Final Evaluation Report

'Evaluation for Building Research Capacity in LDCs'
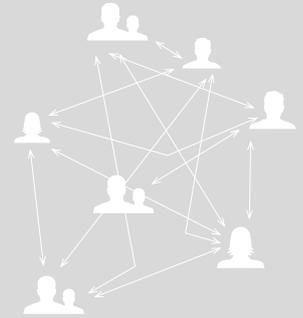
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Submitted by: Blomeyer & Sanz

Authors: Mike Beke, Elsa Perreau (case study Senegal), Julie Pasian and Annika Weikinnis (evaluation support)

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For more information: Blomeyer & Sanz SL, C/Cerezos 545b, CD250, El Clavín, 19163 Guadalajara, Spain | Website - www.blomeyer.eu | Email - info@blomeyer.eu | Tel. - +34 949 492 505 |

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List of abbreviations

CESAG	Centre Africain d'études Supérieures en Gestion
GDN	Global Development Network
GRCB	Global Research Capacity Building Program
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IP	Individual Project
JTD	Journées de Tam Dao
LDC	Least Developed Countries
OP	GDN Overall Program
PC	Program Coordinator
RUB	Royal University of Bhutan
STA	Scientific Technical Advisor
TM	Team Member

Executive summary

Between 2014 and 2017, the Global Development Network (GDN) implemented the Program '*Building Research Capacity in Least Developed Countries*' (LDCs). The Program aimed to raise and strengthen research and outreach skills of beneficiaries in a sustainable manner. The approach adopted by GDN for this Program was demand-driven, meaning that the beneficiaries' needs were targeted on a priority basis, and that GDN's support to addressing needs was tailored-made.

Out of 250 applications from 40 eligible countries GDN selected a total of four individual projects/programmes (below referred to as "IPs") covering five countries, namely Ethiopia, Senegal, Bhutan and Cambodia/Vietnam.

This evaluation assesses Program performance against the expected goals per IP on the basis of a set of evaluation criteria, namely: efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, relevance and added value. The evaluators have used desk research, surveys, interviews and a field mission. This evaluation adopted a bottom-up approach, first assessing criteria per IP. The findings per evaluation criteria and per IP were subsequently placed alongside the Program objectives to identify in which way the IPs have contributed to achieving the overall objectives. At the same time, this evaluation looked at the way the overall Program contributed to the achieving of IP objectives.

Main learnings

From this evaluation we learned that GDN carefully designed the Program to meet underexposed areas within their own activities, first of all by focusing on research institutions as opposed to individual or teams of researchers and secondly by targeting countries underrepresented in GDN's activities. We also learned that GDN adopted a strong Program rational by arguing that researchers operating in a low capacity research environment are virtually trapped in a vicious circle which restricts their ability to undertake and disseminate credible work. A benchmarking exercise has exposed several characteristics of the GDN's Program which stand out compared to other initiatives across the globe, such as: the focus on researchers and research institutions; the focus on LDCs; the provision of technical assistance by the donor organisations; the demand-driven approach; and the involvement of the mentor.

By adopting a demand-driven approach, GDN exposed itself to possible resource-intensive support to beneficiaries and limited control over activities that depend for success on performance by the beneficiaries. On the other hand, we learned that GDN

opted with this approach for a more sustainable path given that a Program, tailor-made for the needs of beneficiaries, is likely to generate longer-lasting results. In order to mitigate the risks, GDN deployed one of its strongest tools for projects, the mentor, but also adopted a hands-on approach to project management.

Main conclusions

This evaluation finds that in terms of **efficiency**, the GDN Program performed reasonably well. The demand-driven approach complicated timely management of the Program resulting on several occasions in delays within IPs. However, GDN Program management and the Scientific Technical Advisors (STAs) effectively supported IP teams and managed to ensure targets were nonetheless met.

In terms of **effectiveness**, this evaluation concludes that the GDN Program supported the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions. The grantee institutions are all active in the area of teaching and research. The degree in which emphasis is placed on one or both of these areas differs. The demand-driven approach in combination with the hands-on support by GDN and the mentor allowed the Program to strengthen institutional activities in those areas already emphasised and promote the inclusion of activities in underexposed areas for the respective grantee institutions.

This evaluation identified some evidence of an internal feedback loop in the grantee institutions related to project management. However, the role of the IP team leaders has been strong in all evaluated projects, questioning the extent to which project management (and monitoring and evaluation) skills spilled over beyond the team leaders to the rest of the team and beyond the team to the institution. This issue has been addressed on some occasions within the IP teams, i.e. by setting up a management committee consisting of IP staff and decision-makers of grantee institutions, or by incorporating trainees in the IP teams.

Nevertheless, the **impact** has been satisfactory with perceived improvements relating to understanding and knowledge of institutional research capacity building due to participation in the GDN Program. In addition, also collective research skills of IP beneficiaries (i.e. students) improved throughout the course of the Program. The activities have particularly contributed to improving theoretical knowledge on research methods, such as understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application.

In terms of wider objectives such as facilitating policy dialogue, this evaluation finds that IP team members differ on confidence and awareness on communication and dissemination skills, in particular in relation to the ability to introduce and extract

policy recommendations. It has to be noted that facilitating policy dialogue within the institution is considered more accessible compared to facilitating this to the outside, i.e. to policy makers on the national level. Providing GDN support on this element is considered challenging given the remote management of the Program.

