors, TTI or otherwise, that might be related to these change processes. Within each of the sample grantees, specific case studies of research quality or communication activities that have been directly supported by TTI in one way or another were purposively selected to explore TTI influence in relation to research quality, organizational change and policy engagement. These case studies of specific activities are listed in Annex 2.

In addition, the directors of each of the full cohort of grantees were interviewed in round 2 of evaluation and the full cohort was also extensively discussed with the RPOs in both rounds 2 and 3 of the evaluation.

A distinction can be made between empirical generalization (extrapolation to make claims for a wider group) and analytical generalization which is an exercise in abstraction focusing on the constituent properties of the empirical cases under investigation. Here the constituent properties of interest are research quality, organizational change, institutional change, policy engagement and context, all of which are conceptual or abstract terms.

Three types of empirical generalization, working with concrete data, are possible:

- Formal generalization where depending on sampling technique, single cases may allow us to say something about typicality or rarity of observations. Given the nature of case selection of the grantees and the heterogeneity of the sample grantees (and the full cohort) this cannot be done with the grantee case material.
- Generalization through 'resonance' with other relevant work that invites wider questioning of the case. Here issues of likelihood and probability are considered in applying ideas and questions from comparable examples to the specific cases. The thinking here draws on three specific comparable strands of work.
 - The first is Lant Pritchett's⁴ thinking about coherence between interventions designed to improve institutional 'performance' and existing institutional practices and here the TTI intervention scores extremely well (in contrast to the World Bank's intervention into villages in Afghanistan {which have similar dimensions of empirical heterogeneity) which was incoherent in multiple ways⁵. This reflects a key quality of the TTI funding in that it is essentially core funding.
 - The second is that of distinguishing between form and function and again the thinking here draws on the work of Pritchett⁶ and the idea of 'isomorphic mimicry'⁷. What he calls a 'key technique of successful failure' that perpetuates capability traps, based on replicating processes that work elsewhere in other contexts (The American TT model replicated in India has fallen into that trap). The dangers of not making this distinction are, for example, of assuming the fact, that there is a formal strategic plan means that strategic planning takes place. Here an argument will be made for the reverse - that it is the function that matters e.g. ability to be strategic without necessarily having a strategic plan and that

⁴ Pritchett, L. (2015) *Creating Education Systems Coherent for Learning Outcomes: Making the Transition from Schooling to Learning*. Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Working Paper. RISE.

⁵ Pain, 2018 *Using village context analysis in Afghanistan*, Kabul, AREU.

⁶ Andrews, M., L. Pritchett, and M. Woolcock (2017) *Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action*. Oxford, OUP (see in particular Chapter 3: Looking Like a State,

⁷ The process by which one organism mimics another to gain an evolutionary advantage. Think of a perfectly edible species of butterfly that looks like another (not so edible) species to avoid being eaten.

there are many routes to being strategic as the case studies show. In practice through the accompanying role of the RPOs and the nature of the funding this is not a trap that TTI has fallen. But there are dangers in looking for overall learning from the TTI experience that it is lessons more about form rather than function that will be sought.

- The third area of work of Charles Tilly⁸ on trust and rule and the nature of networks. The issue here is how informal networks created through social identities and shared histories are fundamental to managing risk in uncertain environments. It is suggested that this is foundational to policy influencing and access in the countries where the sample grantees are located.
- The use of a specific case to challenge a generalization. The example here is that of so many specific instances of specific capacity development efforts being regarded as not useful or worse, that it would be difficult to argue that the specific TTI Capacity Development initiatives in general have contributed, although in specific cases they might have done so.

With respect to analytical generalization the evaluation has been working with key concepts of research quality, organizational change, institutional sustainability, policy influencing and context that are all abstract ideas rather than concrete. That is, they do not have an empirical reality (as evidenced by the wide debate on what is research quality) although we might use certain metrics as indicators of specific aspects of the concept. By working with these key concepts back and forth between the concrete data, using the concepts to frame our enquiry of the empirical and in turn using the empirical to question and refine our understanding of the concept, we are able through abstraction to identify inherent decontextualized qualities or properties of the concepts. These aspects will be addressed in our conclusions.

There is a further step that can be taken, moving from observation of empirical events through concepts to be able to say something about the questions that one might ask e.g. the lessons learnt from the evaluation, about the inherent qualities and dynamics in other contexts that might be relevant to future funding. This is the step of theorizing. It is emphasized that this is about constructing a heuristic framework as a set of conceptual tools and questions if one were to go through the TTI exercise again in. It is not about building an explanatory framework to be used deductively. This will also be returned to in the conclusions.

Additional data sources

The evaluation has also drawn on a range of internal TTI documentation and commissioned studies. The internal documentation included the TTI monitoring data which largely focuses on activities, resources and outputs as self-reported by the grantees. Also reviewed were the grantee application forms for Phase Two and external assessments of these and the Annual Technical Reports (ATRs) drafted by the grantees and the monitoring reports from the RPOs during Phase Two. It was noted that the latter varied in both in detail, quality and focus and in the final round of the evaluation in some cases more recent monitoring reports were not always available. In addition, reports on various assessments of TTI initiatives were reviewed (e.g. ILAIPP, The Young Leaders Fellowship Program, The mid-term report on Capacity Development for South Asia, etc.).

In addition to this internal documentation the evaluation has drawn on various studies commissioned by TTI, including one on Understanding Think Tank-University Relationships in the Global South with country case studies in India and Bangladesh, and the Policy Community Survey (PCS) Report which has been undertaken over three rounds since the beginning of the program. This has aimed to provide a better understanding of policy communities in specific countries and provide strategic direction to grantees on how they can best contribute to the quality of policy making in the countries where they are situated. These have also provided assessments of the use of evidence from think tanks as well as

8 Tilley, C (2005) Trust and rule. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

assessment of their research quality. The Evaluation team has had access to the overall global reports and some summary regional assessments. After the completion of the first draft of the final evaluation report access was given to the PCS individual grantee assessments.

Coding of data

In the final stage of data collection sample cohort interviews were coded in relation to categories of answers that emerged from an interview guide that was developed, focused on indicators identified in early 2018. The indicators that were then identified are summarized in the matrix in Annex Five below. Since interviews revealed a range of perspectives, findings ultimately varied somewhat from the expected indicators. A summary of codes emerging from the responses in the sample cohort interviews is included under each question in Annex Five below.

Similar coding was done for ATRs. Grantees completed these reports with highly varied interpretations of the format and therefore the coding could not follow the reporting structure itself. The codes applied are as follows (data quantity and quality varied considerably):

General organizational strengthening and capacity development

- General staffing and retention issues
- Paying competitive salaries
- Gender equity
- Working conditions
- TTI contributions to staff training
- Degree training
- Strategic planning
- Networking and conference attendance
- ILAIPP and other networking
- Supplementary capacity development

Sustainability

- Shifts in reliance on TTI support
- Resource mobilization efforts
- Action research on business models
- Actions taken to avoid post-TTI decline

Research quality

- Strengthened research processes
- New research areas
- QA Procedures
- External QA
- Internal/informal QA
- QA as promoted by incentives and research culture
- QA as mentorship

Policy engagement

- Perceptions of pathways to influence
- Changes in outside perceptions

Leveraging networks for influence

Changes in communications capacities and initiatives

For Program Monitoring Reports and also RPO and Outside Observer interviews the data was analyzed for each question in the respective interview guides. Further coding was not done as the findings included an extremely varied range of responses.

Case studies were undertaken looking at selected research outputs and related processes. These were summarized in reports presented in Annex Four below. Findings for each sub-heading in the case studies were coded according to emerging issues under each heading as follows

<p>Steps taken to ensure rigor and engagement underpinning credibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review by management before publishing • Building on available national statistics and data sets • Applying internationally recognized methods/models • Ensuring staff skills in data interpretation and analysis • Internal seminars and peer review • Stakeholder and outside peer review and validation • Placing in public domain to encourage feedback • Ensuring institutional status and reputation • Close supervision of data collection • Aiming for achieving standards for peer reviewed publications • Flexibility of methods in response to adverse conditions
<p>Overall judgements on quality of outputs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Acceptable • For broad audience so emphasis on track record rather than just the publication reviewed
<p>Steps to ensure credibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting clearly defined stakeholders and responding to their questions • Addressing challenges with institute being associated with ‘wrong’ stakeholders • Ensuring reputation of researchers/leadership • Ensuring reputation of institute • Stakeholder engagement and validation • Data from credible government data sets • Addressing challenges with weak data sets • Recognizing challenges when unable to follow up after research is released • Timeliness • Close collaboration with communications department
<p>Evidence of policy influence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct reference to decisions based on evidence and analyses • Recognition of greater engagement in policy sphere • Raising awareness about an issue • Feeding into CSO and community led advocacy • Generally informing the public discourse • None now, but perhaps in the long-term
<p>TTI relevance and contributions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitments and capacities for communications • Development of researcher capacities • Strengthened reputations due to stronger human resources • Generally covering of costs • More expansive research agenda and better data • Stronger networks • Investments leading to better internal coordination and dialogue

Interview rounds

Three rounds of interviews were undertaken over a three-year period with variations in objectives, method and coverage.

Round 1

The methodology for the Evaluation in its first stage (from June 2015 to April 2016) followed closely the approach set out in the Inception Report. The Team first focused on a structured analysis of the full cohort data, followed by field visits to the thirteen sample cohort think tanks and attendance at regional meetings in South Asia and West Africa (and brief engagement with a regional meeting in Latin America). The regional meetings provided some of the team members with a chance to also meet with representatives from the full cohort. Over 200 interviews were undertaken, excluding a range of more informal interviews undertaken in conjunction with regional meetings and the Think Tank Initiative Exchange 2015 (TTIX 2015). The Team had regular internal skype meetings and held phone conversations also with TTI Ottawa staff and with RPOs.

A major set of tasks in the first stage was to establish the baseline for the Evaluation, but this proved more challenging than expected, for two principal reasons. The first is that there is no sharp de-lin-eation in most of the available data (or in the minds of grantee institutions) between Phases One and Two. Often data on TTI support and assessments overlap the two Phases, as the work itself has continued across them. The second challenge presented was the diverse, partial and uneven data for constituting a baseline. The pragmatic solution ultimately proposed by the Evaluation Team and agreed with TTI was to use the Phase Two application documentation as a central baseline source (in addition to analysing other data in the TTI database). Details on the methods followed are to be found in the Interim Report.⁹

Round 2

During the second round (November to June 2017) the Evaluation Team's fieldwork focused most intensively on the thirteen sample cohort grantees selected in the Inception Phase for in-depth analysis. Approximately two-day visits were made with each sample cohort grantee. An average of approximately 4 to 5 interviews were undertaken with each sample cohort grantee, including senior management, governance, senior researchers, junior researchers, communications staff and administrative staff. Some interviews were undertaken individually and others in focus groups. Where possible, interviews were undertaken with informed observers and members of the policy community relevant to each grantee, although the inputs that could be obtained from these efforts proved to be limited (11 interviews) and uneven in quality. Sometimes this reflected difficulties in identifying objective observers during the brief visits to the grantees. In other cases it reflected how observers may have reflected more on the past performance of the grantee as they were not fully aware of recent changes. In addition, data from TTI's own monitoring was drawn on.

Full cohort data was collected mainly from two sources. The first was Skype interviews (and where possible face-to-face interviews) with all grantees. A standard questionnaire was used. These interviews took approximately one hour. This full cohort data was triangulated with interviews with RPOs, with whom the Evaluation Team reviewed each grantee individually.

The total number of interviews undertaken (excluding ongoing dialogue with the TTI Program Team and interviews with RPOs on full cohort grantees) was 119. Additional data used to assess the full cohort included the following:

9 External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Interim Report, 21 June 2016, NIRAS, p 4-12.

- Review of available Opportunity Fund reporting
- Review of Stories of Influence
- TTI data on staffing patterns
- TTI data on proportion of grantee budgets funded by TTI
- General TTI reports, blogs and other publications
- Interviews with TTI RPOs on full cohort grantees

Full details can be found in the second interim report of the evaluation¹⁰.

Round 3

The third and final round of fieldwork (June to December 2018) again focused on the sample cohort of grantees following up in a structured manner the case studies within each grantee and selected details on the overall changes within each organization. An emphasis was given to individual grantees assessment of the contribution that TTI support, whether direct or indirect, had made to perceived changes within the grantee organization. Particular attention was given to assessments of changes in research quality.

Interviews were also held with outside observers for each of the sample grantees focussing on their perceptions of the quality in policy relevant research and the extent to which specific grantees met their criteria of quality and how this had changed over time.

Interviews were held with the RPOs assessing for each of the full cohort of grantees key changes that the RPOs had seen during phase two within the grantees. Key issues addressed here related to staffing, working conditions, strategic planning, positioning in the policy environment, communications and research quality. Following this, interviews with the directors of two to three of the full cohort of grantees within each region were held focussing particularly on research quality and policy influence changes.

The Evaluation Team also attended TTI 2018 in Bangkok, which provided an opportunity to meet with the grantees again and verify the emerging findings.

¹⁰ External Evaluation of TTI Phase Two Second Interim Report. Ian Christoplos, Adam Pain, Jups Kluyskens, Francisco Sagasti and Anna Liljelund Hedqvist, 5 December 2017 NIRAS, p 4-7

ANNEX 2: Summary statements on TTI contributions

This annex consists of the agreed final framework (referred to as “Summary statements”) against which the Evaluation Team has assessed the work of TTI. These statements were agreed upon between the TTI Executive Committee and the Evaluation Team at the start of the final stage of the evaluation. The intention was to focus analysis on specific “high level learning questions.” In the course of the final stage of data collection and analysis the Evaluation Team strove to look critically at the assumptions inherent in these statements and derive lessons from this for what might constitute appropriate approaches and aims for future support to think tanks.

1. Introduction

The objective for this brief paper is to present statements summarising the evaluation team’s current emerging hypotheses about grantee development processes and outcomes, in light of TTI contributions. These statements are based on the conclusions from the first two phases of the evaluation and concern contextual factors, TTI contributions and outcomes among the grantees in terms of organizational strengthening, research quality and policy influence. The evaluation team is using these to reassess, frame and refine its methods in the final evaluation phase. The intention of this paper is to present the evaluative logic that will be applied in the final phase of the evaluation. It is not intended as an outline of the actual report. A brief plan to communicate these findings and conclusions to various selected audiences will be developed once consensus has been found on this overall analytical framework.

The summary statements for these three areas describe contexts, intermediary outcomes and expected overall outcomes. They emphasize TTI’s spheres of control, influence and interest respectively, drawing on an overall synthesis of the findings of the first two interim reports, building on the different grantee experiences. The selection of issues to be explored gives priority to aspects that the evaluation team judges to be particularly salient for feeding into overall lessons from TTI and areas where TTI and the EC have expressed specific interest. Due to this prioritization, the final phase will not trace all of the issues covered in the earlier phases, but will include earlier data as deemed appropriate for feeding into high-level learning. The expectation at the start of the final phase is to establish a consensus on the high-level questions to be analysed in the data collection, which will be subsequently discussed at TTI, and answered in the final evaluation report and other communication outputs. The intention of developing these summary statements is thus twofold. First, they provide a set of overarching context and contribution hypotheses that the final evaluation will assess. Second, they constitute a tool for dialogue with TTI, the EC and the grantees regarding what lessons think tanks and their supporters can draw from the TTI experience.

In sections Two through Four, for each of the three TTI components summary hypotheses are presented regarding overall outcomes, intermediary outcomes, TTI contributions and contextual factors. Below these summary statements there are tables with the selected sub-questions, indicators and data sources that will be used to probe the hypotheses. Selected indicators largely reflect the categories of factors and ‘qualities’ that the grantees themselves have described as having framed their collaboration with TTI. The selection of data sources reflects the evaluation team’s judgements regarding where it is possible to collect rigorous data that can provide an in-depth understanding of the TTI process. Each of the three components includes analyses based on both the sample cohort (SC) and full cohort (FC), and where possible these two data sets are used to triangulate findings regarding the individual sub-questions. The mix of sources, however, has varied according to the nature of data required to answer each question. Most of the FC data will be drawn from the TTI Monitoring Database and the Policy Community Survey (PCS). Initial analysis of the TTI monitoring data suggest that

FC interviews will provide only very limited additional data, and that therefore the emphasis of FC data collection will be on database and PCS analysis, as well as extensive RPO interviews regarding all individual FC grantees. Only selected FC interviews will be undertaken. Engagements at the TTX will also be an opportunity to validate and explore selected questions in more detail with the FC.

The focus will be on qualitative aspects, given that TTI produces its own quantitative reporting from the Monitoring Questionnaire. In addition to the summary statements for the three components, selected questions (refined from those that were proposed in the evaluation inception report) are presented in section Five that synthesize these findings in relation to overall lessons to be learnt from the TTI experience.

The FC Monitoring Database sources emphasize TTI funded inputs/activities and grantee outputs. Furthermore, initial analyses of the grantee reporting has shown that their interpretation of the categories of organizational strengthening, research quality and policy influence varies considerably (which indicates the different 'logics' being applied). In light of this, the exact areas where the monitoring data can be used to respond to the different areas is likely to vary from what is presented here once the analysis is complete. Also, there is relatively little information regarding the contextual factors that influence change processes. Therefore, a major emphasis of the SC data collection and interviews with RPOs will be to contextualise the overall analysis, in accordance with the overall methodological approach to the evaluation based on contribution analysis with a realist perspective. SC data will also be used to obtain a nuanced understanding of shifting outcomes during the full period of TTI support. Questions will highlight where grantees have been able to use TTI funding more strategically over time, and also where sequencing of different aspects of capacity development support has proven appropriate or not.

2. Organizational strengthening

Summary hypothesis statement overview

<i>Overall outcome statement</i>	On the whole, grantees are more strategic, stable and sustainable after ten years of support; but concerns remain about the capacity of grantees to maintain this status and continue to build on progress in the post-TTI period		
<i>Intermediate outcomes in terms of grantee ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES</i>	Strategic planning/ thinking has become part of 'the DNA' of most grantees, informed to a growing extent by their M&E	Resource mobilization has emerged as a more central and somewhat more structured part of how grantees operate	Human resource management systems have made most grantees more supportive, gender equitable, well equipped and attractive employers, especially for senior and promising younger researchers
<i>Intermediate outcomes in terms of GRANTEE POSITIONING</i>	Strategic planning/ thinking has enabled grantees to identify/develop their niches and invest to strengthen their capacities to position themselves	Grantees have a greater awareness and more purposeful approach to relating to potential donors and funding/ income generation streams, with some support from their governance structures	Grantees are known and respected among the peer policy research community as a 'good place to work' in relation to professional development opportunities, access to libraries and other support functions and are therefore able to better 'compete' for engaging respected senior researchers

<p>TTI CONTRIBUTIONS</p>	<p>1. Core funding has given grantees the space to pursue what they deem to be strategically relevant research</p> <p>2. Primarily during phase one, and through support from RPOs during phase two, grantees have been stimulated to critically reflect on how they should invest to strengthen relevant core capacities</p> <p>3. Support to ILAIPP and other networks has provided regionally driven capacity development that reflects grantee priorities and skills, which may contribute to sustained networking relationships</p>	<p>1. Through growth and international recognition, TTI has enabled grantees to establish/strengthen their credibility among potential funders and research partners</p> <p>2. Action research in Africa and other opportunities for networking have provided opportunities for exploring new ideas, critical reflection on past approaches and peer discussions on opportunities for enhanced resource mobilization</p> <p>3. Funding has enabled grantees to contract much needed professional support for resource mobilization plans</p>	<p>1. TTI has enabled grantees to fill critical gaps in their organizations, particularly in relation to senior researchers and research directors/coordinators</p> <p>2. Core funding has provided grantees with the stability needed to attract and retain high quality staff</p> <p>3. Physical investments have been made in creating appropriate and more attractive workplace environments and support functions, including libraries and IT capacities</p>
<p>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</p>	<p>1. Selection and design of strategies reflect the diverse opportunities and constraints regarding 'space' and 'positioning' of the grantee organizations</p> <p>2. Strategic planning/thinking among the grantees is impacted by both supply and demand factors in the 'marketplace' for policy research</p> <p>3. Diversity in grantee capacities suggests that the value of regional initiatives for enhancing a given grantee's capacity will vary according to the grantee's context and needs</p>	<p>1. Grantees are aware of and are responding to the need to align strategies with resource mobilization by positioning themselves within the policy research eco-system</p> <p>2. There is an awareness that leverage varies (and is often limited) regarding influence on potential funders</p>	<p>1. The grantees in many cases realize that they are facing profound challenges in maintaining a position within the policy research community wherein they can maintain core functions given the phasing out of core support from TTI and others</p> <p>2. The policy research community is becoming more competitive (with more think tanks and even competition from consultancy firms), which impacts on grantee capacities to attract and retain respected senior researchers</p>

Finalized evaluation sub-questions, indicators, data sources and baselines

Sub-questions	Indicators, data sources and baselines
<p>SQL.1.1: Have changes introduced with TTI support led to stronger staffing and retention, what is the likelihood of these changes enduring after TTI, and what have been the implications of this with respect to equal gender opportunities among grantees?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases in research staff (gender disaggregated) based on reported changes in FC Monitoring Questionnaire and possibly other reporting • Measures to retain research staff based on SC (and to some extent FC and RPO) interviews, where appropriate triangulated with TTI FC monitoring reporting on tailored objectives • Improved working conditions based on SC interviews, where appropriate triangulated with TTI FC monitoring reporting on tailored objectives • Examples of advancement of women (disaggregated between research and administration) from mid-level to senior positions based on SC interviews, where appropriate triangulated with FC Annual Technical Reports (no significant change from Baseline One, deeper dive into Baseline Two)
<p>SQL.1.2: In what ways have strategic planning and thinking been manifested in the work and fundamental organizational commitments of grantees?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived changes in -and adherence to- strategic plans over the full ten year period of TTI, including due attention to the influence of contextual factors based on SC interviews • Changes in the function and use of M&E to inform efforts to follow strategic plans based on SC interviews, where appropriate triangulated with TTI FC monitoring reporting on tailored objectives (partially related to Baseline Four)
<p>SQL.1.3: How has TTI been able to effectively target and sequence support to meet the organizational strengthening needs of a diverse range of grantees? To what extent have regional networks proven to be effective and regionally owned vehicles for this support?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of adaptation of ILAIPP structures to provide appropriate services to members with diverse capacities based on case study related interviews and TTI reporting on ILAIPP • Experience of mix of workshops, webinars and coaching in the Action Research on Business Models in Africa, based on interviews with relevant stakeholders and FC TTI reporting; also appropriate follow-up to other training provided based on SC interviews • Analysis of other completed capacity development initiatives related to organizational strengthening, based on TTI reporting and SC interviews • Evidence derived from initial reporting from the recent Organizational Leadership, Management and Governance Support (largely related to Baselines Three and Five)
<p>SQL.1.4: Has TTI support enabled grantees to move towards more comprehensive and structured approaches to resource mobilization? If so how? If not why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes that grantees have gone through and obstacles encountered, including but not exclusively related to TTI support to developing resource mobilization approaches, based on earlier case studies, SC and RPO (FC) interviews, triangulated with reporting from the Action Research on Business Models in Africa, where appropriate also triangulated with TTI FC monitoring reporting on tailored objectives (largely related to Baseline Five)

<p>SQL1.5: Have those grantees which were highly reliant on TTI support for senior staff salaries found ways to transition to alternative funding and avoid a 'crisis' at the end of TTI?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparisons of shifting levels of reliance on TTI support among a sample of grantees with high dependency levels based on FC TTI monitoring data, supplemented with selected interviews with SC grantees • Analyses of plans for the year(s) after the ending of TTI support in SC and FC based on RPO interviews (largely related to Baseline Six)
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3. Research quality

Summary hypothesis statement overview

<p>Overall outcome statement</p>	<p>On the whole, TTI grantees have enhanced their processes, products and engagements with key stakeholders so as to ensure (and continue to build) their research quality after ten years of support</p>			
<p>Intermediate outcomes in terms of grantee ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES</p>	<p>Internal/external and formal/informal peer review processes are in place that enable researchers (especially junior researchers) to obtain critical feedback on their work</p>	<p>An enhanced 'culture of research' is in place among most grantee organizations that includes factors such as commitments to ensuring optimal methodological rigour amid resource constraints and awareness of central aspects of research quality, such as gender sensitivity</p>	<p>Grantees have established a diverse range of capacities to produce outputs that are credible among intended target groups</p>	<p>Grantee organizations have at least a minimal critical mass of senior and promising junior researchers, with appropriate support functions</p>
<p>Intermediate outcomes in terms of GRANTEE POSITIONING</p>	<p>Grantees are better positioned amid the wider policy research community, civil society and government so as to be part of the discourse on what constitutes credible data and analysis for evidence-based policy formulation</p>	<p>An enhanced 'culture of research' among most grantee organizations reflects an understanding of what research quality factors enhance credibility among policy actors</p>	<p>Grantees are targeting appropriate channels for publicizing their research products and are presenting their work in ways that are both accessible and credible</p>	<p>Grantees have appropriate skill sets within their organizations to respond to (and stimulate) demands from policy stakeholders</p>

<p>TTI CONTRIBUTIONS</p>	<p>1. TTI contributions have been most notable in terms of providing financial resources that enable grantees to gather more and better data sets and improve analysis, thereby enhancing credibility</p> <p>2. TTI has contributed to a critical discussion of if and how to leverage the TTI network to provide a basis for systematic peer review</p>	<p>1. Grantees have been provided with sufficient resources to resist pressures to undertake what they perceive to be low quality or inappropriately framed consultancies and contracted research</p> <p>2. By easing resource pressures, grantees have been able to allocate time for internal debate on research quality within their organizations and introduce procedures to maintain quality</p> <p>3. Training and advice provided on e.g., gender in research, which has enhanced research quality</p>	<p>1. More solid methods and data sets have enabled grantee researchers to publish in more respected and relevant outlets due to the greater rigor and credibility of their research</p>	<p>1. Either directly or indirectly (i.e., core funding to reallocate resources), TTI has allowed grantees to invest in the capacities of younger staff and recruit appropriate senior staff</p> <p>2. Training and support to research that applies a gender lens and thereby raises awareness of relevant factors to policy actors</p>
<p>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</p>	<p>Demand for quality research is sometimes reported to be low, influencing the extent to which quality assurance processes actually contribute to policy influence</p>	<p>Grantees are identifying/ confronting a range of opportunities and obstacles to ensure the policy discourse better reflects empirical evidence</p>	<p>Some grantees are struggling with finding ways to balance investments in producing more academic publications, versus more accessible publications, e.g., reaching intended audiences while helping researchers to obtain appropriate qualifications for careers that include more academic paths</p>	<p>The sustainability of grantees' enhanced capacity to maintain research quality will be tested if/ when the 'quality of funding' diminishes with shrinking access to core support and capacity development support</p>

