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Doing Research global initiative

Call for expressions of interest: Evaluating social science research systems

The Global Development Network (GDN) welcomes applications from research teams based in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) to act as Doing Research national correspondents. **GDN will review applications on a rolling basis in fall 2023.**

While all LMICs countries are welcome to apply, **specific attention will be given to** applications from teams based in the following regions and countries. GDN is currently negotiating funding with donors and partners in these regions/countries:

- Middle East and North Africa (all countries are welcome to apply), and particularly **teams based in Tunisia** interested in leading a DR Assessment in the country, starting in **early 2024**.
- Asia (all countries are welcome, particularly **teams from countries represented in the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC) ([link](#)); others however are not excluded**), starting in **early 2024**.

GDN also welcomes expressions of interest from national foundations, research granting councils, national ministries, or other national and international funders, interested in funding or co-funding DR Assessments in their own country or in their country of operation. GDN is constantly seeking financial support from domestic and international partners to include new countries in the initiative, and expand the global evidence base on the state of research systems.

GDN's Doing Research program

Founded in 1999, the Global Development Network (GDN) is a public international organization that supports high-quality, action-oriented social science research in developing and transition countries, with the aim of promoting better living conditions. "Doing Research" is a GDN flagship program that aims to understand, map and evaluate social science research systems, with a view to identifying and analyzing structural barriers to research in developing countries. As part of this program, GDN also aims to promote the role of women and young people in research. Thanks to their association with the Doing Research program, research teams from the countries concerned

(national focal points) are encouraged to publish their results in international journals. Their institutions are destined to become reference points for research, political reflection and public debate on the national research system, its regulation and its contribution to development. GDN has consolidated a methodology for **Doing Research Assessments (DRA)** ([link](#)) and ensures that the results are relevant, usable and comparable for national and international decision-makers.

Your main tasks

Based in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), the national research teams recruited by GDN will act as national correspondents for the Doing Research program. These teams will be responsible for implementing the Doing Research Assessments (DRA) in their country of operation. GDN expects the national teams to adapt the DRA methodology to the local context. The main output of the DRAs will be the production of an official report on the national social science research system.

Under the Doing Research program, the involvement of national correspondents can be broken down into three phases, taking a total of 15 months:

i. Adaptation:

- Document review of the Doing Research program and critical analysis of the DRA methodology.
- Literature review of research and policy literature on the national social science research system, with particular emphasis on literature dealing with context and actors.
- Kick-off meeting with GDN.

ii. Data Collection and Analysis:

- Step 1: Adaptation of the DRA methodology to the local context (qualitative examination of economic, political and historical contextual elements - national and international; identification of key stakeholders and data sources).
- Stage 2: Data collection with stakeholder mapping; primary data collection through surveys and interviews; secondary data collection, including national and international data sources.
- Stage 3: Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the determinants of research system performance and production of a country-specific Doing Research report.

iii. Dissemination:

- Proactive approach through interventions in physical and online events.
- Production of dissemination means (videos, infographics, briefing notes, etc.).
- Organization of a high-level national dissemination event with key stakeholders.



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The research teams we are looking for

Research teams must apply through a research institute or center. Application documents must be written in English or French. We strongly encourage gender-balanced and female-led teams to apply. The ideal team is multidisciplinary, with advanced and proven capabilities in qualitative and quantitative research. Research teams should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- Experience in analyzing organizational and institutional processes in the research, higher education, knowledge or innovation sectors.
- Experience in data collection and processing (sampling, interviews, questionnaires).
- Network already set up with the political, academic and civil society communities at national level.
- Experience in communicating research to a variety of audiences and in data visualization.

These criteria apply to the team as a whole, not to individual members. These experiences must be demonstrated by examples of projects, jobs and/or research publications.

Conditions

Selected research teams are expected to join a global community of researchers who will shape the evolution of the DRA methodology over the years. Thus, GDN national correspondents are expected to be part of the Doing Research program over the medium to long term and may be required to continue their research and produce regional/sub-regional reports, participate in international meetings or collaborate with national correspondents in other countries if applicable.

Application process

GDN invites teams to submit their expressions of interest as soon as possible. Interested research teams should send the following documents to doingresearch@gdn.int

- Expression of interest document following the attached template: this document must be no longer than 5 pages.
- Letter of support from the head of the applicant institute (model attached).
- CVs of team members.

