

# Starting from context:

## how to make strategic decisions to promote a better interaction between knowledge and policy

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# Introduction

This paper is a practical knowledge product that stems from a [conceptual framework developed by P&I and INASP](#) to understand how the context at the level of government institutions affects the use of knowledge in policy.

The main dimensions presented in the framework are permeated by various degrees of interconnectedness and interdependence, which are typical of complex systems. The dimensions and sub-dimensions included in the framework are repeatedly present when analyzing how research is or not incorporated into the policymaking processes and used by agents.

However, the weight they bear, and the type of relationships among them vary significantly from one context to the other, across different sectors and over time: in some cases organizational culture, especially in terms of values and incentives may become a key obstacle for intended changes by a new leadership while in some other contexts, a strong leadership can bring important changes in that culture. The dynamics of change are highly context-specific: all the theories and assumptions we may have about the different aspects of a concrete situation may not apply to a similar situation in another context. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that one will have a deep understanding of what needs to be done and ensure that the hoped-for changes will take place.

**So, how can a policymaker interested in promoting change in this area build on the framework, taking into account his/her specific policy context?** Our proposed general model is composed by large dimensions and a set of sub-dimensions that most frequently surface when analyzing why research is used or not in policy. This lens reveals that there are different relationships and weights of each dimension and sub-dimensions in different contexts and State agencies. Furthermore, as it is a lens, diverse stakeholders -within the same contexts and institutions- may use it differently and see different things: thus differing about which relationships and factors are more important or not, which should change or not, etc. Perspectives will change and should be taken into account.

That being expressed, what does the framework tell policymakers and how can it be concretely used to make decisions on what to do and how to better decipher context and its role in every effort to promote the use of knowledge in policy? Can it help other interested individuals (researchers, donors, capacity building experts, etc.) make decisions about their work and projects as well?

**Yes, the framework can help you in different ways.** First of all, **it can help you better deal with complexity by incorporating a systemic thinking and developing a more nuanced approach.**

We all know very well that promoting change within our working environments to enhance how knowledge is used is not a simple or easy task. We cannot just devise a plan and follow a step by step approach because there are so many intervening factors that we cannot anticipate nor control. Therefore, we share some general ideas on how to use the framework by looking into different dimensions and their interrelationships, considering how others might regard them, and then strategically decide what to focus on and what to observe.

Second, we have developed a set of practical implications that stem from the dimensions of the framework that can inform the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of interventions aimed at improving how evidence is used within governmental institutions. By going through these implications, policymakers especially -but others such as researchers, capacity building experts and donors- will be able to better identify and prioritize areas of change and build on what others have learned in similar initiatives.

Third, we also present a series of good practices, mostly from developing countries, conducted by different governmental agencies and related bodies to strengthen how research informs policy decisions and formulation. Even though contexts may vary, some common challenges and lessons will inspire you about potential consequences of what you are thinking about doing right now.

Finally, if interested in how we have defined main concepts such as knowledge, public policy and context, please see [Annex 1](#).

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## How to use this practical paper? Roadmap for different users

Below we share a chart that refers to different sections of specific interest for policy makers, researchers and capacity building experts:

If you are a...	Interested in...	Go to...
Policy maker	Embracing complexity and thinking more systematically about potential change	Section 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Bring on perspectives</a></li> <li><a href="#">Look for and observe emergent patterns to link individual to organizational change</a></li> <li><a href="#">Consider policy stages</a></li> <li><a href="#">Unravel your theories of change</a></li> <li><a href="#">Exercise and strengthen your collaborative muscle</a></li> </ul>
	Practical implications of the framework and what to do about them	Section 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Are you about to design a specific intervention to promote the use of knowledge?</a></li> <li><a href="#">Are you already implementing changes to promote the use of knowledge?</a></li> <li><a href="#">Do you want to better monitor and evaluate your efforts to better use of knowledge in policy?</a></li> </ul>
Researcher	Studying how context affects the link between research and policy	<a href="#">Section 2, Researchers</a>
	Informing policy with your knowledge	<a href="#">Section 2, Researchers</a>
Capacity building expert	Improving results at the organizational level	<a href="#">Section 2, Capacity building experts, Implication 1</a>
	Enhancing focus of your capacity building efforts	<a href="#">Section 2, Capacity building experts, Implication 2</a>
	Combining individual with organizational capacity building efforts	<a href="#">Section 2, Capacity building experts, Implication 3</a>
	Increasing ownership in capacity development processes	<a href="#">Section 2, Capacity building experts, Implication 4</a>
	Better incorporating culture, management and processes in your work	<a href="#">Section 2, Capacity building experts, Implication 5</a>

## Objectives

The goals of this practical knowledge product are:

- Present and describe potential uses of the conceptual framework presented in our paper “Context matters and how”, mainly focusing on policymakers but also developing ideas and implications for researchers, donors and experts in capacity building.
- Share a set of concrete emerging good practices implemented by policymakers in an array of developing countries (some very relevant developed countries’ experiences are included as well) to deal with specific challenges and opportunities implied in the main dimensions of the framework.

# The framework

Our conceptual framework presents six inter-related main domains<sup>1</sup> which are crucial to understand where the critical entry points to promote the use of knowledge in policy could be. It also presents a set of relevant sub-domains that most frequently affect any effort to foster the use of evidence and that should be carefully considered when thinking about potential paths of change.

First, there are two main domains that are linked with the external world of a governmental institution:

- 1. Macro context:** this refers to large forces at the national level that establish the big scene for how policy is made and consequently, how research can or cannot inform it. It is the general external context for each policymaking institution, including political, economic, social and cultural systems. These forces shape opportunities and threats for State agencies in terms of using research to inform policy in two main ways: 1) **structural:** factors that very rarely change in a significant way and could be regarded as the more constant and regular outside setting of policy institutions; and 2) **circumstantial:** factors that emerge with particular weight every once in a while and open up very specific windows of opportunity for change.
- 2. Intra and inter-institutional linkages:** belonging to the macro-context but deserving separate attention are those stakeholders that interact with governmental institutions, including other State agencies. Due to the large role that they play in the use of research we consider these intra and interrelationships a separate domain.

The four other domains are key aspects that account for how a governmental institution thinks and behaves (these are zoomed in and presented in the second part of Graph 1) and are explored through the lens of how they enable or hinder the use of research in policy:

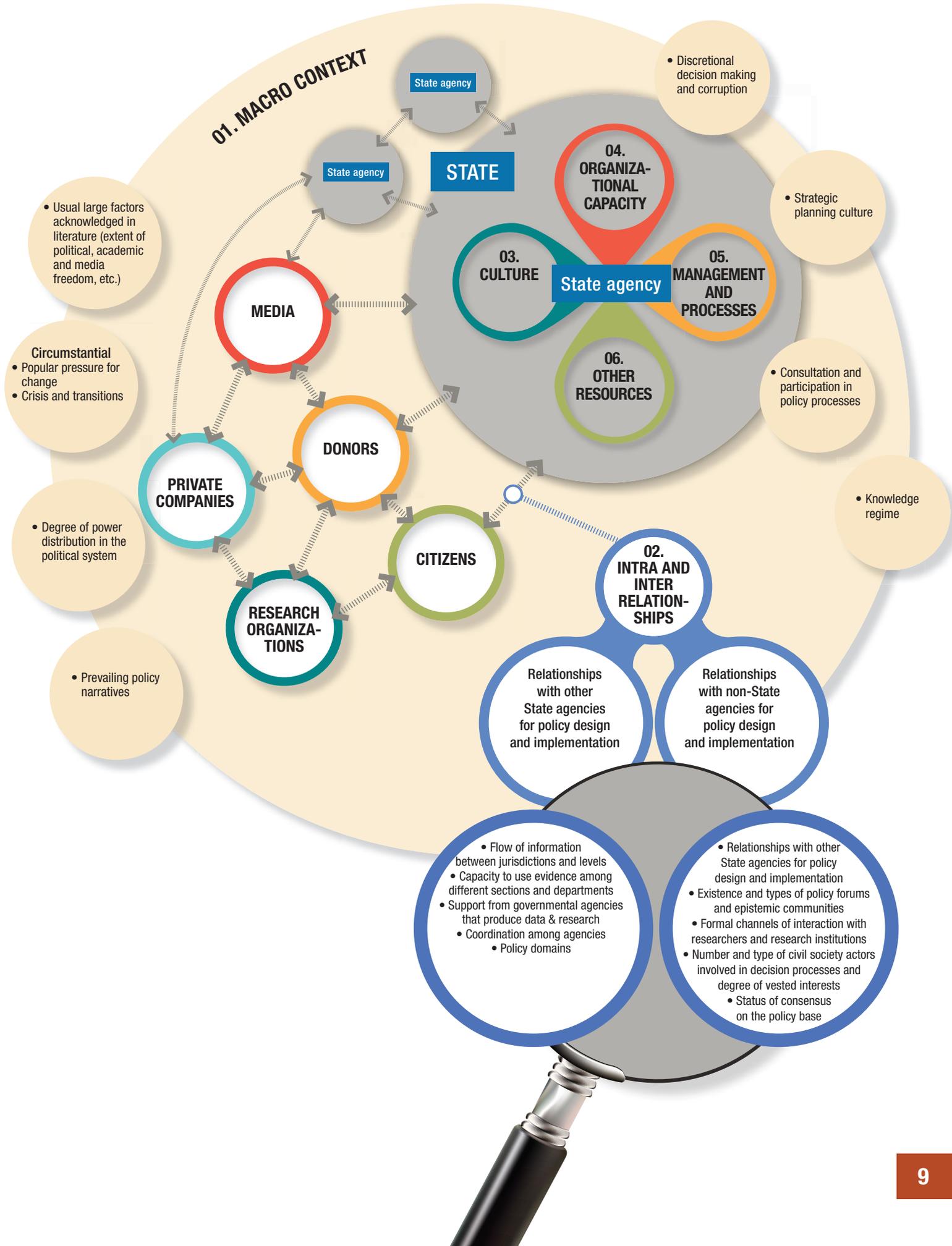
- 3. Culture:** is the set of shared basic assumptions learned by a group that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, is taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel the organizational problems (Schein, 2004). In this case this directly affects what research can mean and means for policy processes, and what incentives and motivations are linked to this.

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed presentation of the framework, please go to [this paper](#).

4. **Organizational capacity:** the ability of an organization to use its resources to perform (Lusthaus, 2002), in this case to design and implement public policies. It includes human resources and the legal framework that determines how resources can or cannot be used and establishes interactions between its members. Internal capacity plays a pivotal role in making the use of research possible (or not) as well as how it is seized.
5. **Organizational management and processes:** this refers to how each governmental institution organises its work to achieve its mission and goals, from planning to evaluation. The way it is managed and the processes and mechanisms that are established to enable members to fulfil their roles and responsibilities can open up or not chances for evidence to interact with policy discussions and decisions making.
- **Other resources:** there is a critical set of resources that any organization needs to achieve its goals, including budget and technology. A State agency may present an organizational culture that appreciates the use of knowledge and that has staff with the right capacities to generate it and/or digest existing research. However, if they lack financial resources, time and infrastructure, the real opportunities for use will be significantly diminished.

Graph 1 below presents these dimensions and their relationships, including the set of sub-dimensions that will be explored separately and in detail in the following sections.

**Graph 1. The six main dimensions of conte interaction between knowledge and policy in governmental institutions**



State agency

### 04. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- Leadership
- Senior management
- Human resources
- Legal capacity

### 03. CULTURE

- Values and beliefs
- Openness to change and innovation
- Incentives
- Motivations

### 05. MANAGEMENT AND PROCESSES

- Degree of systematic planning
- Existing formal processes to access and use evidence in policymaking
- Positions, including division of work and roles and responsibilities
  - Communications processes
  - Monitoring and evaluation

### 06. OTHER RESOURCES

- Budget committed to research
- Technology
- Existence of a knowledge infrastructure
- Time availability

# Section 1

## Embracing complexity and thinking systemically: a good way to start

This framework is built under a **systemic approach**. We believe that the component parts of any system (such as the policymaking system) can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation.

This is why -as depicted in Graph 1 which synthesizes the framework- we regard governmental institutions as part of the larger policymaking system: they interact with each other and they also affect and are affected by multiple institutions and individuals (as shown by arrows linking the different circles in the graph).

At the same time the policymaking system is affected and affects the wider macro context (understood as the political, economic, social and cultural system). Boundaries between all these are blurring and difficult to establish.

**Therefore, it is not possible to establish linear and simple relationships between institutions and stakeholders.** We tend to do this when planning change, but we all know it is quite more complex and how one factor reacts to our actions/ideas has clear consequences on other factors. So how can you make decisions and plan some actions while at the same time **acknowledging this complexity and that we are operating within a dynamic system?**

### 1.1 Bring on perspectives to understand interrelationships

One first important decision is to look at the big picture with the help of others. As Williams (2010) clearly points out in this article on systemic thinking, “a systemic approach involves more than studying how boxes and lines fit together or how information networks operate. Just looking at the ‘bigger picture’ or exploring interconnections does not make an inquiry ‘systemic.’ **What makes it systemic is how you look at the picture, big or small, and explore interconnections. When people observe interrelationships they ‘see’ and interpret them in different ways.**”

Indeed, this practical knowledge product builds on our conviction that the conceptual framework has different (and many times complementary) meanings and implications for different persons, depending on the sector they belong to, their roles, their understanding of what the interaction between research and

#### Box 1. How I handle a situation

*How I handle a situation – whether to give money to a person on the street – will be the result of a complex set of internal arguments and trade-offs that can change in the time it takes for me to reach into my pocket. Yet the theories of management that dominate the international development world tend to force us to pick one and pretend that it's the one that should motivate everyone. And then we wonder why things don't work out quite as we planned.*

Source: Williams (2010)

### Think about who will use it and how

As policymaker you might want to use the framework to conduct a general assessment of how your institution stands regarding the six main dimensions to prioritise areas of intervention. On the other hand, a researcher might focus its attention on which issues emerging from the interaction of these dimensions present more promising findings for future research endeavors.

policy should look like, and the reasons for promoting the use of knowledge in policy, among other factors.

If as policymaker you want to become an agent of change in fostering a better and more fruitful interaction between research and policy consider that those affected by your efforts could understand and use the framework in varied ways, for many different reasons. And diverse interpretations and motivations will generate very different actions and behaviors.

Thus, to make the conceptual framework more useful we depart from an understanding of the wide range of **perspectives** of its potential users. Perspectives imply that the conceptual framework or the government institution to which it is applied can be 'seen' in different ways, and that this will affect how the system is understood.

Furthermore, perspectives draw the attention away from the 'system' as it supposedly exists in 'real life' (i.e. an assessment of how a specific government institution stands regarding all the presented dimensions and sub-dimensions). We can also bring perspectives what the system might be like, could be like or even should be like. For example, we could invite different people to imagine how it might be like with some proposed avenues of change to inform how we design a new project/ programme that intends to make changes to the current situation.

As Williams (2010) points out, this opens up the systems world, because not only can one draw conclusions based on a study of the State agency *as it is*, but one can also compare alternative perceptions of *what people think it is* with *what actually is*, or with different perceptions of *what is* or *what might be*. The similarities and differences between *what is* and *what might be* will create puzzles and contractions. When handled successfully, these 'tensions' can achieve deeper learning than just seeing things through one set of eyes and possibilities. It can also generate better insights into the real-life behaviour of a programme aimed at improving the use of research in policy.



### BRING ON PERSPECTIVES

To incorporate perspectives into any change endeavor, consider the following questions:

- What are the different ways in which this framework can be understood and used (by myself and others)?
- How will these different understandings affect how we judge the success of our effort to enhance the use of research in policy?
- How will these understandings influence the behaviour of engaged and affected individuals, and thus the behaviour of the system, especially when things go wrong from their perspective? With what result and significance?

One baby step: select two members of your team/organization and two external and relevant stakeholders related to your work and ask them which are the contextual factors that are more important for them right now regarding your organization's capacity to promote the use research in policy. Then ask them to select one or two in which changes from your side would be possible and positive.

For more on Perspectives, see the following Useful tools:

- [Soft Systems](#)
- [Net-Map](#)

## 1.2 Look for and observe emergent patterns to link individual to organizational change

A clear consequence of applying perspectives to the use of framework is to acknowledge how an individual perspective (for example, a senior policymaker desiring to create a specific unit or process to incorporate research and evidence to policy decisions) is very different from an organizational perspective (i.e. a team within a policy unit wanting to build new partnerships with universities and research centers to foster production of policy relevant research). **How can you work considering both levels at the same time?**

Indeed, our framework can be used both at the individual and organizational levels, and to build bridges between individual agency and organizational change. Even though its focus is on the State agency as an organization, we believe change largely depends on the role of individual champions. In fact, leadership has been one of the most highlighted sub-dimensions in interviews and literature around how to promote a better use of knowledge in policy.

Organizational response depends on persons who are political savvy. Eyben, Guijt, Roche and Shutt (2015) present experiences that clearly reveal one's personal power to question, create, and act. Individuals tackled their particular set of planning protocols, results frameworks, and reporting requirements to create more workable options.

Being an astute political actor requires understanding the political context and organizational histories and leveraging organizational values. The framework paves the way to this: **you can use it as an effective lens to become politically alert and detect windows of opportunities by subtly playing the game to change the rules.** There are personal journeys of discovery relating to the political processes and how to more effectively interplay with these, by making rules and mechanisms become at some points resources for change when you are able to identify potential new patterns.

Individual agency can drive some organizational change, though the chain is neither clearly visible nor linear. Indeed, the complexity paradigm offers us a useful concept to observe what the potential links between individual and organizational change are: **emergence.**

Emergence is a term that is used to describe events that are unpredictable, which seem to result from the interactions between elements, and which no one organization or individual can control. The process of evolution exemplifies emergence. As one animal successfully adapts to its environment, others mutate in ways that overcome the advantages the first animal has developed. There is

### Box 2. Same starting point, different outcomes

Organizers of Big Push Forward conference allude to the case of two similar organizations receiving an identical grant from a common donor and with identical results and reporting requirements, and yet they responded very differently. The leadership in the first organization initiated a conversation with the donor's senior staff, securing greater flexibility in programme design, results specifications, and reporting protocols, and largely managing to protect their staff from negative effects of the donor's requirements. Leadership in the second organization made sweeping changes to organizational ways of working, creating a hierarchical and oppressive culture. In this case, the grant was perceived as having an overall negative effect on staff morale.

### Box 3. Renowned emergent properties

Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' is perhaps the best known and most frequently cited example of emergent properties, as seen above, and is at the heart of economic thinking. Similarly, the alternative globalisation movement that has arisen in global civil society has the 'emergent properties of acting in a decentralised, participatory, and highly democratic manner' (Chesters, 2004). As with the web, this is the product of interactions among various parts of civil society, and is not implemented as part of some overall 'plan'.

no ultimate “solution” beyond the process of continual adaptation within an ever-changing environment (Kania and Kramer, 2013).

The conceptual framework entails so many different sub-dimensions and stakeholders with varied changing inter-relationships among them. It is then clear that a single individual or an organization cannot drive systemic and predictable change, but at the same time each movement within this web of interactions can mean change in others. **So, how should you proceed to embrace complexity and at the same time make concrete decisions and take specific steps towards promoting positive changes?**

One potential strategy is to **watch out for emergent solutions and patterns** as a way forward to build bridges between individual and organizational change. In fact, complexity theorists believe that what defines successful leaders in situations of great complexity is not the quality of decisiveness, but the quality of inquiry.

**Dagu** is very potent concept if we desire to better deal with complexity and link our individual contribution to organizational and systemic changes. Dagu is a very rich practice that comes from a tribe in Ethiopia, called the Afaris, who believe “it is a sacred responsibility to listen and share dagu—a word that means information, though it implies more than pure data” (Zimmerman and Patton: 2007).

The Afaris are nomadic cattle herders, and they have existed for thousand years in a harsh environment where most nomadic tribes have been wiped out. They claim that dagu is the secret to their longevity: ‘Dagu is life’ is an Afari expression.

The authors explain how “being nomads, Afari families travel from place to place, seeking better conditions for their cattles and themselves. Every so often they will meet another Afari family, and no matter what they are doing and where they are heading, they sit down to talk and listen, usually for hours. The exchange of dagu trumps all other responsibilities. They share what they have seen and heard about the environment, about health issues (both cattle and human), about political tensions, about new relationships. As they talk, they provide the facts as they have seen them or heard them, but also their interpretation of what these facts mean. They collectively make sense of the patterns that are emerging. Children learn about dagu in their families and practice with their parents until they are deemed to be adept at deep listening, astute observation, and sense making or pattern recognition. Their lives depend on dagu. Dagu helps them decide when to leave an area and which are to head to next. It helps them stop the spread of disease in their cattle or families (...) The Afaris do not believe that they can control the patterns, but if they can understand them deeply, they can work with them and potentiality nudge them or influence them.”



## LOOK FOR AND OBSERVE EMERGENT PATTERNS/DAGU

To incorporate emergence into any change endeavor, and be politically alert to detect the best windows of opportunity for change, you might want to consider the following questions:

- Are you really counting with others to detect the relevant patterns?
- Are you using the sensitivity of local sensors (colleagues, other relevant stakeholders within our institutions and those with whom we usually interact, etc.) to bring on change?
- Are you working with a pace that allows you to observe, listen, connect and process as dagu implies?

One baby step: hold a meeting with four/five individuals from your organization as well as current external partners and discuss about emerging trends in terms of the way research and policy are closer to each other (this might range from an university where former policymakers are increasingly hired to teach to the setup of information systems within some governmental agencies). Then select two persons who usually have divergent views on this topic and discuss with them whether they also perceive any emergent trends and ask them about the ones you have already identified.

For more on Emergence, see the following Useful tools:

- [Appreciative inquiry](#)
- [The 5 Why's technique](#)
- [The fishbowl diagram](#)
- [Problem tree](#)
- [Force field analysis](#)

## 1.3 Consider policy stages

Another way to use the framework is to consider how the interaction and weight of the six main dimensions and sub-dimensions may vary according to the usual policy stages. Even though we have already acknowledged the complexity, politics and non-linearity of the policy making processes, there are certainly some specific stages (even when juxtaposed or without definite boundaries) within the policy cycle that imply a diverse combination of stakeholders, type of evidence needed and goals.

Below, we have developed a table<sup>2</sup> to guide the application of the framework in terms of focusing on dimensions that are most relevant in the different policy stages.

.....  
<sup>2</sup> The types of research used have been informed by Lavis, Oxman, Lewin and Fretheim (2009).

**Table 1. Uses according to policy stage**

Stage	How evidence contributes	Type of research used	Actors usually involved	Relevant dimensions and sub-dimensions
<b>Agenda setting</b>	<p>Evidence helps to identify new problems or, through the accumulation of evidence and/ or to capture the magnitude of a problem so that the relevant political players are aware of the fact that they are facing an important issue.</p> <p>Research can also help framing the problem in a particular way.</p>	<p>General statistics and other relevant public information systems to inform where are the main policy problems</p> <p>Community and public surveys to gauge the depth and scope of the problem.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation data can be good sources of indicators about the programmes, currently being used to address the problem.</p> <p>Legislation, regulation, policies, and policymaker surveys can be good sources of indicators about governance arrangements related to the problem.</p> <p>Expenditure surveys can be good sources of indicators about financial arrangements that affect or could affect the problem.</p> <p>Evidence produced by different groups and available qualitative research can help policymakers identify which framings of a problem (or purpose) can best mobilise support among different groups to address a problem.</p>	<p>Political leadership</p> <p>Ministries and other policymaking agencies</p> <p>National and sub-national statistics agencies and other governmental agencies (i.e. think tanks) that produce relevant information</p> <p>Local communities, citizenship and civil society organizations</p> <p>Donors and international organizations</p> <p>Private sector and unions</p> <p>Media</p> <p>Think tanks and academia</p>	<p><b>Macro context:</b> prevailing narratives, popular pressures for change and crisis; consultation and participation in policy processes; degree of power distribution in the political system.</p> <p><b>Inter and intra-relationships:</b> support from other governmental agencies that produce data&amp; information; existence and types of policy forums and epistemic communities; number and types of civil society actors and degree of vested interests; status of consensus on the policy base.</p> <p><b>Culture:</b> values and beliefs; openness to change and innovation; incentives.</p>
<b>Formulation</b>	<p>Once the understanding of the specific situation and the different options are as detailed and complete as possible, policymakers may rely on the evidence in order to make informed decisions about which policy (including the different aspects that define it) to make and implement. This includes knowledge on the instrumental links between an activity and a result as well as an intervention's expected cost and impact.</p>	<p>Systematic reviews</p> <p>Evidence produced by different groups and available qualitative research about policy options, including academic journal articles and annotated bibliographies.</p> <p>Cost/benefit analysis</p> <p>Policy briefs</p> <p>Convening an experts' meeting or workshop to analyse the problems, identify the relevant factors impacting on it and then develop feasible solutions and policy to address the issue.</p>	<p>Political leadership</p> <p>Ministries and other policymaking agencies</p> <p>Donors and international organizations</p>	<p><b>Macro context:</b> strategic planning culture; consultation and participation in the policy making process and knowledge regime.</p> <p><b>Inter and intra-relationships:</b> formal channels of interaction with researchers and research institutions; relationship with other State agencies for policy design; status of consensus on the policy base.</p> <p><b>Organizational capacity:</b> leadership and senior management, legal capacity.</p> <p><b>Culture:</b> values and beliefs; openness to change and innovation; incentives.</p> <p><b>Management and processes:</b> degree of systematic planning; existing formal processes to access and use research.</p> <p><b>Other resources:</b> budget and time availability.</p>

<p><b>Implementation</b></p>	<p>Here attention is focused on operational evidence in order to improve the efficiency of initiatives. This may include analytical work as well as systematic learning as regards technical abilities, expert knowledge and practical experience.</p>	<p>Program reports, both produced by the State agencies and other external stakeholders such as civil society organizations.</p>	<p>Political leadership Ministries and other policymaking agencies  Local communities and civil society organizations</p>	<p><b>Macro context:</b> discretionary decision making and corruption; strategic planning culture.</p> <p><b>Inter and intra-relationships:</b> flow of information between jurisdictions and levels; capacity to use evidence among different sections and departments; coordination among agencies.</p> <p><b>Culture:</b> motivations, incentives; openness to change and innovation.</p> <p><b>Organizational capacity:</b> senior management and human resources.</p> <p><b>Management and processes:</b> existing formal processes to access and use research; positions, including division of work and roles and responsibilities; communications processes.</p> <p><b>Other resources:</b> technology; existence of knowledge infrastructure; time availability.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring, evaluation and learning</b></p>	<p>A process of comprehensive monitoring and assessment is essential to determine the efficiency of the policy implemented and to provide the basis for future decision making.</p>	<p>Impact evaluations. <i>Different types of comparisons over time within a country, between countries. against plans and against what policymakers and/or stakeholders predicted or wanted.</i> Community and public surveys and healthcare as well as healthcare administrative data, can be good sources of indicators about the current degree of implementation of an agreed upon course of action.</p>	<p>Political leadership Ministries and other policymaking agencies Local communities, citizenship and civil society organizations Donors and international organizations Think tanks and academia</p>	<p><b>Inter and intra-relationships:</b> flow of information between jurisdictions and levels; capacity to use evidence among different sections and departments; coordination among agencies.</p> <p><b>Organizational capacity:</b> senior management and human resources.</p> <p><b>Culture:</b> values and beliefs; motivations and incentives.</p> <p><b>Management and processes:</b> monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p><b>Other resources:</b> budget, existence of knowledge infrastructure.</p>



### CONSIDER THE POLICY STAGES

If you think it would be useful to organize efforts to promote the use of research according to the different policy stages, you might want to consider the following questions:

- How can knowledge concretely contribute to each specific policy stage?
- What types of research are available for each stage and what should additionally be generated or sought?
- Who are the most relevant actors in each stage and how would you want to engage them in terms of generating and using research?
- What are the main dimensions of the framework that play a most significant role in each phase?