Finalized evaluation sub-questions, indicators, data sources and baselines

Sub-questions	Indicators, data sources and baselines
<p>SQ2.1: To what extent have grantees identified ways to, now and in the future, maintain the ‘critical mass’ of senior researchers, promising younger researchers and support functions that they have developed with TTI support?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key factors drawn from SC case studies of research processes, where relevant triangulated with FC data from Annual Technical Reports on tailored objectives and Project Management Reporting on phase two objectives • Grantee perceptions and explanations of measures being taken to maintain the critical mass that have been developed during the period of TTI support, primarily based on SC interviews (largely from Baselines Seven and Ten)
<p>SQ2.2: To what extent have grantees been able to strengthen their research processes and enter into new research areas due to TTI support, and are there indications that momentum in these areas will be sustained in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in procedures instituted that grantees state as being derived from TTI support in the SC as revealed in case studies, triangulated with relevant examples of reporting on tailored objectives in the Annual Technical Reports and Project Management Reporting on phase two objectives • New research areas that have been initiated with TTI support primarily based on SC interviews and case studies, triangulated with relevant FC examples of reporting on tailored objectives in the Annual Technical Reports and Project Management Reporting on phase two objectives • Enabling factors for strengthening research quality related to TTI support (indicators derived from figure 23 in second interim report) (partially from Baselines Eight and Nine)
<p>SQ2.3: In what categories of research quality (both in terms of process and products) have grantees demonstrated the most progress, how has this contributed to credibility in the eyes of policy actors, and what has TTI contributed to this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputational factors (derived from figure 21 in second interim report) drawing on SC case studies, PCS data and outside interviews, FC Project Management Reporting where appropriate • Changes in the quality of gender analysis in research processes and outputs drawing on SC interviews and case studies, possibly triangulated with relevant FC TTI monitoring data (partially from Baselines Eight, Nine and eleven)

<p>SQ2.4: How have internal and external quality assurance changed since the start of TTI, are these changes reliant on continued TTI support, and what influence has TTI had on these processes, be they formal approaches or efforts to institute an organizational culture of ‘critical thinking’?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes traced related to external review and feedback in SC case studies (indicators derived from figure 22 in second interim report) • Regular internal/informal peer review and seminars from SC interviews and case studies, drawing on SC case studies, in some cases triangulated with reporting on tailored objectives in Annual Technical Reports and Project Management Reporting on phase two objectives and TTI peer review questionnaire responses • Mentorship/supervision; ensuring appropriate research plans from SC case studies and RPO interviews and TTI peer review questionnaire responses for the FC • Performance incentives and research culture from SC, RPO (and possibly FC) interviews • Tracing of trends in development of capacities for enhanced research quality and a culture of research (indicators derived from figures 25 and 26 in second interim report) based on SC interviews, case studies and possibly TTI peer review questionnaire responses (partially from Baseline Nine)
<p>SQ2.5: In what ways do senior researchers perceive there to have been changes in the ultimate quality of their research as a result of changes in quality assurance processes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples presented in SC and FC interviews and case study findings, triangulated with FC perspectives from RPOs and monitoring questionnaire data (partially from Baseline Nine)
<p>SQ2.6: What changes in quality do external observers perceive to have emerged among the individual grantees and in the policy discourse more generally during the course of TTI phase two?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCS data • Interviews with outside observers (partially and possibly related to Baselines Twelve, Thirteen and Fourteen)

4. Policy influence

Summary hypothesis statement overview

<p><i>Overall outcome statement</i></p>	<p>On the whole, TTI grantees have achieved more impact in their chosen policy arenas after ten years of support</p>		
<p><i>Intermediate outcomes in terms of grantee</i> ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES</p>	<p>More solid methods and data sets have given grantees sufficient credibility to assert their independent judgements, even on politically sensitive issues</p>	<p>More stable finances have enabled grantees to ‘just say no’ to inappropriate offers of projects that could endanger their credibility and independence, and pursue strategic objectives that can drive policy change</p>	<p>Most grantees have established solid capacities to communicate with their selected audiences</p>

<p><i>Intermediate outcomes in terms of GRANTEE POSITIONING</i></p>	<p>Grantee organizations have established sufficient 'independence' (in a diverse range of ways) to be seen as credible contributors to the national discourse on evidence-based policies</p>	<p>Recognized research quality is having a catalysing impact on capacity to attract funding flows and partnerships that create new opportunities for policy influence</p>	<p>Enhanced communications have improved the visibility of grantee research in appropriate media, thereby increasing their presence in relevant policy discourses</p>
<p>TTI CONTRIBUTIONS</p>	<p>1. Critical reflection has been encouraged through the development of Stories of Influence 2. Through RPO dialogue and TTIX related discussions, grantees have received feedback and opportunities for critical reflection on reputational changes and how these relate to supply-side factors (research quality) and demand-side factors (awareness and respect)</p>	<p>1. Core funding has enabled grantees to 'just say no' to inappropriate funding offers and engagements due to both greater immediate financial stability and enhanced status in the policy research ecosystem 2. Core funding has helped grantees to fill funding gaps and explore areas outside of their policy analysis 'comfort zones' and traditional partners/target groups, leading to more strategic positioning</p>	<p>1. Investments have been made in communications strategies, including use of new communication channels like social media that have enhanced visibility in relevant policy discussions 2. Investments have been made in communications staff salaries, training, equipment, publications and running costs of communications units that have enabled grantees to improve the quality of their outputs</p>
<p>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</p>	<p>The grantees are in many cases concerned about the status at the end of TTI as being 'the calm before the storm' due to a decline in possibilities for core funding and trends toward more 'agenda-driven' donor funding, threatening their independence and the credibility required to influence policy</p>	<p>Even if more partnerships for policy influence are emerging, the quality of those partnerships is variable and some may only fund outputs and reduce space for proactive policy influence after the outputs have been produced</p>	<p>Diverse positioning in relation to policy communities has meant that the focus of grantee communications varies from broad public influence to confidential one-to-one discussions with political leaders</p>

Finalized evaluation sub-questions, indicators, data sources and baselines

Sub-questions	Indicators, data sources and baselines
<p>SQ3.1: To what extent have grantees been able to position themselves so as to be perceived as relevant and credible to policy actors, and what has TTI contributed to this process? Are there risks to this positioning after TTI support ends?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCS data on FC and outside observer interviews in SC related to perceptions of independence • SC interviews on positioning and independence • FC evidence from RPO interviews, triangulated with Annual Technical Reports and Project Management Reports on changes over time • Perceptions of influence of TTI derived from SC interviews and case studies, based on indicators from figure 30 in second interim report (partially related to Baseline Twelve)
<p>SQ3.2: To what extent have grantees changed their policies, procedures and activities so as to follow pathways and manage obstacles to policy influence, and what has TTI contributed to these abilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC grantees perceptions of change over time and TTI contributions, drawing on case studies and interviews related to the indicators described on pages 42-44 of second interim report (largely related to Baseline Thirteen)
<p>SQ3.3: Have the grantees been able to leverage TTI-related networking opportunities to engage in efforts to influence policies at a regional or global level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples cited in SC and RPO interviews of engagements with either TTI supported or other regional (e.g., ILAIPP), global (e.g., Southern Voice) or sectoral networks (loosely related to Baseline Thirteen)
<p>SQ3.4: To what extent have proactive and sustainable communication capacities been put into place to inform and engage with relevant policy actors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples from SC case studies of the role of communications in research processes • FC data from Annual Technical Reports on achievement of relevant tailored objectives and Project Management Reporting on phase two objectives (loosely related to Baseline Fourteen)

5. Overarching lessons

In addition to the specific component-related analysis, the final phase will also explore the overarching lessons from the TTI experience in accordance with the third question of the evaluation: *What lessons can be drawn from the TTI experience regarding effective support to think tanks?* These questions will be framed as syntheses of findings from the three components. To the extent possible, initial findings in relation to these lessons will be discussed and validated at the TTI in November and possibly in an online forum during October. The lessons will focus on the following, tentative lessons learning questions:

- **LQ1:** What key think tank characteristics (e.g., leadership, maturity, size, place on research/advocacy spectrum, sector, etc.) and key contextual factors have proven to be significant for achieving the targeted/expected organizational change, developing capacities for sustained research quality and becoming central and influential actors in promoting evidence-based policy change? Which characteristics seem not to be significant? What are the pros and cons of investing in think tanks that are already strong and well established versus those that have yet to create a well-established and sustainable niche for themselves?

- **LQ2:** What effective ways have think tanks found to overcome contextual challenges and retain financial and institutional sustainability in responding to volatile environments?
- **LQ3:** In relation to the clear, central importance of core funding (as already demonstrated in the first two interim reports) and predominance of the grantees' own capacity development investments, what were the added-values of the supplementary TTI-led capacity development training and other related support? Was it worth it and what lessons can be learned about appropriate mixes of funding and support modalities? Could it have been better targeted or timed to be more effective?
- **LQ4:** What aspects of organizational strengthening, research quality and policy influence show a high likelihood of enduring after the end of TTI support, and what factors influence sustainability prospects (both as related to directly securing new funding sources to replace current TTI support and also in terms of think tanks becoming better positioned to ensure internal organizational sustainability and access to future financial flows)? , What aspects of core support are supportive in (or detrimental to) fostering this financial and institutional sustainability?

It is expected that the final phase of the evaluation will also lead to additional lessons as well.

ANNEX 3: TTI Phase 2 Results Framework

The Results Framework aims to provide clarity on what TTI seeks to accomplish in Phase 2. It includes a list of indicators and evidence for each outcome, along with suggested targets, data sources, and timing. The Results Framework will serve as a practical tool for strong program management, and as a means of measuring the effectiveness of the support provided to TTI's grantee organizations.¹

Three main considerations were taken into account in developing this Results Framework:

1. The need for the Phase 2 Results Framework to build upon the foundation of Phase 1 to ensure continuity throughout TTI's multi-year model;
2. Maintaining the central concepts and elements of the Phase 1 Results Framework, given that the external evaluation of TTI found them to be fundamentally sound and closely aligned to the program's theory of change²; and
3. Integrating the views and feedback of TTI team members, IDRC's in-house evaluation experts, EC members, grantees, and the external evaluation team, all of whom were consulted in the preparation of the updated Results Framework.

As a result of these considerations, the high-level structure of the Results Framework has been updated. Its main purpose is to test various aspects of the program's overall theory of change: through access to a combination of core funding and technical support, stronger, more effective and, ultimately, sustainable research organizations are better equipped to provide policymakers and other development actors with the objective evidence needed to develop and implement sound social and economic policies. The indicators and evidence columns combine standard indicators for each grantee, evidence of progress on tailored objectives that each grantee sets for itself, and evidence related to the performance of the program. Given the variety of indicators and evidence within the Results Framework, there are differences in the way that specific indicators are framed, depending on the purpose for which they are intended.

IDRC, in close collaboration with the EC, will commission an external evaluation team very early in the implementation of Phase 2. A key task of the evaluators will be to develop a rigorous evaluation plan for the program in the first few months of Phase 2. While that plan is being developed, adjustments may be made to the Results Framework, especially to ensure that comparative or counterfactual evidence can be usefully incorporated into the evaluation of TTI.

Acronyms used in the Results Framework

ATR: Annual Technical Report
EE: external evaluation

FR: financial report

MQ: monitoring questionnaire
OF: Opportunity Funds

PCS: policy community survey
PMR: project monitoring report
PO: Program Officer

PR: peer review

Sol: story of influence

TFFF: Think Tank Funders' Forum

¹ http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/sites/default/files/TTI%20Phase%20%20Results%20Framework_revised_June%2026.pdf

² Young, Hauck and Engel. 2013. pp. 33 and 42.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS and EVIDENCE	TARGETS	SOURCE and TIMING
<p>OBJECTIVE 1: Renew a group of promising think tanks from the Phase 1 grantee cohort and assist them to maintain effective strategies to improve organizational performance and monitor progress</p>	<p>An established group of think tanks with grant agreements outlines measurable organizational objectives for effective and efficient use of TTI funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality of proposals received, including the clarity of their tailored objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of grantees receive a score of 70% or higher on their Phase 2 applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scoring matrix for Phase 2 proposals
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explicit linkages existing between grantee tailored objectives, and their technical reports, budgets, and workplans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of approved workplans and budgets show linkages with tailored objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATR/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> applicant feedback on quality, appropriateness, fairness, transparency, and timeliness of Phase 2 selection process 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> applicant survey/6 months after application deadline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rate of attrition of grantees after approval of funding 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EE/end of phase PMR/rolling
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number and nature of Opportunity Funds proposals and other collaborative projects approved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of available OF budget is allocated every year 3 collaborative projects contribute to a change in policy and/or practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OF/biannual SoI/annual

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS and EVIDENCE	TARGETS	SOURCE and TIMING
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Provide a combination of core funding and access to capacity development support to enable think tanks, both individually and collectively, to achieve improvements in organizational performance, research quality, and policy engagement</p>	<p>Organizational performance Think tanks' performance has remained high, or has improved. They are more strategic, effective, relevant to national policy issues, and sustainable over time, and have instituted processes for ongoing self-assessment and action in addressing organizational needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning cycle built into organizational processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of grantees have instituted regular strategic planning processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MQ/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing complement - number of staff recruited and retained by grantees who have appropriate qualifications according to staffing profiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of positions in the staffing profile of each grantee are appropriately filled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMR/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of key policy stakeholders on grantee organizational performance and outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for 80% of grantees, average rating of answers to D3 and D4 in PCS is 3/5 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCS/ beginning and end of grant
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audited financial statements from each think tank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audit findings are positive, or problems are addressed within 12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FR/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing performance management: Systems / commitments in place for increased and continuous rethinking and actions on own identified critical organizational issues such as quality of research, resource mobilization, transparency, communications, policy engagement, M&E and governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of grantees list all funding sources on their website by the end of the grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan of public information on funding sources/ biannual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of HR systems and policies that promote fairness and well-being of staff put in place by think tanks 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MQ/PMR

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS and EVIDENCE	TARGETS	SOURCE and TIMING
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Provide a combination of core funding and access to capacity development support to enable think tanks, both individually and collectively, to achieve improvements in organizational performance, research quality, and policy engagement</p>	<p>Organizational performance Think tanks are financially viable, enjoying stable support from a diverse set of funders, both international and local, whilst maintaining their independence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proportion of core funding in total budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of grantees have unrestricted revenue (excluding TTI) that accounts for at least 20% of their total annual budget • 50% of grantees are not dependent for more than 40% of their total budget on any one donor / project sponsor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MQ/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of funding partnerships that are aligned with grantees’ organizational strategies, providing them with flexibility and long-term support they need to pursue their strategies, whilst maintaining their independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grantees meet their own targets for partnership development • 100% of grantees have corporate documents that outline their independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MQ/annual • Corporate document review on independence/ year 3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extent to which grantees retain access to core/ flexible funding in comparison with overall trends in the TTI cohort 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planned and actual budgets are reviewed and used in decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grantees have no more than a 20% budget variance for any major line item 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMR/annual
	<p>Overall organizational performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • average score of grantee progress towards tailored objectives in organizational performance by grantees and POs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • average scores for are 7/10 or higher and show progress year on year; by end of grant, 70% of average scores on tailored objectives are 7/10 or higher across all ratings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATR/annual

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS and EVIDENCE	TARGETS	SOURCE and TIMING
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Provide a combination of core funding and access to capacity development support to enable think tanks, both individually and collectively, to achieve improvements in organizational performance, research quality, and policy engagement</p>	<p>Research quality Think tanks consistently produce quality research - i.e., research that is judged by users to be: a) of high scientific merit: technical quality, appropriateness, and rigor of the design and execution of the research; b) relevant to what key users need and deem to be useful for policies and practice - addressing problems that are already policy priorities and/ or focusing on issues likely to emerge in the near future c) credible in terms of respect by external stakeholders for the organizations and individual researchers producing research findings</p>	<p>a) Scientific Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> external peer review of grantee publications that assesses methodological quality, relevance, and appropriateness of outputs for research intended to inform policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> peer review scores of 80% of grantees show high or rising quality over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PR/annual
		<p>b) Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> see Policy Engagement Outcomes and Indicators 		
		<p>c) Credibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> instituted quality assurance processes for research ethics and scientific quality across full range of grantee research outputs policy actors'opinions of the quality of grantee research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of grantees have instituted and applied quality assurance processes by end of grant 70% of respondents score PCS question D3 (a, 1, m) and D4 with 3/5 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMR/annual PCS / beginning and end of grant
	<p>Overall research quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> average score of grantee progress towards tailored objectives in research quality by grantees and POs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> average scores for are 7/10 or higher and show progress year on year; by end of grant, 70% of average scores on tailored objectives are 7/10 or higher across all ratings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATR/annual

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS and EVIDENCE	TARGETS	SOURCE and TIMING
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Provide a combination of core funding and access to capacity development support to enable think tanks, both individually and collectively, to achieve improvements in organizational performance, research quality, and policy engagement</p>	<p>Policy engagement National, regional, and international policy actors including peers, practitioners and implementing agencies, view think tanks as credible and appropriately focused producers of high quality, objective research and analysis on important current and near-future policy issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perception of peers, practitioners and other policy actor of grantees' ability to inform and influence policy (e.g. grantees focus on high priority issues, provide informed critique of public policy, quality and expertise of researchers, objectivity, and quality of recommendations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of respondents score PCS question D7 and D8 with 4/5 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCS / beginning and end of grant
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> examples of research ideas/findings that policy actors are incorporating into their work 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCS /beginning and end of grant Sol/annual
	<p>Policy engagement Think tanks actively engage with policy actors, communicate research results effectively and in appropriate formats, and stimulate policy actor demand for think tank research outputs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> type and extent of dissemination of grantee research findings and outputs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MQ/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented efforts to promote research uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of grantees who have explicit research uptake strategies increases annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MQ/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase in familiarity among policymakers of supported think tanks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of respondents score PCS question on familiarity with think tanks at 4/5 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCS /beginning and end of grant
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy actors' perceptions of quality of engagement with grantees (e.g. effective engagement with policymakers, dissemination of research / recommendations, value of in-person events) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of respondents score PCS question D3 and D4 with 4/5 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCS /beginning and end of grant

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS and EVIDENCE	TARGETS	SOURCE and TIMING
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Provide a combination of core funding and access to capacity development support to enable think tanks, both individually and collectively, to achieve improvements in organizational performance, research quality, and policy engagement</p>	<p>Policy engagement Research produced by think tanks informs policy debates and influences policy development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of Stories of Influence (Sol) that demonstrate grantees are informing policy debates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of grantees produce annually one Sol supported by evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMR/annual
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extent to which grantee advice is sought by government officials and other stakeholders 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCS/beginning and end of grant
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of researchers in targeted meetings with policymakers, formal testimony to government, and sitting on task forces and working groups 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MQ/annual
	<p>Overall policy engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • average score of grantee progress towards tailored objectives in policy engagement by grantees and POs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • average scores for are 7/10 or higher and show progress year on year; by end of grant, 70% of average scores on tailored objectives are 7/10 or higher across all ratings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATR/ annual
<p>OBJECTIVE 3: Facilitate and share learning about strategies for building and managing successful, sustainable think tanks with a wide range of policy research organizations and interested stakeholders</p>	<p>Southern think tanks, within and beyond the TTI Phase 2 cohort, are exposed to and, as appropriate, adopt good organizational, research, and policy engagement practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requests for, downloads of, and feedback TTI's knowledge products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requests and downloads show an annual increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website/ biannual feedback log/rolling
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extent to which nature and quality of content is valued by think tanks at TTIexchanges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of participants at TTI exchange provide positive feedback on event • non-TTI grantee attendance increases with each TTI exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTI Exchanges, 2015 and 2018

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS and EVIDENCE	TARGETS	SOURCE and TIMING
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation of funders in Think Tank Funders’ Forum (TTFF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present membership of TTFF continues or expands in Phase 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTFF/biennial
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and nature of public engagement activities by TTI team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTI team has 4 public engagement activities each year (1 / quarter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comms log/rolling
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of enquiries, or informational requests from external stakeholders 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comms log/rolling

ANNEX 4: Case Studies

Introduction

As noted above, for each sample grantee specific case studies of research quality or communication activities that have been directly supported by TTI in one way or another were purposively selected to explore TTI influence in relation to research quality, organizational change and policy engagement. Each of the 20 case studies are described below.

CASE STUDY 1

Name of the grantee:

CADEP, Paraguay

Project:

Exposing the risks of the country's level of public debt

Introduction

From 2013 to 2016, the public debt of Paraguay more than doubled and reached over 23% of GDP. Voices of concern were routinely rejected by Government, citing the importance of public investment and arguing that compared to other countries in the region Paraguay's debt was still low. However, the fact that the country had a more limited capacity to pay the debt because of very low levels of taxation was not mentioned. For CADEP, the increased public indebtedness represented a major macro-economic risk which could jeopardize national development. A timely publication by the organization soon triggered an intense political process leading up to the rejection by Parliament of Government's national budget proposal for 2016. In the budget finally approved for that same year, the relative levels of public debt were not raised.

Background and purpose of the project

In principle, CADEP's leading researchers agreed with Government on the merits of increased public investments for achieving an inclusive national development. However, they considered the rapid rhythm of increased public indebtedness to represent a major macro-economic risk which could jeopardize national development. Firstly, because the country's revenue collection (around 12.5%) was comparatively low, and an increasing debt could therefore rather soon come to constitute a major long-term burden. Secondly, because the capacity to ensure quality in the investments (most of which were related to large-scale physical infrastructure) was limited. Thirdly, also the composition of the debt - where state bonds had increased rapidly from 12% in 2013 to reach almost 40% in 2016 - constituted a risk, considering the development of the global economy.

On the Government side, the mantra of "public investments for national development" was repeated over and over again, and instead of taking the revenue levels into account, Government spokespersons compared with the relation to GDP only - showing other comparable countries to have higher ratios than what their budget proposal would imply for Paraguay. While rather many Members of Parliament were concerned about this development, they generally did not have much expertise in these kind of

macro-economic affairs. Hence, they could not refute the arguments presented by Government but still remained sceptical and actively sought advice.

In this context, CADEP's leading researchers (and founding fathers) decided to publish a brief article in the organization's monthly journal, *Economía y Sociedad* (Economy and Society, funded by TTI) on the risks of public debt. Steps were also taken to actively disseminate the article among the media and Members of Parliament.

Main features of the planning process

In fact, surprisingly little planning had to be done as the moment in time was very favourable. A notable degree of interest concerning the topic in question (the potential risks represented by the increasing national debt) already existed and Parliament's upcoming scrutiny of the budget proposal for 2016 constituted a predictable window of opportunity. Moreover, CADEP's leading researchers - who previously had occupied high-ranking posts in the national government - held a very good reputation concerning macro-economic analysis and the organization periodically published research reports and comments within this field. Finally, due to TTI funding CADEP boasted a monthly journal, which was widely read within academic and political circles.

Against this background, the initial planning was mainly reduced to the decision that a critical article on the rising public debt should be published without delay and that this article should be actively distributed to members of Parliament and selected media. In the case the article was met with tangible interest, CADEP should also be prepared to give follow-up interviews and to hold seminars or informative sessions on the topic, primarily within political circles and with media.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

The article published in CADEP's monthly journal had obviously been discussed within the organization's management team and also reflected results from previous research undertaken by the organization. However, it was not written as a research piece but rather had the character of a column or OpEd contribution. Hence, it was not directly peer reviewed but was underpinned by the long trajectory of CADEP within the fields of budget and fiscal analysis.

Overall judgement of research quality

As explained above, this advocacy initiative did not include any specific piece of research but was built on a long research trajectory and solid reputation within this field. Starting in 2003 CADEP had undertaken an annual monitoring of the national budget, with special focus on the expense side and the composition and usage of the resources stemming from taxation. This analysis - called "*Monitoreo de las Cuentas Públicas*" had been published on a yearly basis and had become an accepted reference both among economists and in the public debate.¹¹ Two other well-researched publications within this area include an original study on Paraguay's contemporary economic development published by CEPAL,¹² and a report from 2013 on the need for fiscal reform (including a revised tax system) for inclusive growth.¹³ All of these works comply with high standards for research quality and were subject to both internal and external peer reviews.

11 OFIP. Monitoreo de las Cuentas Públicas 2003-2015. CADEP, Asuncion.

12 D. Borda (2007). Paraguay: Resultados de las Reformas 2003-2005. Serie Informes y Estudios Especiales. CEPAL. Santiago de Chile

13 D. Borda, M. Caballero (2013). "Paraguay: Hacia Un Nuevo Acuerdo". En: J. Rodriguez y J. Diaz (editores). *Caminos para la Reforma. Estrategia Política de un Acuerdo Fiscal*. CIEPLAN. Santiago de Chile.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

The article published by CADEP had a somewhat limited first-hand audience in mind, namely active politicians and thematically knowledgeable journalists. Within this circle, there was actually no need to take any special measures in order to ensure credibility. The author was one of CADEP's founders, Dinoniso Borda, who has a solid reputation in the country for his expertise and whose performance as the country's Minister of Finance during two previous governments (2003-2005 and 2008-2012) is highly rated.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

Once the article had been published, CADEP was invited by a group of MPs to clarify and provide further information on this topic in relation to the soon forthcoming debates in Parliament on Government's budget proposal. During quite some period further comments and also direct participation by CADEP's researchers were also requested by media, civil society organizations, government officials and the business sector.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

The initiative was extremely successful and had a very direct influence. The original Government proposal was rejected by Parliament and the relative levels of the public debt were not raised in the national budget finally approved. *Ms Stella Guillén*, who then was Director for Public Debt at the Ministry of Finance remembers the article and direct discussions with CADEP as key elements which contributed to changing the strategy:

"The proposed level of public debt would not have been sustainable, but we were not aware of the real figures or, rather, what measurements to use in this context. At the Ministry people were first upset but then gradually changed. We have to admit that our proposal was more political than grounded in a solid analysis. CADEP did a good job. The country had recently introduced laws on transparency, so CADEP had access to all data they needed and then did a quality analysis."

Ms Desirée Masi, who then was Member of Parliament from one of the smaller opposition parties, entirely agrees on the importance of CADEP's analysis:

"We thought the increased public debt was a risk but had no good technical arguments and most of us are not very skilled in economics. Government people only compared with GDP and gave figures from other countries and then it did not seem so concerning at all. Then we invited CADEP and they clarified how these aspects should be analysed and what measures to apply in order to get sustainability levels right. Once we understood this, we knew that our first reaction had been right and could argue better with Government."

TTI relevance for the project

Considering CADEP's history this initiative would most likely have been launched even without TTI. However, with TTI support CADEP has learnt how to use strategic communication – and the monthly journal where the article was published is funded by TTI. Consequently, at least the first element attributes a certain degree of relevance for TTI in this context. Moreover, even if the organization's reputation for quality research had been well established already before the start of TTI the sizeable support under that program facilitated new recruitments of qualified researchers and the establishment of a more robust internal organization; aspects which contributed positively to safeguarding research quality and maintaining CADEP's solid reputation.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Dionisio Borda (CADEP); Stella Guillén (Ministry of Finance) and Desirée Masi (MP). (21 & 22 August, 2018 in Quito, Ecuador)

- **Publications:**

- D. Borda, M. Caballero (2013). "Paraguay: Hacia Un Nuevo Acuerdo". En: J. Rodriguez y J. Diaz (editores). Caminos para la Reforma. Estrategia Política de un Acuerdo Fiscal. CIEPLAN. Santiago de Chile http://www.cieplan.org/media/publicaciones/archivos/337/Camino_para_la_Reforma_Estrategia_Politica_de_un_Acuerdo_Fiscal.pdf
- OFIP. Monitoreo de las Cuentas Públicas 2003-2015. CADEP. Asunción. <https://mega.nz/#!dSRG2BCCLdVplr2DphqPoNEVCK3t7yNE3KqkQ2QxOJAb8ckQBS1s>
- D. Borda (2007). Paraguay: Resultados de las Reformas 2003-2005. Serie Informes y Estudios Especiales. CEPAL. Santiago de Chile. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/7863>

CASE STUDY 2

Name of the grantee:
CBGA, Delhi, India

Project:
Increasing state level budgets for school education

Introduction

Two studies on school education budgets were carried out by CBGA. The first (CBGA and CRY -Child Rights and You, 2016) examined how Indian States had structured and provisioned their school education budgets. The second (CBGA and CRY, 2018), looked at changes in the overall budgets for school education. The first study found that in most of the study states elementary education had not been much of a priority, showing that government was underfunding education and the report pointed out specific aspects of this. The second study found that while there was an overall increase in State revenue receipts, key areas of investment in relation to educational quality, social inclusion and community engagement remained underfunded.