In terms of **sustainability**, this evaluation found that objectives established for the respective IPs remain a priority for the grantee institutions. Whether the activities will continue in the same way and with the same intensity as during the GDN Program cannot be fully determined largely due to dependency on external funding.

Finally, in terms of **relevance and added value**, this evaluation finds that the value of GDN in piloting such a program is that the organisation has a vast track-record in building research capacity in developing countries and settings, access to international donor organisations, and already has established the organisational set-up to provide project management and monitoring and evaluation services. GDN can be considered the right player to pilot the Program considering fewer steps were to be made in order to launch or adapt their normal research capacity building approach to this new institutional approach. This evaluation found that with this, GDN has proven to innovate and re-invent their role in research capacity building and therefore ensures sustainability of the organisation. Learnings from this Program, together with previous institutional Research Capacity Building experiences (such as the Global Research Project '*Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public Expenditure Accountability*') gives reason to consider scaling up the initiative in the future.

Recommendations

On the basis of the lessons learnt and the main findings, the following recommendations are prioritized:

1. GDN has adopted a strong Program rationale and therefore this evaluation advises GDN to continue developing this institutional research capacity building initiative.

2. This evaluation notes that in order to implement a demand-driven program, it is key to allow beneficiaries to design their own projects. As a result, GDN is confronted with managing different projects which could put pressure on project management resources but also complicate cross-learning between the beneficiaries. Without undermining the demand-driven and hands-on management approach adopted by GDN, it is recommended to support beneficiaries in the IP design in order to allow harmonized project implementation processes and foster cross-learning between teams on common areas such as project management and monitoring and evaluation.

3. At the same time, this evaluation recommends that GDN continues making use of its strengths, in particular the use of the mentor tool as well as the support on access to research and research training. Given the slightly different tasks of the mentor for support on institutional research capacity building compared to academic (thematic) guidance, this evaluation recommends to continue GDN's efforts to build a common methodology for the work of the mentor.

4. In terms of implementation of the Program, this evaluation recommends a minimum of two face-to-face meetings between GDN Program management, the mentor and IP implementation teams. Also, the evaluators recommend GDN to provide additional guidance to beneficiaries on reporting standards.

5. Finally, several good practices were identified and on this basis it is recommended to: request all future IP teams to conduct a self-assessment on the outcomes of the activities; and to promote participation of IP team members in international conferences.

1 Introduction to the GDN Program

This GDN Program supports research institutions in Least Developed Countries (LDC). The aim of the Program is to raise and strengthen the research and outreach skills of beneficiaries in a sustainable manner. The approach adopted by GDN for this Program is demand-driven, meaning that the beneficiaries' needs are what define and drive project design, and that GDN provides a tailored-made support to its grantees.

GDN selected out of 250 applications from 40 eligible countries, a total of four individual programmes (below referred to as "IPs") covering four LDCs[1]. The Program ran for 24 months from 2014 to 2016 and was extended three months into 2017.

1.1 Program rational

GDN's mission is to "*promote research capacity building in economics and social sciences in developing and transition countries*".[2] The Global Research Capacity Building Program (GRCBP) is used to launch competitive research calls that are designed to select researchers and raise their capacity by providing them with mentorship, peer reviews, trainings and guidance. GDN has identified underrepresentation of researchers from LDCs participating in the GRCBP and has therefor designed this Program.

According to the adopted rationale by GDN, the researchers operate in a low capacity research environment. This is characterised by:[3]

- Low individual and institutional capacity and expertise in carrying out cutting-edge research;
- Limited graduate and Ph.D. programs;
- Restricted funding opportunities;
- Inadequate infrastructure, resources and data availability;
- Weak research to policy connect;
- Limited opportunities to engage, collaborate and network with peers locally, regionally and globally.

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[1] Ethiopia, Senegal, Bhutan and Cambodia (in combination with Vietnam which is not considered a LDC but a middle income country).

[2] Desk research, GDN IDRC proposal revised Nov 2013.docx

[3] See: http://gdn.int/html/page11.php?MID=3&SID=24&SSID=79

This environment restricts the ability of researchers to undertake and disseminate credible work. As a result, there is low demand for their research, which results in a vicious circle from which it is difficult to escape. This is called a 'low-research capacity trap'.

GDN's Program aimed to build research capability of researchers that operate in such an environment. GDN approached this from multiple levels. The Program targeted institutions but also researchers. It targeted research capability for individual researchers but also outreach and project management development for institutions to increase research capacity. By adopting a multi-level approach, GDN aimed to break the vicious circle in which researchers in LDCs are trapped. In more concrete terms this was done: [4]

- To develop and strengthen the analytical skills of individuals and institutions based in LDCs to help them undertake rigorous research;
- To encourage networking and constructive engagement in a peer-learning environment;
- To increase the ability of researchers and institutions in these countries to provide timely, reliable and evidence-based policy options;
- To create a network of institutions to share best practices and training materials with other institutions.

1.2   Program stakeholders

The main stakeholders involved in the Program were: research institutions; scientific and technical advisors (STAs) or mentors; GDN Program management; and the donor organisation (IDRC).