One baby step: hold a meeting with a set of relevant stakeholders of a specific policy stage and brainstorm together what knowledge is available and if there is need to push for more/better research. Discuss together how you could use/produce that needed knowledge.

## 1.4 Unravel your theories of change

Besides traditional policy phases, the way knowledge is identified, produced and used will also depend on how diverse stakeholders assume that policy change happens, and with a set of beliefs on what conditions are necessary for success, as well as which strategies fit better what situations.

Our worldviews imply theories about how change will take place, whether or not they have been explicitly stated or documented as such. **So, how do you think change usually happens within your policy environment?**

By bringing more awareness into your own assumptions on how policy change happens you will be able to more concretely detect when and how research could be incorporated into policymaking, sometimes in ad hoc cases but also more systematically.

For example, the Policy Windows theory (posed by John Kingdon's classic theory of agenda-setting) seeks to clarify why some issues get attention in the policy process and others do not.

It identifies three "streams" related to the policy system:

1. *Problems*: The way social conditions become defined as "a problem" to policy makers, including the problem's attributes, its status, the degree of social consciousness of the issue, and whether the problem is perceived as solvable with clear alternatives.
2. *Policies*: The ideas generated to address problems.
3. *Politics*: Political factors, including the "national mood" (e.g., appetite for "big government"), campaigns by interest groups and advocates, and changes in elected officials.

**Does this resonate to you within your environment?** According to this theory, for an issue to receive serious attention or be placed on the policy agenda, at least two of the streams need to converge at critical moments or “policy windows.”

Therefore, if you believe most of the changes within your policy field take place in this way, you will probably try to link existing evidence or commission new research that allows you to increase consensus on which are the main policy problems, how to define and frame them as well as present alternative policy options once the issue becomes highly visible in the political agenda, i.e. the window of opportunity is open and clear.



### UNRAVEL YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE

To sharpen your efforts to enhance the use of evidence in policy, you will need to make your assumptions on how policy decision making and implementation usually takes place within your agency or research field and also if there are any specific policy stages or types of change that imply some particular ways in which knowledge would add value to the process.

To this end, you might try to answer the following questions:

- Are you working linked to a particular policy stage in which some types of research and stakeholders are more relevant? What are the specific contributions that research can bring into this stage?
- How do you foresee that the most important policy changes within your working area will take place?
- Based on how those changes could take place, who should be engaged in providing/using evidence and how?

One baby step: think about and prioritize one main policy change that might take place in the near future to which research could concretely contribute. Try to identify producers and users of research whom you could engage in joint efforts to promote the best use possible of existing or new knowledge. Build consensus on the key burning questions that could be answered by research.

For more on Policy changes, see the following Useful tools:

- [Political Economy Analysis](#)
- [General pathways of policy change](#)
- [The policy problem framework](#)

## 1.5 Exercise and strengthen your collaborative muscle

The variety of sub-dimensions that may play a significant role in your efforts to promote a better use of research in policy may at some point seem overwhelming.

One way to deal with this complexity is to prioritize which sub-dimensions are worth addressing; this will be done in the next section. However, besides prioritising, a very important strategy within any change fostered in this field is to strengthen your potential for collaboration and coordination so as to capitalize on the synergies and strengths of others. Personal efforts usually hit a

#### Box 4. Be realistic about collaboration

Ramírez and Fernández (2005) share a set of lessons from collaborative management experiences that can shed light into defining how to frame and conduct new collaborations:

- 1) Stakeholder analysis must address three interrelated dimensions: the nature of a problem, its boundaries, and those actors who “own the problem.”
- 2) A stakeholder’s likelihood of being noticed and involved is a function of several attributes including power, urgency and legitimacy.
- 3) Any group or organization seeking to convene other stakeholders should first analyze its own role and objectives, and its relationship with those stakeholders it seeks to invite.
- 4) Stakeholders’ attributes are a function of the social networks they belong to and the multiple roles they play.
- 5) Stakeholders may be identifiable, but it is those empowered with knowledge and capacity that participate as ‘social actors.’
- 6) Stakeholders will make choices among three different classes of procedures for dealing with social conflict: (i) joint decision making; (ii) third party decision making; and (iii) separate action.
- 7) Stakeholders enter into negotiation when it is seen as the best alternative to what they could expect to obtain “away from the bargaining table” (BATNA).
- 8) Collaborative processes cover three phases: (i) problem setting, (ii) direction setting, and (iii) implementation.
- 9) Dispute resolution systems involve the use of mediators and require that disputants shift away from negotiating about “positions” to negotiating about “interests.”

wall. The need for coordinated action is clear if one intends to shift a complex system. **So, how are you currently collaborating with others and coordinating efforts?**

Strength in numbers is a well-known political strategy for taking action. This is not at all new. However, the costs of collaboration and coordination are not new either and should not be underestimated.

Collective action, an obvious option to overcome the limits of personal influence, can take place within an as well as organization as well as across organizations. Efforts within the organization will probably be geared towards challenges and opportunities in the State agency’s main dimensions: culture, capacity, management and processes and resources. Linking with stakeholders from other organizations (governmental and non-governmental) will be a good opportunity to develop and strengthen effective relationships that nurture the interaction between research and policy.

The degree and depth of collective efforts will vary according to you and your organization’s potential to convene and maintain collaborative processes through three main phases: (i) problem setting, (ii) direction setting, and (iii) implementation.

This not only depends on the existing culture of working with others, but as well on the collaborative skills and experience of relevant stakeholders around the interaction between research and policy (see Box 1). **Do you think your collaboration is good enough for the three phases? Or do you find there is need to work out that muscle?**

**Collective impact** is an approach that is increasingly generating evidence on how change efforts, conducted under a certain set of conditions<sup>3</sup>, are yielding positive changes in the communities where they take place.

As Kania and Kramer have found, “research indicates that these working groups are most successful when they constitute a representative sample of the stakeholders. This leads to emergent and anticipatory problem solving that is rigorous and disciplined and, at the same time, flexible and organic. Structuring efforts in this way also increases the odds that a collective impact initiative will find emergent solutions that simultaneously meet the needs of all relevant constituents, **resulting in a much more effective feedback loop that enables different organizations to respond in a coordinated and immediate way to new information.** Similar to the birds in a flock, *all* organizations are better able to learn what *each* organization learns, enabling a more aligned, immediate, and coordinated response.” (2013: 5)

.....  
3 To learn about these conditions, see [here](#).

Mostly interesting, this approach has found that often the problem is not the lack of resources, i.e. funds to conduct policy relevant research or skilled researchers who can conduct this type of research. Previously unnoticed solutions and resources from inside or outside the community are identified and adopted. Existing organizations find new ways of working together that produce better outcomes.



### EXERCISE AND STRENGTHEN YOUR COLLABORATIVE MUSCLE

To increase the potential impact of your change efforts, collaboration with others is a must. Being politically savvy on whom to bring into the table and how to make the pieces of a complex puzzle fit better is a clear challenge. We share some guiding questions to inform your potential partnerships and relationships:

- Who would share your agenda regarding the promotion of the use of research in policy? Whose agendas would present conflicts with this but should be considered due to their role in policy decision and management?
- How strong is your organizational culture in terms of collaboration? How do current management processes enable or hinder coordination with other governmental institutions? Where among these are the low hanging fruits for change?
- Which existing intra and inter-relationships should you keep nurturing or not and what are they key players you should be engaging with?
- Who should be engaged in establishing a new direction in terms of the way research is currently being seized/produced?

***One baby step:*** make a quick laundry list of your current collaborations (individuals and organizations). Select those who have demonstrated better capacity to cooperate and coordinate and invite them to a joint meeting. In that meeting, brainstorm together ideas on what you could do together to foster a more strategic use of evidence in policy. For more on Collaboration and Coordination see the following Useful tools:

- [Dialogue Mapping](#)
- [Validation](#)
- [Negotiation Fair](#)

## Section 2

# Practical implications

You should not read this whole section; instead please identify your profile and the type of use you are interested in, and then go through the related implications. If you feel need to learn more about a particular one, just click on the link and learn!

In this section, we will share a set of practical implications of the conceptual framework. Such implications vary according to the type of efforts to be developed as well as the potential users. Most of them –the ones we consider more relevant and useful– are further developed in the subsequent sections. We have also included in the table some main implications for donors, which we thought might be valuable for them.

**Table 2. Practical implications for different users and uses**

	For future research and knowledge systematisation efforts	For the design of direct interventions	For the implementation of changes	For monitoring, evaluation and learning
<b>Policymakers</b>	Document your concrete practices, mechanisms and processes for the promotion of the use of research.	Develop a sound assessment of your public institution. Prioritise your areas of intervention, with a special focus on interrelatedness. Plan some main ideas for change within a common agenda.	Nurture genuine engagement of critical stakeholders. Learn more about organizational change. Embrace baby steps, and be willing to learn and adapt, always.	Take a close look at how key dimensions of the framework affect or are affected by your efforts and document what you learn. Create spaces for reflection and learning and influence, but be pragmatic about them.
<b>Researchers focusing on the interaction between research and policy</b>	There are some key research questions related to how context matters that derive from the general framework and that could inform other research projects. Related future research endeavors could focus on the following topics: 1. Identify whether there is an evolution from no use to high use of research in policy within government institutions as well as the sub-dimensions usually accounting for that evolution. 2. Build different taxonomies of government institutions based on patterns of interaction among the main dimensions and sub-dimensions and the type of interventions that should be fostered according to the different profiles. 3. Develop case studies of governmental institutions that have experienced (or tried to achieve) a significant change to embed the use of knowledge in policy. 4. Synthesize overall lessons emerging from public sector reform and governance that should inform future efforts	Be aware of relevant changes conducted by or within State agencies to incorporate research and policy; build on new opportunities and adapt to threats.  Proactively develop proposals on how research related to your area of work could better inform policy design and decisions.	Look for windows of opportunities that emerge as governmental agencies.	Develop relationships with those stakeholders that are learning from efforts to promote the use of research in policy and interview them every once in a while to document lessons/ findings around each of the dimensions.
<b>Researchers trying to inform policy with knowledge</b>	Design a research agenda/research projects embedded in an understanding of context.	Embed your technical assistance/advice in the organizational context of the involved policymakers.	Try to become a partner with policymakers throughout change.	Use the framework to understand how your research has contributed or not to the policy making processes.

<p><b>Capacity building experts/ Technical consultants</b></p>	<p>Document positive capacity building activities and processes that have demonstrated impact for the use of research in policy and identify which sub-dimensions have played an important role.</p>	<p>Identify entry points and prioritize capability gaps through wide consultation with different stakeholders.</p>	<p>Embrace politics to embed capacity building efforts within the organization. Consider how culture, management and processes and other resources can affect and be affected by changes in organizational capacity. Combine individual with organizational capacity building efforts within a systemic approach. Engagement of relevant stakeholders is an ongoing process and entails flexibility to marry intended outcomes with emergent solutions.</p>	
<p><b>Donors</b></p>	<p>Support research efforts mentioned above. Systematize findings from the projects (organizations you support in terms of most recurrent and relevant dimensions and sub-dimensions that account positively for change. Support the development of positive deviance case studies (leading governmental institutions that have made a significant leap in the use of research without a specific external support to do so).</p>	<p>Thoroughly evaluate project/program proposals under the lens of the framework and assess their degree of understanding of the role and weight of each dimension in the potential for change. Remain flexible to changes and emerging opportunities. Foster the use of inter and intra-relationships in the design of interventions; ask other relevant and linked stakeholders about their perceptions around potential and desired change.</p>		

## 2.1 Policymakers

### 2.1.1. For the design of direct interventions aiming at enhancing the use of research in policy

Are you about to start a new concrete effort (mechanism, project, unit, etc.) to strengthen how research is produced and used within your agency? If so, below a set of suggestions on how to use the framework.

#### Implication #1: Develop a sound assessment of the public institution

The first and natural implication of the framework is that is very important to have a relatively thorough diagnosis or self-assessment of where your public institution stands regarding the role and interplay of the different dimensions and sub-dimensions.

This is because any change in a specific sub-dimension (i.e. creating an institutionalized mechanism to consult producers of research or conduct a training of policymakers to enhance their policy analysis skills) will be influenced by other factors (i.e. the mechanism will be skipped by staff who prefer to limit dialogue to their trusted advisors, or those trained will find no incentives to apply those skills since any reasonable analysis is quickly dismissed due to leadership idiosyncrasy or the lobby effects of pressure groups).

The assessment will allow you to:

1. Identify which dimensions will probably play a heavy role in terms of the near future, and
2. Determine which dimensions and sub-dimensions are really under your sphere of influence and which you should be concerned about; as well as what capacities and resources of the individual or the team are enough for intended changes and where you need more help.

**This seems quite obvious, but how often have we found ourselves with super ambitious plans based on an over estimation of our capacity and an under-estimation of the power of other driving forces?**

It is also true that some people excel at doing this type of analysis very implicitly when making choices on their change agenda. Theoretically they would not need to go through longer processes like the one entailed in performing a sound assessment of your institution.

Even if this is your case, you might consider doing it so that others who do not have the same capability feel part of the change, understand the need for it, and help things happen (or at least do not represent obstacles for change). This is related to finding out

#### Box 5. Zoom out before zooming in



As the ecologist Eric Berlow argues in [this excellent video on simplifying complexity](#) we certainly need to first zoom out (i.e. see the big picture that surrounds our work, be it our long term endeavor in general or the context of a short project in particular).

This means that we need to step back, consider the entire system (i.e. apply the whole framework to our work and according to our perspective, and ideally using those points of views and perceptions of others as well), observe all the links between components/parts (i.e. who could affect whom, why and how, especially in terms of power relationships), and from this space hone in the sphere of influence that matters most (i.e. strengthen links with existing research producers and try to build a joint policy relevant research agenda for the near future, and engaging top leadership to craft leading questions for this process).

Eric explains that the more you step back and embrace complexity, the better chance you have of finding simple answers and it's often a simple answer that is different from the one you started with.

the right incentives and motivations which emerged as very important factors in the framework.

Therefore, engaging others in the assessment is a good strategy to detect where the potential barriers as well as catalyzers for change reside. **Who should you work with, then?**

A clear lesson related to engaging others, emerged from the public sector reform at Whitehall, “departments in which leaders worked together and shared responsibility for the change agenda were much better placed to take big strategic decisions and manage risk across silos. Where executive teams worked towards a common aim, this showed a deep-rooted commitment to change in the department.” (Page, Pearson, Jurgeit and Kidson: 2012). For this, engaging others from the very beginning is key and we will delve more deeply into this in the Implementation section.

There are already known tools to produce self-assessments or diagnosis that include external viewpoints, ranging from appreciative inquiry to SWOTs. The main take away from the framework is that dealing with context is dealing with complexity. Zooming out to first discover the wide range of factors that can affect or be affected by your efforts is a strategy to embrace complexity.

Once you see the big picture, you will be able to focus on those areas that deserve your energy and attention. Eric Berlow’s Ted Talk in Box 2, is a very good example on how to approach a good assessment without shying away from complexity.

### **Implication #2: Prioritise your areas of intervention, with a special focus on interrelatedness**

Once you have done a careful assessment, the framework will also help you to better detect where the potential for change is larger, by taking into account where the barriers as well as the opportunities are more significant. The assessment provides the big picture, which is always quite overwhelming and complex.

#### **How do can you make the right decisions about where to start?**

Time is usually short and we are pressed by the need to deliver results. Even those who can work with a more comprehensive and long-term framework will need to decide what to do, at the operational level, including with whom and how.

Don’t forget that organizational change implies high energy and commitment from those leading it, to bear fruits. A rational step by step approach will not suffice and might even deter emergent solutions and new ideas to emerge. Therefore, we suggest you and your team should first highlight those sub-dimensions and those relationships between them that you and others have considered crucial for any change.

**Which are the sub-dimensions that represent strengths and opportunities for future changes?** Building on what already works well or on existing resources and capabilities will allow you to better address gaps and weaknesses. Try to jointly think about desired changes capitalizing positive areas.

However, priorities and focus do not mean to forget the interconnectedness of dimensions and sub-dimensions presented in the framework. Even while just some sub-dimensions will be the subjects of desired change (for example, a change process focused on creating formal processes to find and use evidence and making some related changes in roles and responsibilities of some job positions), it is important to detect which other sub-dimensions (i.e. technology that supports those processes and values and beliefs about the use of research) are very likely to affect them significantly.

Indeed, to focus efforts in the most promising areas does not mean forgetting other factors; as we will analyze in the next section, permanent vigilance of developments in other areas is key to enable a smoother implementation.

**And how about others who may affect or be affected by change?**

The weight of inter and intra-relationships is crucial in terms of thinking about change, due to the permanent interaction between any State agency and other policymaking instances and institutions as well as the interaction with other relevant stakeholders such as citizens and media.

Also, different perspectives on what the system looks like today as well as how it should look like in the future also need to be taken into account. Not all problems foster similar attention and motivation. As Ramalingam et al state, “those who are being affected by aid initiatives need to be part of the process of identifying the important elements of the relevant system, as well as defining the problems and their solutions (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1994; Röling and Wagemakers, 1998). As there are many perspectives on how to understand the complex social, economic and political contexts of aid work, it is important to bring together as many of these as possible in order to gain a rich picture of constraints and opportunities” (2008: 14)“

Perspectives are key when defining problems to be addressed: “efforts to build state capability should begin by asking “what is the problem?” instead of “which solution should we adopt?” Focusing on prevailing problems is the most direct way of redressing the bias to externally prescribed forms towards internal needs for functionality; it ensures that problems are locally defined, not externally determined, and puts the onus on performance, not compliance. It provides a window onto the challenge of building state capability, forcing agents to assess the ambiguities and weaknesses of

## Box 6. On dynamics of change

*“For this reason, development planning should abandon prescriptive, goal-oriented decision making and prediction about future states and focus instead on understanding the dynamics of change and promoting a collective learning framework through which concerned stakeholders can constantly, through dialogue, express their respective interests and reach consensus.”*

Source Geyer, cited in Sellamna (1999)

incumbent structures, to identify areas where these need to be broken down and deinstitutionalised, and to look for better ways of doing things.” (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock (2013:9)

**Remember: it is important to take into account others’ agendas, especially those with more power to enable or block potential changes.** The challenges of promoting or enhancing culture, capacity, management and resources to enable a better use of evidence in systems and policymaking should never be underestimated. Furthermore, when deciding those priorities, do not underestimate the politics and costs of change; build on previous similar experiences of change (even in other areas of government) to gauge how much effort is required and re-assess the depth and scope of change accordingly.

To this end, tools like Power Analysis, Force Field Analysis, the 5-why technique or Fishbone diagram shared in [Useful tools](#) are useful.

### Implication #3: Plan some main ideas for change within a common agenda

**So now, how do you think about what to do within those priorities?** Once the areas have been established and ideally agreed upon with other key stakeholders, it is important to avoid using logical frameworks or static and quite simplistic theories of change. The framework implies a systemic approach since different dimensions and sub-dimensions affect each other simultaneously.

**It is more about being catalysts of positive developments than implementing a step by step project.** As Kania and Kramer (2013) affirm (and it is also applicable to the public sector), “predetermined solutions rarely work under conditions of complexity—conditions that apply to most major social problems—when the unpredictable interactions of multiple players determine the outcomes. And even when successful interventions are found, adoption spreads very gradually, if it spreads at all.”

**So, how can you favor emerging solutions?** These authors argue that under conditions of complexity, predetermined solutions can neither be reliably ascertained nor implemented. **Instead, one should pay attention to favoring certain rules of interaction that can lead to changes in individual and organizational behavior that create an ongoing progression of alignment, discovery, learning, and emergence.**

In fact, to say that a solution is emergent is not to abandon all plans and structures. They propose that rather than deriving outcomes by rigid adherence to preconceived strategies, a key tenet of addressing complex problems is to focus on creating effective rules for interaction. **Who can you connect to jointly address those priorities? How can you ensure a fruitful degree of interaction?**

### Box 7. Replace control with resilience and emergence

Ramalingam et al also point out that, overall, the principles of emergence mean that over-controlling approaches (common in project proposals and program designs) will not work well within complex systems. However, he also clarifies that to say that prediction of any kind is impossible may be overstating the case. Even while complexity suggests that, in certain kinds of systems, future events cannot be forecasted to a useful level of probability, in other systems, future events can be foreseen in a helpful manner. For example, how will mid-level bureaucrats react to the introduction of a regular space to discuss about how they are currently using research in their work? What would happen if, instead of this, you propose a meeting to jointly discuss how to do this in the future?

Rather than rejecting planning outright, there is a need to rethink the purpose and principles of planning. "This has two key strands. First, it is necessary to incorporate an acceptance of the inherent levels of uncertainty into planning. The requirement for a certain level of detail in understanding future events should be balanced with the understanding that both simple and intricate processes carry uncertainty of prediction. While improving one's models of change and analyses of facets of a situation may be worthwhile, it is just as important and often more practical to work with a realistic understanding of this uncertainty and build a level of flexibility and adaptability into projects, allowing for greater resilience."

You should consider how to create space for innovation and novelty to occur. While this may be obvious, this is often the reverse of what happens in the real world, because of a tendency to over-define and over-control rather than simply focus on the critical rules that need to be specified and followed (Morgan, 1986). In this direction, it seems that instead of very detailed and concrete change plans, **a common agenda with some main and shared ideas of potential change should be developed.** This agenda should make best use of existing capabilities and expertise (which you will have detected through the assessment), and take into account strengths and opportunities regarding sub-dimensions of the framework.

#### **Finally, don't forget that you are dealing with wicked problems.**

Indeed, uncertainty is integral to any change within complex systems, characterize by wicked problems, which is another useful concept to think about specific ideas for change. According to Williams and van't Hof (2014) there are many definitions of these, but essentially they boil down to these six:

- Every wicked problem is novel or unique.
- There is a no stopping rule; you can't hit the pause button.
- The problem is not understood until the formulation of the solution.
- Wicked problems are complex; they have no single cause, no single effect and have no given alternative solution.
- Every wicked solution is a 'one shot operation'; there is no off-the-peg 'best practice' answer.
- Solutions are not right or wrong, but they may be better or worse.

Key to resolving wicked problems, according to most authors, is being able to come to a shared understanding (between sectors, between groups and between individuals) of what the problem is and how it is to be approached (National Collaborating Centre for Health Public Policy Fact sheet, 2013). **Collaboration, again, is crucial to come up with an agenda with a decent level of consensus and buy in.**

### 2.1.2 For the implementation of direct interventions

Implications for implementation are less clear and ripe. As you will be able to see in the [Good practices section](#), practical experiences in developing countries to deal with the different dimensions and sub-dimensions aren't easy to find; they are usually not systematized and many have not been around long enough to draw solid conclusions on how they worked and what are their main effects.

Also, within implementation one of the main dimensions to work upon is organizational culture. Being a less tangible and explicit dimension, case studies and reform projects seldom include specific

## Box 8. How do we do the right thing?



There is no straight forward answer to this question that will emerge again and again as you implement changes.

The notion of practical wisdom, or *phronesis* as Aristotle called it, is a helpful concept to frame your implementation efforts. Practical wisdom is the ability 'to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason' (Bradshaw 2009, book subtitle). It is a term that refers to the acquired skill of knowing 'how to do the right thing, in the right way, with this person, in this situation' (Ramirez et al: 2015).

If willing to learn more about this, watch [this excellent Ted Talk](#). With help from collaborator Kenneth Sharpe, Barry Schwartz shares stories that illustrate the difference between following the rules and truly choosing wisely.

considerations on how to deal with incentives, motivations and the “soft” side of the story.

To juggle all the variables that could affect changes and efforts in order to shift very complex systems is a challenge even for many skillful managers who are used to dealing with unpredicted outcomes. We invite you to build on what you already know and further develop your practical wisdom which is the capacity to do the right thing in the right way at the right time. This entail remain alert and flexible so as to effectively detect what can be done next building on how others are behaving and responding. You can learn more about practical wisdom in Box 4.

### So, is there something you can learn about implementation?

Yes, there is knowledge stemming from other areas that could be used to organize thinking about implementation challenges and how to deal with them: this is especially applicable to public sector reform (many lessons about how to build ownership, how to identify and work with the right incentives, etc. can shed light into implementation challenges) and to overall change management (phases, critical success factors and other main lessons from this stem of literature and experience). We share some insights next.

### Implication #1: Nurture genuine engagement of critical stakeholders

Whatever the areas prioritized for change, the role of other stakeholders continues to be of relevance. The key actors will vary according to the stage of change; this is sometimes even more complex with the high turnover in governmental staff as detected in the framework. Building up sustainable change or promoting an embedded mechanism to incorporate new knowledge in policy is not easy when people are frequently changing positions in your agency and others. Furthermore, it is key to be aware of their various interests and how these may affect their power, resistance, enthusiasm, etc.

However, it is very important to identify who are key leaders that will significantly affect any new effort to promote the use of research (either positively or negatively) and engage them as much as possible from the very brainstorming and formulation of ideas. Special attention should be given to the fact that departments operate in a complex web of relationships across government and beyond, which presents both opportunities for effective collaboration and potential obstacles to change (Page et al, 2012).

Think both about internal and external leadership. Efforts also imply building a relationship between researchers and policy makers, avoiding the “by chance” encounters and discussing the effort of how to institutionalize that relationship.