Background and purpose of the project

In 1966 the Kothari Commission recommended that total Indian government spending on education be raised to 6% of the Gross National Product (GNP) by 1986. The Government's New Education Policy (NEP) endorsed this target but the collective spending by the Union Government and State Government on education has remained at less than 4%. One third of the public resources for education comes from the Union Government and the balance is provided by State Governments. A decline in the Union Government's share in national budgetary spending on education has shifted the responsibility to the states. In 2015-16 the fiscal architecture of India changed. This increased the devolution of central taxes to the states raising them from 32% to 42% of the divisible pool of central taxes and reducing the Union Government's Plan grants to the states. These changes have increased the responsibility of States to fund education.

About 68% of the total education budget is estimated to be allocated to school education. But there is still not universal elementary education despite the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) in 2009. Although this act has brought about some improvements in school education it

was unclear whether States had actually allocated more money to primary education in order to reach the goals of the RTE. Nor was it clear how inclusive that budgeting was for marginalized or excluded groups such as girls, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and Muslims. After the fiscal changes in 2015-16, States have acquired greater fiscal autonomy with more responsibilities. But there has been uncertainty whether overall resources available to the States has increased much and if this had led to an increase in their spending capacity. Moreover, if this had, was it resulting in an increase in school education budgets and if so in what areas?

Main features of the planning process

The research came about in response to a call for proposals to analyse school budgets issued by CRY in 2014. CBGA responded and proposed they would undertake the analysis only at the primary school level. It was the first time that a study of this nature had been done at such a detailed level. CBGA initially proposed that they would analyse the data for all 30 States but it was difficult and the budget data was not on-line so it was agreed that the study would focus on just 10 contrasting States. In addition, the time frame for the study coverage expanded to four years rather than the proposed three years. CRY initially provided 20 lakh for the study. In 2017-18, CRY gave another Rs. 6 lakhs for the seminar and advocacy purposes. Approximately Rs.20 lakh has been used from TTI funds for the study. CRY gave a lot of support to the framing of the study as it took the CBGA team into new analytical territory.

After this first study the relationship with CRY was established and it was agreed that a second study would focus more on the adequacy of funding for education which was a key interest of CRY. CBGA had established a data base in the first round study but issues of assessing adequacy are challenging and there was a need to focus more on key areas and unit costs of these. For this second round CRY provided about 75-80% of the funding and TTI about 25%. A third round of research on municipal budgets and secondary education is planned.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

While the research methods as such in these studies are not particularly complicated - fundamentally they require a tedious compiling of budget data from multiple state levels and sources - the skills lie in knowing how to interpret and handle the ways in which budgets are formulated and presented. Budgets need to be read as texts, they rarely describe reality or are of predictive value, they are open to misreading and each item that is budgeted and defined, in turn is defined by other items in the budget total¹⁴. The skills of interpretation are considerable.

With respect to quality assurance, the processes for the first study capture the approaches used. The first draft of the findings was presented internally for discussion. Then the CBGA team had a roundtable meeting where they invited key academic, education financing specialists and budget group partners who made many comments. They responded to those comments but were not in a position to address certain aspects such as linking expenditure to physical outcomes. But there was also some demand to investigate the adequacy of the funding which the second study has addressed more.

Overall judgement of research quality

The final reports are of high quality with a clear discussion of the issues around education budgeting, presentation of the sources of data and the methods used to analyse them. This reflects both the skills that have been developed to analyse budgets and the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes applied.

¹⁴ See Roe,E (1994) Policy Narrative Policy Analysis: Theory and Practice, Durham and London, Duke University Press, pp: 21-27 for reading budgets as texts

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

The credibility of the data was not in question since this was collected from the state governments. Quality assurance processes of the findings was provided through review processes described above.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

For the first report, a joint presentation was made at the Union government level. Government officials in the current regime are now very guarded in speaking out which is a big change from before. In part this may be because Union government officials now see the responsibility as resting with State officials. But CBGA also has to be careful because of the restrictions imposed by the Foreign Contributions Act and all their publications are marked for private circulation only to protect them in case they are accused of using foreign funds for anti-government activities.

CBGA wishes to engage more at the State level where there is a greater audience. Untied funds are increasing and being transferred to the States and in general there is greater devolution of funding which gives more scope to advocate for better use of such funds. At the moment at the State level there are not many reports on budget analysis and less discussion than with central government. If CBGA is seen as to be going down to the State level and telling them to improve, that is probably more acceptable to the Union government. Indeed, at the State and district level there is also a wider audience and quite a bit of activism and interest in this kind of information, mostly from small scale civil society organizations (CSOs) and block and district level functionaries. Accordingly, the findings are more likely to be taken up and used by a vocal civil society such as the Right to Education (RTE) Forum as they seek to make demands on government. CBGA has had specific feedback that this data on budgets and what was allocated has not been available before, and there clearly is a demand for it.

CRY has office in 10 States and many of the CRY regional officers picked the study up and used it to mobilize some of their grassroots partners. CRY is active and good at advocacy through social media. In six States in the preparation of the last state budgets they made submissions to the education department about education funding. CRY have that access and therefore the partnership of CBGA with them offers a lot of potential to lobby.

The report was released in three states (Bihar, Rajasthan and Maharashtra) and there has been little questioning of the data and analysis since it has been sourced from government. It was clear, for example in the seminar on the release of the report in Rajasthan, which focused on the specific findings for that state, there was strong support by CSOs with an interest in education, as well as with state civil servants. Not only did the state level representation of the Right to Education Forum attend the meeting and told CBGA that it would use the report for further advocacy, the Deputy Secretary of Education for the Government Rajasthan also spoke at the meeting.

The release of the report was widely covered at National as well as in the State level press. In Rajasthan some 14-print media published articles on the release with additional online reports. Sixteen online sites of the national media carried coverage of the release in in Bihar there were 18 published report on the release of the Bihar report. In addition, CNBC TV18 which is an English business news TV channel in India did a four-program series on education and issues of financing drawing from the CBGA report and interviews with CBGA. The second study has only been released recently and policy briefs are being prepared for all six states covered under the study.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

There is evidence of how the first report has increased the visibility of the funding of education as an issue. The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) based in Delhi has been seen by CBGA as its key rival. As an autonomous research institute under the Ministry of Finance NIPFP has the

weight of government behind it but the analyses that CBGA has been offering have not been undertaken by NIPFP. Acknowledging the contribution made by the first education report, NIPFP has done a further study on education finance¹⁵ drawing on the findings of the first CBGA report. Further the NITI Aayog (The National Institution for Transforming India) a policy think tank established by the current government after it abolished the planning commission, has also recognized the CBGA (2016) report through posting it as a key resource on its website.

CBGA is linking its communication to the RTE Forum as it recognises the limiting factors and space for policy research and want to match their findings with advocacy interests. They see they can provide the data and analysis for vocal advocacy but with the advocacy efforts to put in as they call it 'the adjectives' around the evidence. CBGA can provide the hard evidence but must not be too opinionated on budget levels. They can point out the inconsistencies but see that in order to be able to supply data they have to survive and must be careful not to advocate but simply provide the data and analysis. This in essence can be seen as a form of data activism - collecting data that is hard to access, undertaking the necessary analyses and putting it out in the public domain.

TTI relevance for the project

The TTI contribution can be seen as contributing to the capacity acquired in public finance in education. If there had been no support from TTI it is doubtful if CBGA could have done this with just CRY funding in 2015. As a result of the first study, work on education has expanded. The partnership with CRY was used to build a database, allowing CBGA to do what they had been wanting to do and engage in shifting the discourse about education funding. This has been both the tangible and intangible contribution of IDRC. This therefore can be seen as a case study of enhanced research capability of an organization to engage in, design and build a strategic partnership and TTI support created that conducive environment.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Protiva Kundu (Lead Researcher) and Subrat Das (Director): 24 January 2017 and 22 August 2018, CBGA Offices, Delhi.

- **Publications:**

- CBGA and CRY (2016) How Have States Designed Their School Education Budgets, Delhi, CBGA.
- CBGA and CRY (2018) Budgeting for School Education: What has changed and what has not? Analysis of six states in the 14th Financial Commission Recommendation Period, Delhi, CBGA.

¹⁵ Sukanya Bose, Priyanta Ghosh and Arvind Sardana (2017) Resource requirements for Right to Education (RTE): Normative and the Real. NIPFP Working Paper Series, Paper 201, Delhi, NIPFP.

CASE STUDY 3

Name of the grantee:
CPR, Delhi, India

Project:
Election politics and big data

Introduction

Big data sets are those that may be analysed computationally to reveal patterns, trends and associations especially in relation to human behaviour and interactions. CPR's saw an opportunity to develop new capacities to contribute to the public debate and bringing a level of analysis to it that has not been present before. The initiative speaks to CPR's strategic positioning in developing a skill set and competence that was not present in India's more intellectual community. It chose to apply the big data analysis in the area of electoral politics. In contrast to a prevalent view in Indian social studies that to study politics there is a need to be a political actor, CPR' approach to working on political behaviour is that it is data based, detached and the rigour is derived from the data.

Background and purpose of the project

CPR used TTI funding to recruit a senior researcher in 2015 to kick start the project. CPR has had the practice of recruiting and head hunting the best available younger minds to work in an area, give them support for two years by which time they are expected to generate their own funding. Dr Neelanjan Sircar was recruited for the position. Although of Indian origin, he was born in the US, has American citizenship and a first degree in applied mathematics and economics (from UC Berkeley) and a PhD in political science from Columbia. He was recommended through the Dean of his school who is a personal friend of Dr Mehta (the then President of CPR). Neelanjan saw moving to work in India as a distinct opportunity to undertake interesting work in an exciting context within a supportive institutional environment. He does not view himself as a straight academic and valued the engagement that working through CPR offers that an academic environment would not give. It has given him an opportunity to talk to the political parties on what the data says rather than taking any particular position.

Commenting on the work he has done on urban politics he noted that there is so much basic information that is not known - e.g. the unemployment rates in Delhi and that he saw a fundamental role in putting information on this in the public domain. Theory has helped in translating that information into public engagement. In 2018 Dr. Sircar moved from Ashoka University but he has maintained a Visiting Fellow position at CPR because he values what it has to offer and has been able to build up a research group within CPR that remains.

Main features of the planning process

Neelanjan has worked on projects investigating the social connections between citizens in India and their local brokers and leaders, as well as how these local brokers and leaders, both rural and urban, make decisions. There has been a particular interest in the effects of the large scale urban transformation that is underway in India and its effects and more theoretical issues of how in the context of weak state capacity, citizens raise grievances with state services. This research has combined rigorous large scale (N) surveys with qualitative methods. Neelanjan is also a non-resident fellow at the Centre for the Advanced Study of India at the University of Pennsylvania where he has presented on this work. In addition, his skills in working with big data, and the spatialization of data is contributing to other areas of CPRs work, notably the urbanization program. He has a new study for which he is the India based

partner on Female Labour Participation. The study is funded by the Ford Foundation through the University of Penn State in the US and supports a new research group at IPS that is working on the data and providing data support to other projects within CPR.

A study that has recently been completed on political finance in India. Drawing on analysis from the self-declared affidavits of candidates for the Lok Sabha elections between 2004 and 2014 the findings point to the rise of wealthy candidates, the causes of this and the democratic consequences. It investigated the role of personal wealth and self-financing candidates in Indian elections, why the financial capacity of the candidate is an important feature of Indian electoral politics and how it structures the incentives of political parties. Using detailed publicly available data on candidates' assets, this research shows that a candidate's personal wealth, measured in terms of moveable assets, has a significant positive impact on his/her electoral fortunes. It further shows that wealthy candidates directly filter into competitive parties. But even among these wealthy candidates from competitive parties, the wealthiest candidate has a greater probability of winning the constituency. The empirical results strongly support the view that there are structural and institutional reasons for the outward display of wealth in Indian electoral campaigns.

The findings were published as part of a book on political finance in India (Devesh Kapur and Milan Vaishnav, 2018, *Costs of Democracy: Political Finance in India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, see viii) and a five-part series explaining the threat to democracy of election campaign cash was published in the *Hindustan Times* in July 2018. Neelanajan Sircar contributed one of the five articles (*Money Matters in Indian Elections: Why Parties Depend on Wealthy Candidates*, *Hindustan Times* 26 July 2018).

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

Neelanjan's work has focused on state level elections in India over the last few years combining data analysis (of publicly available data on voting patterns) and ethnographic field work with colleagues from CPR. This provided an analysis of voter behaviour that is not being undertaken elsewhere. He has a particular interest in understanding the theoretical principles that underlie the decision-making processes of voters in India, and their wider relevance to democratic practice in the developing world more generally. Recent publications have covered elections in Bihar, Bengal and Assam all published as working papers and available on the CPR website. In addition, he has been writing a regular column or opinion pieces for the *Hindu* on these elections, a connection established through the CPR Director of Communications, Richa Bansal. While commentary on elections in a politically charged context carries risks writing based on data-driven analysis offers an opportunity to provide in depth and informed comment, an approach on which CPR has established its reputation. Writing of this nature in the public sphere is a key quality assurance mechanism since data and analysis is open to critical scrutiny by other journalists.

This is well exemplified by the commentary that CPR offered more generally on the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Elections where the Union Government, the BJP, had a major triumph. Neelanjan and colleagues provide comment through the podcast series (*ThoughtSpace*) that has been developed as a communication tool by the Director of Communications. Comment was also provided by other faculty at CPR in various papers, reflecting the diversity of views and positions in CPR and its ability to project diverse voices rather than a specific institutional position. This has been a key to CPR's overall positioning.

Overall judgement of research quality

The research has often worked with publicly available data and it is the analysis and interpretation of that data that is the core issue around quality. As will be seen from the review of the book (section VIII) and the public reception of the analyses of that data, research quality is not in question.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

Neelanjan Sircar has played a key role in setting up a series of dialogues on Indian Politics. Called the CPR-TCPD Dialogues on Indian Politics they are jointly run by CPR and the Trivedi Centre for Political Data (TCPD) at Ashoka University. These are monthly events that brings together academics, policy and political practitioners, and civil society actors to debate important social and political issues in India. They are seen to provide a forum for intellectually rigorous, non-partisan commentary to strengthen public discourse on politics in India. The dialogue series is an effort to carve out a space for critical, nuanced engagement to understand the changing dynamics of Indian political parties, the impact of new and emerging social movements and the use of new instruments of mobilization in India's polity. Four events have been run so far and are available as podcasts.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

Communication activities described in the previous section highlight the promotion of public debate.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

Reviews of Devesh Kapur and Milan Vaishnav, 2018, *Costs of Democracy: Political Finance in India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press:

"This volume fills an important gap in both the literature on Indian political economy, as well as in the broader study of electoral finance. The book should be read both by scholars and policy makers interested in the issue of the role money plays in the world's largest democracy."

–*Atul Kohli, David K.E. Bruce Professor of International Affairs and Professor of Politics and International Affairs, Princeton University (USA)*

"One of the vital challenges in India and around the world is curbing the corrosive role of money in politics. This study, by a distinguished team of contributors, provides new insights into campaign finance in India, the world's most populous democracy, and how regulations could be reformed. The research will be of widespread interest for scholars of elections, corruption, and political reform."

–*Pippa Norris, Paul F. McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Laureate Professor of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney, and founding Director of the Electoral Integrity Project.*

"Democracy doesn't come cheap. Its cost is tremendous and rising. Unfortunately, the role of money in politics has lately assumed pernicious dimensions. It is no consolation that India is not alone facing this problem. This timely book is not only the first of its kind for India but also a rare contribution to the broader comparative literature."

–*S.Y. Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India*

"By using empirical evidence to shed light on an opaque phenomenon, this book contains the best that academia has to offer to a broad audience of concerned citizens."

–*Gilles Verniers, assistant professor of political science and co-director of the Trivedi Centre for Political Data, Ashoka University*

"The most compelling, exhaustive, innovative, riveting and perhaps challenging study of the 'opaque and enigmatic ways' in which the corrosive power of political finance in Indian elections works."

–*Ashwani Kumar, Financial Express*

TTI relevance for the project

The specific contribution from TTI to the development of this research on politics using big data has been to provide the funding to seed and develop a new research area in CPR. Consistent with CPR's approach

the recruitment process is the key to bringing in quality recruitment and a core attribute of that quality is also the ability or potential to build a research team. There is an entrepreneurial dimension to building teams looking for synergies between private and academic spaces and donors which this research program exemplifies well. It also illustrates well the range of outputs between academic chapters and contributions to serious debate both in newspapers and through public seminars. This links with the development of the communication capacities at CPR which has been another key area supported by TTI funding. It also speaks to the approach of the new CPR President to strengthen the convening role of CPR to make it more visible as an institution rather than just through the strengths of individuals.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Neelanjan Sirca and Richa Bansal, 22 January 2017 and 21 August 2018, CPR, Delhi.

- **Publications:**

- Neelanjan Sirca (2018) *Chapter 2: Money in Elections: The Role of Personal Wealth in Election Outcome* in Devesh Kapur and Milan Vaishnav (eds), *Costs of Democracy: Political Finance in India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- Neelanjan Sirca *Money Matters in Indian Elections: Why Parties Depend on Wealthy Candidates*, Hindustan Times 26 July 2018

CASE STUDY 4

Name of the grantee:
CPR, Delhi, India

Project:
Development of communication capacities

Introduction

This case study provides an account of the way in which communications has grown and developed within CPR and contributed to CPR's position and visibility in policy debates. TTI funding and dialogues with CPR on the need to develop an effective communication capacity has been a root cause of the changes described below. The extent to which communications has become embedded in CPR since its launch in 2015 is reflected in the fact that four project teams now (Accountability Initiative, Climate research, Sanitation, Urbanization) now have their own communication staff, providing communication support across the research group. They also regularly liaise with the central communications team.

Background and purpose of the project

Prior to the recruitment of a Director in 2014 and the establishment of a central communications department at CPR this function was highly decentralized and carried out at an individual and project level. The extent to which it happened depended on the interests of the research team. This arrangement reflected the organizational structure of CPR. As a result, CPR was known primarily for its key thought leaders and specific thematic areas with the institutional presence and identity of CPR being somewhat secondary.

Since 2014 the development of Communications as a core activity at CPR has contributed to the establishment of a more public and coherent CPR presence and positioning. This was a result of a fairly

long-term dialogue between the TTI RPO (Seema Bhatia-Panthaki) and the then CPR president Pratap Mehta, and has been funded by TTI. The current President, Yamini Aiyar is playing an active role in creating a more public presence of CPR through promoting its ability to convene (see below) and establishing an annual conference to project CPR's work.

Main features of the planning process

Characteristically for CPR, the recruitment process for the individual to lead the effort was central to the process and the director of Communications has played a leading role in building the strengths of CPR's communications since 2015. While it is still a work in progress a number of stages can be identified. They speak to not only carrying out the more expected functions of a strong communications department but also going beyond that. They also point the gradual and planned development of an organized communication culture within CPR, moving from a decentralized and diverse approach to a more and necessarily so centralized and coherent approach. This has required a managed process of developing internal communication to build a constituency of support for the changes and building recognition of the support services that a communications department can provide. It would be fair to say that internally the contribution of the communications department to research and policy engagement by CPR is now well recognized.

Key steps taken to develop communications capacity

First the development of more systematic and effective communication tools through:

- Redesigning the CPR website in May 2014 and this has attracted a growing audience (a 135% increase since launch achieving over 31,300 hits by March 2018);
- Developing social media platforms including twitter, Facebook etc.
- Establishing a central CPR mailing list which now has around 14,000 subscribers and is growing through continued website sign-ups and digitizing event sign-up sheets
- Producing and circulating monthly analytics that report on website access and use and by section (and by where users come from) specific traffic (on news stories, event pages, research outputs), twitter access and engagement, views of CPR podcasts and YouTube videos.

In addition to various research interpretations that were already being carried out – summaries, interviews, commentaries – a series of *thematic blogs* on different research topics were launched. This included collated views of CPR faculty in short commentaries on topical issues, titled *CPR Views*. While media op-eds were produced on a particular subject by the faculty, CPR Views was an opportunity to go beyond that and draw on synergies across CPR to provide a fuller perspective on specific issues. Each blog in the series was mailed to select media by researchers in conjunction with the communications team, often leading to wider media coverage, thus informing public opinion.

Three thematic major blog series have been run so far -

- On environmental justice, where proposed changes to the coastal regulation law, sought through an RTI application along with its history, impact on communities etc. were run in a series of 10 blogs (see detailed case study in Annex 1). The series was viewed a total number **12,842** times with **11,076** unique views. Of the 10 pieces, the highest viewed piece was the one, which detailed the [proposed changes](#), acquired by the researchers through an RTI application. The series received an average number of **1284** views per blog, and **1107** unique views per blog.
- On residential electricity consumption patterns co-authored with Prayas (Energy Group). The nine-part blog series titled *Plugging in* received a total of **15,450** views (11.2% of overall lifetime traffic

to the entire news section) and **13,814** unique views (11.6% of overall lifetime unique traffic to the entire news section). In particular, the piece on [Trends in India's Residential Electricity Consumption](#) received **9,664** page views, which is the highest number of page views on any news piece in the lifetime of the new CPR website (since 2015). Some of the blogs in the series, including the highest viewed piece, were translated in Hindi and published in *Eklavya*, a monthly science magazine.

- On [small town urbanization](#) - this is a current series and so four pieces have been put out. Two of these were carried verbatim by *Deep Dive* in the *Financial Chronicle*. All four pieces can be accessed through: <http://www.cprindia.org/news/6531>

CPR views

So far, two of these have been put out, and each piece with the analytics is provided below:

- 173 views for [Environmental cost of Development Projects](#)
- 473 views for [Overhauling 'babu' culture in India?](#)

It is hoped these will be developed to provide an effective mechanism for showcasing CPR's varied institutional perspectives, especially on topical issues.

New talk series and use of promotional tools such as Facebook Live and Facebook advertising

During 2017-2018 several talk series, focusing on diverse topical issues was launched at CPR. This initiative is effectively establishing CPR as a convenor of public debates on important issues. The series including [Metamorphoses](#), (in partnership with India International Centre and funded by NITI Aayog) focusing on the impact of technology on society (see annex 2), [Clearing the Air Seminar Series](#) focusing on the air pollution issues in Delhi, talks on topical *international relations* issues, such as the Rohingya crisis and India-China relations, and the [CPR-TCPD Dialogues on Indian Politics](#), in partnership with Ashoka University, to discuss critical issues in this important election year (see separate Big Data case study). The idea behind launching these flagship series was to demonstrate CPR as an organization that brings weight through sound research to discussions on relevant, important current issues.

In order to promote these events and maximize their reach, tools like pre and post event Facebook advertising (selectively, except for *Metamorphoses* where it has been budgeted as a regular feature), and Facebook Live of all events, was carried out. In select events, such as the launch of Amb. Shyam Saran's book *How India Sees the World: Kautilya to the 21st Century* in partnership with the publishing house Juggernaut, *Hindustan Times* was brought in as a media partner and it Facebook Lived the discussion on its page. In another event on India-China relations, *Hindustan Times* did a special shorter Facebook Live with the speakers, which was viewed widely. These tools have been used not only to attract more people to the events but to also reach a wider and more diversified audience online, especially through Facebook Lives. Analytics on audiences for the news pieces, event pages, Youtube and Facebook Live are collected for each event. It is clear also from analysis of who is attending some of these events, particularly the *Metamorphoses* talks that individuals from senior positions in society and government are being attracted to the events.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

The research from CPR already has credibility and is widely respected. What the development of communications capacity has done is to bring that research more systematically and widely to the public attention

Reporting on policy engagement

Over the last four years, the annual report has become an important tool for showcasing highlights of CPR's work each year. There is a formal annual report required for accountability purposes but the development of a second annual report as a communications product has focused on policy engagement activities undertaken by CPR staff. Project and faculty members started capturing examples and stories against a framework developed by the communications team. In 2017 the Accountability Initiative (AI) went a step further with its PAISA (Planning, Allocations and Expenditures, Institutions Studies in Accountability) research program. The AI team worked with the communications team on a detailed narrative of its policy engagement work on the ground. AI's field associates or PAISA staff had extensively engaged with the frontline bureaucracy on findings from their research seeking collaborative solutions. To capture this, the communications team working with the research team identified themes after engaging with the field staff. A consultant was hired for a three-week-long field visit, and a detailed story on Putting Research into Practice was put together and posted (<http://www.cprindia.org/news/6235>.) This is an example, which will be used to encourage other researchers to write long accounts of policy engagement.

Evidence of policy influence and contributions to the public debate

Two examples of leverage impact and contributing to the public debate through effective communications are attached in annex 1. The first covers proposed changes in the law covering coastal governance and how communication of this led to direct action from affected communities and promoted public debate. The second addresses more the stimulation of public debate around the effects of digital technology through a seminar series

TTI relevance for the project

TTI can be seen to have contributed to the development of this communications capacity at CPR. First through a dialogue over time between the TTI RPO and the President of CPR on the potential need for developing this capacity. The second was through the use of TTI funding to fund a Communications Department. However, the shaping and achievements of the initiative are a result of internal CPR processes.

Appendix:

• Interviewees:

Richa Bansal and Pratap Metha (21 and 22 Jan 2017, CPR, Delhi) and Richa Bansal and Yamini Aiyar (20 and 21 August 2018, CPR, Delhi)

Annex 1 Case study:

Leveraging research on coastal governance through effective communication

The CPR-Namati Environment Justice project at CPR, is an action research project that trains paralegals to work on environmental solutions as well as generate data on the performance of laws and institutions related to environmental governance. The project wrote a series of 10 blogs, in collaboration with the CPR communications team, on India's coastal regulation law, CRZ, 2011.

This series was triggered by the proposed replacement of the CRZ, 2011 by a new law by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). This was likely to dilute the safeguards of an earlier law for the coastal environment and traditional livelihoods. The CPR blogs, (in some cases regional languages translations were included) were posted on the homepage between March and August 2017 and were later archived (<http://cprindia.org/news/6360>).

This series captured stories from the ground, provided a history of the law, analysed the proposed amendments to the law in the past three years and captured the court's perspective on the law. Most importantly it *disclosed* the planned revisions in the new law (Marine Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2017/MCRZ), which the project team had exclusively accessed through a Right to Information (RTI) application. The blog piece on the disclosure of the new law received the greatest coverage and was viewed almost 3000 number of times on the CPR website.

Each piece in the series was shared with a cohort of journalists interested in covering coastal governance and rights. The piece on the disclosure of the new law, received particularly heavy media attention. There were close to 20 pieces in a range of print and digital media publications, such as *Hindustan Times*, *Scroll*, *Times of India*, *Press Trust of India*, *Business Standard* etc. The media did deeper case studies on the potential impact of the dilution of the law by speaking to affected communities in states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka - thus further contextualizing the upcoming changes. A few examples of the coverage are provided by the links below. Examples of the media coverage:

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/health/environmentalists-and-fishing-communities-slam-proposed-marine-coastal-regulations/story-pH1dvcN1ZOLFgjomQ1oxRN.html>

<http://www.thisisplace.org/i/?id=b8e45830-5654-4c75-9a60-645ab341f14a>

<http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/column-shoring-up-the-builders-2386866>

<https://counterview.org/2017/04/08/new-crz-rules-offered-without-addressing-concerns-of-coastal-communities-consultation/>

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/costal-folk-angry-over-moves-to-dilute-crz-norms/article19435985.ece>

<http://normangeestar.net/2017/05/26/centre-plans-changes-in-crz-rules-to-give-tourism-a-boost/>

After the draft new law was disclosed by the Namati team in May 2017, submissions were made to the Ministry by fisher groups, coastal communities, environmentalists and urban planners, opposing the suggested changes in the new law. While no direct causality can be drawn the new law has been put on hold by the Ministry after the Namati team disclosed its contents as revealed by a Ministry reply in November 2017, in response to another RTI filed by Namati.