B E N E F I C I A R I E S | The main beneficiaries of the Program were research institutions in Bhutan, Cambodia/Vietnam, Ethiopia, and Senegal. A total of four institutions participated in the Program. Each team consisted of a Program Coordinator (PC) and Team Members (TM).

Table 1: GDN Program beneficiaries

Country	Program name	Implementing Partner	Names	Role
Bhutan	Improving the quality of policy relevant research in	Institute for Gross National	Sonam Rinchen	TM

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[4] See: http://gdn.int/html/page11.php?MID=3&SID=24&SSID=79

	Bhutan through leadership development, institution building and research practice	Happiness Studies, Royal University of Bhutan	Sangay Thinley	TM
			Kezang Sherab	TM
			Jamba Tobden	PC
Vietnam/Cambodia	Université régionale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques Les Journées deTam Dao (JTD) – Cambodge, Laos, Vietnam	Université Royale de Droit et des Sciences Economiques du Cambodge	Laurent Mesmann	TM
		Académie des Sciences Sociales du Vietnam	Stéphane Lagrée	PC
			Thu Trang Bui	TM
			Phùng Diệp Anh -	TM
Ethiopia	Building Ethiopia's research capacity in economics and agribusiness	Haramaya University	Mengistu Ketema Aredo	PC
			Degye Goshu Habteyesus	TM
Senegal	Programme de renforcement en capacités de recherché de la DRC-CESAG	CESAG Centre Africain d'études Supérieures en Gestion - African Centre of Management Studies	El Hadji Gueye	PC
			Aboudou Ouattara	TM
			Bernard Korai	TM
			Hadiza Moussa Saley	TM

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORS | The Program included four Scientific and Technical Advisors or mentors that provided direction and support in planning, implementing and monitoring the country-level programs.

STA	Program country focus	Organisation
Benjamin Buclet	Ethiopia	Formerly Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
Jean-Pierre Cling	Cambodia, Vietnam	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nicolas Jacquemet	Senegal	Université de Lorraine Nancy and Paris School of Economics
Kazuo Matsushita	Bhutan	Kyoto University

P R O J E C T   M A N A G E M E N T | The GDN program management team consisted of three members.

Table 3: GDN Program management

Name	Role
Francesco Obino	Program Manager
Annie Soriot	Ex- Deputy Director of Programs (1 October 2013 - 30 November 2015)
Neha Jagatdeb	Program Assistant

D O N O R | The donor organisation of the Program was the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). IDRC has funded GDN activities since 2005, granting funds for two successive four-year periods. In 2012, IDRC extended funding with one year and in 2013 granted a new three-year period. The collaboration between GDN and IDRC for the last funding period targets two parts. The first concerns IDRC's core support for GDN's mission and activities under GDN's strategic framework. The second part focuses on the Program.

1.3   Program activities

GDN delivered services/support to the teams during the selection and implementation and self-evaluation phase. The activities during the selection phase primarily included support on identifying objectives and scope of activities under each country program. After selection, GDN helped to further refine and tailor individual programs (IPs). After this, one advisor per IP was engaged to provide guidance on IP design and

implementation, deliver training sessions and conduct on-site visits. GDN ensured interaction with the donor, and facilitated peer-learning workshops, cross-country comparisons, sharing training modules, addressing data and methodology limitation, etc. Also regional and global workshops were organised for networking, experience sharing and guided internal assessment. After students of research institutions graduate, the original idea was that GDN would promote the inclusion of the researchers to other GDN activities, such as the GRC[5].

The Program was meant to be demand-driven, meaning that GDN would make resources available to the grantees on the basis of their own capacity needs. These resources include mentorship, close program management support and workshops. To give an indication on the kind of activities GDN could support, a list was provided to the donor organisation:[6]

- Specific workshops focused on "how to design and conduct empirical research" (how to write a research proposal, to design methodology in line with research objectives, to present results etc.).
  - o Focus on identifying interesting research problems, articulating and refining research question and polishing the working research hypotheses
  - o An added focus on research management and leadership could be explored.
- Methodology workshops – for a variety of themes and disciplines. The idea is to bring the population of promising students and early career researchers up to the requisite level in terms of analytical capacity and methodological competence.
- Specific training programs in data collection, computational and analytical skills
- Research visits, lectures by regional and global experts in the given field or methodology; Faculty exchange program from LDCs to other countries to scale up their mentoring skills.
- Online tutorials or on-site mentoring on methods and data for young researchers.
- Refresher courses/workshops on contemporary topics of research for mid-career researchers and academics to improve quality of research, teaching and peer-learning environments in universities and think-tanks.
  - o Focus on advanced thematic and methodological issues.
- Scholarships for masters' students and guidance to try and steer more towards pursuing PhD and research.