**Is your organization ready at its different levels to walk this path?** Organizational capacity comes to the center stage in implementation. As the framework reveals, an optimal alignment between high leadership, senior managers and human resources in terms of valuing and fostering the use of evidence in policy formulation and implementation increases chances of building a culture that favors research. Who, then, among these groups could be part of this effort? You need to know for real if the team will be able to perform and pursue the reform. Also consider whether they will receive the right incentives to do so.

Part of this engagement implies an assessment of where capacity gaps rely: as stated in the framework, policymakers need the required **technical and research skills** and experience both to commission and interpret the results of research, and to put the findings into practice.

In this sense, any champion willing to strengthen a culture of use of evidence and in setting up new management processes that enable this, needs to consider the current capacity of his/her agency to manage programmes successfully, including expertise, personnel, and political (elite) support. Implementation entails building on existing capacity (sometimes promoting champions or providing them with the right incentives); others, there will be need to bring other stakeholders or develop new capacities among existing staff.

#### **What capacities do you need to foster today?**

Engagement is not only about developing technical capacity. A genuine involvement of relevant stakeholders means that power distribution, incentives and idiosyncrasies are really taken into account. Taking such an approach challenges traditional development interventions.

As Andrews et al reveal: “The basic message must be that interventions are successful if they empower a constant process through which **agents make organizations better performers, regardless of the forms adopted to effect such change**. The politics of this re-focusing recommendation are obviously complex. They require, for instance, challenging perspectives about when and how to tie development funding to reform results, asking if external agents and solutions can build local state capabilities, and clarifying whether and how local agents and solutions should play a greater role in their own development. They may also entail adopting reforms that, at least initially, powerful critics can deride as unprofessional (‘promoting non-best-practice solutions’), inefficient (‘reinventing the wheel’), even potentially unethical (‘failing to meet global standards’)” (2013: 7).

One key aspect of engagement is how to select which stakeholders to engage and how. A significant level of participation is usually

**Box 9. An effective power strategy: facilitating front-line staff and partners to speak for themselves**

Eyben et al in *The Politics of evidence and research in international development* (2015) share various cases on how enabling voices of front line staff can yield to a better use of evidence.

Johnson shows cases about the influence of children’s voices in evaluations, bringing senior managers together with children bridged the gap that had hitherto kept this evidence from decision-makers’ ears. This, in turn, had required capacity-building efforts to make senior managers more aware of how children’s knowledge can inform their decision-making, making them willing to listen.

Causemann and Gohl provide details about how the Southern partners ‘often had little understanding of the realities and needs of German NGOs’, making it difficult for them to focus written reports to meet donor needs. The face-to-face exchanges valued by Southern partners clashed with the required reports written at a distance from where decisions were made. One of their concluding suggestions concerns facilitating reflections by front-line staff as part of reporting protocols, to generate more in-depth and useful information about results.

costly in terms of time and resources; thus, identifying whom to convene and for what purposes is a recurrent challenge where more knowledge systematization stemming from real experiences by public institutions could really contribute.

**Think about the whole chain of actions.** Finally, engagement should pay special attention to what Eyben et al (2015) call the “voices of front-line staff” which are usually far from decision-makers. This is related to how power is distributed: there are usually complex chains of power that enable elites maintain a distance from power’s effects’ (see Box 5).

On the contrary, these authors emphasize how “conscious agency (‘power to’) is required for senior managers to make themselves available to listen and be prepared to act upon what they hear from those at the coalface. Equally, it requires concerted action and courage from front-line workers to circumvent the hierarchy and go straight to the top.” (Eyben et al, 2015: 182). **What could you do today to promote these various levels of dialogue?**

**Implication #2: Learn more about organizational change**

Lessons and experiences in leading organization change usually highlight a set of critical factors for success that should be taken into account when implementing efforts to promote the use of research in policy. Just to illuminate our thinking in this direction, we could use [Kotter’s classical 8 step process](#), and adapt it to changes within the public sector:

**Table 3. Steps for effective change management**

John Kotter's 8 step process - an overview	
Steps	Transformation Suggestions
<b>1. Increase urgency</b>	Examine market and competitive realities. Identify and discuss crisis, potential crisis, or major opportunities. Provide evidence from outside the organization that change is necessary.
<b>2. Build the Guiding Team</b>	Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort. Attract key change leaders by showing enthusiasm and commitment. Encourage the group to work together as a team.
<b>3. Get the Vision Right</b>	Create a vision to help direct the change effort. Develop strategies for achieving that vision.
<b>4. Communicate for Buy-in</b>	Build alignment and engagement through stories. Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies. Keep communication simple and heartfelt. Teach new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition.

<b>5. Empowering Action</b>	Remove obstacles to the change. Change systems and / or structures that work against the vision.
<b>6. Create short term wins</b>	Plan for and achieve visible performance improvements. Recognize and reward those involved in bringing the improvements to life.
<b>7. Do Not Let Up</b>	Plan for and create visible performance improvements. Recognize and reward personnel involved in the improvements. Reinforce the behaviours shown that led to the improvements.
<b>8. Make Change Stick</b>	Articulate the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success.

A list of recommended literature and capacity development activities related to change management is provided in Annex 2.

### Implication #3: Embrace baby steps, and be willing to learn and adapt, always

Finally, don't forget that this is an ongoing process that will require continuous adjustment as things evolve.

#### How can you push for those baby steps and remain flexible to solving new problems or tapping into new opportunities?

In this sense, it is key to count with an enabling environment for decision-making that encourages experimentation and 'positive deviance' (Andrews et al: 2013). The framework has revealed within organizational culture, the importance of openness for change, which is closely linked to a government's willingness to admit failure.

This is also related to the overall culture of critical thinking. Naturally, this entails careful management of open instances for genuine reflection and self-criticism, so that they do not completely erode decision-making and implementation processes but facilitate clear areas for enhancement and/or reform.

As mentioned above you should think about a set of visible performance improvements, and **build on small steps as you move forward**. This way of implementing change clearly resonates to the classical argument about incrementalism of public policies: contrary to a rational and linear approach focusing on clear objectives with predictable outcomes, it emphasizes the plurality of actors involved in the policy-making process and predicts that policy makers will build on past policies, focusing on incremental rather than wholesale changes.

**So what should you do to strategically drive this process?** Focus continuously on gains (and communicate them adequately!) as

#### Box 10. Like choosing the slow and odd-looking camel

*This is like choosing a slow and odd-looking camel help one ride through the desert, in lieu of a much faster and more impressive looking horse, given the camel's relevance in its context. It is the kind of decision that reformers make as a result of positive deviance and experimentation, but will always be difficult to 'sell' to outsiders who did not muddle through with them, and whose primary metric of success or 'rigor' is the extent to which a given option complies with a known global 'best practice' ('professional', 'expert') standard.*

Source: Andrews et al (2013)

well as emerging problems as some steps are taken. Rather than following a rigid plan seek with the help of others solutions that take into account constraints such as time, resources, cultural resistances, etc.

This clearly is aligned with what ODI (Booth and Unsworth, 2014) and other international development agents are increasingly advocating for: **politically smart and locally led interventions**, where there is support for iterative problem-solving and brokering of interests by politically astute local actors.

It demands stepwise learning, brokering relationships and discovering common interests.

Stay flexible: so that emerging solutions are co-constructed with the participation of those who can contribute to their development, and represent the best fit for that context at that point of time rather than worldwide recognized practices and recipes.

### 2.1.3 For monitoring, evaluation and learning on direct interventions

**Implication #1: Take a close look at how key dimensions of the framework affect or are affected by your efforts and document what you learn**

**How can you monitor and evaluate your efforts? What is a feasible way of ensuring that learning takes place?**

Within your prioritised areas of change, there are varied sub-dimensions, especially related to culture and capacity that most frequently affect change efforts. Regarding those sub-dimensions, it is advisable to document those changes and discuss how to address/build on them.

To this end, being alert and curious entails permanent dialogue and listening to others, ranging from staff within your agency to other relevant government officials and higher decisions makers. Think about a very concrete mechanism to discuss what you discover with others and document it very simply, but document lessons and findings.

Collective vigilance (see Box 6) yields positive fruits.

**Implication #2: Create spaces for reflection and learning and influence, but be pragmatic about them**

**Being pragmatic to assess results in capacity development is very important:** more than a sophisticated framework or system to detect what is working well or not, you should take into account real resources and capacity to monitor and evaluate changes.

**How can you enable learning?** As Andrews et al argue, “active learning through real-world experimentation allows reformers

#### Box 11. The value of collective vigilance

In 2008, the city of Memphis Tenn., and Shelby County initiated a multi-pronged collective impact initiative called Memphis Fast Forward that includes a focus on improving public safety called Operation: Safe Community. After three years, cross-sector stakeholders looked at data regarding progress in public safety and concluded they were making good headway on two of three priority thrusts: policing and prosecution. Unfortunately, they saw little progress in the third area of violence prevention. The parties agreed to double down their efforts and re-tool the plan for prevention. Three months later, the U.S. Department of Justice announced the formation of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, with federal support available to communities aspiring to higher levels of performance in prevention activities. Memphis Fast Forward quickly jumped into action and, three months later, was one of six communities nationwide to be selected for funding.

The leaders of Memphis Fast Forward could not have anticipated and planned for the new resources that came from the Department of Justice. Had the participating organizations been acting in isolation, they most likely would not have been aware of the new program, and even if one or two solitary nonprofits knew of the potential funding, it is unlikely that they could have mobilized a sufficient community-wide effort in time to win the grant. Collective impact enabled them to see and obtain existing resources that they otherwise would have missed.

to learn a lot from the ‘small-step’ interventions they pursue to address problems (or causes of problems). They learn, for instance, about contextual constraints to change in general, how specific interventions work (or not), and how these interventions interact with other potential solutions. This facilitates *bricolage*, with lessons becoming part of the landscape of knowledge and capacities ‘at hand’ from which new arrangements emerge in resource constrained settings. (...) The lessons learned in such experimentation are dynamic and make the biggest difference when immediately incorporated into the design discussions about change. In this respect the learning mechanism differs significantly from traditional monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that focus on compliance with a linear process of reform and allow ‘lessons’ only at the end of a project” (2013: 15).

**Establishing a time/space to collectively discuss about how changes are evolving** within the agency is one concrete way to ensure that there is some stage of evaluation/reflection and learning about the change processes. Another one is to **create a learning community with peer policymakers** who are working as agents of change in this field and share specific lessons and practices.

A combination of face to face and online mechanisms to share lessons and practices could work well. However, due to the scarce time usually available for this type of activities, maybe just planning a very concrete annual exchange might be a reasonable step forward to be able to give a critical perspective to one’s efforts as well as build on what others are learning and become inspired with new ideas. Some policymakers consider it extremely important to have mechanisms or spaces to receive critics due to the political challenges of this type of changes. Critics should be addressed, if not they keep endangering the whole process.

## 2.2 Researchers

### 2.2.1 For researchers interested in the link between research and policy

**Implication #1: There are some key research questions related to how context matters that derive from the general framework and that could inform other research projects**

1. Are there any most significant sub-dimensions that represent critical areas to understand and work upon regardless the types of governmental institutions?
2. How can leadership be nurtured/supported to promote this type of changes? What do effective leaders in this area look like?
3. Which are the stronger relationships among the different

sub-dimensions that should be especially considered by those interested in promoting change?

4. What are the organizational culture changes that usually take place in successful development in terms of the generation and use of knowledge within public institutions?
5. What types of interventions have been more effective to promote changes in general and which sub-dimensions have been more relevant to achieve those changes (or to hinder them)?

### Implication #2: Related future research endeavors could focus on the following topics

- Test whether there is an evolution from no use to high use of research in policy within government institutions as well as the sub-dimensions usually accounting for that evolution.
- Build different taxonomies of government institutions based on patterns of interaction among the main dimensions and sub-dimensions and the type of interventions that should be fostered according to the different profiles
- Synthesize overall lessons emerging from public sector reform and governance that could inform future efforts
- Develop comparative case studies by applying the analytical framework to different political institutions in different countries and political systems which would allow better generalizations and wider applicability.

## 2.2.2 For researchers trying to inform policy with their knowledge

### Implication #1: Design a research agenda/research projects embedded in an understanding of context

When designing their research agenda and projects, researchers should take into account the six main dimensions of the framework and assess how they could affect uptake of your research from policymakers. It is very important that researchers are able to further identify the critical contextual factors affecting change and how these can support or endanger change. Some potential questions are:

1. What are the main macro contextual factors that could affect the need for the research you will produce?
2. What are the existing relationships you have with policymakers and other non-State stakeholders that can inform your decisions on research strategies? Who should you consult with?
3. How will organizational capacity of the State agencies affected by your research influence the degree of use of what you plan to produce? Could your research help develop new capacities?

4. What will be the main incentives, motivations, values and beliefs of policymakers and their agencies that will affect how they perceive, understand and use your research? Are they really open to innovation in the related policy area?
5. Are there any existing processes within the related governmental institutions that you can build on/seize to promote the use of research?
6. Which resources would you need to take into account to determine whether the findings from your research could be realistically used?
7. What would work better: to have a sectoral specialist researching about change or a change/reform specialist documenting a change process in any sector?

### Implication #2: Embed your technical assistance/advice in the organizational context of the involved policymakers

Increasingly, researchers and research organizations such as think tanks are invited by policymakers to provide technical assistance/advice for policy implementation, as a way to further use their knowledge and expertise to inform decisions that need to be made at the operational level. Part of the role of these researchers is to preserve a degree of independence and objectivity in the process and ensure technical advice of high quality. However, it is also important that you develop a sound understanding of the current capacity, culture and resources that can affect the use of existing research and the production of new evidence in the governmental agency you are working with.

The framework reveals the recurrent sub-dimensions within each State agency that you should take into account when partnering in implementation efforts. Many factors related to culture and capacity, such as incentives and motivations, values and beliefs, styles of leadership, openness to change, etc. are hard to detect during the design of new policies. Many are very political in nature and it is difficult to anticipate how they will play out during implementation. Using the framework lens to be aware of their weight and become observers of how they evolve and influence any change effort can become a good strategy to cope with the complexity of context.

Similarly to capacity development efforts, technical assistance is also as an inherently political process. In this sense, the recommendations posed by Datta et al. (2012:24) are also applicable to the use of the framework when providing advice. “Organizations change in response to their perceptions of how well equipped they are to deal with their external environment. Funders, consultants and clients need to allocate time during the inception phase of a project (or even during a pre-project phase) to consider the full ramifications of capacity building, not shying away from some of

the more political aspects. During this, consultants can help actors with sufficient power and influence within the client organization to understand what is happening in their organization, develop a vision of what they want it to be in future and a strategy to help them to get there. In other words, they need to understand how organizational change happens and how they can best engage with it. Referring to Kaplan's framework, this may involve strengthening higher order elements such as the organization's vision and mission, as well as improving individual skills and abilities to help the organization as a whole achieve its goals."

### **Implication #3: Try to become a partner with policymakers throughout change**

Following the point above, the framework reveals the need for researchers to become partners of policymakers in dealing with their context: no research can be used without acknowledging the limitations and opportunities posed by relationships with others within the governmental institutions and other external stakeholders, as well as culture, resources, capacity and existing processes. As developed for policymakers, researchers also need to remain open and flexible during change processes, constantly detecting how your research and contributions can illuminate them, and taking into account needs and interests of other relevant stakeholders.

Therefore, assistance should not be limited to producing technical results, but also on how to nurture and develop build effective and dynamic relationships among diverse actors who are influenced by the context in different ways.

### **Implication #4: Use the framework to understand how your research has contributed or not to the policy making processes**

Finally, the framework also offers insights into how to better monitor, evaluate and learn about the policy influence of your work. Its different dimensions and sub-dimensions can become areas under your concern/observation to detect what is enabling the intended outcomes or not. One possibility is that you develop a specific mechanism to track how and why your research has been used or not, taking into account the role of the six main dimensions, or to incorporate some of the most relevant sub-dimensions into your current MEL systems/methods.

## **2.3 Capacity building experts**

Several of the implications for the design of interventions are naturally applicable to capacity development, since the latter is indeed a specific type of intervention, as well as the fact that several interventions implicitly entail the development of new capacities and skills.

## Implication #1: Embrace politics to embed capacity building efforts within the organization

First of all, it is extremely important to better incorporate the “soft” and “intangible” side of capacity building activities, meaning all those aspects that play a role in its success but which are not usually explicitly dealt with when designing and implementing this type of endeavors. Such factors could be labelled under the concept of politics within each institution: how are decisions in fact usually taken? Which are the real motivations and incentives for different groups of individuals to endorse and engage in capacity building activities? Who influences whom and who can really make change happen?

These are mostly related to one main dimension of the framework: **culture**, which can be understood as ‘the way things are done around here’. The way values and beliefs, incentives, motivations and openness to change (including critical reflection) influence any effort to enhance capacity to use research in policy should be a part of how each effort is designed, implemented and evaluated. These are also affected by the distribution of **power within the agency and between the agency and other State institutions**, which is also many times invisible and not sufficiently recognized.

The lack of explicit tools and mechanisms to incorporate culture and power in the design of interventions aiming at public sector reform is notable.

This emerges in a clear way in documents sharing lessons learned about public sector reform initiatives. For example, Andrews et al (2013) put it in a very straightforward manner: “Why has building state capability been so hard? In past work we argued that development interventions—projects, policies, programs—create incentives for developing country organizations to adopt ‘best practices’ in laws, policies and organizational practices which look impressive (because they appear to comply with professional standards or have been endorsed by international experts) but are unlikely to fit into particular developing country contexts. Adapting from the new institutionalism literature in sociology, we suggested that reform dynamics are often characterized by ‘isomorphic mimicry’—**the tendency to introduce reforms that enhance an entity’s external legitimacy and support, even when they do not demonstrably improve performance**. These strategies of isomorphic mimicry in individual projects, policies and programs add up to ‘capability traps’: a dynamic in which governments constantly adopt “reforms” to ensure ongoing flows of external financing and legitimacy yet never actually improve. The fact that the “development community” is five decades into supporting the building of state capability and that there has been so little progress in so many places (obvious spectacular successes like South Korea

notwithstanding) suggests the generic “theory of change” on which **development initiatives for building state capability are based is deeply flawed.**”

**Why does this happen?** The authors posit that capability traps emerge under specific conditions which yield interventions that (a) aim to reproduce particular external solutions considered ‘best practice’ in dominant agendas, (b) through pre-determined linear processes, (c) that inform tight monitoring of inputs and compliance to ‘the plan,’ and (d) are driven from the top down, assuming that implementation largely happens by edict.

Indeed, in terms of interventions, we have presented ideas that build quite another set of conditions. First, we have already stressed out the importance of embracing complexity and avoiding linear plans that assume that X type and quantity of activities will yield to Y type of results, replacing these with some general ideas that inspire a strategic set of stakeholders to couple emergent solutions with some intended outcomes. Furthermore, as we will argue in the second part of this practical paper, we believe that complex challenges like fostering the use of knowledge in policy require the use of emergent practices, rather than best practices. We will delve deeper into this later on. Finally, the framework highlights the indispensable role of leadership but as well points out how senior managers and human resources also have a crucial weight in making ideas and plans happen, and effectively contribute to the use of knowledge in policy. Top down approaches that do not consider the role of ownership will probably lead to dead ends.

As Datta, Shaxson and Pellini (2012) point out “people and organizations can have strong or weak incentives to change, develop and learn, as a result of their environment or internal factors. Like learning, capacity development takes place in people or organizations and cannot be forced on them (unless, in some instances, they are coerced into it). Outsiders can teach, and shape incentives for learning, but no more than that. If change processes are not owned and led by those whose capacity is being developed, they are unlikely to happen.”

Andrews et al (2013) go further and suggest that capability traps can be avoided and overcome by fostering different types of interventions to build state capability which should (i) aim to solve particular problems in local contexts, (ii) through the creation of an ‘authorizing environment’ for decisionmaking that allows ‘positive deviation’ and experimentation, (iii) involving active, ongoing and experiential learning and the iterative feedback of lessons into new solutions, doing so by (iv) engaging broad sets of agents to ensure that reforms are viable, legitimate and relevant—i.e., politically supportable and practically implementable.

## Box 12. Dancing with the politics of any change process

There are some very practical ways to engage with the natural way in which things are conceived and done within an organization to allow a better flow of the potential change that stems from good capacity building initiatives, such as:

1. **Begin with a combination of a honest self-assessment with some external validation on which are the key priorities and needs in terms of organizational capacity.** To do so, consider engaging a trustful facilitator who can gather candid views, ranging from high level decision makers to junior employees. Also, within this assessment include different motivations, expectations and opinions about what capacity building should look like and how it should be done.
2. **Challenge those involved in determining capacity building objectives:** Are these viable? How can they demonstrate its feasibility? Is there evidence on similar processes yielding similar results?
3. **Build a flexible theory of change,** ensuring the widest participation possible in its design and making different points of view (especially opposing ones) explicit. Periodically re-visit this theory of change and make needed changes to reflect how politics influence the originally expected activities and results.
4. **Devise specific mechanisms to gauge how activities are affecting or could affect those who are not participating directly** and build on emerging opportunities related to those who could support changes and discuss emerging threats too. For example, have a regular meeting with high level policymakers and jointly assess how capacity building could be better linked to what is going on within the institution.

To us, all these conditions are part of **explicitly incorporating politics into decisions about what type of capacity building efforts to conduct, and how to implement them, as well as throughout the whole capacity development process.**

Indeed, as Eyben et al (2015) affirm: “Much of the results and evidence agenda is an effect of more diffuse power dynamics. Even when someone ‘in charge’ makes a decision, they may be unaware of – or indeed unable to prevent – what actually happens, since this is an outcome of multiple interactions by myriads of interconnected actors. Those in authority – chief executives and government ministers – are as much subjects of power as the most junior staff member; and multilateral aid agencies as much as grassroots organizations. This kind of invisible power is at work in all our relationships – each time we walk into a room, make a suggestion, or participate in a workshop. It is the process of socializing and embedding that shapes what we think, say, and do.”

### So, what would be a good starting point to incorporate politics?

Capacity building efforts need to clearly acknowledge the role of culture related factors presented in the framework such as values and beliefs, incentives, motivations and openness to change. Detecting these from different perspectives, i.e. facilitating candid discussions about real beliefs and values, incentives and motivations that diverse members of the organization believe will affect any related activities is a good starting point. Building a multi-layered endorsement of the capacity building process also paves the way to future application of ideas and concepts that emerge from this process. Some ideas on how to better incorporate politics are shared in Box 6.

### Implication #2: Identify entry points and prioritize capability gaps through consultation with different stakeholders

As already mentioned in this paper, it is important to take into account diverse perspectives regarding **where the strengths and weaknesses in terms of internal capacity reside today as well as which should be the preferred ones to address through capacity building efforts.** High interest and motivations should be considered as relevant entry points. This will allow new capacity strengthening processes to build on where more interest and potential throughout multiple levels are found.

Such an assessment should also take into account other related change processes that can significantly affect capacity building (i.e. if leadership has opted to launch some new participatory processes, they will probably be more interested in supporting efforts to develop facilitation and communications skills to incorporate varied producers of relevant knowledge. Therefore, it is important to

discuss with those who will support the activities as well as those who will get engaged how they foresee they could be better linked to existing priorities and demands from other new and related efforts.

This is coined by [ITAD \(2014\)](#) as the **legitimacy of a capacity development initiative**: “If a capacity development intervention has the buy-in and interest of the right people, it is more likely to lead to change. It is also important to consider the legitimacy of individuals or groups delivering or championing the intervention.”

Indeed, as we pointed out in the conceptual paper where we introduce the framework, continuity and stability of high level leadership clearly engaged with facilitating the use of knowledge in policy appears as a key facilitator for such initiatives (Peirson, Ciliska, Dobbins and Mowat, 2012). This is especially the case of efforts that were not seen as embedded enough in the structure and culture of an organization. For example, how much the major or the governor appreciates research determines the investment in research units or human resources. If he/she does not believe in the power of research, he/she will invest in other issues.

Therefore, when developing consultations to inform capacity building activities, it is very important to **assess the degree of interest and support from leadership**, including their own needs and interests in receiving support to further their leadership skills for managing change. Also, if working first with leaders as a way to pave the way to further changes, it is important to assess the degree of legitimacy of these leaders: how they are perceived by others is crucial to foresee how the changes they could foster can take place and get buy in.

Senior management and key staff can also benefit from capacity building activities. Their self-assessment of skills and gaps could be complemented with some consultation of connected stakeholders to combine internal perceptions with external ones related to where their strengths and weaknesses rely in terms of using research to inform policy.

The sub-dimensions described under Organizational capacity provide clear ideas on where gaps can be. Following some examples:

- Leaders’ understanding and capacity to address a wide range of incentives and pressures
- Senior managers’ connections to expert advisory committees and informal relationships with experts
- General staff’s technical and research skills, capacity to use information and communication technologies and political and communications skills

### Implication #3: Combine individual with organizational capacity building efforts within a systemic approach

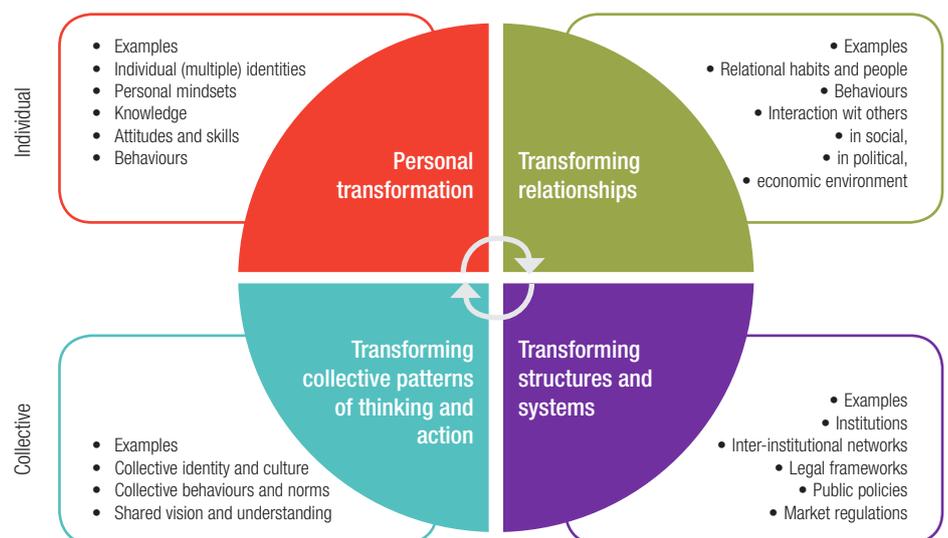
The framework implies an inclusive approach in terms of linking systemic dimensions (i.e. knowledge regime) with organizational ones (i.e. existence of a knowledge infrastructure) and individual factors (i.e. leadership).