Communicating the proposed changes to the law and their consequences in a sustained manner, and engaging with the media throughout, led to action from affected communities and promoted public debate. It is likely that if the Ministry were to try any further changes, it would be under greater scrutiny.

Annex 2 Metamorphoses - Talking Technology

Metamorphoses is a seminar series that seeks to contribute to bridging the gap between digital technologies, which are transforming lives, and understanding of their multiple dimensions. Its objective was to assemble acknowledged thought leaders from India and abroad, to inform and educate society about both the power of new technologies to change lives for the better but also to warn of the risks that are attached to them and that must be confronted. The series held nine events in 2018 covering different aspects of the digital revolution. The series was a joint initiative between NITI Aayog (the Government of India's think tank), Indian International Centre (IIC) and Centre for Policy Research (CPR). A pre-launch promotional plan given, cross promoted by IIC and NITI Aayog, led to a dedicated audience and regular media coverage. The [keynote](#) on 2 May 2018, looked at the big picture - the nature of technological change and its interplay with individual and social attitudes - and subsequent sessions sought to demystify the jargon through which new technology is projected on to daily lives. Further sessions examined issues relating to data privacy and cyber security as well as the emerging legal regime to regulate this domain.

The impacts of digital technologies on the human psyche and on societies were also considered - exploring ways in which some of the negative elements may be mitigated. There was also a look into the future

- of what machine learning and artificial intelligence may bring to human experience - and the moral and ethical dilemma associated with these. All talks were livestreamed on the [IIC website](#); available on Facebook-live on the Metamorphoses [Facebook page](#); and video recordings were made available on YouTube, as well as disseminated through social media channels including [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and CPR's [blog](#) hosted on the Metamorphoses website. Facebook Lives of two topical discussions on *technology and data privacy* and *technology, social divides and diversity* were advertised immediately after the event. The discussion on data privacy received 12000+ views, while the latter received 18000+ views.

The Series (<http://www.cprindia.org/projects/metamorphoses-talking-technology>)

[Keynote: Introducing Metamorphoses](#) 2 May 2018 by Professor Yochai Benkler (Berkman Professor of Entrepreneurial Legal Studies at Harvard Law School, and faculty co-director of the Harvard Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society)

[Second Panel Discussion on 'Future of Governance' - part of 'Metamorphoses: Talking Technology'](#) 24 May 2018

[Metamorphoses Special Talk - Leading Digital Transformation and Innovation](#) 8 June 2018

[Third Panel Discussion on 'Vocabulary of the Digital' - part of 'Metamorphoses: Talking Technology'](#) 5 July 2018

[Metamorphoses Special Talk - Beyond Techno-Narcissism: Self and Other in the Internet Public Realm](#) 7 July 2018

[Fourth Panel Discussion on 'Technology, Social Divides and Diversity' part of 'Metamorphoses: Talking Technology'](#) 8 August 2018

[Fifth Panel Discussion on 'Unpacking Media - Digital & Traditional'](#) 5 September 2018
Oct 10

[Sixth Panel Discussion on 'Automation, Artificial Intelligence & the Future of Jobs'](#) 10 October 2018

CASE STUDY 5

Name of the grantee
CRES, Senegal

Project
Achieving eligibility for research grants based on CRES research quality

Introduction

During ITT Phase Two support, CRES was selected as a research partner in the framework of an international research consortium called NOPOOR (<http://www.nopoor.eu/>) which is funded by the European Union for the period 2012-2017. The project, which aims to strengthen knowledge for better anti-poverty policies, is the largest development research program funded by the European Union in the last 10 years. NOPOOR collects new empirical evidence on poverty from 21 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, gaining new insights into poverty from individual to government level. NOPOOR is EU-funded research and funds projects for 8.000.000 Euro for 5 Years, 1 April 2012 - 31 March 2017 funding more than 100 researchers from 20 institutions worldwide. CRES was selected amongst others because of its researchers and research quality.

Background and purpose of the project

NOPOOR has mobilized more than 100 affiliated researchers from 20 research institutions based in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. The research focused on a hundred topical themes organized

around seven research areas: - Dimensions and dynamics of poverty - Impact of foreign aid - Globalization and international migration - Inclusion and exclusion in social networks - Education and Social Protection - States and political systems - Future scenarios. In addition to these lines of research, the project had two important aspects: disseminating research results and capacity building for young researchers through the organization of training workshops and mentoring within research teams.

Main features of the planning process

With a team made up of about ten researchers, doctoral students and statisticians, CRES was involved in four sub-areas of research on the dynamics of poverty: the impact of the commercial partnership agreements between the European Union and ECOWAS; the impact of migration and remittances on the families of origin of migrants; the social protection of poor and vulnerable groups; and the relationship between shocks and poverty. In addition, CRES was also involved in the production of dissemination documents and the organization of research conferences. To this end, CRES was in charge of drafting the dissemination report of the "South Conferences".

In addition to the scientific partnership that existed between CRES and IRD-DIAL (this is the coordinator of NOPOOR based in France) through scientific co-publications, the quality of CRES researchers and their publications as well as the quality of financial and administrative management contributed to its integration into the collaborative project NOPOOR. The process of electing partner institutions for the NOPOOR project lasted more than a year. CRES had set up a team of researchers and administrative staff to participate in the various stages of the project: defining research areas, writing of research proposals, preparation of the budgets and elaborating an action plan.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

One of the criteria for becoming eligible for NOPOOR funding was not only the individual researchers and their status and publications of the last 5 years but also other elements of CRES that they needed to show, including the fact that they had administrative and financial staff and that they could satisfy different accountability criteria. The key point is that TTI contributed to the status of CRES which helped them position themselves for eligibility and selection of NOPOOR grants.

In terms of research CRES had to submit research proposals and themes through concept notes. CRES applied its own research quality process before submitting concept notes to NOPOOR.

Overall judgement of research quality

NOPOOR was leading on research quality so an external agency passed an overall judgement on the quality of CRES proposals and research outputs, including applying its own peer review process. As a result, through NOPOOR, CRES in turn strengthened its scientific research production. Twelve working papers and eleven policy briefs were produced. An article on the social protection of young people was published in 2017 in the Economics Bulletin. An article on migration is being published in the Journal of Development Studies and other articles will be published in the course of 2018.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

As part of the project, CRES increased its visibility through organizing in 2014 and 2017 two policy forums for the dissemination of its research work. These forums each mobilized more than 200 participants composed of technical and financial partners, the Government of Senegal, civil society and the media.

Activities for enhanced policy influence/Evidence of policy influence from the project

There was a spinoff from the research leading to new collaborative research among different organizations. CRES work is cited regularly, including by ECOWAS. CRES was asked to be present at a consultation process about the EU's commercial policies towards Africa.

NOPOOR has also contributed to better reporting of CRES research time and other costs. This resonates with the business model workshops that TTI funded in Africa. CRES thinks that it will be necessary to introduce this kind of reporting in order to establish a better costing model. NOPOOR and TTI support therefore reinforced each other.

The experience of CRES in the NOPOOR project has allowed it to diversify its portfolio of donors and to master project management skills. CRES strengthened its network of scientific and strategic partners which enabled its researchers to present their research at the project's annual conferences and two editions of the European Development Days (2015 and 2017) and contribute to preparatory work for an EU Heads of State meeting. On the basis of the research and the evidence that was produced on migration and development within the framework of the NOPOOR project, a CRES researcher was invited to the Valetta pre-summit in Brussels to support African and European NGOs in their advocacy on migration policies between Europe and Africa. Another relevant outcome is that CRES has been requested to participate in the European Union consultation on development issues and the elaboration of policies for Africa.

CRES also organized two training workshops on panel data econometrics in 2014 and on Inequities, Poverty and Growth in 2017. PhD students and young researchers from CRES and other partner members of the NOPOOR network and other Think Tanks based in Senegal participated in these training workshops. In addition, researchers from CRES members of the NOPOOR team supervised master's theses relevant to NOPOOR research themes. Five trainings and internship papers were produced. One thesis has been defended in 2017 and another is in the finalization phase for a defense during the year 2018.

TTI relevance for the project

TTI has undoubtedly contributed to the maturity of CRES in a number of ways, including its research capacity, credibility and independence, by supporting its financial and administrative capacity, as well as its communication and outreach. This helped CRES to be selected for the NOPOOR program.

TTI's specific support, although indirect in the NOPOOR project, could be a combination of factors, including the fact that TTI has allowed CRES to strengthen both its institutional and organizational capacity. This has allowed CRES to mature and reach a solid critical mass that has attracted donors. In other words, research quality and funding need to be underpinned by 'organizational fitness'.

CRES is becoming a recognized and respected research centre in the world of research in economics and social sciences according to the interviewee (head of research unit). CRES's gained experience in the NOPOOR project and has allowed it to strengthen its network of partners and develop its international project management capabilities. This is an asset in the submission of new projects to funding from the European Union or other donors.

Most important was for the EU to be certain of their investment. They were very demanding, and they were aware that TTI funded CRES which they thought was to their benefit. They had to show who the key five funders were to CRES, including TTI, and this helped to get recognition.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Ms Fatou Cissé, Head of Department, senior researcher.

• Publications as a result of the NOPOOR grant to CRES

Policy briefs in French

- Abdoulaye Diagne, Quels facteurs conduisent à l'entrée et à la sortie de la pauvreté? Une méta-analyse sur la dynamique de la pauvreté dans les pays en développement.
- Mamadou Dansokho, Abdoulaye Diagne et MBaye Diène. La dynamique de la pauvreté au Sénégal.
- Fatou Cissé, Gaye Daffé, Bambio Yiribin. Les transferts d'argent des migrants contribuent-ils à la réduction de la pauvreté ? Une analyse des cas du Burkina Faso, du Nigeria et du Sénégal.
- Fatou Cisse et Ismael Fofana. L'Accord de Partenariat entre l'Union Européenne et l'Afrique de l'Ouest est-il réellement bénéfique pour les pays Ouest Africains ?
- Gaye Daffé et Mbaye Diène. Quelle politique de protection sociale face à la grande vulnérabilité es ménages sénégalais ?

Policy briefs by NOPOOR in English

- Abdoulaye Diagne. Which factors lead to entry and exit of poverty? A meta-analysis on the dynamics of poverty in developing countries?
- Andrianarison Francis, Cisse Fatou and Rabeloma Tiana. Remittances and Development: Do Transfer Channels Matter?
- Fatou Cisse and Ismael Fofana. The Economic Partnership between European Union and West Africa: Are there really benefits for West Africa?
- Gaye Daffe and Mbaye Diène. Which social protection policy will face the great vulnerability of the Senegalese households?
- Francois Joseph Cabral. Social protection: what about young people unemployed, uneducated, not trained ?
- Abdoulaye Diagne. Catastrophes and poverty in developing countries.

Working papers of Nopoor (10 in English and 1 in French)

- Abdoulaye Diagne. Quels facteurs conduisent aux entrées et sorties de la pauvreté dans les pays en développement? Une méta analyse sur les dynamiques de pauvreté dans les pays en développement.
- Abdoulaye Diagne. Which factors lead to entry and exit of poverty? A meta-analysis on the dynamics of poverty in developing countries.
- Abdoulaye Diagne, Mamadou Dansokho and MBaye Diène. Determinants and processes of transitory and chronic poverty in Senegal.
- Fatou Cissé, Gaye Daffé and Bambio Yiribin. Estimating the net effects of migration and remittances on poverty and inequality in Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Senegal.
- Fatou Cissé and Bambio Yiribin. Effects of migration and remittances on child's time allocation: evidence from Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Senegal.
- Cisse Fatou and Akim Al Mouksit. Separating migration and remittances effects on child's left behind: Evidence in the Senegalese households.
- Andrianarison Francis, Cisse Fatou and Rabeloma Tiana. Remittances and Development: Do Transfer Channels Matter?
- Fatou Cisse and Ismael Fofana. The Economic Partnership between European Union and West Africa: Are there really benefits for West Africa?
- Gaye Daffe and Mbaye Diène. Which social protection policy to face the great vulnerability of the Senegalese households?
- Francois Joseph Cabral, Social protection: What about young people not in employment, not in education, not in training?

- Abdoulaye Diagne. Catastrophes and poverty in developing countries.
- Abdoulaye Diagne. Transferts de fonds et chocs dans les pays en développement.

Publications in scientific journals.

- Francois Joseph Cabral. Social protection: What about young people not in employment, not in education, not in training? *Publié dans Economics Bulletin en 2017.*
- Andrianarison Francis, Cisse Fatou and Rabeloma Tiana. Remittances and Development: Do Transfer Channels Matter? *Journal of Development Studies.* (to be published)
- Cisse Fatou and Akim Al Mouksit. Separating migration and remittances effects on child's left behind : Evidence in the Senegalese households. *Economics Bulletin.* (submitted for publication)

CASE STUDY 6

Name of the grantee:
CSEA Abuja, Nigeria

Project:
Research on tobacco taxation and consumption: the economics of tobacco control in Nigeria

Introduction

Like many other African countries, the taxation in Nigeria on tobacco is low and also the taxing structure is often very simple and not correlated to any incentives reducing the prevalence of smoking, including taking health impacts and related costs into account. CSEA conducted this study as a result of work undertaken at the sub national level by CRES (Senegal), another TTI grantee and its cooperation with the regional body ECOWAS. This study aimed to put the economics of tobacco control into Nigerian perspective and provoke debate and policy changes in Nigeria.

Background and purpose of the project

This study is a result of cooperation with a university professor in South Africa who developed a model to reduce the prevalence of smoking: the Tobacco Excise Tax Simulation Model (TETSIM). The study provided CSEA with the opportunity to apply this model and adapt it to calibrate for the Nigerian context. Other models are available (WHO) but these could not be applied to Nigeria due to the lack of national data necessary for the WHO model. TETSIM allowed CSEA to prepare different taxing scenarios for government as well as a three-year projections of the proposed policy change.

The objectives of the study provided CSEA with the application of a model that is well accepted and that could be applied to the Nigerian situation. There is also an advantage that the regional context (ECOWAS) and work by others such as CRES as well as the South African Professor who developed the model serve as critical reference points. The study provided a baseline scenario and served as a starting point to follow up research and assess results and impact at a later stage.

Main features of the planning process

It started with a first workshop where the Cape Town Professor explained the model, including how it links to data sources. Subsequently CSEA organized a stakeholders' forum which has a formal set-

ting and included MoH, MoF, Nigerian customs, academia, and NGOs. Given that the Nigerian government representatives were interested since this would be positive for the Nigerian Tax Authorities, the topic raised few political issues. MoH and MoF both supported the idea of a tax increase while also discussing the health impact. In other words, this was a win/win situation for the key ministries involved. Critical were two workshops both the technical working group, organized by the Government of Nigeria (GoN) during the work and the dissemination workshop organized by CSEA after completing the research.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

For this study, data were mostly derived from national sources; both primary and secondary data. Other data were sourced from international databases due limited data availability in Nigeria. The paper provides an overview of the baseline data. It started with a first workshop where the Cape Town Professor explained the model, including how it links to data sources. The main challenge was that CSEA could not use WHO data which are not available for Nigeria, so they had to find alternatives. The method was provided so that CSEA could develop hypotheses for the Nigerian case and how the outcomes could be relevant to policy makers. These skills were available at CSEA.

The first consultations with the Executive Director of CSEA were informal. The CSEA board member was part of the structural review process for each CSEA proposal and the professor in Cape Town was the external reviewer. He was funded by ACBF to come to Abuja for the workshop.

The model provided an existing, accepted methodology and rigour that was already checked and internationally accepted as an alternative to the WHO model. CSEA considers it a high-quality process looking back and eventually the paper was published in the Journal: Tobacco induced diseases.

CSEA applied its own internal quality process but the 'holder of the model', the professor in Cape Town, had to make sure that the Nigerian context would not change the model itself. This provided an extra check on the integrity of the model and how it was applied to Nigeria.

Overall judgement of research quality

The paper is coherent and explains clearly what the issue is, presents the methodology followed, the model used and its adaptations and policy options. There is a separate section on data collected and used. The paper models four different options and proposes possible scenarios based on a baseline scenario. This would support reviewing in due course what effects different policy options could have and how these could be reviewed again if additional data were to become available later. Projections are clearly presented. There is an adequate literature list.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

Although CSEA is known for its economic analysis, this was a first time opportunity to work on a new and relevant topic. Critical were two workshops both the technical working group workshop, organized by GoN and the dissemination workshop organized by CSEA. This division of labor worked well and the GoN led on technical issues. Moreover, the potential tax restructuring and increase was of interest to government in order to raise its revenues. They had an intrinsic motivation to be part of this.

Key to the process was the technical working group and CSEA's participation in the group. Some of the Nigerian officials were at the international Tobacco conference in South Africa which boosted their confidence and helped them to revise the policy.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

There was additional research done on Nigeria as a second step in the methodology in order to strengthen CSEA's findings and make it Nigeria specific. CSEA was part of the technical working group and could engage the policy makers on their proposed outcomes and targets, on existing government models and taxation policy and projections. This helped in getting the engagement with GoN and created a higher-level commitment and interest from MoH and MoF and a tax increase on all the different tobacco products, including tobacco produced in Nigeria. The key of the research was not about an increase in taxing tobacco but also to introduce a change in the taxation structure to the benefit of increasing revenues.

The national Tobacco Control Alliance which also has other TTs as members accepted CSEA as a member which was a prestigious recognizing that its research was relevant, credible and also gave CSEA access to an important, international NGO: the CTFK (Campaign for Tobacco Free kids).

CSEA's communication unit had various contributions to the dissemination: blogs, article shared with all the people on their mailing list, full report, policy brief, plus publication accessible on the website. They were also part since the beginning of the research as well as the different workshops and mobilized the media and NGOs at every occasion.

CSEA talked various times to academics and NGOs who are working on health issues so indirectly they supported CSEA's work and thus added pressure on government representatives. This approach worked well.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

The World Tobacco Conference in South Africa accepted CSEA's paper and CSEA was selected to present it. Some of the policy makers from Nigeria attended this conference so they could see how CSEA's work was received. Networking goes on in the committee and the Tobacco Alliance, so they continue the work.

Change in taxation policy in Nigeria was effective in June 2018. Both the taxation level was revised and taxing structure introduced. The story doesn't end here. CSEA managed to get additional funding for primary data collection and expand its work with research in the states. They had only 10.000 USD for the first study and managed to get 50.000 USD for the second round. They are now in the process of expanding they research further since they have a baseline. A potential risk is that they do more work while it is not sure how the policy makers will be involved at the federal or state level.

TTI relevance for the project

Staff time was paid for (research, communications, peer review). They had matching funds from ACBF.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Precious Chukwuemeli, 30 August 2018

- **Publications**

- Precious Chukwuemeli, Akanonu Joseph, Ishaku Chukwuka Onyekwena (2018) *The Economics of Tobacco Control in Nigeria: Modelling the Fiscal and Health Effects of a Tobacco Excise Tax Change in Nigeria*, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA). Abuja, Nigeria

CASE STUDY 7

Name of the grantee:
EDRI, Ethiopia

Project:
**Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (ESBD)
research program**

Introduction

The research was intended to redress an imbalance of attention in Ethiopia where there have been tendencies to perceive of industrialization and large enterprises as the sole generator of employment. There has been little evidence upon which to develop policies for more balanced economic development, including small enterprises. Furthermore, although it is known that these small enterprises account for 75% of industrial pollution, there is very little known about how this might be reduced.

Background and purpose of the project

The idea for the research stemmed from a desire to develop a more holistic understanding of how to best pursue Ethiopia's the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). The main focus of the GTP is on manufacturing led by large enterprises, but there is a recognition that a broader perspective is needed to understand more broadly about how innovation can contribute to growth and employment. There is a recognized need to understand, for example, whether they are benefiting from business development services. Another major gap that was recognized was how these businesses can be part of the green agenda, given that they currently account for 75% of industrial pollution,

Main features of the planning process

There was a meeting with the Ministry of Industry to identify knowledge gaps and they emphasized the need for a better understanding of the role of small and microenterprises for job creation. The Ministry of Industry was actively engaged through EDRI arranged follow-up meetings to see if the research design is relevant and useful. Researchers asked directly what was useful for implementing policy. An inception phase was added to the research as a way to check on these issues at an early stage.

Some efforts were made to engage with the small enterprises as potential research users, but EDRI's linkages with the private sector are with larger enterprises, so this was not possible. With small enterprises the research team gathered impressions from discussions when piloting the methods as it was hard to engage with them in during the design phase.

The lead researcher recognized that there is a danger that policy issues related to the environment or gender are often simply overlaid on a study such as this. He realized that gender was not consistently mainstreamed when planning the research and tended to take either a narrower 'women in development' approach or, alternatively, a focus only on areas where discrimination was expected. It was also recognized that the environmental component to the research, funded separately and added onto this study, was not well integrated into the research plans, but this was seen as 'a start' for looking at issues that will need to be addressed more in the future.

Furthermore, this study was a 'baseline' and therefore by nature was designed to be more descriptive than analytical. Many of the questions that policy-makers need answers to are 'why' questions rather than 'what' questions, and further study, including deeper dives into certain aspects, will be needed to better understand the institutional and motivational factors that relate to the 'why' questions.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

The research was led by EDRI senior researchers (most of whom had received their degrees abroad with support from TTI). In undertaking the research strong protocols were applied. This emphasized guaranteeing the quality of the data by recruiting highly experienced and educated data collectors and supervisors to follow the enumerators. Two weeks of training was provided for the enumerators, including mock interviews, followed by a piloting exercise. A manual was prepared for the data collection and was translated into local languages. One supervisor was used for every five enumerators. A data auditor was also employed to check 5% of the data collected and see that the enumerators and supervisors had actually carried out the data collection. Furthermore, software was used to listen to a random selection of the interviews to see if they were following the data collection manual.

The EDRI researchers review each other's papers and also send these for external review. This research was presented in two workshops for senior policy makers and other experts to hear if the approach was relevant for their needs. The research has also been presented at international conferences to get feedback from international academia. These processes can be seen to have partially grown out of the critical mass of senior researchers who have now returned to EDRI after getting degrees abroad with TTI support.

The degree of attention to peer review is reported to be more intense now than in the past, though not entirely new. But it is notable that these mechanisms are very much dependent on access to funding for workshops and international networking, which until recently was reliant on TTI support.

Overall judgement of research quality

The publications have thorough explanations of the methods used. Limitations were also mentioned but with some gaps, e.g., exclusion of more isolated and instable areas from the sample. Methods for the environmental component failed to include some salient issues, such as factors of climate risk. In the energy efficiency study there are some obvious issues around analysis of the adoption of energy efficient lightbulbs as a proxy for claims about wider attitudes towards the 'green agenda'. Given the emphasis on greening it is notable that the focus is entirely on climate mitigation, "environmentally friendly" practices and energy efficiency aspects, with issues of adaptation and climate risk notably absent (despite the surveys having been conducted during the worst drought in a century).

Mention of regions in the studies is only made with respect to the quality/consistency of government data, not of their local policies and praxis. This is problematic given Ethiopia's federal and devolved structure. With this, there is a lack of a basis for analysing cultural factors that could, for example, have major implications for the role and dynamics within cooperatives.

There is no literature review in the baseline publication, but this is perhaps related to the character of the book as a baseline survey, whereas the literature review may appear in later analyses.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

To address end-users' interests the research focused on what is missed in the Ethiopian approach to growth and transformation in comparison to other countries, e.g., Asia where small enterprises have been given more attention. The intention is to inform the government of where to invest. Recommendations focus on dynamic rather than survival enterprises and emphasize what kinds of jobs are created; wage levels compared to other countries, working conditions, including occupational safety; backward and forward linkages; potential to compete; sources and levels of capital and growth over time.

Globally, EDRI can be seen to have become more influential due to their expanding cooperation with major international research institutions (e.g., Stanford, Bonn, Gothenburg, Hohenheim). Indeed, this research stood out in that other projects have received other (not TTI) funding.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

Ten papers are being produced in relation to the research, five of which are financed by TTI and the others by the EU. The EU is very much interested in applying the findings. There has been one journal article. Workshops, and an annual conference have been organized to bring researchers and policy-makers together. Future expanded outreach will depend on availability of resources, but this is of concern now that TTI funding is no longer available.

The role of the EDRI communications officer was to invite the media to cover the dissemination workshop.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

Despite a recognition of the obvious importance of engaging with the private sector on research such as this, their interest in research remains weak. Private sector actors do not appear to trust research.

By contrast, EDRI has noted a major increase in the demand from the government. In the past, attendance by government at EDRI workshops was poor, as officials were waiting for instructions from their superiors. Now they are asking for advice as they are ready to take more initiative in the changing policy space. There is a notable change since the new prime minister assumed power. The prime minister himself is said to be interested in research, which has set a new tone for authorities more generally.

Another discernible change has also been in the increased respect for Ethiopian research. In the past major studies, such as impact evaluations of megaprojects, were usually commissioned from international researchers and consultants. Now they are coming to EDRI.

TTI relevance for the project

This study, partially funded by TTI, was an example of how new approaches have been applied since the appointment of the research coordinator. Before researchers largely just engaged with other fellow researchers (leaving policy influence for the Executive Director), but now the researchers are proactively engaging with users and soliciting feedback from international experts. There has been no contact between the EDRI researchers and researchers from other TTI grantees working with related studies.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

- Tigabu Getahun, 28 August 2018

- **Publications:**

- Mulu Gebreeyesus Abebe Ambachew Tigabu Getahun Berihu Assefa Girum Abebe Seid Hassen Haileselassie Medhin, 2018, Main Features of Micro and Small Manufacturing Enterprises in Ethiopia: Baseline Survey Report, EDRI
 - Sied Hassen, Tagel Gebrehiwot, Tiruwork Arega, 2018, Determinants of enterprises use of energy efficient technologies: Evidence from urban Ethiopia, Energy Policy, 119, pp.388-395

CASE STUDY 8

Name of the grantee:
EDRI, Ethiopia

Project:
Structural Transformation and Industrial Policy (STIP)

Introduction

Part of a long-term research program supported by AFD looking at a wide range of topics related to structural transformation. This particular study, being a deep analysis of bureaucratic rationality, appeared to tap a realization that this was an important issue, even though the more qualitative political economy analysis was a step out of EDRI's comfort zone of more econometric research.

Background and purpose of the project

Based on earlier studies as part of STIP, EDRI researchers had observed that the quality of bureaucracy was deteriorating and there was a growing disconnect between the intentions of high-level policy and the reality of frontline bureaucrats. There was a recognized need to fill this knowledge gap. "We saw a need to delve into this deeply to understand the state industrial apparatus. As a "developmental state" we realized that the narrative has to trickle down to the frontline; analyse whether the altruism that underpins the developmental state narrative is really there."

This overall approach in the analysis of the bureaucratic constraints indicates a striking (for a government agency such as EDRI) implicitly self-critical assessment of the role of bureaucracies and the prospects for a smooth implementation of grand plans. This indicates a readiness to look at fundamental issues of the Ethiopian developmental state and question prevailing orthodoxies. In doing this the study pays considerable attention to comparison with the East Asian meritocracies that the Ethiopian state has tried to model itself upon, noting that this is an empty if the bureaucracy is not in place and incentivized.