Applications will be reviewed shortly after receipt by GDN's Doing Research team. When sending your application, please specify in the body of the email if you already have co-funding to carry out similar studies. The application deadline is **November 24th, 2023**. After this date, if you wish to be kept informed of any new calls for expressions of interest, please consult <http://www.gdn.int/doingresearch/about> or write to doingresearch@gdn.int .



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Budget

GDN typically secure funding for up to 50,000 euros per research team before starting an assessment. The global DR team at GDN will provide technical support, training and mentoring. If necessary, additional funding may be mobilized, in particular for the organization of workshops and the publication of country reports. The cost of the assessment might be lower based on the country.

For more details, see the appendix below.



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APPENDIX

Context

The Global Development Network supports researchers by providing financial resources, a global network, and access to information, training, peer review and mentoring. The organization promotes higher quality research to better inform public policy for more effective and inclusive development. Through its global platform, GDN connects social science researchers with policymakers and development actors around the world. Founded in 1999, GDN is currently headquartered in New Delhi.

GDN's work on research systems is based on the work of Lundvall (2007), the European Commission (EC, 2009), IDRC (2013), Williams et al. (2013) and GDN's Doing Research pilot project (2017a). The Doing Research program offers a systemic analysis of the research environment, research functions and research system at country level. By providing new data and research on these aspects through a new comparative framework, the program aims to support national policymakers, national and international donors and academics to develop strategies to stimulate local production of quality academic research and increase its contribution to public debate and sustainable development policies.

A pilot phase (2014-2016) supported seven research teams from eleven developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to study their research environment using a range of different scientific approaches, from historical analysis to analysis of political economy and econometric approaches¹. The synthesis of the pilot studies highlighted a set of "determinants" considered relevant to understand research systems and their performance (GDN, 2017a). This collaborative exercise culminated in a synthesis and scaling workshop in May 2016 that laid the foundations for the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) based on conversations with a wide range of experts and agencies.

In 2018, GDN decided to integrate the implementation of the methodology DRA into the work of national institutions interested in the subject as part of the Proof-of-Concept phase of the program, supporting at the same time the emergence of a network of research centers in the global South. GDN ensures that the results are relevant, exploitable and comparable.

¹ <http://gdn.int/doingresearch/countries>

The following DRAs have been implemented in [Bolivia \(2020\)](#), [El Salvador \(2022\)](#), [Nigeria \(2020\)](#), [Indonesia \(2020\)](#), and [Myanmar \(2020\)](#) and an [update in 2021](#)). These are the first systematic analyses of the production, dissemination and uptake of social science research in the five countries, employing the DRA methodology. The reports generated high quality evidence that is both systematic and comparative in scope. A preliminary study to understand the state of science and technology in [Venezuela \(2020\)](#) was also conducted in partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

In addition to producing high quality evidence, the authors, all locally recruited, published the following peer-reviewed journal articles from their report with close mentoring from GDN.

- Rakhmani, I., & Sakhiyya, Z. (2023). [Inequalities and social sciences in neoliberal Indonesia](#). *International Social Science Journal*, 1–15.
- Glutting, J. R., Lee, Z. X., and Galloway, C. (2022). [Rebuilding social science research systems in Myanmar: The past informs the future](#). *International Social Science Journal*, 1–11.
- Olofinyehun, A., Egbetokun, A., Ayo-Lawal, A., Sanni, M., Oluwatope, O., and Yusuff, U. (2022). [Diffusion of social science research in Nigeria](#). *International Social Science Journal*, 1–20.
- Fussy, D. S. (2022). [Use of research evidence in the policy domain: A best-evidence synthesis of social science research in Africa, Asia, and Latin America](#). *International Social Science Journal*, 1–14.
- Egbetokun, A., Olofinyehun, A., Sanni, M., Ayo-Lawal, A., Oluwatope, O., and Utieyineshola Yusuff, U. (2022). [The production of social science research in Nigeria: Status and systemic determinants](#). *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 9 (1).
- Egbetokun, A., and Olofinyehun, A. (2021). [Dataset on the production, dissemination and uptake of social science research in Nigeria](#). *Data in Brief*, Volume 35, 106932.