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[5] The evaluators note that the GRC as a program was discontinued by GDN in the new 2017-2022 strategy.
[6] Desk research, GDN IDRC proposal revised Nov 2013.docx

- May include small grants/fellowships to allow researchers to participate in relevant summer courses in some of the established universities in the world.
- Scholarships for PhD thesis – partial grants for field research or primary data collection, stipends, paper presentations in international conferences, short duration stay in an advanced university with an assigned mentor.
- Mentoring (both from very senior researchers, and also from mid-career ones with less stringent demands on their time).
- Competitive small grants for undertaking research (possibly linking this with the existing activities in GDN's portfolio) with mentoring, networking and communication opportunities through GDN's and IDRC's various platforms.
- Joint partner institution/government/GDN programs to organize the intermediation between academic research and policy advice.
- Communication strategies and training to feature researchers from these countries and their quality research outputs in appropriate global and regional networks, platforms and forums, both online and offline.
- Provision of various networking and knowledge services, including an inventory of existing global and local knowledge resources (including data), access to basic and advanced toolbox components including statistical packages and facilities for visual interpretation of data.
- Career skills workshops for young researchers:
    o Publishing guidance, writing non-technical briefs based on rigorous academic research, effective presentation skills for researchers;
    o Networking and connecting with other researchers and people for collaborative research or other career options.

1.4 Individual Program activities

Each team ran a different program. This section presents the briefs for each individual program (IP)

Table 4: GDN Program Individual Projects

Country	Program name	IP brief
Bhutan	Improving the quality of policy relevant research in Bhutan through leadership development, institution building and research practice	The program aims to develop stronger research leadership skills across the nine colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) to build 'Research Centers of Excellence' actively engaged in promoting research and community linkages in the country. It intends to enhance the knowledge and capacity of the academic staff to engage in independent research and supervision of students, and instil a culture of discourse, critical enquiry and practical solutions in the undergraduate and postgraduate students.
Cambodia	Université régionale en sciences sociales,	This program extends the 'Summer School in Tam Dao,' run by the *Académie des Sciences Sociales du Vietnam*; to Cambodia, Laos,

Country		
	humaines et économiques Les Journées deTam Dao (JTD) – Cambodge, Laos, Vietnam	Myanmar and Madagascar. The purpose is to approach the essential skills and instruments for the appropriate study of social reality and to provide researchers with theoretical basis as well as methodologies in preparation of qualified scientific research projects. The objective is to support training on social sciences and to contribute to higher education research strategies in South-East Asia and beyond.
Ethiopia	Building Ethiopia's research capacity in economics and agribusiness	The program intends to develop skilled professionals who will be recognized as providers of high quality research services and education in their disciplines. It targets the University's PhD and MSc students through grants and training on statistics, econometrics, data collection and analysis. To improve the quality of theses supervision, the program also provides training and mentoring for its academic staff.
Senegal	Programme de renforcement en capacités de recherché de la DRC-CESAG	The program targets CESAG researchers and aims to improve their research and communication skills. In addition, the program aims to invest in experimental economics.

Each IP contained a different set of activities with different objectives:[7]

Table 5: GDN Program Individual Project activities

Country	Main objectives	Main activities
Bhutan	Training of faculty through hands-on mentoring and support for the development and execution of small research projects	Open call for brief concept notes
		Selection of concept notes / research and writing workshop / development concept notes to proposals
		Presentation proposals in workshop / selection of proposals
		Appointing mentors / research courses / research phase
		Final presentation findings
		Assistance for publication research
	Training of college of Deans through country visits to Asia	Visit to centres of excellence in Asia
		Workshop on action plans for research centres
	Institutional development of research centres	Discussion of draft action plans
		Implementation of action plans
		Progress review
	Student engagement in research	Development framework for student engagement
		Teaching research
Cambodia/Vietnam	Propose training	Identification of global thematic area / creation of a committee

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[7] Desk research, work plans.

		Identification of trainers
		Identification of workshop trainers
		Realisation of a work plan
		Awareness raising for Vietnamese trainees / conference presentation / website presentation
		Awareness raising for regional trainees / conference presentation / website presentation
		Selection of trainees
		Preparation of translation team
		Selection of literature
		Appointing trainers to trainees
	Ensure knowledge transfer	Identify training facility
		Dissemination activities
	Dissemination and optimisation of training	Development of a scientific and educational report on the training
		Publication of book in three languages
		Media material
Ethiopia	Small research grants	Call for proposals
		Selection of grantees
		Announcing grantees
		Contractual agreements
		Releasing grants
		Evaluating status of student research
	Training workshops	Six workshops (four themes)
	Staff exchange program for mentoring skills	Staff exchange program for mentoring skills
Senegal	Develop skills in data collection techniques	Workshops Fellowships Experimental economics Creation of a new academic journal
	Improve skills in the use of quantitative methods	
	Improve skills in using methodologies	
	Improve writing skills	
	Improve language (EN, FR) skills	
	Grants for field work / conference / placement programs	
	Raise awareness of multidisciplinary collaborations	

2 Evaluation methodology

2.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation aims to '*track and critically evaluate the extent to which the program achieves its stated objectives*' and to assess what GDN has done to make the Program and the IPs work.[8]

The evaluation assesses performance against the expected goals per IP in Bhutan, Cambodia/Vietnam and Ethiopia and against the program as a whole. Due to the cancelation of the IP in Senegal, a separate section will de dedicated in this report. The evaluation will present findings and evidence-based recommendations for future programs.