Main features of the planning process

There are a few AFD based French researchers who are sort of involved in STIP, but none were involved in this specific research initiative. Collaboration with French scholars has been very rare. Specific research agendas are effectively set by EDRI, which drafts proposals based on what researchers view as salient. Once approved by AFD, EDRI then assigns researchers to undertake the study and draft the outputs.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

When the methods for this study were presented to stakeholders, they recognized the value of and understood the political economy approach. This was in contrast to more technical econometric studies. EDRI engaged one researcher who had this political economy experience, and it was in some respects an opportunity for other EDRI researchers to expand their methodological skills sets.

The peer review process began at the design stage as the proposal was shared with colleagues who provided useful feedback. Early results were then presented to both peer researchers at EDRI and also to high level officials to get feedback. The broader academic community has not been targeted so no efforts have been made to get external academic peer review (thus far). This shows the value placed in

stakeholder validation, which particularly in this case is seen as more important than traditional peer review. It also indicates how EDRI's more standard, formal peer review processes are treated as optional with an out-of-the-box study such as this.

Overall judgement of research quality

The study includes a good literature review (with a few gaps). The research design is clear and well described. The theoretical framing is appropriate and clear. This is particularly notable as this type of research is very new for EDRI and thus shows their adaptability.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

Researchers spoke to many government officials in different ministries where people immediately recognized the importance of the issues. The trust that exists between EDRI and ministries, combined with recognition of the need for independent analysis, were important for ensuring the openness that was required for embarking on this study.

Overall it is notable that credibility, per se, is apparently not a limitation to utility. Challenges rather relate to making the research more widely available and adapted to audiences. EDRI researchers acknowledge a need to strengthen their skills in drafting policy briefs. But this is not a panacea if there are no resources or time allocated for acting to bring the research into the public domain.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

In effect, no plans have been made to make a proactive effort to influence policies. The EDRI communications officer only involved in inviting media to over a dissemination workshop. The study was presented to the AFD director and some politicians at the dissemination workshop, and posted on the website, but not more. A reason for this is that there are financial pressures at EDRI to move on to the next project as each researcher has to generate their own resources, otherwise they will, paradoxically, fall victim to the same bureaucratic inertia revealed in the study, working for zero wages, etc. Official salaries are even lower than those in the universities, and a monthly salary is less than one day of fees for an externally financed project, so incentives for undertaking efforts to influence policies would need to be accompanied by financial remuneration. Ultimately this aspect of the research process depends very much on the personal interests of a given researcher as it is rare when this is covered in their contracts.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

A challenge has been that, although the research has been recognized as credible, the policy choices have significant political ramifications that inhibit response. One of the state ministers said that they knew that the bureaucracy was not functioning as they would have like it to be. But when choices were presented, they did not want to make the hard choices of moving resources from capital to recurrent expenditure due to the former being more politically beneficial. EDRI provided a menu of options. EDRI explained the lost opportunities when investors leave due to a non-functional bureaucracy. Nonetheless, many politicians made clear that they do not look at the ramifications of these lost opportunities. "This is where we were struggling to communicate and engage with their decision-making processes." On the other hand, the Prime Minister has publicly recognized that the public sector operates with what are essentially zero wages and that this cannot function in the long-term. As such, there is a potential basis for driving policy impact, but obstacles remain.

TTI relevance for the project

TTI has contributed indirectly to the research by supporting the higher education of EDRI staff and the program coordination functions that have allowed for internal exchange within EDRI and also the salary of the communications officer, even if his role is thus far still quite limited.

Appendix:

- **Interviewee:**

Abede Girum, Addis Abeba

- **Publications:**

- Girum A. Tefera, Biniam E. Bedasso and Ashagrie Demile, 2018, Industrial Policy Network and Bureaucratic Capacity of Key Public Institutions in Ethiopia, Research Report 33, July 2018

CASE STUDY 9

Name of the grantee:

FUSADES, El Salvador

Project:

Advocacy for rejecting the national government's proposal on pension reform and for constructing a viable alternative through a broad-based participatory process

Introduction

In February 2016, El Salvador's left-wing government all of a sudden presented a bill to Parliament for a radical reform of the country's pension system. The proposal was strongly criticized by a wide range of actors and also triggered popular protests, with the participation of workers and pensioners. Against this background, FUSADES management decided to give the issue high priority. Soon a broad civil society platform (Citizens Initiative on Pensions, CIP) addressing this issue was established, in which FUSADES played an active role. The initiative became very successful and in September 2017, the Parliament of El Salvador unanimously approved a national law on the pension reform which satisfied all the main critical points raised by CIP and the main stakeholders.

Background and purpose of the project

Already at the beginning of the decade 2010, most analysts agreed that El Salvador was experiencing serious fiscal and financial problems. Economic growth had been low for quite a number of years, the fiscal deficit was high and the level of public debt kept increasing. This situation had already produced detrimental effects on the national pension system, thereby contributing to the potential risk for a national crisis.

While there seemed to be a general agreement on the main features of the situation, the proposals on how to address the problems varied a lot and little progress towards the elaboration of an action plan was made. In February 2016, however, the Government (from the leftist FMLN Party) suddenly presented Parliament with a bill to radically reform the national pension system which, according to them, would be a first step towards improving the fiscal and financial situation.

The proposal suffered from two major shortcomings. Firstly, it had not been consulted with the main actors, not even with the trade unions or the private sector. Secondly, the contents were shocking to a

wide range of interest groups, from workers and retirees to the business sector. In spite of these characteristics, Government insisted it should be submitted for approval by Parliament within two month's time. Critical comments immediately filled the media space and within days public protests had erupted in many parts of the country. Hence, it was clear that this issue - how to reform the pension system within the context of financial problems *and* satisfying core demands from the main sectors - was to constitute the main political arena for quite some time.

Against this background, FUSADES management decided to give the issue top priority. The organization made public statements discarding the proposal on legal and institutional grounds and issued an appeal to Parliament not to approve the proposal but rather to establish a decent time-line for allowing a broad-based and consultative process on the topic. Already in the same month of February, FUSADES published its first analysis of the governmental proposal, a publication which was to be followed by many more.

Soon a broad civil society platform (Citizens Initiative on Pensions, CIP) focusing on this issue was established, in which FUSADES played an active role. During the following 18 months FUSADES contributed intensely with its expertise in economic analysis and previous analytical work on pension systems, as well through its network of well-reputed specialists at home and abroad.

The unifying goal for all actors within CIP was to (i) achieve sufficient weight for getting a genuinely broad and public debate on the proposed pension reform started, and (ii) together elaborate a new proposal, which should be economically sound, socially inclusive and be accepted by a broad majority. This proposal should then be transferred to Parliament and replace the one initially presented by Government.

Main features of the planning process

The two core elements for FUSADES in the planning process were (i) How to best participate in the broad civil society platform (CIP) and (ii) How to maximize outreach in order to mobilize broad segments of the population. The latter aspect was well-known to the organization and their capacity within this field had already - not least due to TTI support - been considerably expanded. Hence, this was nothing really new, even if rigorous planning of course had to be made. The first aspect, however - the participation in a civil society platform, interacting with a broad spectrum of NGOs, including those who represented a radically different ideology and some who traditionally were opponents to FUSADES - constituted a real challenge. The very fact that FUSADES opted for this kind of participation reflected a clear development and change in approach - and this effort was clearly to become a test of the organization's new capacities.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

Due to the sudden appearance of this window of opportunity, this project could not involve any directly linked research effort. However, FUSADES had previously published several studies on the precarious fiscal and financial situation and the problems facing the national pension system,¹⁶ and its expertise within the field was widely recognized. In the elaboration of these studies, FUSADES normal quality assurance mechanisms had been applied, including informal peer reviews and discussions within the centre's thematic research groups.

Overall judgement of research quality

FUSADES' Department for Economic Studies is well established with a long trajectory, supported by a thematic commission consisting of some 24 professionals. This is also reflected in the quality of the

¹⁶ See, for instance, *Indisciplina fiscal y el mito de las pensiones*, (FUSADES, October 2015) and *¿Por qué debe respetarse el ahorro de los trabajadores para sus pensiones?*, (FUSADES, April 2015).

research, which is based on a variety of statistical sources, including figures not only from the Central Bank but also from national household surveys. In addition, plenty of other sources have been used. The main publications by FUSADES in this field represent good quality research, drawing on multiple (referenced and recognized) sources and applying an independent analysis which itself was the object both of in-house peer reviews and informal external consultations with thematic experts.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

FUSADES confronted two different challenges concerning its credibility. Firstly, the usual one related to the technical quality of the data and analysis they provided, in a polarized situation where Government and its allies (rather few this time) would seize any opportunity to disqualify the material. Hence, normal FUSADES procedures were rigorously applied and sometimes also reinforced, as the organization was well aware of the political risk involved should certain data be weak or misleading.

Secondly, FUSADES - an organization stemming from the elite national business community and high social circles - would have to earn its credentials as a trustworthy member within an unusually broad civil society platform which included not only poor pensioners but also representatives from the country's trade unions. Also, FUSADES would have to be cautious concerning its role and profile; participating but not coordinating or being the main actor, being a part of the platform but not having the lead role.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

The process embraced a whole range of work-shops, meetings, seminars, publications and outreach activities - both by the platform CIP itself and by each individual member. Updates on the process were given regularly to the media and to the MPs and the process also became known abroad, particularly in Central America but also on the continent. It also - not least through efforts by FUSADES - gained the attention of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Crucial moments in the participatory process were the joint definition and approval of the criteria to be used for the consultative method and, thereafter, the definition of key aspects concerning a pension reform to be taken into consideration.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

The initiative was extremely successful and in September 2017, the Parliament of El Salvador approved a national law on the pension reform which satisfied all the main critical points raised by CIP and others. Moreover, the law was approved *unanimously*, implying that also the MP's belonging to the governing party had accepted the new contents. FUSADES is still actively following developments within this area and in September 2018 a paper was presented on achievements and challenges in the implementation of the reform.

TTI relevance for the project

TTI support is perceived by FUSADES staff to have been key for enabling their participation in this effort. Here a summary excerpt from the interviews:

- We would never have been able to do this ten years ago. At that time, we were a traditional think tank and could not have used other means to influence public policy. Also, we have become broader and have a wider vision. In this context, we needed to have empathy with affected people, with poor people, with workers. That was not the traditional FUSADES. TTI gave us insights on new ways of communicating, of getting outreach, which made us credible for more people. We survived and

were transformed, without that prior development nobody would even have thought of us participating in a platform like CIP – and we would most likely not have been accepted by them either.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Álvaro Trigueros, Marjorie Trigueros (16 August, 2018 in San Salvador, EL SALVADOR)

- **Publications:**

- Among the publications relating to this topic before February 2016 the following two can be mentioned: *Indisciplina fiscal y el mito de las pensiones*, (FUSADES, October 2015), http://fusades.org/sites/default/files/Indisciplina%20fiscal%20y%20el%20mito%20de%20las%20pensiones_0.pdf ; and *¿Por qué debe respetarse el ahorro de los trabajadores para sus pensiones?*, (FUSADES, April 2015), <http://fusades.org/sites/default/files/%C2%BFPor%20qu%C3%A9%20debe%20respetarse%20el%20ahorro%20de%20los%20trabajadores%20para%20sus%20pensiones.pdf>
- For the period February 2016 and onwards, FUSADES published a considerable number of papers, reports and other documents. In this context, two of these may be the most relevant ones, one from the very beginning in Feb 2016 and one follow-up report from 2018 on achievements and challenges in the implementation of the reform: *El proyecto de reforma de pensiones vulnera derechos constitucionales* (FUSADES, Feb 2016), http://fusades.org/sites/default/files/An%C3%A1lisis_DEL_181%20El%20proyecto%20de%20reforma%20de%20pensiones%20vulnera%20derechos%20constitucionales%204%2003%2016.pdf; and *A un año de la reforma de pensiones: ¿qué ha pasado con la implementación?* (FUSADES, Oct 2018).

CASE STUDY 10

Name of the grantee:

Grupo FARO, ECUADOR

Project:

Improving the quality of the electoral process and enhancing the power of the vote

Introduction

This project aimed at improving the electoral debate and providing the voters with good quality information about the proposals presented by different national political parties. It also set out to make citizens' votes having influence beyond the Election Day, establishing a mechanism for monitoring how the new government complied with the electoral promises. The project got the approval from the national electoral authorities and could therefore reach millions of voters through support from Facebook. More than one year after the elections, the follow-up mechanism on government performance is still in place, provides factual inputs to the public debate and is taken seriously by all main political actors.

Background and purpose of the project

In the second half of 2016 it became clear that Ecuador's sitting president, Rafael Correa, would not launch a constitutional reform that could permit him to run for a third period. After ten years of rule characterized by centralization, authoritarian inclinations and a severely reduced space for civil society the presidential elections to be held in the beginning of 2017 seemed to present new opportunities. During the past decade, Grupo FARO had been continuously exposed to the negative (and some-

times even hostile) attitude by the national Government towards the NGOs and, in order to resist, had assumed the role of being an important hub and champion of civil society organizations at large. Now, this “network for survival” was turned into a force to achieve national elections of a real good quality and with enhanced citizen participation – hopefully leading to a change.

These were the points of departure for the initiative called *Ecuador Decide* (Ecuador decides), launched and led by Grupo FARO and with the active participation of a broad group of national CSOs.

The overall purpose was to enrich the democratic process and make the vote have lasting power beyond election day. It consisted of five main components: (i) Promote the informed vote; (ii) Generate proposals on public policies directly from the citizenry; (iii) Organize public events for participatory debates and dialogues; (iv) Contribute to capacity development of key actors, including local governments and CSOs; (v) Performing close follow-up concerning the new government’s implementation of key campaign promises at 100 days, 6 months and 1 year after the elections. The two most relevant in the context of this brief narrative are (a) the informed vote, and; (b) the follow-up on campaign promises.

The component called *An Informed Vote* aimed at enhancing the quality of the political debates in relation to the upcoming presidential elections and improve the factual basis for people to actively make their choice. Its implementation included two main tracks. Firstly, the elaboration of a kind of ‘electoral compass’, where the two points of departure were the (i) specific issues defined as priority tasks for government by the population (according to separate polls), and (ii) the plans and proposals from each political party in relation to these priority issues. Secondly, a massive dissemination of the compass, reaching out to a considerable number of potential voters and stimulating them to use the instrument.

The component focusing on follow-up of electoral promises after the elections, with the catchy name of “*Del dicho al hecho*” (from words to deeds) selected certain priority areas and elaborated indicators already before the elections was over, indicators to be used for the ex-post follow up.

Main features of the planning process

One main task in the planning process was to reach out to a broad spectrum of CSOs, get them involved and establish effective coordination. Another key task was to ensure high-level dialogue with the pertinent national authorities (mainly the National Electoral Tribunal), with the most well-reputed national universities and with the political parties. The success of the project depended directly on the combination of (a) effective capacity for outreach; (b) official support from the electoral authorities; (c) direct involvement from the political parties, and; (d) contributions from the universities.

Outreach capacity and solid legitimacy became the corner stones. As the campaign advanced, daily meetings were held as an early warning mechanism, to discuss potential quality issues and act on them immediately.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

With this ambitious project, Grupo FARO made an incursion into a territory which was new to the organization, encompassing all the three phases of the electoral cycle¹⁷ and involving a considerable number of different dimensions. The enterprise was well-prepared and was built on a solid base of academic literature and research related to the key areas of democracy, communications and monitoring methods. Due to this specific character, the project can be seen as a case of validation of previous research and “experiments” within this field, applied to the specific conditions of Ecuador at the

¹⁷ As elaborated by the Electoral Knowledge Project (<http://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/electoral-assistance/electoral-cycle>).

time. Moreover, the experience generated by the project was then summarized and contextualized in a recently published book,¹⁸ hence representing an evidence-based and analytical feedback for new research and continued societal practice.

Overall judgement of research quality

The book published by Grupo FARO on their involvement with the “electoral cycle endeavour” summarizes experience and lessons and locates them within the framework of contemporary academic literature and applied research, providing the context for continued analysis. It is well referenced, and the texts have been the object of informal peer reviews and external consultations. It no doubt represents good quality research, directly feeding on a multi-dimensional and large-scale practical experience.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

Grupo FARO had for many years already (with the increasingly harshening conditions for civil society under President Correa) played the role of CSO coordinator and spokesperson. Hence, that credibility and legitimacy was already present. The topic itself (general elections), however, was new to Grupo FARO, why it became of great importance to get the blessing from the highest national authority on elections (who did not have the resources to undertake this kind of information campaign themselves) and also to count on explicit approval from each of the candidates and their parties. For the first component Grupo FARO also got explicit support from the national UNDP office, which enhanced credibility.

Moreover, for the component *An Informed Vote*, the text concerning what each candidate proposed or promised to do if elected president was to be strictly neutral but also genuinely informative. It was approved by each party and also by the National Electoral Tribunal. For the component “*From words to deeds*”, the procedure was similar in the sense that while Grupo FARO, supported by the universities, led the work with defining indicators (quantitative as well as qualitative) for each important campaign promise, these indicators were also explicitly approved by the candidates before election day.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

The component “*An Informed Vote*” succeeded in getting the National Electoral Tribunal to sign an agreement with Facebook to get a visible link (in the form of a button with the name of the slogan) added to most national FB users. The potential number of voters were around 12 million and of these an estimated 9 million had an FB account. On 7 million of these accounts the special election-related button (*An Informed Vote*) was added. The electoral compass was also widely used as a comparative framework in a whole series of events and debates, where the different party programs and political agendas were discussed.

The component on making the new government deliver on its promises has its given media highlights at the predefined breaking points (100 days, 6 months, 1 year, etc.) when the index and a reader-friendly analysis is presented and widely distributed. This has also been reinforced through periodic debates on the challenges concerning implementation and how to improve it.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

For the first component, directly attributing influence is more than difficult. One interesting information, however, is the fact that of the 7 million FB accounts where the button for the electoral compass was added, more than half a million were noted as having used the instrument. Moreover, a circumstan-

18 Grupo FARO (2018): “*Más allá del voto: ¿participar para incidir?*” (Mingalibro No. 2, Quito, Ecuador)

tial evidence which may be relevant in this context is the fact that the interconnected component dealing with “*Generating proposals on public policies from the citizenry*” showed tangible success in that the new Government decided to adopt two out of four main proposals elaborated through this project.

Concerning the component on follow-up, indications of success are more direct. The newly elected Government has hitherto been keen to meet with the teams of experts undertaking the analysis, has delivered the required inputs and also actively participated in public events where the results have been presented and debated. Grupo FARO has also been invited to advise (as a consultant) on how to improve certain parts of the implementation. Finally, the exercise has received new funding and recently been extended into 2019, covering two full years of the new government’s mandate.

TTI relevance for the project

TTI support is perceived by Grupo FARO staff to have been of substantial importance in this context. One aspect relates to better knowledge and command of techniques and methods for monitoring and evaluation. Another is the fact that TTI permitted Grupo FARO to maintain and enhance its credibility as a pluralistic and non-party organization, providing the required level of credibility for this ambitious initiative (*Ecuador Decide*). Finally, the overall institutional strength has also been of importance for the role as CSO lead and coordinator, a dimension related to TTI support.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Estefanía Terán, Julio Francisco Trujillo (21 August, 2018 in Quito, Ecuador)

- **Publications:**

- Periodical publications on the results from the monitoring of government achievements in relation to key campaign promises. See, for instance, the report from Jan 2018 on government performance within the area of anti-corruption: *Informe sobre avance de las propuestas de lucha contra la corrupción para los seis meses* (<https://deldichoalhecho.ecuador-decide.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/informe-6-meses-corrupcion.pdf>)
- A full book on the project: *Grupo FARO (2018) “Más allá del voto: ¿participar para incidir?”* Mingalibro No. 2, Quito, Ecuador

CASE STUDY 11

Name of the grantee:

Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana

Project:

Research on basic services

Introduction

IEA undertook this research to demonstrate that the lack of basic services come at a cost for Ghana: it undermines development, creates inequality and neglects a fundamental human right of its citizens. Despite Ghana’s economic growth, basic services have not reached a large proportion of the population. The analysis of understanding the gaps in access to basic services in Ghana sheds light on the policy shortcomings and provides suggestions on areas that require intervention.

Background and purpose of the project

IEA used to focus on national government, but it also started to do more work in the counties and in particular the ones that have high poverty levels. IEA collected data in these counties on the lack of delivery of basic services. IEA started with some surveys to get an idea what basic services are provided, and this prompted the paper. IEA wanted to build the case that the lack of basic services is a loss to Ghana and its economy and that basic services are public goods to which citizens should have access as a fundamental human right.

Ghana has witnessed some periods of good economic growth over the last decade. Yet, inequality has partly weakened the conversion of growth into significant poverty reduction. As a result not all Ghanaians have benefited from the gross domestic product (GDP) increase. In addition, the paper addresses the inequality between rural and urban areas demonstrating the neglect of providing basic services (water, sanitation and health) in rural areas.

Main features of the planning process

IEA has a standard procedure for planning its research and this process was followed in this case. Once there was a draft paper IEA organized a roundtable to test the rigour of the methodology and the approach. IEA has a large network and selected various stakeholders from the start. The peer review process is explained below.

For the preparation of the methodology, various other data sets were used specific to Ghana such as the Ghana living standard survey. The World Bank and UNDP also provided data to make a comparison and it satisfied the reviewers at the various review rounds. Other data were also consulted such as the Afro barometer. The researcher tested the data first to make sure that these could be used in combination with the surveys that IEA conducted in the different counties.

Policy influence

The research was targeted at three Ministries: health, local government, sanitation and water. They also included parliamentarians, the speaker of Parliament, and media in the review process. Some of the Parliamentarians were not very interested in the research while they represent the people. The researcher decided to take the approach pushing for the rights of the people in order to create more pressure and interest. The paper includes general conclusions and recommendations in order to carefully maneuver with an uninterested government (note that the research was published when then previous government was in power). The key actors in the planning are: the researcher, the internal peer reviewer, the director of IEA and support staff.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

The peer review process consisted of the following steps:

Step 1: the author initially presented an outline of the research - having earlier developed an abstract.

Step 2: the outline was discussed at a research-in-progress meeting after which the author produced a first draft

Step 3: the draft paper was discussed at a second research-in-progress meeting with input from external resource persons who, prior to the meeting, were given copies of the paper to peer review.

Step 4: the paper was subsequently fine-tuned and presented at a roundtable discussion to which relevant experts, academics and policy makers were invited.

Step 5: comments from the roundtable were incorporated after which the paper went through another round of external peer review.

Step 6: final comments were addressed, and the final paper was sent to an English language editor prior to publication.

The peer review process serves both credibility and potential influencing through inviting selected stakeholders, including donors.

Overall judgement of research quality

There is no description included of the methodology in the paper, but this could be due to the fact that the publication is part of a series of monographs which are short papers. There is a reference list. References are frequently used to provide evidence and support discussion.

There is a mix of data used: donor and government data with IEA's own survey work (*2015 IEA Socio-economic and Governance Survey* (the second in the series) and focuses on three interlinked basic services - water, sanitation and healthcare.

The sample for IEA's survey appears somewhat small in order to generalise but the author uses the comprehensive national survey Ghana Living and Standards Survey (GLSS6) to compensate for that.

Ghana's demography has changed rapidly and increased, and no analysis is included that would highlight that lack of policy action which in turn could exacerbate the problem. Given the period under review the MDGs provided an important benchmark to assess Ghana's progress or lack of progress in providing basic services.

The author treats each individual basic service but also puts the basic services discussion into context such as governance systems, decentralization, corruption, etc. This provides a better picture of understanding the complexity of introducing reforms and policies that should serve citizens better.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

There is no evidence of concrete follow up. A possible impediment is also that the author is not always present in Ghana. The research topic is not pressing to government. At the same time opportunities arise: for example, the government has created a Ministry of Sanitation which is one of the three basic services areas that the paper targets. One option is to get lower levels of government involved and notably those counties were the data were collected.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

The lack of access to basic services affects the welfare of a significant number of Ghanaians. In fact, the IEA's socio-economic surveys provide evidence that this issue is among the foremost concerns of the people. Yet, over the last few years, limited progress has been made in extending access - whilst challenges have mounted. As a result, the Institute found it pertinent to provide broad recommendations in this critical area to inform and influence policy aimed at addressing the prevailing challenges.

IEA has excellent media coverage, and this is one way of putting pressure on government and parliamentarians.

The monograph (both printed and electronic) has already been disseminated to a diverse audience, including influential personalities in Ghana, senior level policy makers, legislators, representatives of key public sector agencies, private sector companies, the donor community, civil society groups and the general public. IEA has planned further individual engagements with key sector ministers in the coming months.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

No evidence of policy influence.

TTI relevance for the project

TTI paid for the external peer reviewer. In addition, IEA now has a standard peer review protocol which is now rigorously applied. The publication was also financed by TTI. The senior researchers also benefit from TTIs grant in terms of their salaries.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Dr Michael Ofori-Mensah is Director of Research at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), by Skype on 7 September 2018

- **Publications:**

- Access to Basic Public Services: Challenges Ghana Must Overcome, IEA monograph no. 46

CASE STUDY 12

Name of the grantee:

Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana

Project:

Inflation Targeting under weak macroeconomic fundamentals: does Ghana need a monetary policy re-direction?

Introduction

Inflation targeting was introduced by Ghana's Central Bank about ten years ago and the research reviews this instrument and its adverse effects. The paper explores in particular the effect of inflation targeting on interest rates in Ghana. It argues that inflation targeting in the midst of fiscal indiscipline, persistent over expenditures, weak productive structures as well as low export capacity that expose the country to exchange rate fluctuations will not be effective and rather result in high interest rates. This is contrary to the effect that inflation targeting should bring about. The research questions the appropriateness of this instrument for a country like Ghana in which the Central Bank may not be sufficiently independent to act.

Background and purpose of the project

The instrument had been in use for 10 years and it appeared a good moment to review its relevance and effectiveness. The author wants to demonstrate that Inflation Targeting after 10 years has not worked and that the Ministry of Finance and Ghana's Central Bank need to review this instrument.

Inflation Targeting as a monetary framework combined with salient characteristics of emerging economies especially Ghana raises important policy concerns. This is because several studies have shown that certain characteristics of emerging markets do not support the Inflation Targeting framework. In this context the question arises whether the instrument is appropriate for Ghana and whether it had the desired effects. The author also thought that part of the problem was the insufficient independence of the Bank of Ghana.

Main features of the planning process

The research fits in a larger debate on the effectiveness and impact of these policies. Most importantly, such policies are often adopted in high income countries, so the question was also why Ghana adopted this policy to begin with. Since this instrument is a brainchild of the IMF and WB, the author initiated broad consultations and consulted many sources before the work started. There were several reasons for this: (i) risks and reputational damage had to be reduced and in particular with two key partners to Ghana, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; (ii) not all necessary data were available or public so support for the research had to be secured from organizations in terms of sharing data and discussing progress of the work, including the WB, IMF, the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Ghana; and (iii) the preparatory work in terms of consultations also provide a synopsis of the research idea and thus an opportunity to lobby for it and ensure access to key stakeholders before, during and after the research.

The above approach also enhanced credibility: using the right data and providing opportunities for reflection on this policy after 10 years. The IEA researcher is also senior researcher and part time teacher at university of Ghana. He is teaching macroeconomics with a focus on monetary policy. As a result, he wanted to make sure that the work would both be of academic interest as well as of interest to donors, the Bank of Ghana and other stakeholders in Ghana.