**How can you better link levels of change in terms of capacity building?** Capacity building interventions can be informed with this approach: an overall understanding on how different levels can interact with each other will enable you to detect potential links between changes at the individual, organizational and systemic levels, including the decision about in which level/s to focus your efforts.

This is consistent with UNDP's approach which understands that capacity challenges within individual organizations are one dimension of the issue and need to be addressed; the other key dimension is the institutional context in which organizations locate. For successful institutional change and reform, both dimensions need to be addressed, with the latter often being at the nexus of capacity change and policy reform. This is where incorporating an understanding of how intra and inter-relationships will

Indeed, as ITAD team states, there are four main dimensions of change to consider when developing new capacities, synthesized in the following graph:

**Graph 2. Dimensions of change in capacity building**



Source: ITAD (2014)

Any effort to transform how knowledge is used in policy at the level of the governmental institution (collective change) should think about what are the related individual changes as well as how other structures and the whole system could affect or be affected by this change.

The authors shed light into how these four dimensions of change:

### Personal change

We would need to think about building the knowledge and skills people need to do their jobs. But a CD2 approach would go beyond knowledge and skills to consider mindsets, confidence and behaviours. Do staff value evidence? Do they have the confidence to speak up in meetings or challenge a peer or superior who they think is wrong? A CD2 approach would also consider the power and status of people targeted by an intervention, as influenced by their managerial hierarchy, profession, gender, age, and so on.

### Change in relationships

Complexity science emphasises the interrelated nature of different parts in a system. To improve health policies it would not be enough to focus on the individuals involved in a policy making process. We would have to think about the relationships between individuals, within and outside the Department of Health.

### Change in collective patterns of thinking and action

Applying systems and complexity thinking to capacity development encourages us to think of the policy making environment within the Department of Health as having emergent properties, which are more than the sum of individual behaviours - So changing the features of an organization or network is about more than changing the behaviours of specific people. We shouldn't just ask 'How do individuals behave', we should ask 'What are the social norms prevalent within the Department of Health that influence policy making? What does the collective identity and culture of the Department look like?

### Change in systems and structures in the enabling environment.

Finally, we have to think about the enabling environment. How does the wider context support or constrain effective policy making within the Department of Health? What makes an environment enabling or not? We pulled from the literature a few examples of features that an enabling environment might have. When these features are present, an environment is more conducive to capacity building; and attempts to change individual behaviour, relationships, and collective patterns of thinking and action are more likely to be successful.”

Therefore, although a specific capacity development activity or project may focus on only one level, **a certain degree of analysis**

of how other levels could be affected or affect it is advisable to inform its design and implementation. In this direction the main dimension and sub-dimensions included in the framework provide a good basis to ensure that one remains focused but at the same time aware of opportunities and threats that can arise from other related levels and factors.

Finally, phasing interventions and determining which type of changes can be expected throughout different timeframes is also a good strategy to deal with the different levels (individual, organizational and systemic).

For example, KSI laid out a roadmap to strengthen Indonesian Government Research Units (Balitbang) capacity through varied interventions that will produce changes through various models and approaches, and also involving various players, as shown in Annex 3.

The preferred future expressed by all informants of a study about the current status of Balitbangs was for a government-wide culture of critical enquiry, and provision of high quality and timely research by experts in policy analysis and the formulation of options based on evidence. However, to achieve this they also recognized the need of significant reform in the status, conditions and remuneration of researchers, removal of structural and organizational barriers and significant strengthening of the government's key partners in knowledge creation – universities, research institutes and private organizations. All these expected changes were linked and taken into account to establish a capacity building process that articulates levels and timeframes.

#### Implication #4: Engagement of relevant stakeholders is an ongoing process and entails flexibility to marry intended outcomes with emergent solutions

The framework has clearly revealed the importance of thinking about the **different levels of policymakers to engage** in the promotion of the use of research in policy: from leadership to senior management and other staff, everyone plays different roles throughout the process of incorporating (or not) evidence in making decisions and managing public policies.

It has also highlighted the importance of **ownership**: When policymakers are involved in the design phase of research projects, this increases the likelihood of the research being used by securing early 'buy-in' and can also tailor the findings to the policymakers' needs (Newman, Capillo, Famurewa, Nath and Siyanbola, 2013). When demand arises within a country's political economy as opposed to structures external to the system (such as from donors), there is increased ownership which is a critical factor to ensure use (Porter and Feinstein, 2014).

#### Box 13. Emerging capacity

Capacity is partly about functional expertise, but also about system cohesion and energy. It is frequently a messy process and works best in complex situations. It needs space and freedom to explore the best way forward.

The authors provide a very concrete example of remaining flexible and open:

##### *Two networks in Brazil*

The process of emergence can be seen at work in the COEP and Observatório cases in Brazil.

They were first energized by the pursuit of key values to do with democratization and social justice. They grew organically through informal connections and relationships. They refused to set clear objectives at the outset. A direction and connection and stimulation worked better than traditional directive management.

There was no attempt to develop formal hierarchies at the outset. They experimented throughout the network with small projects and interventions. There was a constant exchange of experiences, information and knowledge.

They spun off many working groups, informal communities and associations. Collective networking capabilities emerged through linking and connecting capabilities at the individual and organizational levels.

Source: Blokland, Alaerts, Kaspersma and Hare (2010)

**How do we foster ownership?** In capacity building efforts, ownership can be elusive, ebbing and flowing over the life of any intervention (see box 8). Ownership can exist at the highest levels of an organization (where negotiations and planning takes place) but may be absent lower down, and vice-versa.

Interests can change and supporters at the outset may become detractors later on, so not everyone will be engaged throughout the whole process. Those who have the ability to exercise their ownership may not share the same interests and objectives as other stakeholders with less voice.

In politically unstable environments, ownership can quickly shift as alliances and allegiances form and reform. Therefore, staying alert about these changes and how different participants may change their interests and support throughout the process is very important to make it more effective: as we have highlighted in terms of implementing changes, remaining flexible and with the capacity to adapt the approach and activities as unexpected events take place is a key strategy to catalyze real change.

#### **Implication #5: Consider how culture, management and processes and other resources can affect and be affected by changes in organizational capacity**

**Organizational capacity** is the dimension at the center stage of capacity development. We have above stressed the importance of intra and inter-relationships through engagement of a diverse set of relevant and external stakeholders. However, the three other main dimensions within the governmental institution have very strong links to its members' capacity and should be worked upon, either directly or indirectly, within any effort to develop or strengthen capacities.

As the World Bank acknowledges (2000), in public sector reforms (PSR) the most crucial and difficult part is changing behavior and organizational culture. In Ghana, for instance, implementation of the integrated financial management system stalled until attention turned to changing behavioral patterns and incentives. In this direction, for the World Bank civil service and administrative (CSA) reform has been the second most common area of PSR lending. Although CSA performance has improved in fewer than half of the borrowing countries, improving CSA has been essential for sustaining PSR in other areas.

This is tightly related to **incentives and motivations**, which should be carefully considered in every capacity building activity. Particular attention should be paid to expectations around capacity development: **is the prevailing culture aware of and willing to commit enough time for changes to take place?** As the

World Bank's (2008) experience revealed, "Expectations for the progress and effects of PSR are the foundations for motivating the government to undertake them and the Bank and other donors to finance them. Thus, the ideal balance is for expectations to be high enough to motivate but not so high that they misguide efforts or that failures to meet them erode credibility and commitment."

In terms of other resources, a key question to jointly answer is which could be the basic reforms that need to be done to leverage capacity development (i.e. paid access to journals and research elsewhere, study tours, new database software)? **Some degree of investment is usually required to scale up individual changes to organizational ones.**

#### **Box 14. Tools for managing in a complex context**

##### **Given the ambiguities of the complex domain, how can leaders lead effectively?**

###### **Open up the discussion.**

Complex contexts require more interactive communication than any of the other domains. Large group methods (LGMs), for instance, are efficient approaches to initiating democratic, interactive, multidirectional discussion sessions. Here, people generate innovative ideas that help leaders with development and execution of complex decisions and strategies.

###### **Set barriers.**

Barriers limit or delineate behavior. Once the barriers are set, the system can self-regulate within those boundaries. The founders of eBay, for example, created barriers by establishing a simple set of rules. Among them are pay on time, deliver merchandise quickly, and provide full disclosure on the condition of the merchandise. Participants police themselves by rating one another on the quality of their behavior.

###### **Stimulate attractors.**

Attractors are phenomena that arise when small stimuli and probes (whether from leaders or others) resonate with people. As attractors gain momentum, they provide structure and coherence.

###### **Encourage dissent and diversity.**

Dissent and formal debate are valuable communication assets in complex contexts because they encourage the emergence of well-forged patterns and ideas. A "ritual dissent" approach, for instance, puts parallel teams to work on the same problem in a large group meeting environment. Each team appoints a spokesperson who moves from that team's table to another team's table. The spokesperson presents the first group's conclusions while the second group listens in silence. The spokesperson then turns around to face away from the second team, which rips into the presentation, no holds barred, while the spokesperson listens quietly. Each team's spokesperson visits other tables in turn; by the end of the session, all the ideas have been well dissected and honed.

###### **Manage starting conditions and monitor for emergence.**

Because outcomes are unpredictable in a complex context, leaders need to focus on creating an environment from which good things can emerge, rather than trying to bring about predetermined results and possibly missing opportunities that arise unexpectedly. Many years ago, for instance, 3M instituted a rule allowing its researchers to spend 15% of their time on any project that interested them. One result was a runaway success: the Post-it Note.

Source: [Snowden and Boone \(2007\)](#)

Related to management and processes, are there existing practices to which new skills/capacities can directly contribute (i.e. planning stage) or could minor adjustments be made to build on expected changes (i.e. modifications in job positions)?

Finally, leading by embracing the complex interactions between culture, capacity and resources poses significant challenges. Some ideas about how to face them are shared in Box 9.

## Section 3

# Useful tools and good practices/ Main user: policymaker

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Delving into practical implications is a first step towards using the framework to better gauge the role of context in the interaction between research and policy. Another complementary strategy is to get inspired by how other peers are already making progress in improving the link between research and policy by dealing with different dimensions of context and planning complex interventions.

With this purpose, we share in this section two main sets of resources: 1) useful tools to better embrace complexity of efforts to promote the use of research in policy, and 2) good and concrete practices deployed by policymakers and think tanks to deal with some of the main dimensions of context.

Related to the latter, most of the users of this paper have probably read enough about the need to replace best practices with good practices or good fits. Indeed, while in a complicated context, at least one right answer exists; in a complex context, however, right answers can't be ferreted out. As Snowden and Boone very clearly argue, "It's like the difference between, say, a Ferrari and the Brazilian rainforest. Ferraris are complicated machines, but an expert mechanic can take one apart and reassemble it without changing a thing. The car is static, and the whole is the sum of its parts. The rainforest, on the other hand, is in constant flux—a species becomes extinct, weather patterns change, an agricultural project reroutes a water source—and the whole is far more than the sum of its parts" (2007: 5).

In contexts where unpredictability and flux abound, we can understand why things happen only in retrospect. So, what can a policymaker looking to improve the use for research in policy do prospectively?

Two paths seem to offer some potential answers: one is to observe and try out **emergent practices** within each one's context; and the second is to explore good practices from similar ones.

**Emergent practices** are solutions that emerge out of the context, due to the interplay of different factors and stakeholders. An adaptive leader will try to avoid falling back into traditional command-and-control management style and strategically create room and opportunity for informative patterns to emerge. This entails openness to failure and experimentation, which is not frequently

found in policymaking spaces where political consequences are really high. Therefore, the leader needs to constantly observe and discern which of the emerging patterns around the use of research are could lead to most desired outcomes and support those nurturing those patterns. In that sense, leaders must patiently allow the path forward to reveal itself.

Even though they should not be used as recipes or fixed solutions, **good practices** from peer organizations and colleagues can also become a valuable source for making decisions and implementing changes. It is important to not underestimate the power (and differences) of initial conditions, and to acknowledge that a similar practice will evolve in diverse settings in a very different way depending on the interplay of factors that vary in weight and movement. Indeed, any notion of ‘good practice’ requires a detailed local knowledge to understand why the practice in question was good. If managed in this way, good practices can enlighten decisions, help with the anticipation of potential challenges and problems, and shed light into the type of potential solutions and mechanisms to deal with similar problems.

In this direction, we have put together a set of emerging practices, most of them from developing countries and led by State agencies/ policymakers. These are not specific guides on how to make certain changes or deal with concrete challenges but offer a body of evidence on how other policymakers are currently making progress in setting up organizational contexts that allow a more fruitful interaction between knowledge and policy. Therefore, even while recognizing the complexity of our own endeavor and the need to remain flexible, we can use others’ experiences and lessons learned to design and implement our own experimental path.

Finally, we agree with O’Meally that , efforts to go beyond a “best-practice” mindset and toward a more “best-fit” approach in development practice are arguably impartial and incomplete—both conceptually and operationally—with calls to strike a balance between researchers’ focus on complexity and practitioners’ desire for concrete guidance. We hope that this set of practices provide a starting point in terms of systematising available knowledge while insisting on the need to remain sensitive to context to assess which of this knowledge could be useful and relevant and how each practice can take it organic form when owned by local stakeholders (some guiding ideas below in Table 4).

**Table 4. Focus on context**

Tools and practices tend to emphasize	A focus on context tends to emphasize
Self-contained approaches	Multiple endogenous and exogenous drivers of change
Linearity (steps or stages)	Nonlinearity (complexity and unintended outcomes)
Technical aspects	Political and power aspects
Best practice roadmap	Good practice adaptation
Donor/technical expert driven	Organic processes, led by diverse stakeholders
Largely formal mechanisms to promote the use of research in policy	Informal mechanisms are critical, alongside formal mechanisms

Source: Author, adaptation of Table 1.2 at O'Meally (2013)

### 3.1 Useful tools

The context framework clearly depicts the complexity underlying any effort to promote the use of knowledge in policy. In this section we share a set of tools that will allow you to better embrace this complexity, by incorporating different perspectives, seeking for emergent solutions and patterns, identifying opportunities for research according to policy stages and working with collaborative approaches.

This is a limited set of tools; there are more and increasing ways to work under a complexity framework. We especially recommend the following sources of information:

- Williams, B. and van 't Hof, S. (2016 ). *Wicked solutions, a systems approach to complex problems*. This handbook offers the possibility to apply systems thinking in three levels with increasing complexity, so it's a great and practical starting point to ensure you acknowledge complexity when designing specific interventions. You may also want to learn about this proposal watching [this video](#).
- Ramalingam, B.; Laric, M. and Primrose, J. (2014). *From best practice to best fit. Understanding and navigating wicked problems in international development*. Overseas Development Institute. In this paper, the authors share concrete examples of how DFID teams have applied specific methods and approaches to face wicked problems.

**Table 5. Tools to deal with complexity**

<u>Tools for identifying perspectives regarding the use of research in policy making</u>	<u>Tools for observing emergent solutions and patterns towards change</u>	<u>Tools for identifying research inputs according to policy changes</u>	<u>Tools for strengthening coordination and collaboration around the use of research in policy making</u>
<a href="#"><u>Soft Systems</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Net-Map</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Appreciative inquiry</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The 5 Why's technique</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The fishbowl diagram</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Problem tree</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Force field analysis</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Political Economy Analysis</u></a> <a href="#"><u>General pathways of change</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The policy problem framework</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Dialogue Mapping</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Validation</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Negotiation Fair</u></a> Several other collaboration are practices are shared in <a href="#"><u>Good practices</u></a>

### 3.1.1 Tools for identifying perspectives regarding the use of research in policy making

#### SOFT SYSTEMS

**What is it?** Soft Systems is a methodology that first forces you to consider alternative perspectives (such as development as ‘aid’, as ‘patronage’, as a ‘tool of foreign policy’, or as ‘empowerment’). It then asks a series of questions that help you work out the structure, function and logical consequences of each perspective. You then compare and contrast this ‘logic’ with ‘real life’. Unlike most ‘logic’ modelling approaches, the idea is not to make ‘real life’ more like the logic, but to gain insight from the similarities and differences across several perspectives that help you improve the current situation.

**How does it work?** SSM follows 7-stages. Some of them address the “real” world, and some of them –perhaps the most important parts– address a conceptual world. These are:

1. Enter situation considered problematical
2. Express the problem situation
3. Formulate root definitions of relevant systems of purposeful activity
4. Build conceptual models of the systems named in the root definitions
5. Comparing models with real world situations
6. Define possible changes which are both possible and feasible
7. Take action to improve the problem situation

For more information on SSM, we recommend [this presentation by Bob Williams](#).

## NET-MAP

**What is it?** [Net-Map](#) is an interview-based mapping tool that helps people understand, visualize, discuss, and improve situations in which many different actors influence outcomes (Net-Map Brochure: 679 KB). By creating Influence Network Maps, individuals and groups can clarify their own view of a situation, foster discussion, and develop a strategic approach to their networking activities. More specifically, Net-Map helps players to determine:

- what actors are involved in a given network,
- how they are linked,
- how influential they are, and
- what their goals are.

Determining linkages, levels of influence, and goals allows users to be more strategic about how they act in these complex situations. It helps users to answer questions such as: Do you need to strengthen the links to an influential potential supporter (high influence, same goals)? Do you have to be aware of an influential actor who doesn't share your goals? Can increased networking help empower your disempowered beneficiaries?

**How does it work?** The process to apply net-map follows six stages:

### 1. Preparation

- Define question (e.g. "Who can influence the success of our project?").
- Define links (e.g. giving money, disturbing someone, giving support, giving command) and assign different colors to the links (i.e. giving money = red link).
- Define goals (e.g. environmental orientation and development orientation or pro and contra a change of legislation).
- Decide who should be involved in interviews / discussion.

### 2. Actor selection

- Ask: "Who is involved in this process?"
- Write names on actor cards and distribute on empty Net-Map sheet.

### 3. Drawing of links:

- Ask: "Who is linked to whom?" Go through the different kinds of links one by one (e.g. "Who gives money to whom? Who disturbs whom?").
- Draw arrows between actor cards according to interviewees directions.
- If two actors exchange something (e.g. information) draw double headed arrows. If actors exchange more than one thing, add differently colored arrow heads to existing links.

#### 4. Goals

- Ask according to pre-defined goals, actor by actor, e.g. “Does this actor support environmental, developmental goals or both?”
- Note abbreviations for goals next to actor cards, allow for multiple goals where appropriate, by noting more than one goal next to the actor (see picture 4).

#### 5. Influence Towers

- Ask: “How strongly can actors influence xy?”
- Explain / agree on a definition of influence with your interviewee, clarify that this is about influence on xy and not influence in the world at large.
- Ask interviewee to assign influence towers to actors: The higher the influence on the issue at stake, the higher the tower. Towers of different actors can be of the same height. Actors with no influence can be put on ground level. Towers can be as high as interviewees want.
- Place influence towers next to actor cards.
- Verbalize set-up and give interviewee the chance to adjust towers before noting height of tower on the Net-Map (important for documentation purpose).

#### 6. Discussion

- According to specific goal of your Net-Map exercise, discuss what this network means for strategy of organization, where influence comes from, what happens in case of conflicting goals etc.

The tool is low-tech and low-cost and can be used when working with rural community members with low formal education as well as civil society organizations and international development actors.

For more information on Net-Map, go to [Net-Map Toolbox](#).

### 3.1.2 Tools for observing emergent solutions and patterns towards change

#### APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

**What is it?** [Appreciative Inquiry](#) is about the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives “life” to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. Thus, it entails detecting where the best patterns might emerge.

AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the "unconditional positive question" often-involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people. In AI the arduous task of intervention gives way to the speed of imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design. AI seeks, fundamentally, to build a constructive union between a whole people and the massive entirety of what people talk about as past and present capacities: achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, strategic competencies, stories, expressions of wisdom, insights into the deeper corporate spirit or soul-- and visions of valued and possible futures. Taking all of these together as a gestalt, AI deliberately, in everything it does, seeks to work from accounts of this "positive change core"—and it assumes that every living system has many untapped and rich and inspiring accounts of the positive. Link the energy of this core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized.

**How does it work?** According to [betterevaluation.org](http://betterevaluation.org) Appreciative Inquiry is often presented in terms of a 4 step process around an affirmative topic choice:

1. **DISCOVER:** What gives life? What is the best? Appreciating and identifying processes that work well.
2. **DREAM:** What might be? What is the world calling for? Envisioning results, and how things might work well in the future.
3. **DESIGN:** What should be--the ideal? Co-constructing - planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. **DESTINY (or DELIVER):** How to empower, learn and adjust/improvise? Sustaining the change

For more information on AI, visit [this site](#) which provides a wide variety of resources on using and understanding AI including academic articles, books and sample cases and project packs. Many of these resources are also available in languages other than English. There is also a section which invites users to become involved by sharing their AI stories and experiences or actively contributing to online forums on issues and topics centred on its practice. Also, a free online course on this approach is available [here](#).

## THE 5-WHY'S TECHNIQUE

This technique enables a deep discussion about the causes of a problem, which is a very crucial step towards identifying emergent solutions, based on what diverse persons bring forward.

**What is it?** Invented in the 1930's by Toyota Founder Kiichiro Toyoda's father Sakichi and made popular in the 1970s by the Toyota Production System, the 5 Whys strategy involves looking at any problem and asking: "Why?" and "What caused this problem?"

By asking the question "Why" you can separate the symptoms from the causes of a problem. This is critical as symptoms often mask the causes of problems. As with effective incident classification, basing actions on symptoms is worst possible practice. Using the technique effectively will define the root cause of any non-conformances and subsequently lead you to defining effective long term corrective actions. This is an effective way to detect how potential solutions may be stronger or combined, building on what different persons bring to the table.

### 5 Whys offers some real benefits at any maturity level:

- **Simplicity.** It is easy to use and requires no advanced mathematics or tools.
- **Effectiveness.** It truly helps to quickly separate symptoms from causes and identify the root cause of a problem.
- **Comprehensiveness.** It aids in determining the relationships between various problem causes.
- **Flexibility.** It works well alone and when combined with other quality improvement and troubleshooting techniques.
- **Engaging.** By its very nature, it fosters and produces teamwork and teaming within and without the organization.
- **Inexpensive.** It is a guided, team focused exercise. There are no additional costs.

Often the answer to the first "why" uncovers another reason and generates another "why." It often takes five "whys" to arrive at the root-cause of the problem. You will probably find that you ask more or less than 5 "whys" in practice.

**How does it work?** Five steps can be followed to apply the 5-why's technique:

1. Assemble a team of people knowledgeable about the area of non-conformance. Include as many personnel as possible.
2. On a flip chart, presentation board, or even paper; write out a description of what you know about the problem. Try to document the Problem and describe it as completely as possible. Refine the definition with the team. Come to an agreement on the definition of the Problem at hand.

3. Have the team members ask “Why” the Problem as described could occur, and write the answer down underneath the Problem description.
4. If the answer provided from 3 (above) does not solve the Problem, you must repeat steps 3 and 4 until you do.
5. If the answer provided from 3 (above) seems likely to solve the Problem, make sure the team agrees and attempt a resolution using the answer. You may find that there are more than one root causes to the problem.

The 5 Whys can help you uncover root causes quickly. However, making a single mistake in any question or answer can produce false or misleading results. You may find that there is more than one root cause for each non-conformance; corrective actions should be implemented for each of these.

To validate those potential root-causes that are under your control, you can apply the following validations to your answers or root causes. Ask the following questions for every possible root-cause you identify at all levels of the 5 Whys:

- Is there any proof (something you can measure or observe) to support this root-cause determination?
- Is there any history or knowledge to indicate that the possible root-cause could actually produce such a problem?
- Is there anything “underneath” the possible root-cause that could be a more probable root cause?
- Is there anything that this possible root-cause requires in order to produce the problem?
- Are there any other causes that could possibly produce the same problem?

Source: [Guidance Notes: 5 Why's Technique](#), IMS International.

## FISHBONE DIAGRAMS

This technique can very well complement the 5 why's one, and enables a useful graphic description of different causes and their links.

**What is it?** The Cause & Effect, or Fishbone Diagram, was first used by Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa of the University of Tokyo in 1943 - hence its frequent reference as “Ishikawa Diagram”, as a way of measuring quality control processes in the shipbuilding industry. A diagram that shows the causes of an event and is often used in manufacturing and product development to outline the different steps in a process, demonstrate where quality control issues might arise and determine which resources are required at specific times.

This diagram is used to identify all of the contributing root causes likely to be causing a problem. This methodology can be used on any type of problem, and can be tailored by the user to fit the circumstances. Use of this tool has several benefits to process improvement teams:

- Straightforward and easy to learn visual tool.
- Involves the workforce in problem resolution - preparation of the fishbone diagram provides an education to the whole team.
- Organizes discussion to stay focused on the current issues.
- Promotes “System Thinking” through visual linkages.
- Prioritizes further analysis and corrective actions.

Creating this diagram with a cross functional team will build not only trust between departments but will cultivate new found knowledge and understanding for the key players in the process. When using the Fishbone as a discussion topic meetings can be better focused on process improvement and defect reduction.

**How does it work?** This tool is most effective when used in a team or group setting.

The team using the fishbone diagram tool should carry out the steps listed below.

1. Agree on the problem statement (also referred to as the effect). This is written at the mouth of the “fish.” Be as clear and specific as you can about the problem. Beware of defining the problem in terms of a solution (e.g., we need more of something).
2. Agree on the major categories of causes of the problem (written as branches from the main arrow). Major categories often include: equipment or supply factors, environmental factors, rules/policy/procedure factors, and people/staff factors.
3. Brainstorm all the possible causes of the problem. Ask “Why does this happen?” As each idea is given, the facilitator writes the causal factor as a branch from the appropriate category (places it on the fishbone diagram). Causes can be written in several places if they relate to several categories.
4. Again asks “Why does this happen?” about each cause. Write sub-causes branching off the cause branches.
5. Continues to ask “Why?” and generate deeper levels of causes and continue organizing them under related causes or categories. This will help you to identify and then address root causes to prevent future problems.

### Tips:

- Use the fishbone diagram tool to keep the team focused on the causes of the problem, rather than the symptoms.
- Consider drawing your fish on a flip chart or large dry erase board.
- Make sure to leave enough space between the major categories on the diagram so that you can add minor detailed causes later.
- When you are brainstorming causes, consider having team members write each cause on sticky notes, going around the group asking each person for one cause. Continue going through the rounds, getting more causes, until all ideas are exhausted.
- Encourage each person to participate in the brainstorming activity and to voice their own opinions.
- Note that the “five-whys” technique is often used in conjunction with the fishbone diagram – keep asking why until you get to the root cause.
- To help identify the root causes from all the ideas generated, consider a multi-voting technique such as having each team member identify the top three root causes. Ask each team member to place three tally marks or colored sticky dots on the fishbone next to what they believe are the root causes that could potentially be addressed.

