Doing Research Assessments

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH SYSTEMS

Assessing and Benchmarking Social Science Research Systems

Doing Research is an initiative of the Global Development Network (GDN) that aims to assess systematically how the features of the national research system impact the capacity to produce, diffuse and use quality social science research to the benefit of social and economic development. A pilot phase (2014-2017) in 13 countries was supported by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). With the ongoing implementation of Doing Research Assessments in Bolivia, Indonesia, Nigeria and Myanmar, the program has now entered its 'proof-of-concept' phase (Jan 2018 - Dec 2019).

Bridging the research gap and improving development policies

The implementation of the global agenda for sustainable development requires local research capacities to ensure that the scientific community is equipped to critically analyze development and policy challenges, and to accompany actions and reforms with contextualized knowledge of the local environment. Strengthening the knowledge base in developing countries, with the aim to build a critical mass of researchers, is an important objective that requires an understanding of contextual

and systemic factors of the enabling environment for doing research. We have little systematic information about the state of health of social science research in most countries, except a few developed ones. An in-depth analysis of research systems is key to understanding how to bridge this gap and lift up the research that is generated in developing countries. Research systems analyses can help policymakers, donors and academics answer the question of '*What can be done to further generate and mainstream local research as a key input to public debate and sustainable human development policies?*' The Doing Research Assessment is the methodology developed by GDN to study the research system, after its pilot in 13 countries. It includes three steps to analyze the factors that impact the social science research system in a given country or region and will lead to several knowledge outputs and awareness raising efforts.

Steps and activities to implement a Doing Research Assessment

Context analysis

Mapping of research actors

Doing Research Framework

} Collection of new data at country level

Publication of the Doing Research Assessment

National seminar and dissemination

Doing Research Framework: the core of the assessment

The Doing Research Framework is a mixed method research module that allows a contextualized comparative enquiry into a national research system, looking at key factors that determine the production, diffusion and uptake of social science. It would typically serve as a magnifying glass to identify aspects that need attention of the regulator, or to provide a baseline for strategizing investments in capacity building for research production, its diffusion or its use.

	1. Production	2. Diffusion	3. Policy uptake
Inputs	1.1 Research inputs	2.1 Actors & networks	3.1 Policy-friendly research
Activities	1.2 Research culture and support services	2.2 Research communication practices	3.2 Research-based policy making
Outputs	1.3 Research output & training	2.3 Research communication products	3.3 Research-based policy tools
Outcomes	1.4 Opportunities & sustainability	2.4 Popularization of sciences	3.4 Research for better policies

Doing Research Assessment framework and its indicators

FACTOR	*INDICATORS*	TYPE	SOURCES
1. Production (generation) (1/3)			
1.1 Research inputs (30% of the production score) People and resources needed to produce robust social science research			
1.1.a People	• *No. of social science researchers, per million active people* • *% of social science researchers with PhD* • *% of female researchers*	Ratio % %	Desk review/UIS Desk review/Survey Desk review/UIS
1.1.b Funding	• *Government Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) in social sciences, per researcher*	Absolute	Desk review/UIS
1.1.c Infrastructure and data	• *Quality of access to data* • *% of open access output* • *Quality of research infrastructure*	Rating % Rating	Survey Scopus (SciMago)/Survey Survey
1.1.d Time for research	• *Time allocated to research*	%	Surveys + interviews
1.2 Research culture and support (30% of the production score) Set of cultural rules and principles, activities and interactions supporting the production of research.			
1.2.a Institutions and policy	• *Quality of a social science research body* • *Quality of national research policy*	Rating Rating	Desk review + Survey Desk review + Survey
1.2.b Peer review culture	• *Quality of mentoring* • *No. of peer-reviewed publications, per researcher*	Rating Absolute	Survey + interviews Scopus/Survey
1.2.c Capacity building	• *Development of research capacities* • *Funding for Research Capacity Building, per researcher*	Rating Absolute	Survey + interviews Desk review
1.2.d Research support and administration	• *Quality of administrative support*	Rating	Survey + interviews