After the initial preparations as outlined above the research followed the standard IEA procedures in peer review and stakeholder engagement. The key actors in the planning were: the researcher and IEA; the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; the Bank of Ghana, its technical staff and management;

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

As described above, an elaborate procedure was followed to secure a high level and broad audience. The researcher also covered both the practical implications of the research as well as the academic background and soundness of the research. The fact that he had the donors on board also made a difference since they supported Ghana joining the list of inflation targeting countries to begin with, yet interest rates were still high after 10 years of this policy. The support of the donors to undertake the work was necessary to ensure that they as well as other stakeholders and notable the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Ghana would agree with the approach.

Overall judgement of research quality

While IEA's standard procedures were applied, including internal and external peer reviewer, the research quality was enhanced by securing data from two key institutions: the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Ghana. There is referencing to international standards and key authors in this area. A conceptual framework and time related adoption analysis is introduced. Quality of the evidence is convincing.

First rounds of comments from internal and external reviewers provided a sharper reference point to shape the paper and ensured national attention, including from the CB, IMF and WB. The author had all the key players on board for feedback so there was 'no escape'. It was critical to balance the rigour of the research with the necessity to ensure that a non-specialized audience could read the paper: the solution was to have two papers one more focused on comparative countries and where Ghana served as the example that the policy had adverse effects and a paper which could be consumed by a broader audience. The paper includes comparative analysis backed with econometric analysis.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

The process of lobbying was significant and relevant to interest key stakeholders in the fact that the policy after 10 years had not had the desired effects: lowering interest rates. The opposite was the case so it was critical to motivate the key stakeholders in searching for the answer why the policy hadn't worked. This could lead to reputational risks for the authorities and thus the case had to be built very cautiously. Part of the lobbying was that the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Ghana would permit the researchers to use data that are no available publicly in order to collect evidence that the policy had not worked.

A workshop setting provided a first option to share the basic conclusions. The workshop was chaired by former deputy of the Bank of Ghana, the IMF and WB country directors attended as well as academia, civil society, and media. This helped to raise the debate and continue with options going forward. The media covered the ongoing work, and this served as outside pressure point.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

The inclusion of the key donors to Ghana as well as follow up with a workshop at the University of Ghana, including a discussion with previous Central Bank governors helped to shed light on 10 years of this policy and helped to establish a discourse on this topic. Continuous pressure on the Central Bank which at some point had to react and it worked.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

The IMF decided to review its own analysis of Inflation Targeting in Ghana and published a separate paper. Policy has not been a one-off target but a series of issues that had to be addressed in combination with policy recommendations as well as a governance recommendation to the Bank of Ghana to strengthen their independence and strengthen the interest rate was accepted. As a result, the Central Bank acted and the interest rate fell from 24 to 17%. This means that the private sector can now get loans against a lower interest rate which is critical to investments and exports.

Also, the Ministry of Finance and politicians embraced the research and supported its recommendations.

TTI relevance for the project

Direct importance is the salaries of the researcher and the peer reviewers; the publication and the organization's capacity to facilitate in house workshops and

Appendix:

- **Interviewees**

Eric Osei-Assibey, 5 September 2018

- **Publications:**

- Legislative Alert Series. *A Publication of The Institute of Economic Affairs Vol. 24 No.2 June 2017.* Inflation Targeting Under Weak Macroeconomic Fundamentals: Does Ghana Need a Monetary Policy Re-Direction?

CASE STUDY 13

Name of the grantee:

Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana

Project:

A decade after oil discovery in Ghana: the economic impacts and policy implications

Introduction

Ghana achieved a milestone in 2017 of 10 years since oil discovery and 7 years as a producer. This was therefore an opportune time to assess the economic impacts of oil. When Ghana discovered oil just before the 2008 financial crisis there were high expectations that Ghana would make a real move forward in terms of development. The oil discovery was a windfall and the paper discusses whether Ghanaians have benefited from the exploitation of oil. IEA at an earlier stage had tried to sensitize policy makers on how the oil revenues could be used wisely, how the revenues could be sustained to the benefit of all citizens.

Background and purpose of the project

The discovery of oil was 10 years ago and there were concerns whether the revenues were used for Ghana's development and priority areas for investment. The concern was that Ghanaians were not getting anything out of its oil production. The government in power could not explain why some of the oil revenues was not spent. Originally, an Act passed and demanded that the money should be spend along a long-term plan - which Ghana did not have- and as a result the government spent it in sectors: agriculture, infrastructure, capacity building in the oil sector, etc. The approach was not strategic and in addition it would give the Ministry of Finance too much discretion.

IEA included the Norwegians and British at Ambassador level from the beginning and they were all in support of the approach. A presentation from the Norwegian Ambassador was to say that Ghana should work with Norway to manage Ghana's oil better and look at the original contracts. It appeared that these contracts were not favourable to Ghana: government was in a rush to prepare these contracts and the Government royalties were only 5%. There were also concerns about the transparency of the procurement processes and how the oil production was actually organised. Norway was a big supporter of this work also since the slogan 'Ghana beyond aid' started and oil could thus benefit Ghana substantially in becoming less dependent on donors' contributions.

The Act - to which IEA also made contributions- on how the options of the find could be used was widely debated and IEA was closely following the process at the time. Legislation was passed in 2011 after the production started. IEA considered it a good moment to review after 10 years what Ghanaians gained from the find.

Main features of the planning process

The IEA has a well-established quality assurance procedure for all research outputs and the research went through this process. This involved a peer review system, which began with the author initially presenting an outline of the research - having earlier developed an abstract. The outline was discussed at a research-in-progress meeting after which the author produced a first draft.

The draft paper was discussed at a second research-in-progress meeting with input from external resource persons who, prior to the meeting, were given copies of the paper to peer review. (The meet-

ing thus served as a forum to share their feedback). The paper was subsequently fine-tuned and presented at a roundtable discussion where relevant experts, academics and policy makers were invited. The IEA's roundtables are another stage of quality assessment to test the evidence and rigour of the research. It also provided an opportunity for detailed questions to be posed (and feedback to be given) on the findings. Comments from the roundtable were incorporated after which the paper went through another round of external peer review. Once the final comments were addressed, the paper was sent to an English language editor prior to publication.

Constant engagement with the stakeholders in the process and in particular with the Norwegians was critical. Government was very distant on this topic. Nevertheless, the paper seemed to increase considerable pressure points also through the media, NGOs and donors.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

The author used an external model and adapted it to the Ghanaian context. IEA managed to keep the conversation going and support from donors was critical in terms of their contribution and experience (Norway/UK) as well as ensuring collecting relevant data and rigorous analyses.

IEA used a specific model and the aggregate model that was used (macro-economic model) has limitations. Despite its limitations the model was used to provoke debate. The model may not be accepted by all economists, but it gave useful indications. IEA had no funds for primary data collection, so the analysis of the expenditures was challenging since there was little information on how the revenues were spent. The researcher had to ask for data from government institutions which was not self-evident. The previous government was very suspicious with anyone undermining their power.

Overall judgement of research quality

The Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) model was used in this analysis. GTAP is a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model which has a database comprising 140 regions/countries, including Ghana. Ghana's data is based on a social accounting matrix jointly constructed by the International Food Policy Institute and the Ghana Statistical Service. To determine the impact of oil production in the economy, IEA imposed a shock to the model in the form of the average value of oil production over the period 2012 to 2015: Scenario A. IEA then applied another shock to the model excluding oil: Scenario B. The net impact of oil is then given by the difference between the solutions in Scenarios A and B.

Other Ghanaian TTs have presented papers which discussed this topic. The author felt that none of those have been analytical and were more descriptive. Although the paper could be seen as 'an opinion' the model provides ways of collecting data and providing an analysis to stimulate debate. In particular the use of data from Ghana would make the work more attractive and credible. Calibrating the model with actual data (dynamic) over time could improve the results and thus enhance the debate.

The paper is very short. The model is explained and data presented. No other specific references to methodology.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

This is a delicate topic and IEA had to 'surf among the sharks'. Indirect pressure through donors, media and NGOs plus some government representation worked best to keep the debate going since government was not interested. Change in government more recently after the elections may provide new opportunities to engage and there is pressure from Parliamentarians that the Attorney General should investigate this case further and in particular the procurement processes.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

A hostile government but supporting key donors such as the UK and Norway. The debates which are covered in the news did inform policy makers indirectly. IEA has a broad audience and good relationships with the donors so they can effectively use their network to influence indirectly.

The use of Ghana's petroleum revenues has been a topical issue in the last few years. It shot to the top of the policy debate in 2017 when the new government decided to use the oil revenues to finance its flagship 'free Senior High School policy'. It was, therefore, a good time to analyse the economic impact of the past expenditures or the lack of it and propose how impacts could be improved.

Both the printed and electronic copies of the policy brief have been disseminated to a diverse audience. This comprises the most influential personalities in Ghana, senior level policy makers, legislators, representatives of key public sector agencies, private sector companies, the donor community, civil society groups and the general public. IEA also plans for individual engagements with selected legislators and policy makers.

The IEA will utilise other's media platforms including print, electronic and social media (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) to widen the reach of the issues discussed in the paper. A special focus of the communication strategy will be to continue educating the general public on the recommendations proposed - with a view to empowering them to demand policy action from government.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

The paper itself started the conversation and indirectly triggered reaction also due to indirect pressure, including through the media. The public accountability committee recommended that the independent prosecutor (also recently appointed in which IEA played a role) should investigate the matter.

TTI relevance for the project

Staff time, publication and the peer review persons were paid by TTI resources.

Appendix:

• Interviewees

Prof. John Asafu-Adjaye, Senior research fellow at IEA and also teaches at the University of Ghana. September 5, 2018

• Publications

- A decade after oil discovery in Ghana: the economic impacts and policy implications, *A publication of The Institute of Economic Affairs Vol. 24 No.3 November 2017*

CASE STUDY 14

Name of the grantee:
IPAR, Rwanda

Project:
**Development of Business Cycle Indicators for the Rwandan economy:
Step 1- Indicators for the construction sector**

Introduction

IPAR Rwanda initiated this study as a way of exploring new approaches that they could use to provide realtime data of practical use to public and private sector actors. The focus on the construction sector was seen as a pilot for a potentially wider approach to filling strategic gaps in prevailing timely access to statistics on key indicators that policy makers and the private sector need for their decision-making around investments in relations to short-term shifts in economic trends. An intention was to apply this experience in other sectors as a new niche for IPAR.

Background and purpose of the project

This research initiative arose from a desire at IPAR to produce more core 'reference' products as part of defining the organization's niche in the policy ecosystem. The focus on the construction sector was seen as a pilot for a potentially wider approach to filling strategic gaps in prevailing timely access to statistics on key indicators that policy makers and the private sector need. The focus was on certain proxy indicators for which data could be collected quickly on a regular and predictable basis. As such, this initiative was seen as a model for future initiatives, the importance of the construction sector in Rwanda notwithstanding.

Main features of the planning process

The design began with discussions with the unit at the Ministry of Finance responsible for GDP monitoring about gaps that existed in their sectoral analyses. There was clear encouragement from the Ministry. Contacts with the German development agency GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) indicated that they were prepared to finance the pilot. A German institute known for this type of sectoral forecast modelling was contacted and a German expert came to Rwanda for two months to assist with the research design.

Planning of the research recognized the need to take into account the different information needs of public and private sector actors and design the products accordingly. The need for more up-to-date data, as exemplified by using the proxy indicator of the price of cement, was seen as a way to ensure that the private sector would find the data useful for realtime decision-making. When this was presented to private sector actors, they were sceptical at first, as they had never received this kind of data before and were unsure how to apply it in their planning.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

The German approach was adapted to the Rwandan context. There is now an agreement that they will provide additional support when IPAR needs assistance, for example if there is a need to revisit the hypotheses underpinning the research. They are also assisting with a new (separate) initiative to engage in forecast modelling for the agricultural sector.

The other senior researcher at IPAR did an internal review of the research, but as this was outside his area of expertise, he acknowledges that his input was modest. This is an endemic problem for IPAR

(and perhaps many other small think tanks) as they try to address too many gaps in the policy sphere. They are the only real policy think tank in Rwanda, and demands come from a broad variety of sectors. With just two senior researchers, this means that quality assurance efforts are inevitably somewhat generic, rather than sector specific. In effect, the access to the German expertise has functioned as the main quasi-peer review related to methods.

Overall judgement of research quality

There has been transparent recognition of the mixed quality of data available and the importance of designing this model to achieve optimum rigour within these constraints. There is also a recognized need to ensure that the model is sufficiently light to ensure that the data can be collected and come out on a quarterly basis. The policy briefs have attractive graphics and are clear, but lack a clear introduction for readers to be able to orient themselves regarding the utility of the findings.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

The thinking on utility grew out of a past experience with producing annual monitoring reports for the government (e.g., the IMIHIGO review) and recognizing that in some areas quarterly data was essential. In order to be effective, the research will need to be done on a regular, reliable basis over time, so as to be integrated into the decision-making processes of key actors. This will, in turn, require stable funding. This is essential for the construction studies and also for replication of the model in other sectors. At this point the paths to accessing such funding are unclear. The private sector tends to view research as a public good, and has thus far not shown interest in providing financial support. The government has interests related to their role in supporting investments, but such financing is uncertain. Longer-term financing from donors for a private sector-oriented product is also likely to be unreliable.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

A seminar was to be held in September when the hypotheses about the utility and credibility of the research model would be tested when presenting to the public and private sector actors who are expected to use the data.

There is a recognition at IPAR that there is a 'marketing' challenge in moving ahead. There are intentions to use social media, the website (which had been long neglected) and flyers to promote the research, but this had not yet been done. The quarterly bulletins are clear, simple and brief, with attractive graphics, and as such appear to be well designed for the intended influence. The intention with the research is to have one or two staff assigned to continuously collect data and produce quarterly updates and bulletins. This will require ongoing financial commitments from donors. Government funding is deemed uncertain and as yet the private sector, which could be seen as the main beneficiary of the research, has not shown interest. However, dissemination thus far has been limited while the research product is being refined.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

It is clearly far too early to assess policy influence. Despite apparent relevance and commitment to putting this research into use, as this case study is being drafted the different pieces are not yet in place.

TTI relevance for the project

TTI influence is seen to have largely consisted of greater recognition of the need to design research to reach intended users. Also, without TTI core support it is unlikely that IPAR would have had the basic institutional structure in place to respond to a request for research such as this.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Joseline Kirez, 23 August 2018 and Alexandre Simons, 20 September 2018

- **Publications:**

- 'Development of Business Cycle Indicators (leading and coincident) for the Rwandan economy: Step 1- Indicators for the construction sector', 2017, IPAR Rwanda; Construction Sector Barometer, 4th Quarter December 2017, IPAR Rwanda; Construction Sector Barometer, 3rd Quarter September 2017, IPAR Rwanda

CASE STUDY 15

Name of the grantee:

IPAR, Rwanda

Project:

Market analysis of economic studies in Rwanda

Introduction

The study was initiated to respond to a need, as perceived by both Rwandan and international actors, to better understand both who was responsible for the supply of a growing number of economic analyses, and also the extent to which this supply was responding to the various demands from policy actors for evidence upon which to base their decisions. An underlying intention was to find ways to better harness the relative strengths of national and international researchers.

Background and purpose of the project

The research was initiated out of discussions with the Rwanda Economic Policy Research Network and GIZ about the need to find have a better evidence base for seeing how to enhance policy through high quality evidence. The research was intended to influence both producers and users of research and address what was seen to be widespread ignorance about the overall landscape of economic research in Rwanda.

Main features of the planning process

The design of the research focused on both demand and supply of economic analyses, with an emphasis on perceptions of quality by the users of the research and data being produced. A special focus was on understanding the often different roles of national and international research institutions, and how to best harness their respective strengths.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

The methodology was largely clear and appropriate, with due attention to bringing out the contextual factors behind the direct supply and demand factors. The questionnaire was designed jointly by IPAR and GIZ. The method involved bringing the stakeholders together for data collection for a workshop where they were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Some follow up was done to contact those who were not able to attend. This was a notable shift from previous studies where enumerators visited the informants. This was seen to be more cost efficient. It was recognized that the sample was ultimately smaller than desirable.

The methods, data and reports were shared and reviewed internally by IPAR staff. The senior research fellow noted some issues around the sample size and mix, and noted risks in generalizing from the data available. GIZ was the only outside reviewer of the report and was generally quite involved in the development of the study, with considerable feedback provided in the course of the planning and implementation of the research.

Overall judgement of research quality

There were some deficiencies in the design of the research with respect to the assumed dichotomy between international and national research since both cohorts include many examples of 'hybrid' institutions with a combination of national and international staff.

A notable weakness was the failure to acknowledge the seemingly obvious risk of vested interests from IPAR itself as it is one of the main suppliers analysed in the study. It was reported that none of the stakeholders in Rwanda expressed any concerns in this regard, which IPAR assumed to be due to their reputation for being independent and unbiased.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

IPAR perceives the data set to be credible. There has not been much discussion about the perceptions of the users of the study, but it is generally assumed that IPAR's overall reputation assures a high degree of credibility.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

There has yet to be a significant effort to disseminate the findings. GIZ is the main client and therefore the target of the research is GIZ. It is acknowledged that a further study with a larger sample and looking more deeply at the drivers of demand for research would be useful, but would of course depend on additional funding. In order to influence the broader agenda, it would be important to look more at the extent to which research is being driven by donor versus national demands and development agendas.

A dissemination event was planned for the participants in the research where it was expected that ideas for putting the findings into use or looking at how to deepen the research would be discussed. Otherwise, social media and distribution of the flyer would be important channels for dissemination, as well as posting on the website once it is relaunched. TTI contributed to greater awareness of the need for a more deliberate effort to target different actors with research outputs. But this intentionality appears to sometime be weighed against a focus on providing research to a given client and also the lack of additional financial resources for more ambitious communications efforts.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

It is too early to begin to judge the potential for influencing policy, but the recommendations of the study have been incorporated into GIZ funded training and related initiatives. There have been discussions with UN agencies about the implications of the study for their use of foreign consultants.

TTI relevance for the project

Although financed by GIZ, TTI influence was mostly perceived to have been in creating the overall conditions for the research to be undertaken, including the existence of physical infrastructure (the IPAR Rwanda offices) and covering the recurrent costs of administration and other functions.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Joseline Kirez, Dickson Malunda, 23-24 August 2018

- **Publications:**

- 'Market Analysis of Economic Studies in Rwanda': Report, IPAR, 2017 Economic Studies Market Rwanda, Policy Brief, IPAR 2017

CASE STUDY 16

Name of the grantee:

IPS, Sri Lanka

Project:

Developing communications around the Annual State of the Economy report

Introduction

This case study is an exploration of the way in which IPS engages in policy, the role that communications has played in this and how this changed during the period of TTI funding support. It is focused around the Annual State of the Economy report, IPS's flagship publication, to explore the relation between communications and policy engagement. The role of communications has to be seen in light of IPS's position as being 'of' government but not being seen as being 'in' government.

Background and purpose of the project

IPS issued its first State of the Economy report (SOE) in 1992 and they have come to be IPS's signature publication for which there is both national and international demand. The SOE is seen to be highly influential - reflecting by the demand for copies, and the extent to which the annual SOE is reported on. Its arguments and conclusions are often quoted by opposition MPs in parliament. The Government, donors, World Bank and IMF all purchase copies (at the moment it is only issued in printed form which is charged for) and the Diplomatic community and the private sector also take it. The banks and stock brokers reproduce it in their stock reports to clients but at a firm level there is less interest.

The reasons for this interest are seen to be the value and quality of ISP's assessment of Sri Lanka's economy and the identification of the key medium-term policy issues that are likely to arise. It is clear from both the demand for the publication that it fulfils not only an agenda identifying role - what are the issues to be addressed - but also from the ways in which IPS is engaged with government and its role in key government strategy documents an agenda setting role. This speaks to the inherent influence of the document over and above its content and the way it is communicated.

Main features of the planning process

There is a well-established process by which the SOE is developed. Taking the SOE 2017, the late Executive Director Dr. Kelegama discussed with the Board in October 2016 the issues that were likely to be topical in 2017 and what would be politically possible to usefully address. This speaks to the need for acute political antennae in making judgments as to what issues one might gain traction with. Dr. Kelegama knew that the fiscal management was going to matter as the government was not getting its act together because of the various promises that it had made, and it was important to keep pushing the message that this mattered. Once this decision was made, then the responsibilities for drafting

chapters were allocated within IPS. Before staff had to be encouraged to contribute but now they were not happy if they were excluded from the drafting. Dr. Weerakoon has been the editor for the last 15 issues.

The earlier editions of the SOE had not been done in a systematic way and had been less strategic. In part it was an issue that no funding was given to staff to cover the time so their research time could not be costed in. As a result, they were often reluctant to contribute. 2010 however was the point of change and in the TTI application IPS said that they were going to focus on post conflict challenges and from 2010 a thematic focus has been built into the design of the SOE. TTI funding has cover about 80% of the costs working on a budget about 14-18 days per chapter of about 20 pages.

Steps taken to improve communication

Up to 2015 the SOE report was produced and distributed in its hardcopy form: a heavy weight report written in English of some 150 pages which by definition restricted its readership to those with the language skills, interest and time to fully digest its contents. The key public engagement was around its launch and a Government Minister usually presided over this.

However there has been a concerted effort to broaden its audience, in part reflecting the increasingly dispersed nature of the policy arena. From 2015 IPS began producing electronic briefs of two pages called 'Policy Insights' that highlighted the issues from each key thematic chapter. This practice has continued, and these are issued prior to the launch of the formal report which is launched at some stage in the early autumn. Since 2017 authors of the chapters have also been producing blogs on key issues emerging from each chapter flagging the policy issues that the report will contain. Finally, the report was launched and it is extensively reported in the English speaking press. Annex 1 provides the details of the blogs, electronic briefs of the 2017 SOE. In addition, compilations by thematic areas drawing from the full SOE series have been made and are downloadable from the IPS website.

One can point to the relatively limited reach of the SOE to the public given both the language it is written in (none of the policy insights for example are in Sinhalese or Tamil) and the content. But account has to be taken of the nature and purpose of the SOE which by definition speaks to a very specific public debate and audience. However, note also has to be taken of other communication development at IPS that point to a widening engagement with policy and an ability of IPS to convene. The first is the series of Policy Engagement Fora where each unit convenes an event with interested parties to discuss and identify key emerging policy issues. The first was held in January 2018 on Education issues. The second was the New Thinkers Symposium in February 2018 where public policy practitioners under the age of 35 and were invited to a meeting to discuss national economic policy issues. Ninety-three participants drawn from the public sector, private sector and academia attended the meeting which aimed to provide a common platform for the next generation of policy makers. The event used new audience interaction tools including online software to source questions and conduct live opinion polls and was streamed through Facebook to reach a wider audience. Trade Research, Climate Change and Migration have been the topics of three subsequent events.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

IPS already has well established credibility in the policy sphere and the SOE has played a key role in this over time. But its credibility has also been closely associated with key individuals at IPS.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

IPS was established by an Act of Parliament in 1988, its Board is appointed by Government as is its Executive Director and it is accountable to parliament. In these senses it is a Government Institution.

But in other significant respects it is not in that funding from government is minimal, IPS sets its own research agenda, its Board has acted to maintain a separation from government and to most outside observers it is seen as independent. A reading of the two Annual State of the Economy reports – that of the Central Bank which gives the facts and the figures and essentially information, and that of ISP which provides knowledge – identifies the difference. Thus, while IPS could be said to be ‘of’ government, it is most clearly is not ‘in’ government.

This is a tension that needs managing and it is here that the qualities of leadership that are of particular significance. It is clearly the signal achievement of the late Executive Director Dr. Saman Kelegama to have balanced engagement with government and independence from government. It speaks to the significance of the specific leadership qualities that have been required of IPS as well as the importance of relationships and networks rather than institutional boundaries and identities in shaping pathways of influence. The achievement of IPS is to have capitalised on the ambiguities of its position and gain influence within government while maintaining its independence. This has varied over time and the previous government was less enthusiastic for IPS’s positions than the current one, but this did not stop engagement. It is also true to say that IPS has engaged more with government ministries during the current government than the previous one.

Engagement within government has varied from the embedded to the indirect. Dr. Kelegama was a key member and even led government international trade negotiations. The current Director, Dr. Dushni Weerakoon sits on a number of key committees, as do most of the senior research staff. ISP has a key role in drafting both the Prime Minister’s Vision 2025¹⁹ which is primarily about economic policy as well as the President’s Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development and was asked to ensure consistency between them. The key thematic areas of Vision 2025 are also those of IPS’s research strategy. It is also the case that many of the younger research staff at IPS who have moved on have gained positions as economic advisers in key ministries thus consolidating links between IPS and these ministries. ISP’s influence is further enhanced by the relatively limited technical capacities that exist in Ministries which creates a demand for what it has to offer. In sum these forms of influence that IPS has over policy making reflect both its institutional position, the relevance of what it does and its credibility.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

There can be no question that under TTI IPS communication practices have developed considerably as reflected in the diverse ways in which the content of the annual SOE report has been communicated. It is also evident that IPS is expanding its convening role as shown with the development of its policy engagement forums and the New Thinkers Symposium in 2018. Its developing blog series is certainly connecting it to a wider audience including from within the private sector.

To what extent these have added to ISP’s already significant policy presence and its capacity to influence and have policy effects is difficult to assess. Given the established reputation and influence of IPS and its SOE the effects of communication development may have expanded its public presence allowing a broader contribution to a more public debate than that which it has had before and in that sense it has strengthened its presence.

TTI relevance for the project

IPS acknowledges the extent to which TTI support has been foundational to developing its communications approaches both through the dialogues with the RPOs and the use of TTI funding to support the development of capacities in this area. The approach to communication will be continued after TTI funding ceases

19 http://www.pmooffice.gov.lk/download/press/D00000000061_EN.pdf

Appendix:

• Interviewees:

Dr. Dushni Weerakoon, January 2017 and August 2018, IPS, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

• Blogs and Policy Insights in relation to the SOE 2017

1. Women in the Sri Lankan Workforce: Dissecting Education and Female Labour Force Participation - 27 July 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/07/27/women-in-the-sri-lankan-workforce-dissecting-education-and-female-labour-force-participation/>
2. Ending the Test Score Horse Race: Transforming Sri Lanka's Education - 17 Aug 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/08/17/ending-the-test-score-horse-race-transforming-sri-lankas-education/>
3. Achieving Food Security: A Plausible Reality or a Pipedream for Sri Lanka? - 23 Aug 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/08/23/achieving-food-security-a-plausible-reality-or-a-pipedream-for-sri-lanka/>
4. The Gendered Face of NCDs: Can Sri Lanka Beat the Odds? 03 Oct 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/10/03/the-gendered-face-of-ncds-can-sri-lanka-beat-the-odds/>
5. Poverty and Access to Education: An Old Problem Affecting the Young Generation of Sri Lanka - 09 Oct 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/10/09/poverty-and-access-to-education-an-old-problem-affecting-the-young-generation-of-sri-lanka/>
6. Building Resilience for Climate-induced Disasters in Sri Lanka - 13 Oct 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/10/13/building-resilience-for-climate-induced-disasters-in-sri-lanka/>
7. Sustainable Development Goals for Social Development: What's Sri Lanka's Score? - 17 Oct 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/10/17/sustainable-development-goals-for-social-development-whats-sri-lankas-score/>
8. Bridging the Skill Gap: A Challenge in Sri Lanka's Quest for Economic Growth - 19 June 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/06/19/bridging-the-skill-gap-a-challenge-in-sri-lankas-quest-for-economic-growth/>
9. Spiraling Growth of Accommodation in the Informal Sector: Bane or Boon of Sri Lanka's Tourism? - 17 Nov 2017 - <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2017/11/17/spiraling-growth-of-accommodation-in-the-informal-sector-bane-or-boon-of-sri-lankas-tourism/>

Policy Insights <http://www.ips.lk/publications/policy-insights/>

- Trips Agreement and Food Security: A Sri Lankan Perspective (3/10/2017)
- Child Poverty: A looming threat for Sri Lanka's Younger Generation (6/10/2017)
- Responding to the Challenge of an Ageing Population (3/10/2017)
- Dissecting Shadow Education (01/08/2017)
- Battling NCDs for a healthier population (01/08/2017)
- Confronting Food Insecurity in Sri Lanka: A formidable challenge (29/09/2017)
- Exploring Sustainable Development Goals: what is ahead for Sri Lanka? (6/10/2017)
- Managing Natural Disaster Risks: A need of the hour (01/08/2017)
- Revisiting Land Policy: Reforms to match evolving economic needs (2/10/2017)
- Fuelling Tourism to move forward (29/09/2017)
- Retaining, Reintegrating and attracting talent for growth and competitiveness (29/09/2017)
- Skill Gaps: The Achilles heel of Sri Lanka's Education Sector (29/09/2017)
- Investing in Human Resources and Reforming the Labour Market (01/08/2017)
- International Environment (01/08/2017)
- Macroeconomic Performance (29/09/2017)

CASE STUDY 17

Name of the grantee:
IPS, Sri Lanka

Project:
Teaching resources and exam performance

Introduction

Sri Lanka's public education system suffers from poor examination outcomes and wide disparities in academic achievements across schools. The development of a highly-skilled well-educated workforce is seen as essential to Sri Lanka competitiveness in the global economy. The study drawing on monitoring data collected by the Ministry of Education and using quantitative modelling techniques explored the relation between school resources, teacher quality, school management and educational outcomes in relation to maths achievements at O level.