Source: [How to Use the Fishbone Tool for Root Cause Analysis](#)

## PROBLEM TREE

The purpose of the Problem tree is to understand the causes and the effects of a problem.

### How does it work?

**Step 1.** Define the core problem and place a card with key words, a drawing or an object representing the core problem in the middle of the workspace. This corresponds to the trunk of the problem tree.

**Step 2.** Ask ‘Why has this problem occurred?’ Identify 4 or 5 causes directly responsible for the core problem. These are the first-level causes (or thickest roots) of the core problem. Describe each first-level cause on its own card using a drawing or a few key words, and add details as needed to the back of the card or on a flip chart. Place all the cards that show first-level causes in a row below the trunk showing the core problem.

**Step 3.** For each first-level cause, ask ‘Why has this occurred?’ The reasons are the second-level causes directly responsible for each first-level cause. Write (or draw) each second-level cause on its own

card using a few key words, and add details as needed to the back of the card or on a flip chart. Place the new cards in a row below the corresponding first-level causes.

**Step 4.** Use the same method (Step 3) to determine the causes directly responsible for each second-level cause. Place these third-level causes in a row below the corresponding second-level causes. Connect the first, second and third level causes with lines representing the thickest surface roots and the finer deeper roots of the core problem.

**Step 5.** Go through the same steps (Steps 2 to 4) to determine the first-level, second-level and third-level effects or implications (branches and fruit) of the core problem. Ask participants ‘What is the result or consequence of this problem (or this effect)?’ Keep in mind that effects of a core problem may include actions people are already taking in response to the situation, whether successful or not. Write each effect on its own card, and place the new cards in layered rows above the core problem. When noting an effect, avoid using words that emphasize the lack of a particular solution to the problem; describe instead the consequences of what is lacking.

**Step 6.** Review the result and look for causes and/or effects that fit into both the roots and the branches of the problem tree. These may point to loops or ‘vicious circles’ that reinforce each other through direct or indirect connections to the various levels of causes and effects.

**Step 7.** Identify the most important, the most pressing or the least difficult causes to handle. These may be priorities for action. Identify the effects that are most troubling to the people involved in the exercise, or that point to new opportunities. These may help to motivate and focus attention on the core problem and its causes.

Source: Chevalier, J. & Buckles, D. Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation. SAS Dialogue. Ottawa, March 2013. For more information see [here](#).

## FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

The purpose of the Force Field analysis is to understand the factors that contribute to a problem, a situation or a project and those that counteract it.

### How does it work?

**Step 1.** Define the topic and place a card with key words, a drawing or an object representing the topic inside a long horizontal bar created on the floor, the wall or on a large sheet of paper.

**Step 2.** Identify the factors that contribute to or drive the problem, situation or project. Free List and Pile Sort may help identify these factors. Create labels to represent each factor and place them above the horizontal bar. Write descriptions of the factors on the back of the labels or on a flip chart.

**Step 3.** Identify the factors that counteract the problem or play against the situation or project. Create labels to represent the factors and place them below the horizontal bar. Write descriptions of these counteracting factors on the back of the labels or on a flip chart.

**Step 4.** Rate each factor using scores from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong). To be more precise, identify indicators that define the meaning of each number on the scale. Record the reasons participants provide for each score. Create columns for each factor and show the score by varying the height of the columns.

**Step 5.** Use green dots to identify the factors that people have some control over. Increase the size of the dot when people have greater control over the factor. Use red dots for those over which people have little or no control. Use numbers from 1 (short term) to 3 (long term) to indicate how long it would take to act on a factor.

**Step 6.** Discuss ways to achieve key objectives by strengthening or reducing the factors at play. Consider starting with the factors that people have some control over or can be addressed in the short term.

Source: Chevalier, J. & Buckles, D. Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation. SAS Dialogue. Ottawa, March 2013.. For more information see [here](#).

### 3.1.3 Tools for identifying research inputs according to policy changes

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

This tool can help better decipher expected political behaviours from different stakeholders in specific policy phases.

**What is it?** Political Economy Analysis (PEA) is a powerful tool for improving the effectiveness of aid. Bridging the traditional concerns of politics and economics, it focuses on how power and resources are distributed and contested in different contexts, and the implications for development outcomes. It gets beneath the formal structures to reveal the underlying interests, incentives and institutions that enable or frustrate change. Such insights are important if we are to advance challenging agendas around governance, economic growth and service delivery.

Political economy analysis is particularly useful for development practitioners since it helps us to understand what drives political

behaviour, how this shapes particular policies and programmes, who are the main “winners” and “losers”, and what the implications are for development strategies and programmes. Specifically, it is concerned with understanding

- The interests and incentives facing different groups in society (and particularly political elites), and how these generate particular policy outcomes that may encourage or hinder development.
- The role that formal institutions (e.g. rule of law, elections) and informal social, political and cultural norms play in shaping human interaction and political and economic competition.
- The impact of values and ideas, including political ideologies, religion and cultural beliefs, on political behaviour and public policy.

In this way, political economy analysis helps us to understand how incentives, institutions and ideas shape political action and development outcomes in the countries where we work.

**How does it work?** There are an increasing number of political economy tools available to development agencies, some of which are tailored to specific operational purposes. Though there is some variation in emphasis, three major uses of PEA can be distinguished:

- Macro-level country analysis, to enhance general sensitivity to country context and understanding of the broad political-economy environment. This can be useful to inform country planning processes and the overall strategic direction of DFID country programmes.
- Sector-level analysis, to identify specific barriers and opportunities within particular sectors where DFID is working e.g. health, education, roads.
- Problem-driven analysis, geared to understanding and resolving a particular problem at the project level, or in relation to specific policy issue e.g. growth or public financial management reform.

For more information on PEA and different tools to apply it you can see [DFID \(2009\)](#) and [GSDRC \(2014\)](#).

## GENERAL PATHWAYS OF POLICY CHANGE

Our worldviews imply theories about how change will take place, whether or not they have been explicitly stated or documented as such.

Stachowiak has synthesized 10 social science theories of change relevant to advocacy and policy change efforts since they entail different ways of thinking about how policy change will take place.

These comprise two large types of theories: 1) Global theories are theories that explain how policy change occurs more broadly, and 2) Tactical theories are theories from various social science disciplines that apply to common advocacy tactics that are likely part of broader advocacy efforts or campaigns.

The author summarizes these pathways in the following matrix:

	THEORY (KEY AUTHORS)	DISCIPLINE	HOW CHANGE HAPPENS	WHEN THIS THEORY MAY BE USEFUL
TACTICAL THEORIES	Large Leaps or Punctuated Equilibrium theory (Baumgartner & Jones)	Political Science	Like seismic evolutionary shifts, significant changes in policy and institutions can occur when the right conditions are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large-scale policy change is the primary goal</li> <li>• You have strong media-related capacity</li> </ul>
	Policy Windows or Agenda-Setting theory (Kingdon)	Political Science	Policy can be changed during a window of opportunity when advocates can successfully connect two or more components of the policy process (e.g., the way a problem is defined, the policy solution to the problem, and/or the political climate of their issue).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can address multiple streams simultaneously (e.g., problem definition, policy solutions, and/or political climate)</li> <li>• You have internal capacity to create, identify, and act on policy windows</li> </ul>
	Coalition Theory or Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, Jenkins-Smith)	Political Science	Policy change happens through coordinated activity among a range of individuals with the same core policy beliefs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sympathetic administration is in office</li> <li>• You have a strong group of allies with a common goal</li> </ul>
	Power Politics or Power Elites theory (Mills, Domhoff)	Sociology	Policy change is made by working directly with those with power to make decisions or influence decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have one or more key allies in a position of power on the issue</li> <li>• Focus may be on incremental administrative or rule changes</li> </ul>
	Regime Theory (Stone)	Political Science	Policy change happens through the support and empowerment of policy makers by a close-knit body of influential individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You know or suspect that a coalition of non-politicians is deeply involved in policy making</li> <li>• You have access to or can become part of this coalition or regime</li> </ul>
GLOBAL THEORIES	Messaging and Frameworks or Prospect theory (Tversky & Kahneman)	Psychology	Individual's preferences will vary depending on how options are presented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue needs to be redefined as part of a larger campaign or effort</li> <li>• A key focus of the work is on increasing awareness, agreement on problem definition, or salience of an issue</li> </ul>
	Media Influence or Agenda-Setting theory (McCombs & Shaw)	Communications	Political issues on the public's agenda will depend on the extent of coverage a given issue receives by mass news media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have strong media-related capacity</li> <li>• You want to put the issue on the radar of the broader public</li> </ul>

GLOBAL THEORIES	Grassroots or Community Organizing theory (Alinsky, Biklen)	Social Psychology	Policy change is made through collective action by members of the community who work on changing problems affecting their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A distinct group of individuals is directly affected by an issue</li> <li>• Your organization's role in an issue is as a "convener" or "capacity- builder" rather than as a "driver"</li> </ul>
	Group Formation or Self-Categorization theory (Turner, Tajfel)	Social Psychology	Policy change can be achieved when individuals identify with groups and subsequently act in a way that is consistent with that social group or category membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are looking to build or tighten your base of support</li> <li>• Cohesion among your organization's members is a prerequisite for change</li> </ul>
	Diffusion theory or Diffusion of Innovations (Rogers)	Sociology	Change happens when a new idea for a program or policy is communicated to a critical mass, who perceives it as superseding the current policy/program (or lack thereof) and thus, adopts the idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus is on a new idea for a program or policy</li> <li>• You have trusted messengers and champions to model or communicate the innovation</li> </ul>

Source: Stachowiak (2013)

Understanding underlying assumptions and theories related to different ways of thinking about advocacy and policy work can help organizations more effectively choose strategies, focus evaluation efforts on critical intermediate outcomes, and ultimately be better positioned to achieve desired impact.

## THE POLICY PROBLEM FRAMEWORK

Hisschemöller and Hoppe (1995) have elaborated a simple but powerful categorization of policy problems. For this categorization, two dimensions are used: i) the relevant and available knowledge and 2) the norms and values at stake. The first dimension refers to whether there is or not certainty in regards to the knowledge available about the problem. The second dimension refers to whether there is agreement in relation to the values linked to the problem. As you can see, this classification refers to both a technical and a political (or cultural) perspective of policy problems. With these two categories in mind, four possible types of problems emerge:

- **Structured problems.** These are cases where the problem is clearly defined, there is someone in charge of solving it and a general agreement of what this solution would entail. These are many times considered technical problems where experts can play an important role in providing a solution. Examples of these problems could include regulations of health services, and road maintenance.
- **Unstructured problems.** These problems are the opposite of the former and are also labeled as "wicked", "ill-structured" and "messy". These problems are complex: there are no clear

boundaries, no specific actor responsible for solving them. There are conflicting values and knowledge that are part of an extensive debate. “Solving an unstructured problem requires problem structuring, which is essentially a political activity, to produce new insights on what the problem is about.” (p.43) Examples of this type might include the consolidation or separation of states, negative impacts of new technologies or climate change or complex democratic reform processes.

- ***Moderately Unstructured problems (lack of agreement on values)***. In these problems, there is a general confidence about the technical aspect of the problem, meaning certainty in relation to the knowledge, but no agreement on the values involved in the problem. These include, for example, issues such as how to implement a new program to support entrepreneurs or sexual education in public schools.
- ***Moderately Unstructured problems (uncertainty of knowledge)***. In these problems, there is agreement on the values, but no certainty about the knowledge or the technical aspect of the problem. An example of this problem is how to tackle HIV-AIDS. Another example of this might be the situation where there is a significant educated or youth brain drain from a country. The general opinion is that this should be stopped, but there is not a clear understanding of why it is occurring or how to tackle it.

		On norms and values at stake	
		Far from agreement	Close to agreement
On relevant and available knowledge	Far from certainty	Unstructured problems	Moderately structured problems ( <i>value agreement</i> )
	Close to certainty	Moderately structured problems ( <i>knowledge certainty</i> )	Structured problems

Source: Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995

Each type of problem entails possible uses of research:

	Structured	Moderately structured problems (value agreement)	Moderately structured problems (knowledge certainty)	Unstructured
Description	Stakeholders are ready to tackle the issue	Stakeholders share values, but have opposing knowledge.	Stakeholders do not agree on their values or priorities	Wicked: stakeholders do not know where to start.
What is the role of research?	Show clear options for policy design and how an idea can be implemented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing</li> <li>• Capacity</li> <li>• Technical knowledge</li> <li>• Maintaining support</li> </ul>	Make sense of existing knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather front-line evidence</li> <li>• Making sense of existing research</li> <li>• Knowledge translation</li> </ul>	Bring stakeholders together, find common ground among stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accomodating solutions</li> <li>• Long-term research agenda</li> </ul>	Structure ('domesticate') or prioritize parts of the problem to move forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front-line knowledge</li> <li>• Developing new visions</li> <li>• Frameworks</li> </ul>

Source: Ordoñez and Echt (2016)

### 3.1.4 Tools for strengthening coordination and collaboration around the use of research in policy making

#### DIALOGUE MAPPING

**What is it?** Dialogue Mapping (Conklin, 2006) is an approach to project work and policy design in which collective intelligence is achieved through conducting an issue-based exploration of the problem-solution. The technique works for any topic or problem, but seems to shine best when used in design tasks, that is, interactions focused on planning, solving a problem or creating something abstract such as software or policy.

Dialogue Mapping seeks to bring groups of people tasked with a specific program to a shared understanding of how they will approach it and make decisions based on capturing and displaying their discussion. The goal with Dialogue Mapping is not necessarily to reach a consensus on what action is to be taken, but to reach a common understanding of the problem in order to make reasoned decisions on what to do about the problem. This is best done with dialogue (rather than debate or discussion for example).

**How does it work?** Dialogue mapping is an interactive process for facilitating meeting discussions creating a shared map of the conversation. A facilitator uses the IBIS (Issue Based Information System) method to capture the key questions, ideas, and arguments that come up as the conversation unfolds, recording them in a graphical diagram for everyone in the meeting to see. A Dialogue Mapping session takes place in a regular meeting room and has three parts:

- A graphical hypertext software system designed for real-time hyperlinked semi-structured modelling;
- A Dialogue Mapper (the facilitator) who actively works with the group throughout the session, forming a bridge between the group's conversation and the representation of it as projected on a computer display screen;
- A conceptual framework which structures the knowledge and shapes the group's process; in the case of Dialogue Mapping, this is IBIS.

Three of the most critical technology elements in this alchemy are detecting new questions and making them explicit, validating the map with the group, and chunking material into sub-maps. These elements taken together allow the dialogue mapper to incorporate expressions of a wide-range of competing and contentious points of view into a single representation.

For more information on how to conduct a Dialogue mapping sessions see [here](#).

Source: Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems (Conklin, 2006). For more information see [here](#).

## VALIDATION

The purpose of this tool is to validate the results of an inquiry and decide whether more evidence and/or consensus are needed before action can be taken based on the results.

### How does it work?

**Step 1.** Review the overall results of an inquiry, including proposed actions.

**Step 2.** Prepare a graph (on the floor or a flip chart) by drawing a vertical line that crosses a horizontal line of equal length. Write 0 and 10 at the opposite ends of each line. Discuss and plot on the horizontal line the extent to which the inquiry is based on evidence (sound and sufficient information and analysis). A value of 10 would indicate that the inquiry is based on strong evidence. A value of 0 would show the opposite (the evidence is sketchy and unreliable).

**Step 3.** Discuss and plot on the vertical line the extent to which the inquiry is based on stakeholder consensus (participation and agreement on the conclusions). A value of 10 would indicate a strong consensus achieved through active stakeholder involvement in the inquiry and complete agreement with the conclusions. A value of 0 would show the opposite (no stakeholder involvement and/or strong disagreement with the conclusions). Consider and include in the rating past consultations used to inform the inquiry.

**Step 4.** Mark where the values from the two lines meet and label or place a drawing representing the results of the inquiry at this intersection.

**Step 5.** Use the same graph to plot the level of evidence and consensus needed to reach a firm decision and begin to act on the conclusions. Mark the place where the two desired values meet, and draw an arrow from the first mark to the second.

**Step 6.** Use the results of this exercise to identify what people are ready to decide and act on now. Then, identify what can be done to complete the inquiry to their satisfaction through (1) further information gathering and analysis and/or (2) further stakeholder involvement and stronger agreement. Keep in mind that not every context requires the same level of evidence and consensus before action can be taken.

#### Additional tips

Before deciding how much evidence and consensus is needed to reach a firm decision, discuss the factors that should influence the decision, such as how well the stakeholders understand the issue being analyzed, how much time and information is available, the urgency to act, the impact the inquiry conclusions have on stakeholder activities, how much stakeholder approval and involvement is required, etc.

Source: Chevalier, J. & Buckles, D. Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation. SAS Dialogue. Ottawa, March 2013.. For more information see [here](#).

## NEGOTIATION FAIR

The purpose of the Negotiation fair is to assess and negotiate what stakeholders can expect of each other.

#### How does it work?

**Step 1.** List all the key stakeholders (individuals or groups) that wish to work together to achieve common goals. Consider whether to include representatives of a group as a stakeholder different from those they represent and the community of all stakeholders as a

group with its own profile. Create a flip chart or 'post box' for each stakeholder able to participate in the exercise.

**Step 2.** Establish a rating scale for levels of interaction among stakeholders, from 0 to 3 or 0 to 5. Alternatively, use simple phrases or measurable objects (high, medium, low or colorful stickers, for instance) instead of numbers to set a scale.

**Step 3.** Ask each stakeholder to create one card for each other stakeholder. Each card should indicate who it is from and to whom it is addressed (see example).  
**Step 4** On each card, rate the current level of interaction with the other stakeholder (and the community of all stakeholders) and a desired or expected level of interaction. Members within a stakeholder group can also rate the current and expected levels of interaction among themselves. Record the ratings on the corresponding card. Determine the time needed to achieve the expected level of interaction.

**Step 5.** Write on the back of the card the reasons given for the two scores. Also describe what can be done to achieve the expected level of interaction. This should include offering to do something for the other stakeholder as well as saying what they would like to receive.

**Step 6.** Make a copy of each completed card for later discussions. Post each original card on the flip chart or in the 'post box' of the stakeholder the card is addressed to.

**Step 7.** Invite each stakeholder to read the cards they receive from others and decide which other stakeholder they would like to meet immediately to explore mutual expectations and reach agreements.

Source: Chevalier, J. & Buckles, D. Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation. SAS Dialogue. Ottawa, March 2013. For more information see [here](#).

## 3.2 Good practices<sup>4</sup>

The practices shared in this section are a result of a consultation with policymakers and others working who have developed specific mechanisms to promote the use of knowledge in policy. We are thankful for all those who generously described their experience and provided us with materials to present them in this paper. There are increasingly relevant and useful practices emerging in developing countries to deal with the different dimensions of context (we have included some from developed countries too due to their relevance). However there is seldom time or resources available to systematize them. This is a first and preliminary effort that reveals the potential

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<sup>4</sup> Most of these practices have been developed by Leandro Echt and Shahenda Sulliman based on interviews and with the help of the mentioned persons.

for South-South collaboration and the creation of a powerful community of practice in which change agents are able to empower each other through cross-learning.

Some experiences are relevant for more than one dimension and for different stages of an intervention. We have placed them below in one category to ease detection but as you go through them you might find useful ideas for others. Consider that some of the practices might suit more than one category.

As you will note we have not been able to detect practices to deal with macro-contextual factors (though many of those we share entail some degree of assessment of how those macro factors affect the initiative but no systematic approach was identified to make this more explicit) nor for enhancing organizational culture (this may be done implicitly throughout interventions but there is a need to better identify how to deal with more invisible but important factors such as incentives, motivations, etc.).

**Table 6. Practices to strengthen how research informs policy decisions**

	<b>Practices for seizing intra and inter-relationships with State and non-State agents</b>	<b>Practices for developing and strengthening capacity</b>	<b>Practices for management and processes that support the use of research in policy</b>	<b>Practices for securing and managing more resources to promote the interaction between research and policy</b>
<b>For the design of interventions</b>	<p><a href="#">Quipu Commission in Peru</a></p> <p><a href="#">Public Sector Advisory Council for research organizations in Peru</a></p> <p><a href="#">Establishment of the Health Policy Advisory Committee (HPAC) – Nigeria</a></p> <p><a href="#">Steering Committee for the Cape Town Central City Regeneration Initiative in South Africa</a></p> <p><a href="#">Cross-sector policy integration and cooperation in support of freshwater conservation in South Africa</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Capacity Building Training for Policymakers in Information and Communication Technology in Nigeria</a></p> <p><a href="#">IGAD Regional Initiative for Capacity Enhancement in South Sudan</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Responsive and cost-effective policy making in Kosovo</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Institute for Financial Policy's: a think tank within the public administration in Slovakia</a></p> <p><a href="#">Establishment of a Department of Research Services in Uganda</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Creation of a participatory information management system in Balochistan, Pakistan</a></p>
<b>For the implementation of interventions</b>	<p><a href="#">Minedu LAB, bringing innovation to education policy in Peru</a></p> <p><a href="#">Science Policy Interface Directorate in South Africa</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Building capacities of the Research Unit in the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment in Zimbabwe</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study tours in South Africa</a></p> <p><a href="#">Courses on evidence-based policy making and implementation for South African decision makers</a></p> <p><a href="#">Cross-government Trial Advice Panel in UK</a></p>		<p><a href="#">Ghana's Research, Statistics and Information Management Directorate in the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations</a></p>
<b>For the M&amp;E&amp;L of interventions</b>	<p><a href="#">Plan for the Enhancement of the Indigenous Territorial Development Program in Chile</a></p> <p><a href="#">UK's What Works Network</a></p>		<p><a href="#">Establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in Malawi</a></p>	

## 3.2.1 Practices for seizing intra and inter-relationships with State and non-State agents

### 3.2.1.1 For the design of interventions

#### QUIPU COMMISSION IN PERU

*Sub dimension: Formal channels of interaction with researchers and research institutions.*

**Where/When/Why:** The Quipu Commission was inaugurated in March 2012, promoted by a partnership by the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion (MIDIS, for its acronym in Spanish), the Ministry of Economics and Finances (MEF), Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) Jameel Abdul Latif Poverty action Lab (J-PAL) and Soluciones Empresariales para la Pobreza.

It was based on a previous experience in Chile: the Compass Commission, also set up by J-PAL in 2010 by request of the Ministry of Planning (MIDEPLAN). The goal for that instance was to set up an expert commission to identify Chile's challenges in terms of social policy and propose innovative public policies, and then test the impact through an experimental impact evaluation.

Created in October 2011, Peruvian MIDIS stood out for its evidence-based approach (with a strong emphasis on M&E processes and a strong academic background of civil servants). On another note, MEF was in charge of managing the results-oriented budget. Together, the two institutions controlled the social policy and the public expenditure in Peru. The partnership with three private organizations concerned with the use of evidence in decision making sought to create new institutional schemes to incorporate evidence in the discussion around Peruvian public policies.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The Quipu Commission sought to generate innovative proposals and empirical evidence that the Peruvian government could use to answer key policy questions and design and implement better public policies. To achieve this goals, MIDIS, MEF, IPA, J-PAL LAC and SEP brought together academics, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss the most pressing social issues and public policy questions in Peru and develop seven evidence-based policies that aim at resolving them.

The Quipu Commission's objectives were to:

- Identify key questions related to social development and inclusion that have yet to be answered.
- Identify effective interventions carried out in Peru and in other countries that address the identified policy questions or issues.
- Diagnose the strengths and shortcomings of social programs being implemented in Peru.
- Design innovative interventions or propose modifications to social programs, as well as rigorous evaluation designs to measure its impact.
- Choose viable interventions to implement and to evaluate rigorously.

**How it worked:** MIDIS and MEF convened commissions based on a public issue of their interest. Each Commission was formed by academics and researchers from national universities, think tanks and international organizations. It also gathered international advisors, government and private sector counterparts, and a support team from IPA and J-PAL. The process, which lasted three months, was developed in four stages:

- 1. Meetings between representatives of academia** (universities, think tanks and international organizations) **and government counterparts.** These meetings were spaces to diagnose and identify innovative policies based on evidence. In the case of commissions created to deal with specific problems in a territory, the work included field visits and interviews with officials and opinion leaders in that region or locality.
- 2. Policy proposals.** After the meetings, academics and policy makers jointly developed proposals with the technical assistance of international consultants and support team. These proposals were subject to the priorities set by the government but also aimed to answer unsolved policy and research questions. Prior to elaborating a proposal, researchers reviewed the academic literature on the issue at stake, in order to propose evidence-based solutions and evaluate the aspects of the program that had not been tested yet (therefore, not investing resources in answering a question that has already been solved). Proposals were also subject to rigorous methodological guidelines that require the development of monitoring strategies, designing a rigorous impact evaluation and an analysis of the feasibility and potential for scaling up, among others.

Seven proposals were designed, ranging from financial Inclusion in rural areas using point of sales technology to health practices in families for the prevention of children's malnutrition, the combat to chronic child malnutrition and reinforcement of school lunch program.

- 3. Feedback from policy makers and feasibility analysis.** In order to ensure the implementation of policy proposals from the Commission, the methodology provided that their design includes contributions from policy makers. Therefore, the technical teams of the sector or program in charge of implementation commented on the added value of the proposals. After the presentation of the proposals, the team of MIDIS, MEF, IPA, J-PAL and SEP prioritized them to proceed with a feasibility analysis and design of a pilot for implementation by the corresponding programs or sectors.

The first Quipu Commission was installed in March 2012, made up of six national and four international academics, as well as private sector representatives, who met for 12 weeks. Seven policy proposals were designed, which were socialized with sectors and social programs involved.

#### **Lessons:**

The successful experience of the Quipu Commission led to replicate such forums for dialogue at the regional level, considering the heterogeneity of contexts and specific needs of territories. In June 2013, the Quipu Regional Commission for VRAEM (for the

region's acronym in Spanish) was inaugurated. The specific urgencies of the region posed challenges that demanded solutions focused on the territory. The Commissions proposed five interventions. Funding for this edition was granted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Technical background of decision makers was crucial to raise their interest in meetings with academics and their proposals. Civil servants of the MIDIS presented this background. Political willingness was important for proposals to scale to the implementation stage.

#### Challenges:

- The fact that the commission had no authority or mechanisms, such as regulations, financial resources or budgetary control, to impose the implementation and evaluation of the interventions proposed to the relevant sectors within government, largely limited the commission's capacity to complete its cycle.
- The commission scheme was identified with the proposal development phase, so that the process seemed to finish with the presentation of final proposals. Therefore, time and resources for subsequent phases were underestimated. Particularly, there was a lack of financing of the stages following proposal development. Only one of the seven proposals was fully implemented and evaluated, due to the individual efforts or will of research teams.
- Such limitations were aggravated when cross-sectorial coordination is necessary in order to effectively implement the innovative interventions proposed by the commission, which is the case of social policy.