Doing Research: a global comparative research program

This call for expressions of interest is part of the program's global roll-out and aims to further establish partnerships at national and regional levels. Initiated in 2018, the global roll-out of Doing Research includes three interdependent work streams, each leading to specific results:

- (1) Implementation of 40 Doing Research assessments in partnership with institutes in developing countries.
- (2) Maintain a global dataset of indicators to assess and compare research systems between countries over time, in order to document global and regional trends in the production, dissemination and adoption of research policies.



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- (3) Production of widely accessible outreach resources to raise awareness of the importance of social science research systems for national development, structural barriers to research system performance, and paths to follow for reforming research systems through improved policy and funding efforts.

The global roll-out began with an initial series of five countries, which currently doubled with the ongoing implementation in 5 additional countries in Francophone Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, and Mali. During this initial phase, the GDN has continued to refine the evaluation method thanks to external expertise and direct feedback from national correspondents. The expected outcome of the global roll-out is a series of publications on research systems and the question of their performance, an open-access dataset and a series of physical and online events.

Doing Research Assessments

Doing Research Assessments (DRA) are the central tools of the Doing Research program.

What exactly is a DRA?

It is a mixed-method research module that enables a comparative and contextualized investigation of a national research system. This involves examining the key factors that determine the production, dissemination and adoption of social science research results in a given country. The method follows three analytical stages:

- a context analysis,
- a stakeholder mapping, and
- a standardized evaluation framework: which provides a structured approach to analyze the functions and processes of a research system. This step is supported by quantitative indicators through the collection of primary and secondary data.

DRA's are implemented by a local research institution, with technical support and advice from GDN's global Doing Research team, for a period of 15 months.

DRA's can be used in a number of ways and are generally used to gather data on a research system that is not yet available in a single place. Such an assessment can serve as a magnifying glass to identify particular aspects that require the attention of the regulatory officer, or to provide a benchmark or baseline for establishing a strategy for investment in capacity building on aspects such as research production, dissemination or utilization. The data emerging from the evaluation will also be made available to the research community to encourage further research on systems' performances.

Mobilization of key stakeholders by national research teams

National correspondents interact with and mobilize a number of stakeholders, both during the research phase and during the dissemination of evaluation results. These stakeholders include at least:

- Direct beneficiaries: national policy-makers and regulators, national and international research funders and research administrators.
- Indirect beneficiaries include academics, citizens and the media.

During the research phase (DRA implementation), the main stakeholders will be research actors, grouped into four categories: higher education institutions (HEIs); donors and governments; industry; civil society. The DRA mapping phase will identify the relevant sub-categories. HEIs can be public or private universities; industry includes for-profit think tanks and consulting firms; civil society includes NGOs, non-profit think tanks and the media. Governments and funding bodies constitute the most hybrid category: they include national ministries and research councils, as well as public and private foreign donors. The national research team works in close collaboration with these actors to provide complete data on the research system.

Activity timetable

- **Applications selection and contractualization**
 - Deadline for receipt of applications by GDN's Doing Research team: **November 24th, 2023**.
 - GDN's Doing Research team to contact selected research teams: **early 2024**.
 - Contractualization: **February 2024 – April 2024**.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact the Doing Research team at doingresearch@gdn.int.

Doing Research reference documents

A number of key documents produced by GDN are available via the following hyperlinks:

Link to DRA resources:

<https://www.gdn.int/research/education-research>

Link to DR theoretical framework:

<http://www.gdn.int/sites/default/files/GDN%20-%20Theoretical%20Framework.pdf>



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References

EC (2009). Regional research systems in Europe: current trends and structures. 6th Research Framework Program.

GDN (2017a). Synthesis of the pilot phase of Doing Research. Prepared by the Centre de recherche et d'expertise sur l'éducation et le développement (CREED).

IDRC (2013). Excellence in the context of use-inspired research: Perspectives of the Global South.

Lundvall B.-Å. (2007). National Innovation Systems - Analytical Concept and Development Tool. *Industry and Innovation*, 14: 1, 95-119.

Williams R., de Rassenfosse G. (2013). The determinants of quality national higher education systems. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*