Background and purpose of the project

The government recruits unemployed graduates as teachers and it is always stating that there is a shortage of teachers. This recruitment often happens just before elections and before the last election the incumbent government recruited some 20,000 teachers. But for many of the recruits, teaching is the opportunity of last resort and many are unemployed arts graduates who cannot teach maths or science so end up as primary teachers. In addition, the recruitment process is fairly problematic and is influenced by political and patronage connections.

There are also major problems in terms of O level performance in schools. In 2015 45% of the students who sat for the O levels either failed or only conditionally passed the exam due to failing mathematics. If they fail mathematics, they cannot go on to do A levels and they are also not eligible for vocational courses which require maths. Thus, a core question that the study was designed to address was why so many students were failing maths and how that was linked to school level resources.

Main features of the planning process

The lead researcher, Nisha Arunatilake, who since December 2017 has been the Director of Research at IPS, has had a long interest in educational issues and through engagement with the Ministry of Education was aware of a mutual interest in the issues. When Ashani Abayasakera was recruited as a Research Officer (with a Masters from ANU, Australia), given Ashani's interest in working on a research policy question and her skills, the educational study drawing on TTI funds was designed.

The study drew on the 2016 cross-sectional school level data collected from the Annual School Census of government schools that is carried out every year by the Ministry of Education so the data was not in question. This data set provides detailed information on schools as well as teachers reporting on school physical and human resources, teacher information in relation to age, qualifications and experience as well as other variables. The study took a sub-sample of 5688 of the total 10162 public schools focussing on O level examination performance. Schools that only had primary and lower secondary classes were excluded.

Core findings from the analysis indicated the following:

- Schools that have the best O level results have more than the recommended number of mathematics teachers as stipulated by the Ministry of Education;
- Better performing schools have a large share of qualified and experienced teachers

- Schools managed by better qualified and experienced principals as reflected by principal service grades perform better at O levels
- But schools where the number of days of leave taken by teachers is high, school achievement tends to be less and
- Small schools and lower category, primarily provincial, schools have significantly lower levels of O level performance

A set of recommendations advocated for allocating funds to develop physical and teacher resources in small and lower category schools, to improve systematic training and the recruitment of quality candidates to raise the proportion of qualified and experienced staff, to improve the incentives to reduce teacher leave and develop the principal's training program.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

A multi-level modelling technique was used to examine the link between school-level resources and student performance at O levels. The methods are coherent and robust within the epistemological framework of the study. The study was guided by the Director of Research (Nisha) who has the expertise in multilevel modelling techniques. The publications show both a wide awareness of the debate around causes of poor education outcomes at schools, in depth understanding of Sri Lanka's school education systems and the technique of multilevel modelling. The first of the publications was published in an international journal. It is also worth noting that the junior researcher in the team (Ashani Abeysekera) had an interest in publication in international journals since it would increase her chances of getting a PhD scholarship in the future.

The core of IPS research activities are broadly undertaken within what can be termed an empiricist framework. An empiricist understanding regards reality as what can be observed and measured and as not conditioned by theory or method. The central research questions focus upon finding empirical patterns, e.g. the relationship between poverty and education or resources and educational outcomes, as in the Education case study. Normally these kinds of studies are conducted in ways that implicitly establishes one factor, e.g. education, as the cause of another, e.g. (the absence of) poverty. In practice these kinds of studies use large data sets and therefore tend to be quantitative. This is a mark of neo-classical economics and much of the debate around inherent research quality focuses on questions of data and technique.

Overall judgement of research quality

The publication of the findings from this study in an international journal clearly establishes that the education study meets the relevant quality standards.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

IPS has existing credibility for these sorts of studies and Nisha has direct contact with the National Education Commission and is well connected to the Ministry of Education which gave her access to the data as well as debate around education policy. She sat as a Committee member on the 2016 National Policy for General Education and as a member of the Standing Committee on Higher Education in the National Education Commission (2017).

Activities for enhanced policy influence

A wide range of communication activities, ranging from policy briefs (3 two-page Policy Insights on Dissecting Shadow Education (Aug 17), Is Sri Lanka's Grade Five Scholarship Exam Akin to a Fool's Er-

rand (Nov 17) and Improving O-level Performance: School Resources Matter (Nov 17) and blogs which were picked up in the Sri Lankan print media. In addition, a policy forum on Education issues was held in 2018.

The communication activities for the third report (Nisha Arunatilake and Ashani Abayasekara, December 2017. [Are there Good Quality Teachers for All Classrooms in Sri Lanka?](#), Colombo, IPS, Human Resource Development Series, 7) indicate the range of communication activities undertaken and their uptake by the national press.

Policy Insight: Improving O level Performance: School Resources Matter (Nov 2017)

Blog: [Budget Allocations for Teacher Training: Is Sri Lanka Playing its Cards Right?](#)

Media: [IPS Draws Attention to the Shortage of Qualified and Experienced Teachers](#)

Media Highlights

- [Art TV](#), 28 Nov. 2017
- Shortage of qualified teachers in math and science linked to poor O/L results: IPS - [Daily FT](#), 29 Nov. 2017 [[Article PDF Format](#) 685KB]
- Poor teacher recruitment policies hamper academic performance of govt. schools: IPS - [Daily Mirror](#), 29 Nov. 2017 [[Article PDF Format](#) 2.2MB]
- Sri Lanka experiencing shortage of teachers, despite surplus - IPS - [News First](#), 29 Nov. 2017 [[Article PDF Format](#) 724 KB]
- Teach the teachers - [Daily FT](#), 30 Nov. 2017 [[Article PDF Format](#) 81KB]
- 'Better Schools for Better O-Level Results in Sri Lanka' draws attention to the shortage of qualified and experienced teachers - [The Island](#), 30 Nov. 2017 [[Article PDF Format](#) 450KB]
- Lack of education faculties means poor quality teachers - [Sunday Times](#), 03 Dec. 2017 [[Article PDF Format](#) 196KB]
- Making all schools the best school - [Daily FT](#), 28 Dec. 2017 [[Article PDF Format](#) 83 KB]

Evidence of policy influence from the project

It is too early to tell to what extent these findings and recommendations have been incorporated into policy although the uptake by the national press shows the extent to which there is public knowledge of the issue. However, the Ministry was reported to be interested in the study in that they had been aware of the problems but valued the formal study and documentation of the evidence. The Ministry indicated that the study provided the basis for introducing new policies in the future.

TTI relevance for the project

The capacities for research quality were already well established in IPS. However, TTI has contributed in two respects to the research study. Firstly, the funding of it and secondly the way in which the communications have developed in IPS as a result of TTI support. The range of communication products and the thinking around how to communicate what the findings showed represents a marked change from the past.

Appendix:

• Interviewees:

Ashani Abayasekara and Nisha Arunatilake, January 2017 and August 2018, IPS, Colombo, Sri Lanka

• Publications

- Abayasekara, Ashani and Arunatilake, Nisha. 2018. "[School-level resource allocation and education outcomes in Sri Lanka.](#)" *International Journal of Educational Development*, 61, 127–141.

- Ashani Abayasekara and Nisha Arunatilake, November 2017 [Better Schools for Better O-Level Results in Sri Lanka](#), Colombo, IPS, Human Resource Development Series, 6
- Nisha Arunatilake and Ashani Abayasekara by, December 2017 [Are there Good Quality Teachers for All Classrooms in Sri Lanka?](#), Colombo, IPS, Human Resource Development Series, 7

CASE STUDY 18

Name of the grantee:

MISR, Uganda

Project:

Land restitution in Burundi

Introduction

This doctoral research exemplifies how MISR develops the capacity of young researchers to undertake policy relevant research in difficult contexts. It also shows how a doctoral research project, no matter how relevant, may have inherent limits as a vehicle for proactive policy influence.

Background and purpose of the project

Haydee Bangerezako is a PhD fellow from who Burundi and became interested in approaching land conflicts from a criminal justice perspective due to awareness of the importance of dealing with recurrent occupation of land of people returning after having been displaced. The role of the Land Commission and how its policy and decisions are tied to ethnicity were of such importance to Burundi in the future and for understanding political violence.

Main features of the planning process

Haydee introduced the topic at meetings at MISR and it was approved. A clear advantage of studying the issue at MISR was the ability to design the research to reflect a long-term historical perspective, relating issues to the precolonial and colonial periods as well as the different phases of the development of the Land Commission. Also, Beyond Criminal Justice, the overall research program of which this study is a part, emphasizes a perspective of outside of the narrow focus on victims and retribution pursued elsewhere. The research was designed to take the reader through the history of how land issues have been addressed and help to understand the limitations of continuing on similar paths.

MISR's research is explicitly characterized as being situated in "theory making", which is intended to contrast the past (pre-TTI) focus on "how-to guides", which situates the research in relation to how it may relate to policy formation.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

The PhD fellow had clearly considered how to plan her research in order to assure quality despite challenges related to the extremely constrained political space in Burundi. The conflict in Burundi constrained the kind of data that could be collected, and she had to adapt the methods to the opportunities that existed. With her thesis she wanted to extend the topic, but that required fieldwork which became impossible when the conflict broke out, so methods shifted more to archival research and a critique of the historiography. Therefore, the research became less about land and more about how

the past impacts on how today's land issues are constructed. She interviewed people in Land Commission who provided many of the reports upon which the research relies. She also followed the newspapers and spoke to a limited sample of people who went to the Land Commission to resolve conflicts. Archives were used to study land and land ownership resolution in the past.

Overall judgement of research quality

Methods are not explicitly described in the publications as PhD fellows at MISR are discouraged from going into methodological discussions in MISR publications. The main forum for peer review is the MISR research seminar, where senior researchers and other PhD fellows provide input and critique. Drafts are then revised before further research funds are released. A copy editor assists revisions. There is no external peer review for working papers. PhD fellows attend a writing clinic to enhance their skills.

The MISR Review is the main intended publication outlet for final research outputs. The journal has four editors, three of whom are from MISR and the fourth from the University of Western Cape. The majority of editors read each submission and decide whether to proceed or reject. If a decision is made to proceed at least one external peer review is undertaken. Then publications go to the copy editor.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

Due to extreme limits on public discourse in Burundi it is almost impossible to take steps to raise these issues and influence policy there now. A more conciliatory approach to discussing the Land Commission has been encouraged to explore what openings might exist. Primarily, the PhD fellow has been very active in encouraging a more academic discussion of these topics, primarily with US and European scholars.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

Haydee has been committed to networking and influence, but saw this as inevitably being put on hold in order to be able to complete her doctorate. She held a doctoral symposium to discuss, among other issues, how oral history can contribute to resolving conflicts such as these. Furthermore, she sees working papers as a means for critical reflection on how to present ideas. She is working on turning her dissertation into a book. Overall there is a network of researchers and civil society actors on Burundi where she is very active. The challenge is that these actors have no opportunities to work in Burundi now.

The research has not been published in French, but that is being considered. The discourse is Franco-phone in Burundi, but much of the discussions are in Kirundi. In general, the publication reviewed has some conclusions oriented towards policy recommendations, but these are very brief.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

Influence on policy in Burundi has not been possible in recent years, but it is hoped that the research will eventually provide a basis for a different discourse about survivors (rather than victims). The lack of policy influence is not just due to the conflict and repression, but also as she has been entirely focused on completing her dissertation and publishing it that policy influence has been impossible to prioritize.

Research designed to foster a stronger capacity for national/regional discourse on policy-relevant research issues is not the same thing as research that is designed to contribute directly to 'evidence-based policy formation'. MISR is strongly focused on the former and its eventual contribution to the policy eco-sphere is likely to mainly occur after the young researchers have left MISR to establish themselves at other institutions. As PhD fellows are only recently completing their studies and estab-

lishing their post-MISR careers, it is too early (and beyond the scope of the evaluation) to trace these influences, which are in any case likely to be diffuse.

TTI relevance for the project

Apart from the overall contribution to the MISR rejuvenation, strengthening of research facilities (e.g., library, IT, etc.) and financial stability it is not possible to trace TTI influence on the research plans, efforts to ensure rigour or peer review processes. TTI has not provided advice on peer review or issues of research rigor, but has stressed the need for policy advocacy. As noted above, the opportunities for this advocacy have been extremely constrained.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Haydee Bangerezako, Mahmood Mamdani; 3 July 2018

- **Publications:**

- Haydee Bangerezako (2016) The Politics of Indigeneity: Land Restitution in Burundi, The MISR Review, Issue 1, August 2016

CASE STUDY 19

Name of the grantee:

MISR, Uganda

Project:

Land research

Introduction

This doctoral research project was intended to contribute a historical perspective on long-standing debates in Uganda about policies for pastoralism and agricultural intensification.

Background and purpose of the project

The policy discourse into which the research was designed to contribute was the desire to undertake legal reforms related to land acquisitions to address issues related to the geographical expansion of cattle production within Uganda and the long-standing debate around pastoralism versus settled production with 'improved breeds'. An additional factor related to land acquisitions was the expansion of oil production. In both there were signs that the benefits to these changes were not equitable and there were significant risks of speculation aggravating negative effects. Benefits were apparently being accrued to high level government and military officials. Policies were perceived as being ad hoc and with unclear implementation, thus creating a demand for research.

Main features of the planning process

Research was conducted by PhD fellow Frank Muhereza, who joined MISR with the intention of broadening the debate (rather than changing policies per se) around pastoral issues, as well as to broaden the debate and enrich the discourse with evidence, i.e., to bridge knowledge at MISR with the public domain. His research proposal was discussed and went through a peer review seminar.

MISR's research is explicitly characterized as being situated in "theory making", which is intended to contrast the past (pre-TTI) focus on "how-to guides", which situates the research in relation to how it may relate to policy formation. The tone of the working paper can be seen as polemic, which suggests an intention to support civil society efforts to question land acquisition trends.

Steps taken to ensure rigor and general research quality

The main forum for peer review is the MISR research seminar, where senior researchers and other PhD fellows provide input and critique. Drafts are then revised before further research funds are released. A copy editor assists revisions, with particular attention to references. This process is perceived as being akin to a second peer review. There is no external peer review for working papers. PhD fellows attend a writing clinic to enhance their skills. The external examiner for the PhD dissertation was Ian Scoones, a very highly respected researcher from IDS Sussex.

The MISR Review is the main intended publication outlet for final research outputs. The journal has four editors, three of whom are from MISR and the fourth from the University of Western Cape. The majority of editors read each submission and decide whether to proceed or reject. If a decision is made to proceed at least one external peer review is undertaken. Then publications go to the copy editor.

Overall judgement of research quality

Methods are not explicitly described in the publications as PhD fellows at MISR are discouraged from going into methodological discussions in MISR publications. In the interview the researcher described how it was necessary to rely considerably on secondary data and interviews with local authorities, as well as a cattle producers' organization and lawyers who were representing the producers. Actual interviews with pastoralists were difficult due to their having moved and dispersed. The study is largely rigorous, but there are a significant number of unsubstantiated claims that appear to go beyond what the data can support. Also, and related to this, there is at times a somewhat polemic tone that detracts from the overall quality of the research.

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

Frank has a NGO background and should therefore be able to produce credible outputs to respond to users' needs in the future. However, it is unlikely that the data presented in the publications reviewed, framed very much within the academic discourse, would generate credibility among non-academic readers. The discussions surrounding the research were characterized as being "intricate" due to the discomfort among authorities about the issues being raised, but there was a perception that the data was sufficiently rigorous to be seen as credible.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

In this research the ability to influence policy is largely reliant on the background of the PhD fellow in Ugandan civil society and even in politics and consultancy, which has provided him with the skills and networks to (in the future) bring this research to the policy arena through advocacy efforts. However, his attention until now has been entirely on completing his doctorate and he has not had time to more actively try to influence policy. The PhD fellow sees problem with being a researcher and being involved in policy influencing activities at the same time. Policy actors are invited to MISR seminars and MISR researchers are invited to engage in civil society activities, but engagement in policy discussions is seen to be part of his role as an individual, rather than as a representative of MISR per se. This reflects MISR's intentions to provide young researchers with knowledge so that they are equipped to

engage, but not emphasize teaching them how to engage per se. Mahmood Mamdani wants the land research to continue in the future as it is very central in Uganda and elsewhere. The intention is to clear assume a position as a research institute, not taking sides, but rather highlighting dimensions that are not currently part of the public discourse.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

The PhD fellow recognizes that the policy issues are much broader than the cases analysed in his research. The research is being cited, but the policies have not been influenced so far. Changes are on hold, which itself could be an indication that the research has raised difficult issues. One presidential candidate asked for a copy of the research.

Research designed to foster a stronger capacity for national/regional discourse on policy-relevant research issues is not the same thing as research that is designed to contribute directly to 'evidence-based policy formation'. MISR is strongly focused on the former and its eventual contribution to the policy eco-sphere is likely to mainly occur after the young researchers have left MISR to establish themselves at other institutions. As PhD fellows are only recently completing their studies and establishing their post-MISR careers, it is too early (and beyond the scope of the evaluation) to trace these influences, which are in any case likely to be diffuse.

TTI relevance for the project

Apart from the overall contribution to the MISR rejuvenation, strengthening of research facilities (e.g., library, IT, etc.) and financial stability it is not possible to trace TTI influence on the research plans, efforts to ensure rigour or peer review processes. TTI has not provided advice on peer review or issues of research rigor, but has stressed the need for policy advocacy.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Frank Muhereza, Mahmood Mamdani, 3 July 2018

- **Publications:**

- Mahmood Mamdani (2015) The Land Question and Customary Tenure: Some Preliminary Policy Recommendations. Policy Brief No. 6, October 2015
- Frank Emmanuel Muhereza (2015) The December 2010 'Balaalo' Evictions from Bullisa District and the Challenges of Agrarian Transformation in Uganda, Working Paper No. 17, January 2015

CASE STUDY 20

Name of the grantee:

SPDC, Pakistan

Project:

Fiscal devolution in Pakistan

Introduction

Pakistan has a federal structure and its National Finance Commission (NFCs) meets every five years to decide on the formula for fiscal transfers to the provinces. The NFC is constituted by Federal and

Provincial Finance Ministers and other experts. By working through provincial governments and being part of the key working groups in Sind and the Punjab, the SPDC study members gained access to and contributed at all levels to the technical debate on the formula underlying the fiscal transfers and contributed to a critical review of evidence, arguments and conclusions through the process of negotiation.

Background and purpose of the project

The NFC is established every five years. The notification for the 9th NFC was issued on 24 April 2015, and the first meeting was held on 28 April 2015. The NFC has both statutory members (Federal and Provincial Finance Ministers) and other expert members. SPDC had been keeping an eye on its progress and the hope in 2016 was that the NFC settlement would be reached quickly.

When SPDC was requested to submit a proposal for the TTI opportunity fund in June 2015, SPDC was clear what they wanted to do. The studies were part of a comparative study with the NIPFP (National Institute of Public Finance and Policy) in Delhi. Because of political issues the respective research teams met in Sri Lanka. This case study only analyses the SPDC work. SPDC made the approach to NIPFP as they thought a collaboration with India was the obvious choice in the region for a comparative study. The two countries had the same colonial legacy, but different systems of fiscal transfer have evolved. They thought they could learn from this and the differences between the two countries and bring this to bear on the Pakistan debates on fiscal transfers.

The major objective of the research was to engage the findings of the study with the Pakistan government at both the provincial and central level. The study started January 2016 and was completed in early 2018. The aim of the comparative study was to analyse systems of inter-governmental fiscal transfers in the two countries and provide policy recommendations to the respective governments. There were three specific objectives:

- (a) To examine the individual and aggregated country level fiscal behaviour of the federating units (provinces/states) in response to changes in the design of intergovernmental fiscal transfer (IFT) and grant formula;
- (b) To analyse whether changes in the design of IFTs had a positive or negative impact on public investments by provincial/state governments for promoting social development and
- (c) Explore the links between fiscal transfers to states/provinces and gender equality

Main features of the planning process

The NFC process did not go as expected. In the 8th 2010 award, about 57% of the divisible tax revenues went to the provinces and Federal government felt they had given too much. The provincial governments tried to put pressure on the Federal government to increase their percentage, but they knew from the last award that they had done well and that would not get more. If no award is given (and agreement has to be by consensus) then the previous award still stands. The federal government was not ready to give more so the process dragged out.

SPDC knew that this was going to happen after the first 1-2 meetings and decided to engage during the process of negotiation rather than wait for findings from the research study to be completed. The SPD team carried on the analysis as they went and provided inputs on the basis of what they had done. Based on past collaboration, SPDC was approached by two provinces (Sind and Punjab) to work with them. Mr. Sabir (co-researcher) worked with the Sind provincial government and Asif worked with the Punjab government. Four working groups were formed by the NFC at its first meeting, each one to ad-

dress a specific issue²⁰. Two former members of SPDC was part of another two of the provincial teams²¹ (there are five provinces in total). Under the constitution sales tax is levied on services and consultancies and collected by the provinces while sales tax on goods is collected at the federal level²² and the responsibility for determining what reforms were needed for a General Sales Tax (GST) was assigned to Sindh (which Mr. Sabir contributed to).

The Government of Punjab was given the task to work on resource mobilization which Asif Iqbal worked with the Punjab team developing Punjab's case for the NFC deliberations. They were not formally team members of the provincial working groups but provided technical inputs. So during 2016-17 SPDC was working with 2 provinces and the analysis that was being done in the study fed into the two working groups. The GST study, of which Sabir was a member was presented to the NFC (5 September 2016). Sabir did the presentation on behalf of the Sind working group to the NFC. It was a formal meeting of the NFC, the Finance Minister was there and the Provincial Finance Ministers as well. The case was made that the various taxes should be integrated into one GST and SPDC recommended that this should be collected by the provinces. Note that before it was only the collection not the distribution of this tax that was divided. Before, the federal tax was collecting on behalf of provinces which were then given the tax after the deduction of collection costs. SPDC's study showed that after the devolution of collection in India there was an enormous increase in tax collection, and this has also happened in Pakistan after the 18th Amendment GST on services. If the tax was just to be collected on behalf of the federal government, why should the provinces work so hard to collect it? Essentially this was an issue of incentives.

It was a radical proposal and it was opposed by the Federal Government but SPDC had strong evidence to support the case. They did not expect that it would be agreed but wanted to make the point and start the debate. To SPDC success was that the demand was formally made by the Finance Minister of Sindh and also endorsed by government of Punjab. The government of Sindh made public the demand. The minutes of NFC are not made public but after a meeting, a press talk/ briefing is given when the Finance Ministers talks to the press. The Ministers made a public statement on what they had asked for and the media also publicised the issue.

There were two policy issues that were discussed through the NFC. One was the introduction of GST, on the grounds of efficiency. The other policy issue was related to the vertical sharing. Asif attended two NFC meetings as part of the Punjab team. The formal meeting can only be attended by its members but usually in the larger debate it is the practice that every provincial government bring technical advisers. It is semi-formal and advisers sign the attendance sheet. If they want to make a final decision it is a closed meeting and only its formal members attend. This way of working has been going on a long time and even in the 1990s SPDC were part of the NFC, even in the presence of the Prime Minister, so SPDC were present in the general deliberations.

20 Resource Mobilization (Punjab); Devolved versus integrated Tax Structure: An evaluation of the tax collection framework (Sind); Allocation Efficiency and Expenditure Analysis at the Provincial and Federal level (KPK) and the Federal Government on the Rationalization of Subsidies and Grants. The Balochistan team did not take up any issue

21 Dr Kaiser Bengali (former MD of SPDC) was Private Member of the NFC from Balochistan while Dr Aisha Ghaus-Pasha (former DMD/Acting MD of SPDC) was a Member of NFC Punjab since she was Punjab's Finance Minister.

22 Note in India the responsibilities were the reverse with the Federal government collecting sales tax on services and consultancies and sales taxes on goods were collected at the State level. However this division was abolished with the introduction of a GST (General Sales Tax) in India in 2017.

Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

When Asif was working with Punjab and Sabir with Sindh, they presented their analyses and both the provincial and federal units engaged with the analysis. There is a federal secretariat that is supposed to do all these analyses as well, but they do not have the capacity or the willingness to do it. They usually engage experts to do the analysis. Usually the private members of the NFC are the experts and SPDC has been doing work in this area for a long term. The peer review process of SPDC's work was through public debate with other experts. The analyses that Asif did for the Finance minister of Punjab (former DMD of SPDC) she had to present to Chief Minister so there was a double checking of figures. When SPDC talked about the paper on General Sales Tax, a peer review was done within the provincial group and then it was presented in the NFC meeting. The NFC then provided their comments in response to the paper. So the review process was through sharing with other governments as well. The paper that the Federal government produced was also shared.

The Punjab government sent the paper to Asif for comments, then there was discussion in the team, draft comments were sent back to the NFC and were discussed in working group meetings.

While the past debate on the Fiscal Transfers have focused more on the Vertical Sharing (the division between the State and the Provinces) the SPDC contribution brought from the comparative study new ideas and proposals to challenge the State government to raise taxes to increase State level revenue. The State was arguing that it did not have sufficient revenue thus limiting what it was willing to transfer to the provinces but SPDC argued that pooling sales and service tax into one tax that could be collected at the provincial level would raise overall tax receipts as the Indian experience has shown.

Overall judgement of research quality

The objectives of the study draw on a wider debate on decentralization and fiscal federalism. Chapter 2 (SPDC, 2018a) offers a solid review of the wider theoretical debates around fiscal federalism and its mechanisms, clearly anchoring the specific study in a wider reading. Rigour comes from a clear understanding of what was done, the credibility of how it was done, how it was interpreted, and the logical consistency of the claims built out of it. This rigour is demonstrated in the reports and can be seen as an outcome of the in-time review process that the study experienced

Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

Credibility was gained through working directly with the provincial teams, providing the necessary analyses and helping the provincial teams build their arguments and position.