For more information about the Quipu Commission see [here](#).

Thanks to Dylan Ramshaw and Juan Manuel Hernández-Agramonte, Country Director and Deputy Country Director of IPA, and to Juan Manuel Arribas Berendsohn, Executive Director of SEP.

Other sources: Comisión QUIPU: [Políticas públicas basadas en evidencia 2012 - 2013](#) (in Spanish)

## PUBLIC SECTOR CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS IN PERU

*Sub dimension: Formal channels of interaction with researchers and research institutions.*

**Where/when/why:** The [Economic and Social Research Consortium](#) (known as CIES for its Spanish acronym) is a Peruvian think tank with 48 institutional members, including prestigious universities, research centers and think tanks located in twelve regions of Peru. CIES policy influence efforts are based on the dissemination of policy-relevant ideas resulting from CIES sponsored research, as well as on its convening capacity to generate multi-institutional spaces for policy engagement.

In 2008, CIES established the [Public Sector Consultative Council](#), which involves the participation of relevant sector representatives such as ministers, senior officials, congressmen, heads of key institutions such as the Central Bank and regulators. This council aims to strengthen the link between the academic and the public sector.

**Purpose/Objectives:** It is a multi-sector participatory space that intends to contribute to a better understanding of problems and generate broadly-shared visions, focusing on public-policy priorities and building capacity in the country.

Thus, discussions at council meetings focus on determining priority areas for economic and social research for the public sector with a view towards identifying research topics worthy of being funded through CIES's annual research grants competition. Through this body, CIES also interacts with ministers and senior officials of other governments in Latin America, researchers, representatives of civil society organizations, think tanks and universities worldwide.

**How it works:** The composition of the Council varies with the years, but always consists of policymakers working on different ministries and senior government officials (for instance, representatives of the Central Bank or of the Regional Governments). The Council's composition tries to reflect the priority policy issues addressed by CIES in topics such as environment, health, education, regulation, employment, poverty, decentralization, finance, and others. Of great importance is that members should offer technical expertise and be leaders within the Executive Branch (especially within the Cabinet of Ministers).

The meetings usually take place in the CIES offices. However, the last two meetings were held in the Prime Minister offices of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The agenda of the meetings is determined by CIES' Executive Office taking into account various factors: political and social context, important upcoming institutional events, and others.

Meetings are divided in two sections and have a brief format. Initially, CIES' shares the previous Council's demands and the research that has been conducted in response to those demands. Indeed, the priority areas selected by the Council are incorporated into CIES' [annual competition](#).

Afterwards, Ministers and other members of the Council are required to fill a form expressing their new requests for information and research. Specifically, they are asked to identify a research problem, a more specific topic within research questions, and finally point out the public policy or public organization/department to which the study is related.

Since 2008, ten Councils were organized, which covered a broad spectrum of policy research demands. For instance, in 2010 the Council recommended to focus on decentralization and the new role of state policies; policies promoting small and medium enterprises; and social and human development policies. In 2014, the Council set prioritised issues such as management of natural resources and economic growth, inclusive economic development, and joint programs between poverty alleviation and productive development.

Hand in hand with new research demands, each policy maker is asked to name a representative of their organizations or departments, who will be the nexus between CIES and the public agency in question.

If the topic needs to be refined or validated, a second meeting will be organized between CIES and the technical team of the different departments. A third meeting might take place if both parts consider that new stakeholders should be involved (especially in the case of multi sectorial policies).

Once the research topics are validated, CIES launches the call for its annual competition. After selecting winners, different workshops are organized in which the CIES team brings together researchers that will work on topics and technical teams of the organizations/departments in question. By supporting this direct relationship between researchers and policy makers, CIES promotes that the collected first-hand information has access to important data. The results are presented in next meetings of the Council.

#### Lessons:

- It should be noted that the political context is very important when devising this type of institutional mechanisms. In Peru, research is increasingly recognised as an input to inform decision making (mainly due to a “revolving door” scheme whereby researchers leave their institutions to enter politics and public office, but then return to academic life).
- Changing the venue of the Council meetings from CIES’ headquarters to the Ministries’ offices allowed other interested policymakers to join the Council’s work, thus promoting more integration between the Council’s work and the policymakers’ demands.
- Based on the experience of the Council’s experience, CIES promoted the creation of new five Advisory Councils in five regions of Peru.
- Rotating memberships and political and sectorial diversity, among other factors, should be borne in mind when considering creating similar mechanisms in order to ensure they are consistent with the purpose of generating relevant knowledge for policy making.

#### Challenges:

- Results of the research studies demanded by the Council are presented in the next Council meeting, which takes places one year after. By that moment, it might happen that the policy makers’ priorities have changed. Moreover, the members of the Council might also have changed. However, CIES seeks to ensure the presence of at least one representative of the policy area related to the researches being presented.

For more information see the [Council web site](#).

Thanks to Iliana Carrasco Díaz, CIES Communications and Institutional Relations Officer.

Other sources: [Echt and Carrasco Díaz, 2013](#).

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HEALTH POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HPAC) IN NIGERIA

*Sub dimension: Existence and types of policy forums and epistemic communities*

**Where/when/why:** The [Ebonyi State Health Policy Advisory Committee](#) (HPAC) was established in August 2011 in Ebonyi State, Nigeria, in August 2011. Its establishment followed a study by Ebonyi State University funded by the World Health Organization (WHO) which focused on improving the skills of policymakers in evidence-informed policy, and establishing enabling environments and capacity for health policy and systems research for policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders in the health sector.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The HPAC set out to provide the best available research evidence to policymakers, to answer questions on priority issues, and to make recommendations to the government, health ministry, and other stakeholders. Its objectives and mandate are to:

- Identify critical health issues of highest concern in Ebonyi State, evaluate health research findings, and make appropriate recommendations regarding their reliability in health policy formulation, keeping in view local implementation and applicability.
- Prepare policy briefs on critical health issues and stimulate public policy dialogues based on them, and make evidence-informed recommendations to the government of Ebonyi State and other relevant bodies.
- Advocate for routine analysis of Ebonyi State health policy implications at the state and local levels.

**How it works:** Committee meetings are scheduled at least once per quarter. The Committee provides a forum for the government, development partners, and other stakeholders to share information and experiences, discuss health policy, advise on implementation, and resolve disagreements or conflicts among health sector stakeholders. It works with both local and national decision makers to ensure that results are instrumental in moving effective policies and programmes forward in the Nigeria context.

As well as the development and dissemination of policy recommendations, the Committee also provides advice on research and training. For example the government asked researchers through the HPAC to provide information on programmes such as the Free Maternal Health Care programme to improve access and quality. The HPAC also serves as a bridge between researchers and policymakers, and researchers state that there is a free exchange of information between policymakers and researchers which was not seen as possible earlier.

Training to continually enhance the HPAC's capacity is provided – in 2012 a training workshop was held for HPAC members on developing and using policy briefs; this was followed up by a mentoring on health policy and health systems at Ebonyi State University; and in 2013 a policy dialogue involving key stakeholders in the health sector was delivered at which the participants identified the need for a performance measurement mechanism for the HPAC.

There are currently plans to develop a mechanism to formally measure the performance of the HPAC by periodically collecting and reporting information related to the HPAC's

performance. The purpose of this is to enable the HPAC to periodically consider its operational processes/strategies and see whether outcomes are in line with the Committee's purpose and intentions.

**Participating stakeholders:** The establishment of the HPAC followed a series of meetings between the policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders, there was a unanimous consensus for establishing a platform where policymakers and researchers could permanently collaborate. The creation of the HPAC was then proposed to the government and approved by the Ministry of Health, inaugurated in August 2011. The members of the committee members were drawn principally from the health ministry and from Ebonyi State University. It had 18 members at the time – 9 directors from the Ministry of Health, 5 senior researchers from Ebonyi State University, an NGO executive director, a director of public health in the local government service commission, the executive secretary of the AIDS control agency, and the State focal person of Millennium Development Goals. The 9 directors from the health ministry were selected by the Commissioner for Health based on their function and role in the ministry as key decision makers. The senior researchers from the University were the key members of our knowledge translation platform (KTP) who have been involved in the research and promotion of evidence-to-policy process in the last 8 years.

#### **Lessons:**

- An HPAC comprising of policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders in the health sector can serve as an effective mechanism to bridge the gap between policymakers and those who produce evidence. It can be used as a platform to promote inter-sectoral partnership, collaboration, and networking to facilitate evidence-to-policy links and increase the policy relevance of research.
- Consistent training of members of a HPAC and the institution of a performance measurement mechanism for the committee can contribute to improvement on its processes and activities.

#### **Challenges:**

- When there was no consensus among stakeholders on decisions to be made, more evidence was sought from published works and from experts involved in the area of interest. A sub-committee was constituted to assemble these evidence and make a presentation of the findings before the committee made its final decision.
- A challenge has been the question of how to fund the HPAC for the long-term future. This is being addressed by members through advocacy and sensitising the government, relevant stakeholders, and funders in order to support the HPAC. The plan is to sustain the HPC principally through funding from local and international donors, including the government through the Ministry of Health – discussions are continuously underway regarding this issue of sustainability.

Thanks to Dr. Jesse Uneke, Department of Medical Microbiology/Parasitology, Faculty of Clinical Medicine, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria.

For further information on HPAC, see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

## STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE CAPE TOWN CENTRAL CITY PROVINCIAL REGENERATION INITIATIVE (CTRI) IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Where/when/why:** An informal networking process with individuals within and outside government was initiated by the Minister of Transport and Public Works in order to formulate the terms of reference for the CTRI. The initial policy formation phase, led by key officials in the minister's department, occurred between December 2009 and May 2010.

**Purpose/Objectives:** A Steering Committee was established to assist the Department of Transport and Public Works' (DTPW) regeneration team. CTRI aimed to catalyse an urban regeneration initiative and the primary task of the Steering Committee was to write up this proposal in the form of a policy document.

**How it works:** The Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) was contracted by the Department of Transport and Public Works (DTPW) to constitute a Steering Committee that would assist the department's Regeneration Team. This included university academics, architects and planners from the consulting world. Expertise from these different sources was mobilised and integrated through a set of engagements that resulted in significant debate, exploration and synthesis. The process involved the following engagements:

- Regular meetings of a 'core' coordination group and less regular and more formal meetings of the broader Steering Committee to brainstorm key ideas and strategies.
- Increasingly frequent meetings later in the process which involved consultants working on the drafting of the policy document
- Research work undertaken to collect and read key planning documents, especially those regarding infrastructure
- Ongoing informal interactions with key stakeholder groups from the private sector, consulting industry and CCT
- A stakeholder workshop in April convened by CHEC that brought in key players from the property development industry, consulting firms and universities to discuss a draft policy framework
- Intense interactive engagements during the drafting phase which was concentrated into the months of April and May 2010.

A rapid process of interactive discovery and debate informed by intensive information gathering and stakeholder engagement resulted in the co-generation of a policy framework that has continued to inspire subsequent work and retain political support. Researchers were given space to investigate, raise questions, criticise the findings of consultants and facilitate learning processes that formed part of the joint planning process. In contrast to what consultants and some officials were saying, research by the academics showed that there were infrastructure constraints and that using 'business-as-usual' technologies would be expensive. This conclusion opened up the space for the

introduction of a sustainability perspective, referring specifically to new technologies for treating sewage, using water more efficiently, designing energy-efficient buildings, generating renewable energy, and recycling solid waste.

The final document was handed over to the DTPW in May 2010. It captured a vision for the central city as a space that needs to be productive, connected, innovative, cohesive, sustainable and safe. In October 2013, the first major Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative was announced to realise the CTRI vision. The project emerged from a group of officials at provincial and city level working with key individuals from the universities and the private sector.

#### Participating stakeholders:

- Academics mainly from the universities of Stellenbosch, Western Cape, and Cape Town
- Consultant architects and planners
- Department of Transport and Public Works (DTPW)
- Individuals working in the property development sector
- City of Cape Town (CCT)

#### Lessons:

- Although critical research by academics discovered sustainability issues related to technology and infrastructure, it's important to recognise the environment was conducive to the introduction of such ideas into the policy document. The provincial government had evolved a range of strategy documents expressing commitment to sustainable use of resources. These created a legitimating language that key politicians tended to draw on, as did the dense network of NGOs and university-based researchers dealing with sustainability issues in Cape Town. Without this discursive environment, it might not have been possible to introduce ideas into the CTRI policy document about sustainable urban infrastructure alternatives.
- When it came to research uptake, what mattered was not merely the content of the final report, but also the setting (meetings at CHEC offices and offices of the private sector) and the process (input from the university and property development sectors) which validated and legitimised the final product.

#### Challenges:

- Although expertise from different sources was utilised, the time period (9 months) was still seen as too short for the task to be a genuine transdisciplinary research process.
- A key criticism was the absence of non-governmental organizations or broader civil society sectors, and the fact that the CCT was only brought into the process towards the end which resulted in implementation delays.

For more information on CTRI see [here](#).

## CROSS-SECTOR POLICY INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION IN SUPPORT OF FRESHWATER CONSERVATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Sub dimensions: Coordination among agencies and Capacity to use evidence among different sections and departments*

**Where/When/Why:** In 2005, South Africa's Water Research Commission recognised the need to enable the inclusion of the systematic conservation of inland water ecosystems in the strategic planning processes of several sectors impacting on South Africa's freshwater biodiversity. Acknowledging the overlapping and sometimes conflicting sectoral policy mandates and the need for cooperative action, several government departments and national agencies were brought together to debate their mandates and strategies for managing and conserving freshwater ecosystems.

### **Purpose/Objectives:**

- To collaboratively develop a set of common operational objectives in which all stakeholders agree on what should be done and who is to be responsible and accountable for certain tasks.
- To address the reality of overlapping and conflicting sectoral policy mandates, and the need for cooperative action amongst South African government departments and agencies.

**How it works:** A number of South African government departments and national conservation and science agencies participated in a series of small discussion groups and 2 larger workshops to debate their respective mandates and strategies for managing and conserving freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity.

During the first workshop, participants together formulated a common vision and goal, accepting the need for effective cooperation as a fundamental condition for achieving good environmental governance, whilst acknowledging barriers to effective cooperation (such as the more people involved, the higher the chance of opposition). The initiation and facilitation of the overall process was taken on by two external intermediaries, namely a national funding agency (Water Research Commission) and a national research agency (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), whilst the collaborative workshops were chaired by a senior official from a lead participating department. This person showed a high level of intellectual interest in the issue, empathised with the operational realities of the different participants and espoused the desire for their department to work together with other actors for reasons of mutual and national benefit.

Scientists participated in a cross-sector dialogue with an aim to summarise scientific consensus and clarify uncertainties and disagreements in a form that was relevant to the respective policy contexts. The focus was to extract broad science-based principles that could help guide and harmonize future freshwater conservation efforts, rather than to focus on the specific technical methods that should be used in

freshwater biodiversity assessment and conservation planning. Care was taken not to advocate a particular scientific position or to prescribe specific policy options. Instead departmental representatives were allowed to digest the evidence on the basis of best available science and then, together, on an equal power base, negotiate the most feasible, desirable, and acceptable policy options. The relatively equal power base that existed between scientist and government officials was attributed to a long history of significant interaction between scientists and government in the water sector.

Consensus on the resulting cross-sector policy objectives was reached, despite the ‘uncertainty and lack of scientific validation’ around the 20% benchmark for conservation of major freshwater ecosystem types. While this issue needs to be resolved when implementing the cross-sector policy objectives, it demonstrates that sometimes providing uncertain scientific knowledge is better than not providing any scientific knowledge at all. The process led to the development of a hierarchical policy framework that links a national goal for conserving freshwater biodiversity through a set of cross-sector policy objectives, implementation principles, and operational policy recommendations.

**Participating stakeholders:** Participants included the national departments responsible for governing water, environment, biodiversity, agriculture, and development planning, and South African National Parks.

Participants were selected through a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. The top-down approach consisted of a letter from a senior official in a leading department (in the water resource management sector) to senior officials in other departments, requesting their participation and asking them to identify appropriate delegates. The bottom-up approach was derived from a social network trail that started with scientists and conservation practitioners and worked toward those individuals with decision making and policy responsibilities in the relevant departments. Individuals identified through the latter route were approached directly and asked to participate.

**Lessons:**

- Although the importance of individuals in the facilitation of inter-organizational relationships and dialogues was noted, this experience demonstrated the risks of overreliance on single individuals. A key lesson was that it is important to anchor the process within a lead agency to ensure the commitment required to support a long-term process even if a key individual is lost. A central challenge highlighted in this respect was formalising the process without stifling the informal learning that needs to take place across disciplinary and contextual boundaries. Similarly, an appropriate balance should be found between personality-based and inspirational building of political legitimacy and anchoring progress through bureaucratic mechanisms such as memoranda of understanding.

### Challenges:

- When the project came to an end with its set end date and fixed budget, so did the social process. The initial momentum of the remarkable knowledge-sharing and co-learning exercise whereby scientists and managers successfully established a common goal for the conservation of inland water biodiversity and associated cross-sector policy objectives has been lost and a considerable effort will have to be made to reignite a similar process in future. The maintenance and continuation of the achievements gained through the cross-sector policy objectives process therefore requires longer lasting support and legitimacy than the project budget and timeframe was able to provide.

For more information on this practice see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

### 3.2.1.2. For the implementation of interventions

#### **MINEDU LAB, BRINGING INNOVATION TO EDUCATION POLICY IN PERU**

*Sub dimension: Formal channels of interaction with researchers and research institutions*

**Where/When/Why:** Based on the experience of the Quipu Commissions, IPA, J-PAL and FORGE, in partnership with the Ministry of Education (Minedu) in Peru launched [Minedu LAB](#), an innovation lab for education policy housed within the government of Peru.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The Lab's mission is to promote innovative interventions informed by evidence to address the challenges faced by education policy. Its objective is to contribute to the identification and implementation of effective and efficient education policies through the use, generation and management of rigorous evidence.

**How it works:** The LAB establishes close ties with the academy. The collaborative Minedu LAB process combines the researchers' expertise with the political and operational experience of policymakers, ensuring that the innovations tested before scaling-up are informed by existing rigorous evidence and cutting-edge theories on education and behavioral economics.

The Minedu LAB team of four monitoring and evaluation professionals is nested inside the Ministry of Education Secretariat of Strategic Planning (SPE), which has responsibility of the M&E activities and the budgeting, managing both information and budget. The team receives guidance from a Research Advisory Board, composed of renowned international researchers with expertise in education economics, who provide general guidance on research lines to be pursued. Once these research lines are defined, the LAB engages with individual academics or research team for each specific project.

For each innovation being tested (agreed for every year with their expected impact), the team follows the following policy cycle: 1) Identification of problems to be solved, 2) Design of evidence-informed cost-effective interventions, 3) Implementation of cost-effective interventions, 4) Impact evaluation using administrative data, and 5) Scale up of effective interventions. Throughout each phase, the LAB and researchers communicate frequently via calls and meetings.

#### **Lessons:**

- The fact that the LAB is embedded in the Ministry generate incentives for the feasibility of proposals, and contributes to shape an organizational culture that takes care of the use of knowledge in policies. The same Ministry is interested in designing and evaluating policies. This a substantial difference with the Quipu Commission. Moreover, this institutional scheme ensures sustainability of the practice, beyond the external partners that helped promote it.
- Unlike the precedent Quipu Commission, the advantage of Minedu LAB is that the education policy is responsibility of a single institution. Thus, the challenges of intersectoriality are mitigated in this practice.
- Minedu LAB incorporates a culture of learning in public policy, thanks to systematic innovation and rigorous evaluation.

For more information about Minedu LAB see [here](#). Thanks to Dylan Ramshaw and Juan Manuel Hernández-Agramonte, Country Director and Deputy Country Director of IPA.

## SCIENCE POLICY INTERFACE DIRECTORATE IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Sub dimension: Formal channels of interaction with researchers and policymakers*

**Where/When/Why:** The South African Government through its Department of Environmental Affairs is committed to evidence based decision making through strengthening the science policy interface. South Africa has supported the establishment of the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) (IPBES), a body which assesses the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services it provides to society, in response to requests from decision makers. The objective is to provide policy relevant scientific knowledge to inform decision making.

In response to international obligations and within the DEA Environment Sector, Research and Development Framework, the Branch Biodiversity & Conservation has established a the Science Policy Interface Directorate.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The Directorate of Science Policy Interface provides overall strategic scientific intelligence and leadership through the coordination of specialist scientific advisory services and research for effective Biodiversity and Conservation decision making. Specific objectives include:

- To provide a science policy interface for the Biodiversity Sector
- To coordinate expertise across different sectors and research councils for Biodiversity Research
- To provide an analytical and advisory service on scientific developments and trends arising from SA's obligations in terms of biodiversity related Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- To monitor and evaluate the implementation of National Strategies, programmes and projects
- To coordinate and manage key flagship projects and programmes to enhance the intelligence/content of the sector.

**How it works:** Fourteen South African scientists have been appointed as experts to the 2014 - 2018 IPBES Programme of Work. These experts were nominated by the South African Government through a national process where both international IPBES criteria and national conditions were used in the selection process. The National process required nominated experts to have suitable qualifications and experience as well requirements to report on the intercessional work of the IPBES to the National focal point. In addition, national capacity building through mentorship and internship to support the transformation agenda in South Africa is a fundamental requirement for government endorsement of nominations. The acceptance of the South African experts to the implementation of the IPBES work program in most deliverables signifies a phenomenal achievement for South Africa. Nationally, the intention is that this core group of experts constitutes the national IPBES HUB and serve as advisors to Government on IPBES related matters.

The Department through the Directorate: Science Policy Interface has developed a National Biodiversity Research and Evidence Strategy for the period 2015-2025. The Branch Biodiversity and Conservation is therefore being piloted to strengthen the evidence base for decision-making and policy development. This strategy will be rolled out to all stakeholders for implementation.

National IPBES discussion round tables are convened at least twice a year for reporting against the biodiversity and evidence strategy and to address emerging science policy issues. These discussion round tables include the IPBES experts and other stakeholders from academia, research organizations, NGOs, provincial and sphere of government representatives. IPBES experts are requested to report on the intercessional work of the IPBES through a standardized reporting template that has been developed. The discussion round tables serve as further consultation for the development of the South African position at IPBES plenaries.

Emerging issues in the country both international and locally serve to inform the agenda of the discussion round tables. One such example of a discussion round table that was convened on an emerging issue was that of the science policy interface of Intensive Breeding in the Wild Life Sector. Intensive breeding of color variants of wildlife is likely to cause biological implications including the genetic accumulation of negative traits throughout the produced generations. Commercial game farmers argue that intensive farming gives them a market edge because of its economic value to the game farming and trophy hunting industries. This emerging issue posed a challenge to the Minister of Environmental Affairs, who called for a national dialogue between scientists, industry and government to deliberate on the various aspects of this practice. A tangible outcome is a science policy report which includes a set of recommendations to inform decision making and the subsequent policy development.

**Lessons:** Emerging from the deliberations of IPBES-4 which was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in February 2016, governments and member states need to be more stringent in their endorsement of experts to the IPBES work programme. This resulted from the unofficial release to the media of an embargoed process, particularly from a nominated expert who had private interests. These include consideration to managing conflict of interest as well as managing issues of national importance and intelligence

It is also a reality that the available experts for emerging issues are of limited supply. Further discussion are underway to ensure that regionally, the continent presents to IPBES, the most appropriate and competent experts. There has been a further call for Africa to develop a roster of experts that is frequently updated and accessible to regional member states.

South Africa is the host country for the technical support unit for the African regional assessment of IPBES, this allows it to explore the regional relevance of its science policy practices. It is intended that the Directorate Science Policy Interface expand its reach to the continent, already serving as an oversight function of the IPBES Technical

support Unit and within the mandate of the Department of Environmental Affairs, as a member state of the South African Development Community (SADC), African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and African Union (AU).

**Challenges:** The Directorate: Science Policy Interface is under resourced, with only one Director and one annual intern comprising its human resource. Hence, it relies heavily on the managed network for partnership. Government endorsed nominated experts are required to commit at least 20 % of their time to the IPBES intercessional work and be available and accessible for national processes. Reporting and participation is a requirement for government endorsement of experts. However, enforcement of this requirement is challenging and compliance is on a voluntary basis and dependent on availability and the priorities of experts. Presently, there is increased interest in science policy matters on a national basis. However, this can change given the present economic climate both locally and internationally. The science policy agenda therefore needs to grow and be mainstreamed in broader national processes in order to ensure its relevance and subsequent sustainability.

For more information see the [IPBES web page](#) and the [Department of Environmental Affairs web site](#).

Thanks to Kiruben Naicker, Director Science Policy Interface, Department of Environmental Affairs.

## PLAN FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN CHILE

*Sub dimension: status of consensus on the policy base*

**Purpose/Objectives:** In 2015 the [Institute for Agricultural Development](#) (INDAP) decided to embark on a process to enhance its existing program Indigenous Territorial Development, by incorporating evidence from its beneficiaries. The idea emerged from multiple conversations with beneficiaries, the Strategic Guidelines for INDAP (2014-2018) and ILO's Agreement 169.

The goal of PDTI is to support small farmers belonging to indigenous families, communities, associations or groups to strengthen their agricultural activities while respecting their worldview and procuring to increase their income and improve their quality of life.

Two objectives were established to this end:

- To conduct a dialogue process to define a Plan for the Enhancement PDTI, based on the vision and proposals of its beneficiaries (around 34,000)
- To build a practice of ongoing dialogue with the beneficiaries for the design and evaluation of the program

**How it worked:** the process followed four main stages:

1. **Convening by INDAP's team to representatives of existing Coordinating tables of PDTI and of traditional authorities of each region.** This was done by personal conversations and a formal invitation as well.
2. **Meetings among beneficiaries:** table representatives engaged in a dialogue with their communities related to the invitation to workshops
3. **First workshop** to gather and register proposals from representatives
4. **Second workshop** to present a draft Plan for the Enhancement of the PDTI and receive feedback

The first workshop was structured under two main sets of questions:

1. Has PDTI contributed to the welfare of your family and to the development of your community? How?
2. What is needed to enhance PDTI so that it can better contribute to the welfare of your family and to the development of your community?