The evaluators subscribe to the fact that this evaluation will take place on two levels, meaning the level of the Program as a whole and the sub-levels per IP. This evaluation adopted a bottom-up approach, first assessing criteria per IP. The findings per evaluation criteria and per IP will subsequently be placed alongside the Program objectives to identify in which way the IPs have contributed to achieving the overall objectives. At the same time, this evaluation will look at which way the overall Program contributed to the achieving of IP objectives. This approach will be valuable for the individual research institutions while at the same time help identifying how GDN can best design similar future programs on institutional capacity building.

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[8] See Terms of Reference (ToR).

2.2   Theory of change Program

This report presents the theory of change designed for the evaluation, reflecting the Program as a whole. However, the demand-driven approach adopted by GDN for the Program results in each grantee tackling different gaps and addressing different needs, setting different objectives and using different tools to intervene. In other words, for each IP the evaluators have determined the specific change logic. The illustrations of the theory of change for each IP are included in the respective country chapters below (section 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4).

The intervention logic, adopted by the Program as a whole, starts with the gaps and challenges faced. As previously described, research institutions in LDCs operate in a low capacity research environment. This is characterised by:[9] low individual capability and institutional capacity to carry out cutting-edge research; limited graduate and PhD programs; restricted funding opportunities; inadequate infrastructure, resources and data availability; weak research to policy connect; and limited opportunities to engage collaborate and network with peers locally, regionally and globally. This environment restricts the ability of researchers to undertake and disseminate credible work. As a result, there is low demand for their research, which results in a vicious circle from which it is difficult to escape. This is called a "low-research capacity trap" [10].

GDN deploys resources and mobilizes research expertise (i.e. through the Scientific and Technical Advisor (STA) or mentor), monitoring and evaluation, and project management support (i.e. through the GDN Program Team) which grants access to research and training for institutions in LCDs (IMMEDIATE OUTCOME). This should support research institutions to structure, expand, strengthen and institutionalise research capacity. This includes, *inter alia*, better institutional outreach and networking, and better M&E and project management (INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME). This should result in institutional scale-up and policy dialogue on higher educational reform (LONG-TERM OUTCOME). On the long term this should contribute to better policy debates at the local, national and regional level in LDCs (IMPACT).

The following figure illustrates our preliminary analysis of the theory of change.

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[9] See: http://gdn.int/html/page11.php?MID=3&SID=24&SSID=79

[10] GDN Program Management explained that in their view the gaps and challenges is the lack of funding for sustainable institutional capacity building in LDCs specifically. The low-research capacity trap describes the how and why this is indeed a problema, in other words, it describes the satus quo with an eye on its implications for both research and policy. Further GDN Program Management argues that the "trap" itself is not something GDN can address. Instead, the immediate gap or challenge is one of funding targeted specifically at institutional measures with a scope to break the trap.

Theory of Change
Program

Objectives address needs ← Intervention aims to achieve objectives

Needs
Research institution
Staff (researchers and project managers)
Donors
GDN

Objectives

Wider objectives
Institutionalize research capacity
Facilitate policy dialogue

Specific objectives
Promote institutional outreach
Promote networking
Train M&E and project management

Operational objectives
Provide access to research
Provide access to research training
Provide access to resources/funds (i.e. mentorship)

Challenges / Gaps
Low ind. / inst. capacity to carry out research
Limited graduate and Ph.D. programs
Restricted funding opportunities
Inadequate infrastructure, resources and data availability
Weak research to policy connect
Limited opportunities to engage with peers

Impact: achievement of wider objectives

Effectiveness: achievement of specific objectives

Intervention

Long-term outcome
Better policy debates at the local, national and regional level
Institutionalized research capacity

Intermediate outcomes
Better institutional outreach
Better networking
Better M&E and project management

Immediate outcomes
Access to research, research training, funds

Outputs
Academic and project management support

Inputs
Resources: money; staff; technical expertise (through STA)

Relevance: relation of outcomes to needs

Sustainability: maintenance and resilience of outcomes

Efficiency: transformation of inputs into outputs and outcomes

Figure 1: Theory of Change GDN Program

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2.3 Evaluation tools

For the purpose of this evaluation, the evaluators have used desk research, surveys, interviews and a field mission to Hanoi as part of the Program's mid-term review with all the teams.

2.3.1 Desk research

The evaluators note that access has been given to project documentation by GDN. When required, the evaluators have asked for additional information to GDN and the individual teams, and complemented data through external literature on research capacity building in LDCs.

The documentation has been used to provide general background information on IP activities, its implementation and perceived effectiveness and impact. Desk research on progress reports by the IP teams also gave the evaluators insight into the challenges faced by teams as well as the support received by the STA and GDN Program management. Findings from desk research has been complemented with interviews with IP staff, STAs and GDN.

2.3.2 Field mission

The evaluators have attended the mid-term workshop in Vietnam. This has provided foremost an opportunity to meet the Program stakeholders and get a full overview of the activities. The evaluators have used this mission to collect preliminary data on the common elements belonging to the different IPs. This information has helped to design a final evaluation methodology and better target data collection efforts. The field mission was also used to collect first data on effectiveness and efficiency of the IPs, which allowed the evaluators to identify first project impact. Finally, the field mission was used to interview GDN staff and STAs in order to better understand their response to demands by grantee institutions.

2.3.3 Survey

Three surveys have been launched for this evaluation. The first survey targeted the Program Coordinators and Team Members (IP team survey). This survey was drafted and discussed together with the support of GDN. Raw data from the survey has been shared with GDN after completion of the assignment. The survey questions will be attached to the final report.