Activities for enhanced policy influence

As above, through working directly with the provincial teams and being present at the national meeting they had a direct opportunity to influence policy.

Evidence of policy influence from the project

There was no direct feedback and by the time the study was done the whole NFC discussions were over. The feedback was throughout the negotiation process and by the time study was completed SPDC had already made its contribution and generated what SPDC saw as the necessary debate. The publications should be seen as an endpoint of the process rather than the start point. With a new government SPDC will start again and will have engagement and will draw on the study to get the debate going and see this as an engagement without an end.

TTI relevance for the project

SPDC saw the opportunity fund as a way of taking lessons from India and the association with NIFFPF also gave SPDC credibility. Before SPDC had been involved in a technical capacity with the provincial awards in Pakistan. This time while they were undertaking the research they were also actively involved as part of the teams of the NFC with very close and direct interaction and this was new. The uniqueness of this study was that they had planned it, they had already started on a study and wanted the analysis to be incorporated or discussed during the NFC process and the funding provided the opportunity of providing inputs into a process based on research findings.

The collaboration was very useful as in Delhi, NIFFPF is the expert and the NFC in India is a technical committee. SPDC could take examples from the sales tax study from India and learned of the complexities of India through discussions. They saw that that the integration of Taxes could be replicated in Pakistan and that if more autonomy was given to provinces/ states as India does (in India 60% of tax is collected at state level and 40% by federal government while in Pakistan only 8% is collected by Provincial government and 90% is federal), the provinces would be empowered and spend more on social services. When taxes are collected by provincial governments, they make more effort, they increase the size of the revenue pool.

Moreover, in India personal taxes are 16% of tax to GDP ratio, while in Pakistan they are only 12.5%. The difference is due to the responsibilities allocated to the second tier of government. There are some similarities as well. In India they have a technical NFC and not a political one as in Pakistan and in India the findings are presented to government. Whatever the Indian NFC suggests no-one dares to disagree. That is why they have had 15 commissions. But in Pakistan there have been only 7 commissions and in only 4 was an award agreed so it is a political award. A technically based award would not be acceptable to provincial governments in Pakistan and vice versa in India. Technical issues of course overlap with the political and India has more empowered local governments which Pakistan does not have.

TTI also contributed on the engagement side. This was the first time SPDC had produced three policy briefs from one study, a learning drawn from PEC and it was done in a systematic way. They did not wait for the final report, communication was a priority and they produced issue-based policy papers and used multiple channels.

Appendix:

- **Interviewees:**

Asif Iqbal (January 30, 2017, SPDC, Karachi and August 9th 2018, by Skype)

- **Publications:**

- SPDC (2018a) A Study of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers in India and Pakistan, Synthesis Report, Karachi, SPDC, pp:1-71
- SPDC (2018b) Strengthening Fiscal Federalism in Pakistan: The Way Forward. Karachi, SPDC, pp: 1-71
- SPDC (2017a) An Agenda for Developed Tax Collection. *Research and Policy Brief*, Karachi, SPDC, December 2017 pp: 1-3
- SPDC (2017b) Fiscal Implications of the 7th NFC Award, *Research and Policy Brief*, Karachi, SPDC, December 2017 pp: 1-3
- SPDC (2018c) Empowering Local Government - The Road to Inclusive and Sustainable Development, *Research and Policy Brief*, January 2018 pp: 1-3

ANNEX 5: Interview Questions and Case Study Structure

Sample Cohort (SC) Interview Questions

Questions

Preliminary Questions

SC PQ1: How would you compare the context (interest in evidence and policy making practices) in which you operate at the beginning of TTI funding and now? What effects has this had on your organization?

(categories of responses: closer relations with users; increased demand; modest increased demand; no increase in demand; polarization issues; too much demand to manage)

SC PQ2: How would you characterize the changes in your organization since the start of TTI funding and now and what have those been due to? Continuity or change? What have key moments of change/ rupture been in your history?

(categories of responses: greater internal coordination and intentionality; growth; impact; enhanced research quality; stronger systems and structures; volatility)

SC PQ3: How would you characterize diverse elements of the TTI intervention (core funding, CD, interactional etc.) and how would you assess their relative significance, effects and why?

(categories of responses: capacity development good; core funding central; good in general; legitimacy by being a grantee; little benefit from capacity development; networks good; networks provide little benefit; Opportunity Funds good; RPOs constructive; allows sufficient tranquility to be able to focus)

SC PQ4: Knowing what you know now, would you have used TTI funding in a different way, if so how and why?

(categories of responses: invest earlier in sustainability; invest earlier in systems; better training; invest more in communications; would not use differently)

SC PQ5: What are the key lessons that you think that TTI should draw from its funding of your organization? Has TTI funding been effective and could it be made more so?

(categories of responses: closer follow-up and clearer information on sustainability; earlier focus on organizational issues; invest in offices; less heterogeneous cohort; more focus on relations with government; not changes proposed)

SC PQ6: Which of the grantees do you think your organization is most like - and most dissimilar from - and what lessons might TTI draw from these contrasts?

(categories of responses: no comparable organizations; relations in the region)

SC Q01.1 Has *staff retention* been a problem, if so at what level and has this changed? What do you see as its primary causes?

(categories of responses: retention not a major problem; retention problematic due to lack of financial stability; retention of TTI funded staff problematic; mixed picture)

SC Q01.2 If yes, what measures are being taken to retain staff (senior researchers, junior researchers, finance and administrative, communications, other) hired in recent years?

(categories of responses: engagement in well-funded research projects; better working conditions; good research environment; better range of contractual arrangements; opportunity to work in a respected institution; salary top-ups; retention not an issue)

SC Q01.3 Is this different from the way staff retention was encouraged before TTI? If so, how?

(categories of responses: more competitive salaries; more conducive research environments; no change; situation deteriorating; not comparable with situation before)

SC Q02.1 What contextual factors impact on staff retention? Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?

(categories of responses: competition challenges increasing; competition challenges decreasing; low public sector salaries mean external funding essential; no major challenges; no change as new donors emerging)

SC Q03.1 What measures are being taken to *improve working conditions*? Are working conditions significantly different from before TTI? If so, how? Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?

(categories of responses: offices and small perks; mixed picture; prospects for sustainability good after capital investments; prospects for sustainability poor due to costing issues; prospects for sustaining top-ups poor; prospects good due to organizational reforms)

SC Q04.1 Are there examples or is there quantitative data regarding *improvement in the position of women* (both researchers and administration) since the start of TTI?

(categories of responses: gender balance said to be good; gender balance problematic)

SC Q05.1 Have there been changes in *strategic planning processes* since the start of TTI?

If yes, how would you characterize these changes in strategic planning? Have the RPOs contributed to these processes, and if so how?

(categories of responses: major improvements due to internal processes; major improvements with RPO support; modest changes)

SC Q06.1 Has TTI contributed to your strategic planning since January 2017? How much? (1-10 scale ranging from 1 indicating not at all to 10 indicating comprehensive support, with a mid-level consisting of modest advice and/or coaching)

(categories of responses: various interpretations so ranking was not useable)

SC Q07.1 To what extent are M&E systems used to follow up the extent to which strategic goals are being achieved? (1-10 scale with one indicating no link to strategic goals and 10 indicating strong links to strategic goals with explicit indicators) If so, please provide examples.

(categories of responses: various interpretations so ranking was not useable; related to coordination and dialogue; following up on strategic plans; mixed; monitoring of outputs; human resource related; staff assessments; still weak)

SC Q07.2 What have been the effects of these changes and what has strategic planning contributed to the organization?

(categories of responses: responses together with SC Q07.1)

SC Q07.3 What contextual factors influence your capacities to deploy these strategic plans?

(categories of responses: responses together with SC Q07.1)

SC Q08.1 How would you characterize *changes in the use of M&E* since the start of TTI?

(categories of responses: part of overall institutional change; better emphasis on learning; general improvements; better M&E tools)

SC Q08.2 Are these changes attributable to TTI influence? If so, how has TTI supported these changes?

(categories of responses: responses together with SC Q08.1)

SC Q09.1 What is your view of the *relevance and quality of specific capacity development support for organizational strengthening* provided by TTI? Can you provide examples of how your work has changed as a result of this support? What modalities (training, Opportunity Fund, action research initiatives, etc.) have proven more or less useful?

If this support has not proven relevant or of appropriate quality, please explain why?

(categories of responses: good support on business models; good support for institutional strengthening; good support for networking; Opportunity Fund good; RPO advice good; training good; no significant benefits)

SC Q10.1 What specific changes have happened due to the range of support provided through TTI (training, advice from RPOs, peer exchange, etc.) with regard to *resource mobilization* since the start of TTI?

(categories of responses: business model focus; general focus; not necessarily attributable to TTI; no major changes; good support from RPOs; peer support through TTI network)

SC Q10.2 How would you characterize where you stand now in terms of resource mobilization, compared to where your organization was at the outset?

(categories of responses: credibility with donors improved; generally stronger; more diversified; more projects but less core funding; more government funding; more strategic; progress with costing; no improvement)

SC Q10.3 Does your think tank have a 'business model' bringing together substantive research priorities, resource mobilization and management and policy engagement/influence? (1-10 scale with 1 indicating none at all and 10 indicating comprehensive, integrated and applied, with the mid-level indicated by relatively piecemeal approaches and/or a narrow focus on resource mobilization)

(categories of responses: various interpretations so ranking was not useable; dislike for 'business model' framing; yes as more ambitious; yes but hard to implement; yes related to costing, endowments, etc.)

SC Q11.1 How has *the role and reliance on TTI funding* changed over time and do you perceive there to be a risk of any form of crisis after the ending of this support?

(categories of responses: mixed picture; potential crisis but approach was appropriate; potential crisis and should have invested differently; significant new funding in pipeline to replace TTI)

SC Q11.2 Are there specific plans in place for transitions to the post-TTI funding environment?

(categories of responses: responses together with SC Q11.1)

SC Q11.3 In hindsight, would you have managed your use of TTI funding differently?

(categories of responses: responses together with SC Q11.1)

SC Q12.1 What constitutes a 'critical mass in your organization? Do you perceive that that a *critical mass of senior and junior researchers and support functions* to be in place that enables high quality research?

(categories of responses: no as overstretched and dependent on research associates; yes appropriate size)

SC Q12.2 How has that changed since the start of TTI?

(categories of responses: significant but incremental change; improvement but endemic challenges; transformational change)

SC Q12.3 What measures are being taken to sustain this critical mass after the end of TTI? Are there major risks that you see as likely to be encountered in the future?

(categories of responses: acute risk with no strategy; modest risk no strategy; reliance on one major donor; redoubling fundraising and relying on reserves; risks manageable no strategy)

SC Q13.1 What measures are being taken to *strengthen research quality*?

(categories of responses: addressing challenges in existing data sets; external peer review; internal review; internal seminars; focus on publications; relevance through stakeholder engagement; hiring senior researchers; no major change)

SC Q13.2 What would you describe as key enabling factors to strengthen research quality?

(categories of responses: clarity of direction; external peer review; focus on relevance; quality senior staff to screen, review and implement research; incentives; maintaining standards; not running after small projects; supervision and mentoring of young researchers)

SC Q13.3 Has your capacity to maintain research quality changed since TTI funding started, and if so how?

(categories of responses: yes due to clearer direction; yes due to better methods; yes due to better staff; yes due to better working conditions; yes due to opportunities to network; yes due to strengthened dialogue; no)

SC Q13.4 Where this strengthening has been due to TTI funding for employing/attracting senior researchers, how do you intend to maintain these trajectories after the end of TTI support?

(categories of responses: concerns about weaker strategy and coordination; enough projects to continue; not a problem)

SC Q14.1 What *new research areas* have you been able to pursue as a result of TTI support?

(categories of responses: gender; 'hot topics'; new areas related to skills of new researchers hired with TTI support; expansions but not attributable to TTI)

SC Q14.2 What aspects of TTI support have been most important for enabling your organization to pursue these new research areas?

(categories of responses: flexible funding; networking opportunities; Opportunity Fund; skills for researcher engagement; researcher salaries; RPO advice; support to coordination for strategic direction)

SC Q14.3 Has your engagement in partnerships and networks to work with these new areas changed during the years of TTI support, and has TTI contributed to these changes?

(categories of responses: transformational due to enhanced reputation; transformed from a low level; significant change due to new contacts; significant due to funding; unclear; no change)

SC Q14.4 What are your prospects for continuing with these new areas after TTI support ends?

(categories of responses: optimistic; unsure)

SC Q15.1 Has the *quality of gender analysis* in your research improved over the past decade?

(categories of responses: was already strong before; incremental improvement; more intentional)

SC Q15.2 Has TTI contributed to this, and if so how?

(categories of responses: contributing to better quality; funding for studies; training; nothing)

SC Q16.1 What *research quality assurance measures* are most important in your organization?

(categories of responses: external peer review; internal peer review; related to preparing for publication; related to ensuring quality of staff capacity development; challenges in finding appropriate QA due to research diversity)

SC Q16.2 Have these changed over the past decade?

(categories of responses: totally new for us more internal seminars; more senior researchers for internal quality enhancement; more external QA; more systematic; no significant change)

SC Q16.3 Has TTI contributed to these changes? If so how?

(categories of responses: as part of broadened perspectives; outcome of hiring senior researchers; outcome of support for more seminars and networking; paying for external reviews; training and consulting advice; not sure; unclear response; no)

SC Q16.4 What incentives are place in your organization to promote high quality research?

(categories of responses: being associated with a respected institutions; further education; high quality attracts more assignments; opportunities for networking; promotion link to peer reviewed publications; sabbaticals; salary top-ups for senior researchers; unclear; nothing)

SC Q16.5 Does your context create disincentives for research quality, e.g., due to a focus on increasing financial turn-over, quick response or reliance on small consultancy assignments?

(categories of responses: yes as always compromises on quality; yes due to decreasing demand for evidence; yes due to increasing dependence on short-term projects; yes due to overburdening of staff; yes due to rush to produce publications; risks of this in the future; no)

SC Q16.6 Has the overall quality of your research improved as a result of changes in quality assurance or other measures? If so, can you give examples?

(categories of responses: yes due to better external review; yes due to better internal dialogue/ seminars; yes due to better links to outreach; yes due to better staffing; yes due to better systems; yes but deficiencies still exist)

SC Q17.1 Where would you say that your organization stands with regard to the following? Do you see your organization having achieved significant advancement over the past decade in relation to these areas?

(categories of responses: various interpretations so ranking was not useable)

Determinants of research quality (1 - 5 scale)				
Positioning in public debate	Objectivity, neutrality etc.	High quality staff and capacity development commitments	High quality outputs and data	Visibility and making research accessible

SC Q18.1 How do you see your *'positioning' in the field of policy analysis and advice/advocacy* to have changed over the past decade?

(categories of responses: part of changing relations with government; intentional is finding new methods and pathways to influence; looking for space to engage with the private sector; ongoing efforts to ensure independence; setting the questions together with civil society;

SC Q18.2 How is this different in the various areas of policy analysis and influence in which you are engaged?

(categories of responses: largely related to answers to SC Q18.1)

SC Q18.3 Has TTI contributed to this? If so how?

(categories of responses: funding in general; becoming more strategic; enabling environment for policy discourse; stronger communications; stronger researchers; limited contribution)

SC Q19.1 To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'independent' and what does this signify?

(categories of responses: being able to define the policy question; financial independence related to overall independence; finding appropriate alliances amid polarization; not being drawn into policy implementation; objectivity; dependent on reputation of researchers; underpinned by institutional credibility and stability; no change as always have been seen as independent)

SC Q19.2 To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'relevant' and what does this signify?

(categories of responses: balancing research with policy analysis; focusing on deeper societal issues; emerging from strategy and mandate; linked to research quality; through participatory engagements; relevance=where we can influence policy)

SC Q19.3 To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'credible' and what does this signify?

(categories of responses: quality of methods; quality of outputs; quality of researchers; as a reflection of independence; related to range of engagements; rigor of data; through alliances with other researchers; no change as always seen as credible)

SC Q20.1 What contextual factors (e.g., the demand for high quality research, political polarization, ability to establish and maintain strategic partnerships, etc.) have influenced these abilities?

(categories of responses: changing specific research demands; actors with differing quality demands; modest increase in demand for evidence; more open political discourse=more demand for evidence; polarization weakens demand; changing partnerships; demands for instant evidence; steadfast amid changes; varying government capacities frames demands)

SC Q20.2 Have your policies, procedures and activities changed so as to take advantage of opportunities and avoid obstacles to policy influence?

(categories of responses: yes positive change; consultative processes strengthened; maintaining strategic vision; organic process; stronger communications; no change)

SC Q20.3 Has TTI support been relevant and enabling to respond to a changing environment for policy influence?

(categories of responses: overall strength; having staff to monitor and respond to demand; greater flexibility; stronger communications; stronger networks; indirectly; no)

SC Q21.1 Have you benefited from TTI-related opportunities for networking to *influence policies at regional or global levels*? If so, can you provide examples?

(categories of responses: generally enhanced networking; conference participation; Southern Voice; WATTNEY; ILAIPP critique; not sure what TTI financed; no engagement with TTI related networks; no as relatively isolated)

SC Q21.2 Are there other benefits that you have received through TTI related regional and global networking efforts? Are these benefits likely to be sustained after TTI support ends?

(combined with SC Q21.1)

SC Q22.1 To what extent and in what ways have your *communications capacities* increased over the past decade?

(categories of responses: major improvement; broader engagement with policy community; modest improvement; more staff = more engagement; more strategic; more systematic; more publications; more social media; limits due to narrow demands; work in progress)

SC Q22.2 How would you describe the focus of your communications efforts on a 1-10 scale with 1 indicating rudimentary, a mid-level indicating a focus on producing more/better outputs, to 10 indicating a focus on policy outcomes and engagement?

(categories of responses: various interpretations so ranking was not useable)

SC Q22.3 How has TTI contributed to this?

(categories of responses: major contribution; salaries of communications staff; training; systematic emphasis; advice; limited/questionable; unsure what TTI funded)

SC Q22.4 Do you expect these changes to prove sustainable after the end of TTI support (particularly if TTI support is being used for staff salaries, publication costs or running costs of communications units)?

(categories of responses: yes but a challenge; staff recruitment/retention issues; financing challenges expected; should remain stable)

SC Q23.1 Overall, what is your view of the quality of TTI provided *training/capacity development* support?

(categories of responses: unclear recollection of what was offered; mixed quality/relevance; questionable quality/relevance; relevant; good quality)

SC Q23.2 How does this complement the training that you have arranged locally for your staff (with or without TTI financial support)?

(categories of responses: N/A did not partake/recall; not very complementary; relatively complementary; very complementary)

SC Q23.3 Can you provide positive or negative examples to illustrate these experiences?

(categories of responses: diverse examples)

SC Q23.4 How would you characterize the cumulative experience of TTI capacity development support? Was it more than the sum of specific activities? If so, how?

(categories of responses: very good; cumulative; business models significant but few other views; mixed experience; negative; N/A due to limited engagement)

SC Q23.5 Was the capacity development support well-sequenced, or, for example, would it have been better to receive some training earlier in order to put new ideas and skills into practice while there was a longer period of remaining TTI funding?

(categories of responses: positive; poorly sequenced; N/A due to limited engagement; unclear response)

Regional Program Officer (RPO) Interview Questions

Question

RPO Q01.1 What measures are being taken to *retain staff* (senior researchers, junior researchers, finance and administrative, communications, other) hired in recent years?

RPO Q01.2 Is this different from the way staff retention was encouraged before TTI? If so, how?

RPO Q01.3 Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?

RPO Q02.1 What measures are being taken to *improve working conditions*?

RPO Q02.2 Are working conditions significantly different from before TTI? If so, how?

RPO Q02.3 Will these measures change in the future, after TTI support ends? If so, how?

RPO Q03.1 How would you characterize *changes in strategic planning and strategic thinking* since the start of TTI?

RPO Q03.2 Are these plans better adhered to now?

RPO Q03.3 What contextual factors influence grantee capacities to adhere to strategic plans?

RPO Q04.1 What specific changes have happened due to the range of TTI support provided (training, advice from RPOs, peer exchange, etc.) with regard to *resource mobilization* since the start of TTI?

RPO Q05.1 How has *reliance on TTI funding* changed over time and do you perceive there to be a risk of any form of crisis after the ending of this support?

RPO Q05.2 Are there specific plans in place for transitions to the post-TTI funding environment?

RPO Q06.1 Do you perceive that that a *critical mass of senior and junior researchers and support functions* to be in place that enables high quality research?

RPO Q06.2 How has that changed since the start of TTI?

RPO Q06.3 What measures are being taken to sustain this critical mass after the end of TTI?

RPO Q07.1 How do you see the grantee's *'positioning' in the field of policy analysis* and advice/advocacy to have changed over the past decade?

RPO Q07.2 Has TTI contributed to this? If so how?

RPO Q07.3 To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'independent' and what does this signify?

RPO Q07.4 To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'relevant' and what does this signify?

RPO Q07.5 To what extent has this related to an ability to be perceived of as 'credible' and what does this signify?

RPO Q07.6 What contextual factors (e.g., the demand for high quality research, political polarization, ability to establish and maintain strategic partnerships, etc.) have influenced these abilities?

RPO Q07.7 Has TTI support been relevant and enabling to respond to a changing environment for policy influence?

RPO Q08.1 Has the grantee benefited from TTI-related opportunities for networking to *influence policies at regional or global levels*? If so, can you provide examples (i.e., either TTI-related networks such as Southern Voice and ILAIPP or through TTI financed networking with other stakeholders)?

RPO Q09.1 To what extent has the grantee’s *communications capacities* increased over the past decade?

RPO Q09.2 How has TTI contributed to this?

RPO Q09.3 Do you expect these changes to prove sustainable after the end of TTI support?

RPO Q10.1 Where would you say that the grantee stands with regard to the following (1-5 scale, 1 low and 5 high)?

Determinants of research quality				
Positioning in public debate	Objectivity, neutrality, etc.	High quality staff and capacity development commitments	High quality outputs and data	Visibility and making research accessible
Success factors behind policy influence				
Balancing critical independence with government engagement	Solid technical competence	Strong and respected governance (signaling independence and quality commitment)	Well targeted research	Humility leading to reflective stances

Outside Observer (OO) Interview Questions

Question				
OO Q01.1 What factors do you see as underpinning quality in policy research?				
OO Q02.1 Do you judge that the TTI grantees reflect commitments to successfully address these qualities?				
OO Q03.1 Do you judge that the TTI grantees are producing high quality research?				
OO Q03.2 Has this changed over the past decade?				
OO Q04.1 Do you perceive the grantee to be sufficiently independent to prove credible?				
OO Q05.1 Do you perceive the grantee to communicate effectively with key policy actors?				
OO Q06.1 What constitutes effective policy communication and engagement?				
OO Q07.1 Where would you say that the grantee stands with regard to the following (1-5 scale)?				
Determinants of research quality				
Positioning in public debate	Objectivity, neutrality, etc.	High quality staff and capacity development commitments	High quality outputs and data	Visibility and making research accessible
Success factors behind policy influence				
Balancing critical independence with government engagement	Solid technical competence	Strong and respected governance (signaling independence and quality commitment)	Well targeted research	Humility leading to reflective stances

Case Study Structure

1. Project title

2. Introduction

3. Background and purpose of the project

Why and in what context was this project initiated? As described by the grantee, in their documentation and through the interviews.

4. Main features of the planning process

The planning process - characteristics and phases. Main emphasis in the process concerning expected outputs and outcomes. Any thinking related to the three following topics - methods, credibility, policy influence? If so, to be followed up and elaborated on under each sub-section below. Who were the key actors involved in the planning?

5. Steps taken to ensure rigour and general research quality

Any formal or informal peer review or similar mechanisms applied? Other process factors that impinge on research quality?

6. Overall judgement of research quality

Where published research products do exist these should be reviewed by the responsible team member and judged in relation to established standards concerning methods, clarity, theoretical coherence, quality of evidence, etc. Any other observed quality issues?

7. Steps taken to ensure credibility with end-users

What specific steps were taken to enhance this dimension of credibility in relation to the project, its external activities and products? Any thinking on this aspect present in the planning process and then implemented?

8. Activities for enhanced policy influence

Describe the thinking as well as main efforts and activities undertaken for this purpose.

9. Evidence of policy influence from the project

Is there any direct or indirect evidence for attributing any specific policy influence resulting from the project?

10. TTI relevance for the project

Does the grantee attribute any direct or indirect importance of TTI support in this context, i.e. for the organization's capacity to design and carry through the project? If so - concerning what specific dimension/s or areas?

Appendix:

(a) Interviewees

(b) Publications

ANNEX 6: Financial overview of the TTI program

Donor contributions to TTI 2008-2019 (in CAD)

	Funding Phase 1: 2008-2014	Funding Phase 2: 2014-2019
IDRC	16 654 150,00	18 486 105,00
NORAD*	1 868 448,00	7 999 548,00
DGIS	5 686 946,00	-
DFID	9 823 319,00	11 518 172,00
DFID India		8 352 354,00
Hewlett	41 026 998,00	45 873 462,00
Gates	38 309 005,00	6 072 046,00
	113 368 858,00	98 301 687,00

C\$ Currency: CAD
(Canadian Dollar)

Note:

*NORAD contribution is not final (amount provided above is with estimated currency exchange loss at February 28, 2019)

Comment:

During the period in question, the rate between CAD and USD was close to 0.9 (USD per CAD). Hence, the total support of CAD 211.7 million corresponds to some USD 190 million.

ANNEX 7: Financial support through TTI per grantee

Total financial support from TTI for the period 2008 - 2019 per grantee (in CAD)

Project Title	Project Number	Approved Total
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: African Heritage Institution	107914	1.957.366,98
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales	107862	2.364.680,01
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy	107877	2.454.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Center for the Study of the Economies of Africa	107919	702.682,04
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability	107882	880.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Centre for Policy Dialogue	107886	2.134.999,96
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Centre for Policy Research	107878	1.681.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Centre for Population and Environmental Development	107917	1.631.250,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Centre for Poverty Analysis	107885	892.000,01
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Centre for the Study of Developing Societies	107879	1.869.999,98
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya	107867	930.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Consortium pour la Recherche Economique et Sociale	107913	1.337.543,98
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Desarrollo, Participación y Ciudadanía	107866	930.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Economic and Social Research Foundation	107907	1.328.143,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Economic Policy Research Centre	107912	1.497.006,97
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Ethiopian Development Research Institute	107908	928.577,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Ethiopian Economics Association	107903	1.019.281,00

TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Foro Social de Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras	107868	880.000,01
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Fundación Doctor Guillermo Manuel Ungo	107873	930.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Fundación INESAD	107871	1.101.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social	107872	500.000,01
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: FUNDACIÓN ARU	107869	550.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo	107865	2.303.432,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Grupo FARO	107870	1.100.306,98
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies	107881	1.040.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale	107918	1.000.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Institute for Policy Analysis and Research	107909	1.113.006,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Institute for Social and Environmental Transition - Nepal	107888	663.029,99
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka	107884	949.999,99
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research	107916	2.203.415,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos	107864	2.854.664,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis	107920	1.709.655,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Makerere Institute of Social Research	107906	1.828.148,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: National Council of Applied Economic Research	107880	2.135.000,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Public Affairs Centre	107883	880.000,01
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: REPOA	107905	1.558.275,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization	107911	760.686,00

TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC)	107890	1.279.999,99
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: Sustainable Development Policy Institute	107889	1.119.999,38
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: The BRAC University/BIGD	107887	1.043.999,99
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: The Institute of Economic Affairs	107904	1.203.102,00
TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: The Institute of Economic Affairs, Ghana	107915	2.413.124,00