To be really effective in documenting and synthesizing responses to these questions it is important to count with the adequate team and technology. To this end, INDAP hired a well-known think tank in rural development, [Rimisp](#) that developed a methodology for discourse analysis which consists of two phases:

1. A first classification of recurrent issues and groups of categories, applying a specific software

2. An analysis by 10 persons belonging to different disciplines that will produce two documents: a) Results: the most important needs and proposals that emerged from the process and b) Proposals for the adjustment of PDTI, including a conceptual section and principles to guide the adjustment (i.e. migrating from a system that allocates funds in a very segmented way to a community level investment fund) which will then be worked by INDAP to analyse feasibility, operational design, etc.

**Participating stakeholders:** 122 workshops were held throughout the country with the participation of more than 2700 representatives and authorities as well as staff from INDAP and a facilitator team.

#### **Lessons:**

- It is highly important to invite representatives with sufficient time ahead to allow them a proper consultation with their communities to gather views and proposals
- The inclusion of respected traditional authorities was key: they played a very important role brokering voices from their people and bringing legitimacy to the process
- Capacity development of the teams that facilitated workshops is very important to enable fruitful and productive dialogues.

#### **Challenges:**

- One was to assess how the evidence emerging from this consultation is aligned with traditional research findings/recommendations. They discovered that what emerged from the local communities did not contrast with traditional research and knowledge.
- Another challenge is how to deal with requests that exceed the roles, capacities and/or resources of INDAP, for example the drying of groundwater.
- Responding to the high demand to participate and control resources as well as to design their own projects along with resource allocation implies a risk for the State, because evidence shows that degree of corruption takes place in projects that are highly flexible. Also, there might be contradictions between what communities propose in their projects and what evidence reveals about their technical and economic viability. In this sense, as well as on assuming responsibilities that are new to some stakeholders, there is a need to develop capacity and share relevant knowledge.

For more information, see [PDTI](#)

Thanks to Octavio Sotomayor, National Director of the Institute for Rural Development and Ximena Quezada Morales, Consultant for Institute for Rural Development, Chile.

## UK'S WHAT WORKS NETWORK

*Sub dimension: Formal channels of interaction with researchers and research institutions*

**Where/when/why:** The [What Works Network](#) is a network of independent What Works Centres launched in UK in March 2013 to gather together, scrutinise, and share evidence on effective policy interventions. What Works is based on the principle that good decision-making should be informed by the best available evidence. If evidence is not available, decision-makers should use high quality methods to find out what works. What Works is a world first: it's the first time any government has taken a national approach to prioritising the use of evidence in decision-making.

**Purpose/Objectives:** With the leadership of the Cabinet Office, this initiative aims to improve the way government and other organizations create, share and use (or 'generate, transmit and adopt') high quality evidence for decision-making. The network, and its centres seek to make available the best evidence of 'what works' to the people who make decisions on public services at national and local levels. These people include, among others, government ministers, council leaders, doctors, head teachers, police chiefs, and children's services professionals.

**How it works:** The network is made up of 7 independent What Works Centres and 2 affiliate members. Together these centres cover policy areas (spanning health, justice, education, local economic growth, early intervention, wellbeing and ageing,) which receive public spending of more than £200 billion. They need to be independent of Government; and have a clear and relevant policy focus. The centres help to ensure that thorough, high quality, independently assessed evidence shapes decision-making at every level, by:

- Collating existing evidence on how effective policy programmes and practices are.
- Producing high quality synthesis reports and systematic reviews in areas where they do not currently exist.
- assessing how effective policies and practices are against an agreed set of outcomes
- Sharing findings in an accessible way.
- Encouraging practitioners, commissioners and policymakers to use these findings to inform their decisions.

The Centres are funded by a combination of government and non-government sources including the [Economic and Social Research Council \(ESRC\)](#) and the [Big Lottery Fund](#). The Network is promoted and supported by a What Works National Adviser and his team in the Cabinet Office.

In addition to working with the What Works Centres, the initiative supports government to make policy in a fundamentally different way: deliberately testing variations in approach, vigorously evaluating, and stopping things that don't work.

This includes:

- running a [Cross-Government Trial Advice Panel](#), with experts from across academia and government providing a free service for all civil servants to help test whether policies and programmes are working.
- sharing findings from the What Works Centres across government and promoting discussion on 'what works'.
- supporting a civil service with the skills, capability and commitment to use evidence effectively.
- helping policy makers to make informed judgements on investment in services that lead to impact and value for money for citizens.

#### Lessons:

- The range of different centres is reflected in their different sizes, sectors and remit (they include charities, university centres and arms-length bodies). This diversity offers the opportunity to learn from different approaches.
- What Works has statements of support from chief executives of local authorities, commissioners of public services, head teachers, police officers and others. There is also ministerial backing at Cabinet Office at HM Treasury. They launched the centres and prefaced the reports. This closeness to government is vital for the network's relevance.

#### Challenges:

- Maintaining independence, to avoid charges of 'policy-based evidence', biasing the evidence to political needs.
- Fostering demand for the supply of evidence.

For more information see the [Government of UK web site](#) and [Breckon \(2014\)](#).

## 3.2.2 Practices for developing and strengthening capacity

### 3.2.2.1. For the design of interventions

#### CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING FOR POLICYMAKERS IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN NIGERIA

*Sub dimension: Human resources*

**Where/when/why:** In 2014, capacity building workshops were developed in order to address a perceived lack of capacity on the use of ICT by health sector policymakers. This lack of capacity was seen as impeding the uptake of research evidence in the policymaking process. The workshops were delivered in Ebonyi State in April and May 2014 by senior academics from Ebonyi State University and a senior director from the Ministry of Health.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The objective of the study was to improve the knowledge and capacity of Nigerian policymakers to access and utilize policy relevant evidence. ICT tools were believed to facilitate communication and processing of information and sharing of knowledge, and the lack of capacity on the use of ICT was seen as an impediment to research uptake.

**How it works:** The training was delivered by five facilitators – four were senior academics (three had vast experience in evidence-informed policy and knowledge translation in Nigeria and one had vast experience in intersectoral collaboration in health policymaking), and one was a senior director from the Ministry of Health with vast experience working with the government in the formulation of policy.

70 participants were invited for the workshops and divided into two groups (a total of 52 participants attended in the end). These participants were career health policymakers selected on the basis of previous findings that demonstrated such policymakers played a vital role in the ‘evidence-to-policy’ process at the state and local government levels.

The first group took part in a two-day workshop in April 2014, and the second group in May 2014. A pre-workshop assessment questionnaire was administered before the training to assess the level of knowledge and capacity of the participants on the specific topics to be covered within the workshop. Topics included: the need for intersectoral collaboration in health policymaking; the benefits of ICT in EIPM; introduction to ICT use for evidence synthesis; and searching for health information and policy relevant evidence.

The format of the sessions involved PowerPoint presentations and handouts, with all lectures delivered in a simple and practical manner with no/little emphasis on complex models. Practical sessions were held in which participants used the internet to practice the acquisition of evidence from relevant electronic sources. A post-workshop questionnaire was administered at the end of the workshop. The analysis of

the two questionnaires showed a progressive increase in all areas of ICT capacity (for example, regarding the 'use of ICT for evidence synthesis' – participants improved in this area by 17-33%).

### Lessons:

Questionnaire findings have demonstrated that ICT training workshops can effectively enhance policymakers' ICT competence.

Whilst the training focused on improving the individual skills of policymakers to use evidence, there is also a need to encourage evidence use at the organizational level and promote a conducive organizational environment – e.g. through research collaboration with the university, commissioning research, or providing internet facilities.

### Challenges:

- The post-workshop assessment was conducted straight after the workshops, which was perhaps too short a time to assess the real impact of the training. A follow-up of participants to see how they were able to use the skills acquired may have been a better method of evaluation.

Thanks Dr. Jesse Uneke, Department of Medical Microbiology/Parasitology, Faculty of Clinical Medicine, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria.

For more information on this practice see [here](#).

## IGAD REGIONAL INITIATIVE FOR CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT IN SOUTH SUDAN

*Sub dimension: Human resources*

**Where/when/why:** A civil service capacity building programme was established by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in southern (now South) Sudan between 2010 and 2012. The prolonged conflict between northern and southern Sudan had left civil servants in southern Sudan with serious capacity constraints. A significant number of civil servants were former soldiers appointed based on their role in the conflict without having the necessary education, skills and competencies for public service - a study by the World Bank had estimated that 50% of civil servants lacked the necessary skills required for their function. The initiative was therefore established to strengthen the capacity of South Sudan's civil servants.

**Purpose/objectives:** The objective of the initiative was to support the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to place 200 civil servants from IGAD Member States on secondment with the GoSS to mentor and coach the southern Sudanese civil servants. This placement lasted for two years. The seconded civil servants were "twinned" with southern Sudanese civil servants to serve as a form of rapid capacity enhancement support to strengthen the institutional capacity of GoSS institutions to deliver services.

**How it works:** Three of South Sudan's neighbouring countries who were also IGAD members (Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) seconded and placed 199 civil servants in key functions identified by GoSS ministries themselves. Kenya deployed 79, Ethiopia 60, and Uganda 60. These were deployed to government institutions, ministries, the National Legislative Assembly, the HIV/AIDs Commission, and the Council of States. These civil servants were "twinned" with South Sudanese civil servants to ensure direct transfer of skills through on-the-job training using coaching and mentoring approaches.

The deployed civil servants worked with their South Sudanese counterparts to develop national strategic plans, draft policy frameworks for labour inspections and draft and review laws. They also contributed to the improvement of administrative systems such as records management, accounting and bookkeeping, and infection prevention practices in hospitals.

The deployed civil servants were recruited by a committee of IGAD member states led by the South Sudanese government who identified capacity gaps to be prioritised for the initiative through consultations with its ministries and other institutions. Performance assessments conducted by IGAD and the GoSS showed that the civil servants had played a significant role in supporting capacity building at the individual, institutional, and environment level.

### **Lessons:**

- Strong coordination between all the institutions involved is essential. The creation of forums for regular consultations with all levels of government to

ensure they are fully involved in project implementation and M&E would be beneficial.

- The diaspora can provide an appropriate alternative to ‘twinning’ other nationals when it comes to staff capacity and retention as they are also more likely to stay. Including a diaspora component in similar programmes in the future can contribute to capacity building by harnessing skills from qualified South Sudanese in the diaspora.

#### Challenges:

- The absence of institutional policy frameworks made it difficult for civil servants to clearly determine areas of intervention and prepare workplans. To address this gap, the civil servants worked to support the government to develop policy frameworks and strategic plans.
- In some cases, the deployed civil servants worked as routine staff to ‘fill gaps’ as mentee ‘twins’ were not available and the civil servants ended up working as routine staff. To counter this, they adopted a ‘group mentoring’ approach which ensured that each group had at least one mentee.

Thanks to Jok Madut, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Culture and Heritage in South Sudan.

For more information on IGAD see [here](#).

### 3.2.2.2. For the implementation of interventions

#### **BUILDING CAPACITIES OF THE RESEARCH UNIT IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH, INDIGENISATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN ZIMBABWE**

*Sub dimension: Human resources*

**Where/When/Why:** Data and research are identified as strategic priority areas in Zimbabwe's National Youth Policy, which highlights the "primacy of research, data and information...[for] development, empowerment of young people and their full integration in national affairs". Needs identified include the "collection, analysis, dissemination and use of socio-economic and demographic data on youth development" as well as the "promotion of relevant policy-oriented research on key youth issues". The Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment leads the implementation of the Youth Policy. The Ministry's Research, Policy Coordination and Impact Assessment Unit was established in 2014, with a mixed mandate which includes producing and using research to inform policy decisions; using focal points in other ministries to ensure mainstreaming of youth issues; and evaluating the impact of interventions. It is currently working on a number of projects, including baseline research on vocational training centres, research to inform the design of new youth information centres, and a comprehensive national situation analysis survey on youth issues.

The Unit partnered with the Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network (ZeipNET) to strengthen capacity for use of research evidence at both individual and organizational levels.

**Purpose/Objectives:** Discussions between ZeipNET and the Ministry around the need to strengthen capacity for use of research evidence began in 2013, and ZeipNET's engagement with the Ministry was instrumental in the creation of the Research Unit. ZeipNET's partnership with the Ministry covers training for the new unit's staff, support to the Director in developing processes and systems for the use of evidence, and a series of Policy Dialogue events. The programme was launched through a Sensitisation Workshop at the Ministry in August 2014.

**How it works:** ZeipNET and the Research Unit agreed on a holistic approach to develop the latter's capacities, which consisted of three levels: individual, processes and local environment.

At the individual level, ZeipNET has trained the staff of the Research Unit in skills to support evidence informed policymaking, including how to access, evaluate and communicate research evidence. In order to conduct the trainings, a toolkit with four modules was developed: 1) policy making, 2) setting for information, 3) assessing evidence, and 4) communicating evidence.

When it comes to processes, the Research Unit with support of ZeipNET has developed an Action Plan for evidence informed policy being implemented in 2015-2016. ZeipNET

is working directly with the Deputy Director for Youth Development to provide technical advice and support. Some of the key activities identified in the plan include developing an evidence strategy and set of procedures; advising on research uptake strategies for key pieces of research commissioned by the unit, and supporting a new series of breakfast meetings with youth NGOs.

In order to promote the knowledge local environment, the Ministry and ZeipNET held two Policy Dialogues: one on strengthening youth economic opportunities, and the other on the Zimbabwe Youth Council Review. In addition, the events have led to the formation of a Roundtable Action Group comprised of ZeipNET, the Ministry of Youth, and the Zimbabwe Youth Council to advocate for evidence use to support the Youth Council's work. Among other tasks, the Action Group helps identify best practices and global trends regarding youth.

### Lessons:

- The need for a robust approach for the use of research had been acknowledged in the Ministry for some time, and approaches have been internally debated. The collaboration of the ministry with external stakeholders such as ZeipNET re-introduced the debate. ZeipNET's support on skills development and organizational processes came at a time when there was demand for this support. The result is that the Ministry has been very involved in the programme.
- The partnership to foster the use of evidence in the Research Unit has benefited both from strong internal buy-in from the Deputy Director of the Research Unit, but also from external interest and engagement from a range of other government institutions, research organizations, NGOs and development partners who have engaged with the programme via Policy Dialogue events and a growing communications strategy.
- Building credibility and trust between the parts was crucial. Both parts have gradually built the trust throughout their working relationship. The level of access and trust required in Year 3 to work on sensitive internal processes is a valuable asset which has been built up throughout Years 1 and 2 of the project.
- A holistic and flexible approach to promote positive change is a key factor in supporting a sustainable and effective programme. The programme has taken a three-pronged approach with the Ministry, comprising individual skills training, support for organizational processes, and a broader public engagement initiative. This has enabled the parts to develop a multifaceted understanding of the Ministry's needs, and to identify and support links between different areas of the programme as and when they arise.

### Challenges:

- The new unit does not yet have the staff capacity or organizational processes in place to fully handle the Ministry's evidence requirements.
- It is dealing with a number of challenges shared by research units in other contexts, including limited funding and resources and lack of engagement with relevant research centres and civil society organizations.

- It does not yet have processes in place for determining evidence requirements, accessing or communicating the evidence.
- It faces a particular issue related to baseline data, as existing national data on youth is incomplete.
- The limited engagement and dialogue between the Ministry of Youth and other ministries.

For more information see [ZeipNET web site](#).

Thanks to Ronald Munatsi and Ndongwe Gilchriste, Director and Programme Manager of ZepiNET.

## STUDY TOURS IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Sub dimension: Leadership and Senior management*

**Where/When/Why:** The South African government has made extensive efforts to promote the use of evidence in policymaking, strengthened since 2009 with the establishment of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency. The DPME reports to the Standing Committee on Appropriations in the National Assembly.

With the leadership of the DPME, a range of new systems have been developed to promote planning, monitoring and evaluation in the public sector, starting with the first national development plan. Capacity building was a key pillar of this enterprise, both with the supply of evidence and promoting the demand for evidence. Around the latter, different strategies and activities have been explored, both with the Executive Branch and Parliament. DPME has been leading on the use of M&E, and is collaborating with the Department of Science and Technology around how to improve the research contribution to policy-making. One of the initiatives undertaken to support demand is the study tours.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The purpose of the study tours is that South African policy makers gain an in-depth understanding of the issues underlying successful processes of use of evidence in policy making in other countries. Specific objectives of the tours vary according to the DPME interests and the country of inspiration.

**How it works:** Study tours are typically 10-day trips to other countries to learn from them on a range of issues related to the use of evidence in policymaking.

For instance, in 2011 study tours were carried out to Mexico, Colombia, the US and Australia to learn from their experience in evaluation. These included the Deputy Minister and Director General, and directly led to the agreement to develop a national evaluation policy framework, adopted by Cabinet in 2011. In 2012 a study tour was organised by DPME with members of parliament to visit the US and Canada, in particular to see how the parliaments were using M&E information to support their oversight role. In 2013 a similar visit was carried out to Kenya and Uganda. In these visits, MPs met with Parliamentary Committees, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministries of Finance, Planning, line Ministries, among other stakeholders. These study tours proved very important at building the relationship between DPME and the parliamentary committee it reports to, and to help MPs to see the role M&E could play.

After each study tour, a [report](#) is produced which summarizes the experience and shares key lessons for South Africa, the Appropriations Committee/Parliament and the DPME.

For more information see [here](#). Thanks to Ian Goldman, Head of Evaluation and Research, DPME, Presidency of South Africa.

## COURSES ON EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN DECISION MAKERS

*Sub dimension: Senior management*

**Where/When/Why:** The South African government has made extensive efforts to promote the use of evidence in policymaking, strengthened since 2009 with the establishment of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency. The DPME reports to the Standing Committee on Appropriations in the National Assembly.

With the leadership of the DPME, a range of new systems have been developed to promote planning, monitoring and evaluation in the public sector, starting with the first national development plan. Capacity building was a key pillar of this enterprise, both with the supply of evidence and promoting the demand for evidence. Around the latter, different strategies and activities have been explored, both with the Executive Branch and Parliament. DPME has been leading on the use of M&E, and is collaborating with the Department of Science and Technology around how to improve the research contribution to policy-making. One of these initiatives is the [training of senior managers in evidence](#).

**Purpose/Objectives:** The training of senior managers in evidence looks to enhance their capacity to demand and use evidence. The training aims to help leaders understand how evidence can help them to make the best decisions about policies, programmes, services and budgets.

**How it works:** In partnership with the Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice of the University of Cape Town, a 3-day course targeting Directors General and Deputy Directors General (in practice the top 2-3 levels of the public service) is run twice a year as a high level introductory course to the use of evidence. Policy makers apply and a total of around 110 senior managers have participated to date.

The course introduces evidence-based policy making and implementation for decision makers. It examines what EBPM&I is, and how it differs from opinion based processes and critically engages with evidence processes within the policy cycle. The training also provides an overview of the key research and evaluation tools managers are likely to encounter and presents an overview of key data sources. The institutional culture and structures required to support more effective use of evidence in policy process, programmes and projects is also a subject of the course. Finally, the training creates opportunities for practical application of lessons learnt to strengthen current policy and implementation processes.

Presentations around these different topics are delivered by a broad range of people, from national academics at the university, to former and current senior policy makers working at government departments, NGO and private sector practitioners and international academics.

**Lessons:** The course has proven to be very important in helping to build a supportive environment for evidence, and has directly led to some important departments deciding to undertake evaluations, including National Treasury, Justice, and Home Affairs.

For more information see [here](#).

Thanks to Ian Goldman, Head of Evaluation and Research, DPME, Presidency of South Africa.

## CROSS-GOVERNMENT TRIAL ADVICE PANEL IN UK

*Sub dimension: Senior management*

**Where/When/Why:** The What Works Network in UK gathered a group of trialling experts from across government with 25 external academics, supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

**Purpose/Objectives:** The Cross-Government Trial Advice Panel will help civil servants to use evidence in decision-making. The experts will advise civil servants on using experimental and quasi-experimental methods. Their work aims to ensure that civil servants know whether their programmes and policies work and make best use of public money.

**How it works:** The Panel is composed by three parts. The Steering group with seven members with senior positions in the public sector, members of the What Works Centres and professors at universities. The Government members, with 20 representatives from different policy sectors and institutions. And 25 External experts, who came from universities and think tanks. These academics have first-hand experience of running high-quality trials. By partnering with the ESRC, the Cabinet Office has made use of the Council's convening power. The carefully selected group of academics come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds relevant to current trialling needs in government including, public health, clinical medicine, economics, statistics, education, international development, and crime and justice.

The panel offers departments a range of free services, including ongoing technical support to a select number of trials via small sub-committees of panel members; an email service where individual panel members can field specific technical questions posed by departments; and, depending on demand, drop-in "surgeries" within departments.

The Panel does not take on the full running or ownership of a trial: all trials are wholly owned by the Department that is running the trial. The panel just provides advice and support.

Rather than narrowly focus on RCTs, the panel advise on the best sort of trial or test to generate the most useful results, which could include RCT or not. Where experimental or quasi-experimental methods are not appropriate, the panel link to colleagues in the Cross-Government Evaluation Group to provide support and advice.

The panel work with existing analysis teams and link –where appropriate– to Department's analytical experts. Thus, the panel does not replace any of the functions of a Department's own analysis or trialling teams.

The panel provides advice and support but will not provide a robust quality assurance service or take any responsibility for the success of the trial.

All members of the Panel have signed a Memoranda of Understanding regarding confidentiality and data protection.

### Lessons:

- The Panel has wide cross-Government support from Ministers and the analytical and policy communities, being a good example of cross-Government collaboration to address a gap in provision.

### Challenges:

- For the panel to succeed in increasing the supply of evidence that informs policy making, it is critical there is sufficient demand at the right stage in the policy design process.

For more information see the [Government of UK web site](#).

## 3.2.3 Practices for management and processes that support the use of research in policy

### 3.2.3.1. For the design of interventions

#### RESPONSIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE POLICY MAKING IN KOSOVO

**Where/When/Why:** In September 2014 the think tank Democracy for Development (D4D) and the Government Office for Strategic Planning (OSP) started a project aimed at supporting government institutions in Kosovo in producing policy papers. Its name was “Responsive and Cost-Effective Policy Making in Kosovo- Only Good Concept Documents Bring A Good Outcome”.

The rationale behind the process was that the policy-making process in Kosovo had three challenges: (a) inclusion of vulnerable or marginalized groups in the public consultation, (b) encouraging more public consultations before the law is drafted or a decision is made (c) upgrade the quality of the policy papers in a way that is well integrated with the public consultations.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The main objective of the project was to draft three policy papers in a proper fashion including public consultations with wide inclusion of all interested groups with special focus on inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups and multi-stage decisions. Policy papers and their public discussion over potential remedies of public problems would open-up policy-making for scrutiny, building consensus, responsibility sharing, promoting national dialogue, improving decision-making, reducing costs and increasing the trust.

**How it worked:** D4D and the Government Office for Strategic Planning organized the work in five stages:

#### *1. Mapping/identification of partner agencies to work with*

The first stage of the project was the mapping and analysis of the situation regarding the use of evidence in public agencies. D4D identified two ministries which were keener to work with, and had the energy and the will: the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) and the Ministry of Diaspora (MoD). It was essential to find institutions that perceived the benefits of better policy-making as they could serve as the propellant for a wider change in the policy-making process.

The topics of the policy paper’s emerged from the discussions with the two ministries, under the condition that they picked a topic on which they were willing to adopt a policy based on evidence and public input. The Ministry of Diaspora requested assistance to help them with producing an evidence based policy paper for the topic of “Out of country voting”. The MLSW decided to focus on analysing the social assistance, pensions and employment scheme in Kosovo in comparison to other countries including policies implemented. The third concept document was done in cooperation with OSP and focused on managing public policies performance that would contribute to better and more effective government policies. From

these discussions with the ministries D4D prioritized which problems ought to be discussed in the policy paper and together they reached a general consensus on the working methodologies of the papers.

### *2. Focus groups to discuss policy papers*

The second stage of the project was the organization of three focus groups aimed at discussing three draft concept documents that were produced jointly with D4D, the ministries and the OSP. The focus groups consisted of relevant experts and ministries' staff, which helped verify the data and provide inputs and suggestions, and also allowed to involve policy staff in early stages of policy making.

### *3. Public Consultations around policy issues*

The third stage of the project was the organization of three public consultations with three purposes: (a) involved governmental institutions see the benefits of feedback from civic engagement, (b) the public acknowledges the benefits gained from participating in policy-making, and (c) a general consensus is achieved before a policy is decided on. Two types of public debates were organized in order to see which one is more useful for the future:

- a) Closed public debate with civil society, experts of the field, and other relevant stakeholders through personal invitations. This type of public debate produced more substantial feedback, however, it showed lack of diversity in opinions. The discussion was on a more advanced level.
- b) Open public debate with invitations through different media. The open public debate produced more discussion, and allowed for more input from those who are directly affected by the policy in discussion (e.g. pension beneficiaries, whilst discussing pension policies). Open public debates also enabled increased participation of marginalized groups.

### *4. Planning meetings to define policy papers' templates*

The fourth stage of the project was the organization of planning meetings with advisors of ministries and staff from the OSP. There was consensus on supporting each policy decision with concept documents. A policy paper template was developed in collaboration with the involved parts. The template's main point was also that there needs to be a section which is dedicated only to feedback from public discussions. The OSP led the presentation of the template to other institutions, which became a main tool within the policy process.

### *5. Presentation of policy papers to the media and wider public*

The fifth stage of the project was the organization of a meeting with journalists to present policy papers and discuss about the policy making process in Kosovo, and the ways that media could contribute to wider public interest in particular to certain policies developed by ministries. A second event was organized to launch the policy

papers and receive initial feedback from wider public. Copies of policy papers were distributed among journalists who were asked to give their opinion about them.

### **Lessons:**

#### **Mapping/identification of partner agencies to work with**

- The mapping of the situation regarding the use of evidence in public agencies helped the team get a better analysis to see which institutions are keener to collaborate with civil society. The ministries that were selected were keener, and saw the need for more evidence based research and also had an array of problems that needed intervention especially through thorough research.
- Even if the paper was written by external authors, the level of interest among key officials is key, in order for the paper to be used subsequently. After the publication, it's interesting to see ways in which the ministries go about using the findings.
- Capacities of civil servants are generally low and it is hard to expect them to conduct papers on their own except if they are given a very detailed template to follow (which D4D developed), and if they are given to the younger staff.
- The huge involvement of ministries in facilitating the process was a key factor that explains its success.

#### **Focus groups to discuss policy papers**

- Focus groups were not only helpful for gathering input but also for advocacy. Numerous stakeholders felt included and were constructive with the authorities too.