The IP team survey targeted all team members, a total of 14 and received 11 responses. This corresponds to a response rate of 70%. This is considered satisfactory given that responses were received from all the teams.

Response rate has been low from the Senegal team. This can be explained by the fact that this IP was cancelled. Nevertheless, the PC responded to the survey and also provided feedback through an interview. Collecting feedback from the Bhutan team has proven difficult. It has not been possible to interview the team. However, the evaluators were able to collect information through desk research, including a final internal evaluation report prepared by the Bhutan team, and finally managed to collect survey feedback. In addition, the evaluators were able to meet the team members during the mid-term meeting in Hanoi. Also, information has been collected on the IP in Bhutan through an interview with the respective STA.

Table 6: Survey respondents

Team	Number of surveyed	Number of responded	Profile respondents
Bhutan	4	4	The respondents are the PCs and TMs from each team. These stakeholders have implemented the activities on the national level and have been directly in contact with GDN Project Management and the STAs. These stakeholders will be surveyed on their personal developments due to the Program as well as institutional developments due to the IP.
Cambodia / Vietnam	4	4	
Ethiopia	2	2	
Senegal	4	1	
Total	14	11	

The second and third survey targeted beneficiaries of the IP in Ethiopia. The IP team from Ethiopia has been very collaborative and provided the evaluators with contact details from IP beneficiaries. As a result, two surveys were launched targeting a group of 23 grantees and 32 training participants that benefitted from the IP. Grantees were surveyed on their views on the trainings. Four different training modules were organized by BERCEA:

- Empirical Research Methods in Economics[11]
- Analysis of Cross-sectional, Time series and Panel Data Using Stata and EViews[12]
- Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty and Inequality Using DASP[13]
- Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) Modelling and Analysis Using Generalized Algebraic Modelling System (GAMS)[14]

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[11] 12 grantee respondents and 7 training participant respondents attended

[12] 11 grantee respondents and 6 training participant respondents attended

[13] 11 grantee respondents and 4 training participant respondents attended

[14] 11 grantee respondents and 7 training participant respondents attended

The BERCEA grantees survey had a response rate of 61% (15) which for the purpose of this evaluation is considered highly satisfactory. The BERCEA trainees survey had a response rate of 53% (17) which for the purpose of this evaluation is considered satisfactory. 59% (10) of trainees were BERCEA staff members and 41% (7) students.

The surveys were drafted and discussed together with the support of the IP team from Ethiopia. Raw data from the survey has been shared with GDN and the team in Ethiopia after completion of the assignment. The survey questions will be attached to the final report.

2.3.4 Interviews

The evaluation team has targeted the STAs, GDN staff, and IP PCs for interviews. Nine interviews have been conducted. GDN Program management and all PCs have been interviewed with the exception of the PC from the IP team in Bhutan. Also all STAs have been interviewed (information from the STA for the IP team in Senegal was collected during the field mission in Hanoi).

Further, in-person feedback has been collected during the field mission from the different teams, including the PC of the IP team from Bhutan.

The interviews were to complement and validate the data collected through desk research, surveys and field mission. For each stakeholder category a list of interview questions was developed and used. Interviews were semi-structured.

2.1 Evaluation units of analysis

The main units of analysis to assess the level of achievement of the Program and IPs are: Research institutions (team and beneficiaries); STAs; GDN Program management staff.

2.2   Evaluation questions

The following table presents the evaluation questions. A full overview, including judgement criteria, indicators and means of verification can be found in Annex 6.3)

Table 7: Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions
Impact
1. To what degree has the OP and each IP achieved its stated goals, impacting on the capability of researchers and capacity of institutions?
2. To what degree has each IP reached beyond its stated goals, with institutional spill-over effect on the involved institutions in terms of research and research training initiatives?
3. To what degree has the OP succeeded in supporting institutions to link their own strengthening to larger national policy debates on higher educational reform?
Effectiveness
4. What specific research and research training gaps have the IPs filled?
5. Did the IP and the OP support in identifiable ways the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions? What explains different outcomes across different grantees?
6. Has the OP design (including monitoring and results frameworks) facilitated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions, beyond the implementing teams, that informed project implementation?
7. Has GDN's support been instrumental in filling specific gaps in IP design and management, and enhancing the capability of each team (and institution) to further its goals and vision in terms of IP project implementation? 7a. Has GDN's support, including mentors, contributed instrumentally to the quality and institutionalization of the research capacity building activities planned by each grantee?
Efficiency
8. Were the OP and IP targets achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations? What were the challenges and what was done to mitigate risks?
9. What trade-offs and adjustments, if any, have been made by the IP in order to drive efficiency?
10. What has been the learning in terms of IP implementation for each grantee institution, and for GDN, including in terms of peer-review, mentorship and informal