FACTOR	*INDICATORS*	TYPE	SOURCES
1.3 Research output and training (20% of the production scores) Products of scientific research (publications) and contribution of research to the higher education system (research training)			
1.3.a Academic output	• *No. of documents published in journals, per researcher* • *No. of citations in journals, per document*	Absolute Absolute	Scopus (SciMago) + Google Scholar + Survey Scopus (SciMago) + Google Scholar + Survey
1.3.b Research training	• *% of university staff with PhDs* • *Duration of continuous research training* • *Advanced degree students ratio graduated/ enrolled*	% Absolute %	Survey Survey Desk review
1.4 Opportunities and sustainability (20% of the production score) End result: there are skilled analysts working in all the main sectors, providing opportunities and an interest in the production of new locally-produced research.			
1.4.a Researcher job market	• *Perceptions of career opportunities* • *Quality of incentive system to produce research* • *No. of researchers working outside higher education, per million active people*	Rating Rating Absolute	Survey Survey/interviews Desk review
1.4.b Research evaluation	• *Existence of national standards for research quality and practice*	Y/N	Desk review + survey
2. Diffusion (debate) (1/3)			
2.1 Actors and networks (20%) Diversity of actors, collaboration and networking necessary to foster healthy debate based on scientific evidence			
2.1.a National geography of research	• *Concentration of researchers*	Index	Desk review
2.1.b Diversity of actors and collaboration	• *Level of diversity of research actors* • *Inclusiveness of social issue policy dialogue* • *Volume of cross-sectoral collaboration (no. of co-authors)*	Rating Rating Absolute	Survey Survey + interviews Survey + interviews
2.1.c Research communication skills	• *No. of communication trainings organized in a year* • *Quality of research communication skills and training*	Absolute Rating	Survey + interviews Survey + interviews
2.2 Research communication practices (30%) Activities and structures supporting the wide communication of research.			
2.2.a Local journals	• *No. of journals in social science in the region, per researcher* • *No. of national journals in the local language*	Absolute Absolute	Desk review Desk review
2.2.b International exposure	• *% of international collaboration in social science* • *No. of international research projects, per institution* • *Membership in networks, per researcher*	% Absolute Absolute	Scopus (SciMago) Survey Survey
2.3 Research communication products (30%) Research products aimed at a wider audience			
2.3.a Conferences and debates	• *No. of conferences organized, per institution or per researcher* • *No. of public debates organized, per institution or per researcher*	Absolute Absolute	Survey Survey
2.3.b Online visibility of research	• *No. of HTML and PDF views of research articles*	Absolute	Altmetrics or survey

FACTOR	INDICATORS	TYPE	SOURCES
2.3.c Media and advocacy	• *No. of publication mentions via social media*	Absolute	Altmetrics or survey
2.4 Popularization of science (20%) End result: research-based evidence is valued by the public, who actively access a variety of popular science products			
2.4.a Social appreciation and media coverage of research	• *No. of citations of publications in newspapers* • *Quality of outreach to media*	Absolute Rating	Altmetrics Desk review + surveys + interviews
3. Uptake (policy) (1/3)			
3.1 Policy-friendly research (20%) Products of research specifically aimed at supporting policymaking			
3.1.a Political value of research	• *Level of independence of the research produced* • *Demand for research inputs into policymaking* • *No. of grants received from policymakers, per institution or per researcher*	Rating Rating Absolute	Survey + interviews Desk review + survey + interviews Survey
3.1.b Policy-relevant research	• *Quality of participation of policymakers in research design* • *Numbers of communication materials produced for policymakers, per researcher*	Rating Absolute	Interviews Desk review + survey
3.1.c Research-to-policy nexus	• *No. of lectures and policy learning packages for technical officers and policymakers, per institution* • *No. of researchers holding political position*	Absolute %	Interviews Desk review + survey
3.2 Research-based policymaking (20%) Activities, capacities, rules and structures of policymaking that foster the use of research in the policy process			
3.2.a Formal collaboration: researcher participation	• *Share of researcher membership in bodies advising policy makers at the central and decentralized levels*	%	Desk review + survey
3.2.b Informal collaboration: researcher consultation	• *Frequency of interaction with policymakers* • *Perceived influence on policy development*	Rating Rating	Policy community surveys/ Researcher surveys Policy community surveys/ researcher surveys
3.3 Research-based policy products (30%) Policy products that make use of research			
3.3.a Instrumental utilization	• *No. of research citations in policy documents* • *Frequency of policy implementation support*	Absolute Rating	Altmetrics data or survey Interviews with policy community
3.4 Research for better policies (30%) End result: policies are based on independent, robust and transparent evidence and bring improved outcomes			
3.4.a Influence of research on policy outcome	• *Perceptions of the utility of social science research for policymakers*	Rating	Surveys + interviews

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