#### **Public Consultations around policy issues**

- The idea of having public consultations was beneficial for two reasons: a) the institutions received input and feedback on the potential policy options, and understood what the public regarded as problems, and b) it created a general consensus on which decision would attract more public acceptance. The discussion strengthened the collaboration between governmental institutions and civil society and provided the former with more evidence and facts. Also, the public was able to perceive in a more transparent way that the institutions are keen to work with them towards better policy-making. Furthermore, they could see why certain recommendations may be good but realistically and politically unfeasible (e.g. the diaspora representation in the parliament).
- Both types of public debates aforementioned have their pros and cons, and depending on the topic one type may be better than the other. One does not exclude the other, thus, also a combination of the two can be beneficial.
- Through this experience, public consultations were introduced as part of policy-making rather than to satisfy citizens need for participation.

#### **Planning meetings to define policy papers' templates**

- Developing a template for policy papers in a collaborative manner made it easier and more appealing for the ministries to produce policy papers. The

clarity of the template helped create more evidence-based and thorough papers, and contributed to the consistency among policy papers of different institutions and this facilitate access snf understanding by the public.

### Challenges:

#### Mapping/identification of partner agencies to work with

- One of the main challenges was to gather reliable data. Most of the data had to be reviewed several times before being included in the paper.
- The internal coordination within ministries remains a challenge particularly on the flow of information from higher level to lower levels of the ministries and what is expected from them concerning the policy paper.

#### Public Consultations around policy issues

- Public discussions are part of the policy cycle, but mostly they are done half-heartedly either due to the fear of inviting the real and possibly critical stakeholders, or due to the lack of understanding that this can bring better policies and benefit the decision-makers politically too.
- Even though the project sought to increase the participation of citizens in public consultations, specifically the vulnerable and marginalized groups, it could not be achieved entirely due to the latter's lack of participation. Another challenge was related to participation costs, since no travel budget was foreseen to bring stakeholders from other municipalities.

#### Planning meetings to define policy papers' templates

- There is already a practice and to change the official template requires political willingness at a higher level, a realization that policy papers are really needed inside the government (now considered by many as a nuisance), as well as an assessment that civil servants are able to produce them.

#### Presentation of policy papers to the media and wider public

- The discussion with journalists showed the need for better communication, since usually certain policies do not reach media at all, either deliberately or because it has become natural for certain institutions not to interact with media.

For more information see [D4D web site](#).

Thanks to Leon Malazogu, Executive Director of D4D, and to the D4D team.

## THE INSTITUTE FOR FINANCIAL POLICY: A THINK TANK WITHIN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN SLOVAKIA

*Sub dimension: Support from governmental agencies that produce data & research*

**Purpose/Objectives:** The [Institute for Financial Policy](#)'s (IFP) mission is to provide the Slovak government and public with reliable macroeconomic and fiscal analyses and forecasts. It also serves as a policy arm of the Finance Ministry (for instance, they provide policy advice and evidence if the Ministry wants to promote a specific tax change).

**How it works:** IFP is the most prominent government analytical unit. It functions a research institute at the Ministry of Finance and employs 30 full-time researchers. They have the constitutional duty to provide 3-year macro forecast and 3-year tax-forecast.

IFP consists of three units. The Macroeconomic Department (IFP1) produces analyses and forecasts development of the Slovak economy, e. g. GDP growth, inflation or unemployment. It looks into financial markets and financing of the Slovak government debt. The Tax and Fiscal Department (IFP2) develops analyses and forecasts revenues of the public budgets (taxes and social insurance), fiscal policy, public finance and its sustainability. Finally, the Structural and Expenditure Policies Department (IFP3) analyses government expenditures and structural policies, e. g. education, health or environment, from the Finance Ministry's perspective.

IFP's research agenda has three sources of demand: 1) When the Minister or Prime Minister want to know something, 2) Regular duties: they need to provide inputs for the budget process every year (legal duty), 3) Decisions made by senior people within IFP. Other possible demands are spending reviews and systematic assessments of value for money in public sector, which IFP is piloting at the moment.

The process of generating evidence for decision making follows three main phases: 1) Research production, 2) Review and scrutiny of findings (through articulation with academics, consultants, and people from sister institutions), and 3) Publication of research.

A significant part of IFP's outputs are internal memos (for Finance Minister and other decision makers). Nevertheless, they have three series of regular publications:

- **Economic Analysis:** large pieces of research, covering a complex issue (such as pension reform, labor market, tax systems). Two to four analysis of this type are produced per year.
- **Policy briefs:** much more policy oriented and focused on specific policy issues (certain policy change being evaluated). Dozens policy briefs are published per year.
- **Manuals:** very technical and analytical documents. For instance: How do you calculate progressive taxation?

These regular publications are intended for decisions makers at other executive or regulatory agencies, specialized media, and economic analysts.

**Lessons:**

- IFP's legal status and constitutional duty compel policy makers to base their decisions on the evidence and analysis produced by the institute.
- IFP is concerned with communication because they want to influence decision making by providing evidence. Working there people develop a "skill to put any kind of topic into one page". The more extended format for decision makers are one-page memos, with a systematized structure: title, first introductory paragraph and other four paragraphs, with pyramid structure. They train their staff, with a senior advisor of the Ministry who was also a former journalist. Memos are edited by senior people within IFP before reaching the decision maker.

For more information see the [IFP web site](#).

Thanks to Martin Filko, Director of IFP.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH SERVICES IN UGANDA

### Category:

*Sub dimension: Positions, including roles and responsibilities*

**Where/when/why:** In 1999, the Parliament of Uganda's Department of Library, Research and Information Services was established with a section of 12 researchers. In 2012, the research and library functions were split, creating a new Department of Research Services (DRS) with an approved staffing of up to 39 researchers. The DRS was created with a mandate to provide research services, data analysis and technical advice to committees, Members of Parliament and staff. The department also includes a new unit with the remit to cover science and technology issues to support MPs and specific committees.

**Purpose/Objectives:** The mission of the DRS is to foster Parliamentary business by providing well researched information and technical advice. Its strategic priorities focus on strengthening internal capacity at individual and organizational level as well as building external networks. Current priorities are to:

- Enhance the quality, availability and visibility of research services through expanding external networks with research institutes
- Strengthening management and information systems
- Strengthening research policies, systems and processes
- Establishing a rigorous reporting and M&E system
- Equipping researchers to effectively support Parliamentary business

**How it works:** The DRS' 34 researchers work in five sections which are structured to attract diverse expertise reflecting the Government's own ministries, departments and agencies. These are: Social Development, Legal and Political, Finance and Economy, Statistics, and Science and Technology. Each section supports related Committees, MPs and staff of Parliament with research services, data analysis and technical advice. This consists of provision of a wide range of outputs and services including committee briefs and reports (e.g. for public hearings or field visits), research reports (e.g. for motions and debates in the House or information about constituencies) bills analysis and policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation of government policies, and 'on the spot' technical advice.

The DRS is supported by the Institute of Parliamentary Studies (IPS), Parliament's newly established institutional body for delivering capacity building activities. IPS acts as a 'hub' for all the capacity building programmes within Parliament, standardising and assuring quality.

The DRS has in recent years collaborated with a range of external organizations at the national and international level to achieve its goals, including the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), and INASP to strengthen its EIPM capacity through trainings, the development of policy guidelines, and expert review and

updating of the DRS' internal manuals and processes. DRS staff are also partnering with the Uganda National Academy of Sciences to support the new Science and Technology Unit through a pairing scheme for researchers and a Research Week to raise awareness about the DRS among new MPs.

### Lessons:

The establishment and growth of the DRS was likely helped by the fact that there is strong support for research at the highest levels in Uganda (namely in [Vision 2040](#), the [National Development Plan](#), and [Parliament's Strategic Plan](#)).

The DRS has a strong culture of networking and learning and sees this as an integral part of its capacity development. The Department benefits from formal and informal collaborations with stakeholders in Uganda's strong national research system and also participates in a number of international forums and initiatives. For example, the Director was recently involved in the IPU's development of a global Guideline for Parliamentary Research Services.

### Challenges

- Internal information systems and workflow management remain a challenge for the DRS. Parliament as a whole is soon to put in place a new Parliamentary Business Workflow System which it is hoped will help address some of these issues.
- Although the DRS has seen rapid growth since 2012, with staff numbers increasing, new offices within Parliament, and overall strengthened capacity, it still suffers from limited visibility within Parliament. Some other staff and MPs are not aware of its enhanced scope and new capabilities. A Research Week in mid-2016 plans to address this issue.

Source: INASP 2015, 2016 (informal discussions/unpublished notes)

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF A MONITORING AND EVALUATION WORKING GROUP IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY IN MALAWI

*Sub dimension: Monitoring and evaluation*

**Where/when/why:** In 2006 a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Working Group was set up in Malawi in order to address the fragmented collection and production of food and nutrition security M&E information, and to feed it to stakeholders in sector ministries and NGOs. This Working Group was supported by the European Commission and coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security with external technical assistance.

**Purpose/Objectives:**

- To build the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to formulate and coordinate an integrated Food and National Security Policy for Malawi.
- To serve as a forum for coordination of the different stakeholders involved in data collection and analysis and carry out bi-annual reviews.

**How it works:** The Working Group collects and synthesises information coming in different formats, using different terminologies and covering different areas to create a uniform and consistent analysis. It aims to integrate information from various sources such as health statistics, nutrition, education and agriculture to determine what is happening to food and nutrition security in Malawi and the outputs and impacts from the FNSP.

The Working Group collects and analyses information on 57 indicators and involves more than 20 institutions. Each institution is given 2-4 indicators to update every 6 months. Some collect survey data, others routine administrative data, others national census data. The Working Group meets twice a year (March and September) and each meeting is a week-long. These serve as a forum for stakeholders to come together, bring their information, and perform joint analysis and produce an M&E report. Each meeting produces an M&E Working Group Report containing recommendations for strengthening design and implementation of the FNSP Policy. This report is then presented to the Information Systems Sub-Committee and a plenary session then makes policy recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet.

The M&E reports inform the government on issues such as humanitarian issues, agricultural production performance, and investment priorities to consider when budgeting for the next year. The report from the second yearly meeting (September) is expected to feed into the planning and budgeting cycle of government as budgetary allocations are done around January to March every year. Recommendations from this second meeting therefore tend to focus on informing government budgets for the coming year and priority areas.

The Technical Secretariat of the Food Security Joint Task Force coordinates meetings of the Working Group and provides an independent facilitator for the Working Group. Membership of the Working Group is comprised of organizations that collect information that is important for calculation and analysis of the identified FNSP impact and output indicators.

**Lessons:**

- This Working Group was seen as properly planned and budgeted for, with mechanisms in place for meetings and presenting information to the Information System sub-committee. This was identified as integral to it working well.

Thanks to Chisvo Munhamo, Managing Director Jimat Consult Private Limited, Zimbabwe.

For more information on FSNP see [here](#).

## 3.2.4 Practices for securing and managing more resources to promote the interaction between research and policy

### 3.2.4.1. For the design of interventions

#### CREATION OF A PARTICIPATORY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN

*Sub dimension: Technology*

**Where/when/why:** The Balochistan Trial District Management Project was a project implemented by the Government of Balochistan and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1998-2002 with the aim of supporting decentralisation in the Balochistan province in Pakistan. It was implemented in the districts of Jhal Magsi and Loralai in Balochistan. The principal objective of the project was to assess the type of institutional reforms and other changes required for the decentralisation of public sector service delivery and making them more effective.

**Purpose/Objectives:** As part of this project, a Participatory Information Management System (PIS) was created to address the lack of up-to-date data in Balochistan. Specific objectives of the PIS were to:

- Help identify gaps and disparities in service provision through the provision of data
- Draw communities into the planning process and create a sense of ownership and transparency in the district's decision-making process

**How it works:** The PIS consists of a Management Information System (MIS) with a Geographic Information System (GIS) interface. The software used includes Oracle, Visual FoxPro, MS Office and Arc View, whilst the hardware used includes 15 PCs, two global positioning systems, printers, a plotter, a digitiser, and an uninterruptible power supply. The PIS brings together village and household data on the distribution of public service services. Data collected from communities includes gender, educational level, occupation, vaccination, and access to schools, water, and health facilities. Once processed, the data can be used by local government decision makers to help plan, implement, manage and monitor public sector development activities at district level.

The GIS interface is used to present data not only to government officials, but also to communities with the intention of making them aware of community strengths, weaknesses and development potentials and priorities. The GIS holds data layers on water courses, roads, settlements, forests, cultivation, power and communications infrastructure.

**Participating stakeholders:**

- Project staff who developed the information system
- Local government officials who use the information from the system

- Community members who gather data from communities
- UNDP who funded the system's creation

#### Lessons:

- The availability and allocation of funds is vital for the development of such a system – in this case UNDP funding was critical to the system's development (the overall project cost \$171,000 – this includes staff costs, hardware, and software).
- The sustainability of the PIS (or any such system) also depends partly on the extent to which a more rational, objective culture of decision-making can be institutionalised in government.

#### Challenges:

- A lack of IT skills and IT access (particularly in villages) constrained the project.
- Some officials objected to the costs; this may relate to the decision-making culture of district government which was based around informal, political information rather than the more formal, rational information produced by the PIS.
- Disjuncture between the low-level staff being trained to operate the information system and the high-level staff who actually make the decisions.
- Mobility of trained staff whose skills are easily lost if they are transferred or seek more lucrative urban private sector jobs.

For more information on PIS see [here](#) and [here](#).

#### GHANA'S RESEARCH, STATISTICS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS

*Sub dimension: Existing formal channels to access and use evidence in policymaking*

**Purpose/objectives:** The RSIMD is the research and information dissemination wing of the ministry. It works to ensure that the formulation and review of policies is evidence-based and that recommendations address identified issues. Specific functions include:

- Conduct/commission research into topical and emerging employment/labour issues.
- Co-ordinate data collection initiatives related to topical employment/labour issues.
- Co-ordinate the production and dissemination of sector-relevant data/information in collaboration with the relevant institutions.

**How it works:** The RSMID serves as the main research and dissemination wing of Ghana's Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations. It coordinates, collates, analyses and disseminates employment and labour-related statistics for use by the Ministry and other social partners for policy formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

The Directorate established new measures for more effective collection and use of evidence in 2014. Since then it has started producing regular statistical reports using base data from all its associated departments, agencies and training institutions as well as the National Statistical Service and other relevant stakeholders. This data is then used to inform the ministry's decision-making.

The Directorate also works on capacity building for its staff. It has organised training and commissioned a needs assessment to ascertain the data/information management and research capacity of the Departments/Agencies/training institutions under the Ministry. The results of this will feed in to a Statistical Plan aimed at strengthening their capacity. In 2016, the RSIMD began working on building a documentation centre and a labour market information system as well as contributing to the Ministry's relaunch of its website to enhance public engagement.

The Assistant Director of the Directorate also works as an adjunct trainer at the Civil Service Training Centre (CSTC) which is the official training body for the Ghanaian Civil Service. As part of the VakaYiko project to strengthen use of evidence, CSTC is delivering a course on evidence-informed policy making (EIPM) with the Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS).

**Lessons:**

- The use of staff from the RSMID in trainings serves to create links between the CSTC and the Directorate, and these links have facilitated a learning process between the ministry and civil servants working on EIPM, CSTC, and non-governmental organizations such as GINKS and INASP.

### Challenges:

- A lack of understanding as to what constitutes evidence still exists to some extent within the ministry and the civil service. Staff from the Directorate identified a lack of appreciation for the power of data and research in decision making, and a reliance on tradition.
- Whilst the existence of the RSIMD in the ministry (and other RSIMD's in other ministries) means that the structures of institutions encourage the use of evidence, there are challenges at the individual level related to a lack of technical or 'critical' staff which were seen as weakening the RSIMD system.

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# Annex 1. Terminology

**Boundaries.** We set boundaries around everything we do; no task can be truly holistic and at some point we need to make a conscious or unconscious decision on what to leave in and what to leave out; boundaries delineate what we include or not include in a certain approach, project, etc. (Williams and Hof, 2016).

**Culture.** Culture is the set of shared basic assumptions learned by a group that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, is taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel the organizational problems (Schein, 2004).

**Emergence.** Emergence is a term that is used to describe events that are unpredictable, which seem to result from the interactions between elements, and which no one organization or individual can control.

**Evidence.** Evidence is located in the world: it is the set of observable events or conditions that allow an argument to be built for supporting a certain statement or statements.

**Information.** Information plays a mediating role between the evidence and knowledge: the set of facts and observations associated with an object becomes information, and information associated with a context and experience becomes knowledge (Carrion Maroto, 2002).

**Inter-relationships/interdependency.** This refers to how item within a situation connect with each other and with what implications for whom. These items can be people, things, ideas and resources which in systems language are often called agents.

**Knowledge regime.** Campbell and Petersen (2013:3) define knowledge regimes as “the organizational and institutional machinery that generates data, research, policy recommendations and other ideas that influence public debate and policymaking”.

**Knowledge.** Knowledge is located in the agents (both individuals and organizations): it is the set of information stored through experience or learning, that is, put in context.

**Organizational capacity.** This the ability of an organization to use its resources to perform (Lusthaus, 2002) – in our case: to design and implement public policies. It includes human resources and the legal framework that determines how resources can or cannot be used and establishes interactions between its members. Internal capacity plays a pivotal role in making the use of research possible (or not) as well as how it is seized.

**Organizational management and processes.** This refers to how each governmental institution organizes its work to achieve its mission and goals, from planning to evaluation. The way it is managed and the processes and mechanisms that are established to enable members to fulfil their roles and responsibilities can open up or not chances for evidence to interact with policy discussions and decisions making.

**Public policies.** Based on Oszlak and O'Donnell (1976), we conceive public policies as government actions resulting from the way it handles and settles disputes among different players within a framework of a certain distribution of power. (See also Chapter 5.)

**Research.** Research is a process. It can be defined as the search and generation of knowledge through an intellectual activity characterized by innovation of ideas, the use of rigorous methods and the validation and critical judgment of peers. Thus, research is a process that, using the available evidence and information, seeks to contribute to the generation of knowledge.

**Systems thinking.** Is the art and science of making reliable inferences about behaviour by developing an increasingly deep understanding of underlying structure. Systems thinking utilizes habits, tools and concepts to develop an understanding of the interdependent structures of dynamic systems.

# Annex 2. Capacity building on change management

We share here a set of capacity development activities related to change management that could be worth exploring for those interested in learning more about how to lead and conduct changes for a better use of knowledge in policy.

## [Leadership, Organizing and Action: Leading Change](#)

This is a 14-week Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education online program designed to help leaders of civic associations, advocacy groups, and social movements learn how to organize communities that can mobilize power to make change.

## [Programme: Leading change. Leading yourself and others through the practical and emotional change challenges](#)

Leading Change is a fundamental part of being a leader. Ask any leader what they are currently sponsoring, leading and managing, and they are likely to list changing culture, values, strategy, structure, people, processes etc. etc. etc. Change can be engaging, energising, and inspiring. And also be tiring, frustrating, and disruptive, not only for those on the end of it, but also those responsible for leading it.

Change is about creating new ways of working and behaviours, whilst giving up familiar methods and 'mind-sets,' with uncertainty and ambiguity in between. Leaders need to be able to use a variety of tools and techniques to support themselves and their teams through the technical and emotional challenges of change.

This practical programme explores planned and emergent approaches to change. It considers how complex, adaptive organisational systems respond to change, and how individuals psychologically respond to change. It develops your knowledge and skills in influencing, managing conflict, using power, and political awareness. The programme then supports you to integrate these insights into your leadership style. Throughout the programme you will apply your learning to your current change challenges.

## [Leading Successful Change from INSEAD](#)

Leading Successful Change is a three-day programme designed to help you execute change more effectively in your organisation. You will learn about frameworks and tools that you can apply to lead change effectively; analyse different types of change - crisis, reactionary, anticipatory – and their different dynamics; and examine peoples' attitudes towards change – from early adopters

to hard-core resistors. This programme is also designed to help you analyse different sources of resistance and look at how to create change strategies that factor in the different, non-linear dynamics of a change process over time. Specifically, the programme helps you to enhance your skills in the area of understanding peoples' motivations, creating and sustaining a positive momentum for change and building broad networks of support.

### [Inclusive Leadership Training](#)

This three-course series is directed at individuals at all levels. Learners will learn how to apply an inclusive leadership mindset—the “EACH mindset”—which includes leadership behaviors of Empowerment, Accountability, Courage, and Humility. Through learning and understanding the Catalyst EACH mindset, you will have the opportunity to hone in on and practice skill-building inclusive behaviors that will help you foster team citizenship and innovation at work and in all parts of your life.

### [Inclusive Leadership Training: Leading with Effective Communication](#)

What does it take to inspire others, promote a novel idea, or even have a difficult conversation? How can you position yourself as a leader through inclusive communication? How do you know that the message you are intending to send is what is being received? Join Catalyst experts to explore this topic and the important role communication plays in inclusive leadership.

### [Storytelling for Change](#)

Storytelling for Change is a 6 module course that will teach you storytelling techniques for how to be a better public speaker and connect with your audience whether you're in a meeting with one person or in a presentation to hundreds of people. Acumen and The Ariel Group have created a hands-on course to help you develop your skills as a storyteller. Whether you work in an office, making presentations in the boardroom, as a teacher with 30 to 300 students, interacting with customers, or one-on-one with individuals, knowing how to tell a story in a compelling way will bring you closer to your audience.

Acumen believes that storytelling is an essential tool for changing the way the world tackles poverty because it starts with changing the conversations around what we see, hear, feel and know to be true. Change leaders see the world's potential, and tell powerful stories that inspire action.

## Literature on change management

### [Top 20 Best Books on Managing Change](#)

The top twenty list below is rendered in reverse date order. A short description of the book is provided but much more information can be obtained by clicking on the book image (which takes the interested reader to the [AMAZON](#) page for each book).

[HBR's 10 Must Reads on Change Management](#) (including featured article "Leading Change," by John P. Kotter)

70% of all change initiatives fail. But the odds turn in your company's favor once you understand that change is a multi-stage process--not an event--and that persuasion is key to establishing a sense of urgency, winning support, and silencing naysayers. We've combed through hundreds of Harvard Business Review articles on change management and selected the most important ones to help you lead your organization through transformation. This collection of best-selling articles includes: featured article "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail" by John P. Kotter, "Change Through Persuasion," "Leading Change When Business Is Good: An Interview with Samuel J. Palmisano," "Radical Change, the Quiet Way," "Tipping Point Leadership," "A Survival Guide for Leaders," "The Real Reason People Won't Change," "Cracking the Code of Change," "The Hard Side of Change Management," and "Why Change Programs Don't Produce Change."

# Annex 3. Phases of change for organizational capacity

Realistic timeframe	Key Objectives	Indicative actions	Responsibility
Short term achievements expected 2011 – 2014 and ongoing	<p>Strengthening the major Balitbang.</p> <p>Strengthening the research and policy functions of Ministries without a Balitbang.</p> <p>Enhanced coordination and sharing of research within and between Ministries and among development partners and NGOs who commission, produce and use research.</p>	<p>Needs assessment; establish partnership arrangements; donor and development partner coordination; skills upgrading in analysis and interpretation eg for secondary analysis of large data e-sets such as those available from the Bureau of Census (BPS); scholarships, short courses, study visits and support of existing in-house training, production of manuals and standard operating procedures; revitalising and supporting networks; supporting the communications functions; regional cooperative ventures.</p> <p>Strengthening the regional units (Health) and the research networks (Education) of the Balitbang through increased access to training at various levels; promotion of the value of local policy research; short course, scholarships and other awards.</p> <p>Supporting dialogue within the Ministry on the coordination of research and the role of the Balitbang and others in generating policy advice; supporting advocacy by the Balitbang for adequate resources including a line item in the budget to enable them to respond quickly and flexibly to emergent needs of the Minister; facilitating links between the Balitbang to share training modules, manuals, strategies for regional strengthening and communications, especially for Ministries without Balitbang.</p> <p>Establishment of case studies and baselines to monitor progress as part of good practice. Consider Clearing House models that may be applicable for Indonesia.</p>	<p>Ministries of Health, Education, Research and Technology and National Research Institute with support of AusAID and others.</p> <p>Coordination with LIPI and BPPT*</p> <p>Strategic partnerships with higher education institutions and research and data organizations eg ACER in Australia for learning outcomes data and BPS as the source of population data sets in Indonesia.</p> <p>Education Sector Working Group, Thematic Education Dialogue. Health Sector Working group (to be established) and other forums for dialogue.</p> <p>Bappenas</p>

<p><b>Medium term achievements expected (2015 – 2018) and ongoing</b></p>	<p>More highly qualified researchers as a result of reforms related to the qualifications, conditions, remunerations and pathways for knowledge workers in the civil service.</p> <p>More highly qualified researchers through increased efficiency and effectiveness of universities in leading and supporting the preparation of high quality researchers.</p> <p>Targeted support to the higher education sector, research centres and private research institutes as producers of knowledge.</p>	<p>Support for reform efforts by the Ministry of Apparatus to improve the conditions, remunerations and pathways for knowledge workers.</p> <p>Technical assistance to accelerate the process, evaluate the pilots and highlight good practice and successes. Awards for and communications of successes and outcomes.</p> <p>Provide incentives and support for universities to invest in the teaching of policy research skills. Incentives could include the establishment of Chairs and institutes at a small number of universities, scholarships, awards and twinning with international universities; opportunities to undertake major, prestigious research activities funded by AusAID.</p> <p>Enhance writing and publication skills through short course and in-house expertise. Consider provision of embedded TA to enhance the quality of publications and papers.</p> <p>Review the role and feasibility of establishing one or more additional Think Tanks similar to SMERU. Support small research institutes and private sector businesses to expand their skills.</p> <p>Ensure all programs include a sub-national focus matched with GOI decentralisation agenda.</p>	<p>Ministry of Research and Technology.</p> <p>Ministry of Apparatus, Ministry of Finance, relevant line Ministries and Agencies.</p> <p>DG/Ministry of Higher Education, Stakeholders such as the Rectors, selected universities and research institutes.</p> <p>Private sector.</p> <p>AusAID and DEWAR, Universities in Australia, ACER, NCVER.</p>
<p><b>Long term achievements expected (2019- 2024) and ongoing work</b></p>	<p>A culture of enquiry, research, thinking skills, innovation and entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>Collaborative planning with the Ministry of Education regarding curriculum, teacher training, awards programs and study opportunities to highlight critical thinking. Focus on assessment of these skills as measured on international tests. Promote research and entrepreneurship in communities. Plan for engagement of the private sector and philanthropic investment in the knowledge sector.</p>	<p>Ministry of National Education</p> <p>Bappenas</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>AusAID and other partners.</p>

\* BPPT: Agency for Research and Assessment of Technology. Note BPPT, LIPI and various government research offices (such as Mapping and Survey National Coordination Board, Atomic Energy Board) are under the Ministry of Research and Technology.