learning and sharing across teams?
11. To what extent is the current staffing at an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the IPs and OP (quality and quantity)?
12. Is the OP tracking the outputs and outcomes of the IPs in a systematic way? Who reviews this data? Does a feedback loop exist? What information is important to the grantee institutions?
Sustainability
13. To what extent has each IP become further institutionalized, including through stronger management, wider outreach among potential trainees and increased visibility in their region and among national authorities and potential funders?
14. How could the Program have delivered greater value, specifically for the grantee institution (beyond the implementation team)?
To what extent are the RCB initiatives likely to continue after the OP closes? 14a. Has the OP been able to equip the grantee institutions with new research toolboxes and institutional links that help them deliver quality research and research training to their research communities of reference and beyond? 14.b What lessons does the OP and model offer in terms of sustainability of benefits and results?
15. To what extent has each IP become further institutionalized, including through stronger management, wider outreach among potential trainees and increased visibility in their region and among national authorities and potential funders?
Relevance
16. Does the Program fill a real gap in the research and research training landscape of each of the LDCs?
17. Are the RCB projects supported relevant to the country institutions involved?
18. Are the IPs designed by grantees in line with the overall objectives and goals of the OP?
Added Value
19. What have been the unexpected results (positive and negative) and missed opportunities?
20. How has GDN positioned itself to add-value in a demand-led, tailored research capacity building approach in LDCs?

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3 Findings in relation to outcomes

This section will present the findings per project for the following evaluation criteria: efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance and added value. Before that, the findings for the project as a whole will be presented.

3.1 Program as a whole

This section presents an overall analysis of the collected data from all the IP teams. This section is based on interview feedback, desk review and survey findings. When survey findings are presented they include the responses from all the IP team members with the exception of the IP team from Senegal.

3.1.1 Efficiency

1. Were the OP targets achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations? What were the challenges and what was done to mitigate risks?

The GDN Program experienced on several occasions delays in achieving targets, mainly driven by implementation at the IP level[15]. This evaluation did not identify delays as a result of changes in GDN Program Management staff during the Program period. It is important to note that the nature of this Program required GDN Program Management to constantly adapt to the needs of the beneficiaries. The fact that this was a demand-driven program, made it harder to achieve targets on time. Indeed, this evaluation finds that GDN Program management efficiently adjusted the overall targets in order to ensure that delays in the IPs would not jeopardise actual achieving of results. This evaluation finds that GDN took a strategic decision by outsourcing the judgement on how realistic targets are to the IP teams. Interview feedback from GDN suggests that they consider the IP teams themselves to best understand what can be achieved within a given timeline. GDN would be there to provide project management and technical RCB support. The experience with this Program shows that indeed the IPs have been to a large extent capable of managing the extent to which targets were realistic given the scale of operations. In case they would run into difficulties, GDN and the STA have been able to provide support.

Some delays have been identified throughout the various IPs. Operational delays include primarily the late submission of reporting to GDN Program Management. More programmatic delays in IPs were linked to the completion of the work by end

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[15] More details are given in the respective country chapters, section 3.2.2, 3.3.2 and 3.4.2.

beneficiaries which did not directly reflect the IP teams[16]. However, overall GDN Program targets have been met. It is difficult to determine whether the targets set for the GDN Program were realistic given the scale of operations. When looking at the responses from the individual IP team members, all (100%/10) consider that objectives were met and realistic given the scale of operations. In the case of the Senegalese IP, feedback from the STA suggests that objectives were not fully realistic given the lack of experience from the start of the initiative (more information can be found in section 3.5). This, inter alia, also contributed to the final decision to terminate the participation in the GDN Program.

Interview feedback from the IP team members and STAs suggest that objectives set by GDN for the Overall Program (OP) were realistic given the scale of operations. The GDN activities related to the relatively straightforward operational objectives of the GDN Program (to provide access to research training) allowed for holistic and flexible support to the different IPs. This was required given that each IP had set its own objectives. On occasions, IP teams suffered delays which were dealt with by GDN through tailor-made support on the basis of the IP team's needs. This is illustrated by the wide range of activities offered to the IP team members in order to build research capacity. The following table presents an overview of the activities suggested by GDN to the beneficiaries in order to built research capacity. The table shows that beneficiaries actually used most of these activities in one form or another in the respective IPs.

Table 8: GDN Program RCB activities supported

Supported RCB activities[17]	Vietnam	Ethiopia	Bhutan
Workshops focused on designing and conducting empirical research	✓	✓	✓
Workshops focused on research methodology for a variety of themes and disciplines.	✓	✓	✓
Training programs in data collection, computational and analytical skills	✓	✓	✓
Research visits	✓	✗	✓
Lectures by regional / global experts in the given field or methodology	✓	✓	✓
Faculty exchange program to other countries	✓	✓	✗
Online tutorials on methods and data for researchers	✓	✗	✗
On-site mentoring on methods and data for researchers	✗	✓	✓
Refresher courses/workshops on contemporary topics of research to improve quality of research, teaching and peer-learning environment	✓	✗	✓

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[16] More details are given in the respective country chapters, section 3.2.2, 3.3.2 and 3.4.2.
[17] Feedback from survey.

Scholarships for masters' students and guidance to try and steer more towards pursuing PhD and research	✓	✓	✗
Small grants/fellowships for researchers to participate in training / courses / summer school	✓	✓	✗
Scholarships for PhD thesis	✓	✓	✗
Mentoring from experienced researchers	✓	✓	✓
Competitive small grants for undertaking research	✗	✓	✓
Joint partner institution/government/GDN programs to organize the intermediation between academic research and policy advice	✓	✓	✗
Communication strategies and training to feature researchers and research outputs in appropriate global and regional networks, platforms and forums, both online and offline	✓	✓	✗
Provision of various networking and knowledge services	✓	✓	✗
Career skills workshops for researchers (i.e. publishing guidance, writing non-technical briefs based on rigorous academic research, effective presentation skills for researchers / networking and connecting with other researchers)	✓	✓	✓

Source: IP team survey

2. What has been the learning in terms of OP implementation for GDN?

Interview feedback suggested that for GDN the management of such a program was complex by definition. It was noted that in particular remote management alone was not enough. It is therefore that GDN focused on ensuring close, hands-on monitoring by the GDN Program management team and face-to-face meetings between IP teams and GDN and IP teams and STAs. The experience of GDN has been that capacity is greatly enhanced through these face-to-face meetings. Similar feedback has been collected from the interviewed STAs. All confirmed that meeting the teams was very fruitful, in particular to build trust. GDN suggested it would be recommendable to oblige STA visits to the IP teams in the future. The STA, or mentor, is considered a crucial stakeholder in helping GDN to manage the IPs. Apart from their thematic expertise, STAs should also understand what the IP teams need and how they can achieve the change they want to achieve in the context in which they operate.

GDN learned from the OP that there is capacity in the different countries and that the program's competitive selection process allowed GDN to identify this capacity and support it. The demand-driven approach was considered very important. In many instances the activities of the beneficiaries were not entirely new: some (existing MoUs with external actors, understaffed research centres, underdeveloped trainings) were activities that had been either stalled, were not implemented to their full potential or were dormant for lack of capacity to implement them. They were either part of their core activities or were dormant due to resources restraints. The GDN

Program allowed them to continue these activities with additional support from GDN and the STAs.

It is important to highlight that this Program has been one of the first projects by GDN in which the emphasis was placed on institutional capacity building. To a degree, the Program can be considered a pilot program for GDN and therefor learnings in terms of implementation are important for future references. Interview feedback from GDN suggests that in terms of management the difference is that beneficiaries in this program are more independent. GDN took a less proactive role than for example the STA, and only stepped in once risks were identified in IP teams not achieving targets.

Feedback from the STAs suggested that also for them this Program involved a learning curve. The STA from the Ethiopian team noted that they had to build trust and that the face-to-face meetings contributed greatly to this. In the case of Senegal, the STA expressed lack of confidence that the IP team was able to achieve the targets which probably had effect on the trust between the IP team and the STA. It should also be noted that several STAs already participated in other GDN projects which made them familiar with the kind of support to deliver. However, they also noted that the focus of the support needed to change in this program due to its focus on building institutional capacities. GDN feedback confirms this and notes that indeed some STAs already were familiar with GDN's work or the respective IP teams (as was the case in Vietnam). However, GDN also noted that in their view the STAs underwent a learning development by participating in the Program.

In terms of learnings for the IP team members, this evaluation notes that the IP team members on average rated their level of ability at the end of the Program high for 1) designing and implementing M&E systems and 2) RCB programmes. Also the 3) ability to manage RCB programmes is rated high as well as the 4) ability to reach out and communicate on performance and results of RCB programmes. For all four elements, the IP members indicated that the extent to which participation in the GDN Program contributed to these abilities was high. The IP members were less positive on 5) their ability to facilitate policy debate relating RCB and the contribution of the GDN Program.

Table 9: Rating of learnings for the IP team members

	Rating ability[18]	Relation with Program
1) I have the ability to design and implement M&E systems for programmes within my institution	4,10	3,90

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[18] The IP team members were asked to rate their ability and rate to which extent the Program contributed to this ability. Ratings was done on the Likert scale from 5 very high to 1 very low.

2) I have the ability to design and implement research capacity building programmes that address the needs of my institution	4,00	3,70
3) I have the ability to manage research capacity building programmes	4,30	3,90
4) I have the ability to reach out and communicate on the performance and results of research capacity building programmes	4,00	3,80
5) I have the ability to facilitate policy debate relating research capacity building	3,40	3,40

Source: IP team survey

The IP team respondents also rated their understanding of aspects of managing a RCB project positively. Also the extent of which participation in the GDN Program has contributed to this is positive, in particular for communications between team members, and financial management.

Table 10: Ratings understanding RCB management

	Rating understanding	Relation with program
Budget	4,20	3,70
Timeline	4,30	3,60
Communications between (cross country) team members	4,00	4,00

Source: IP team survey

3. To what extent is the current staffing at an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the OP (quality and quantity)?

Interview feedback from GDN suggests that the staffing was appropriate in terms of types of profiles involved. Staffing was considered less appropriate in terms of time allocated. Considering this is a pilot program for GDN, the Program management suggested that they would require additional time to reflect on the Program to understand whether and why it worked, what worked and what did not, in parallel to external evaluations, and how to possibly scale this up in the future.

4. Is the OP tracking the outputs and outcomes of the IPs in a systematic way? Who reviews this data? Does a feedback loop exist? What information is important to the grantee institutions?

GDN project management actively tracked outputs and outcomes of the IPs and also pushed the individual teams to do this internally. The data is primarily reviewed by the GDN project manager in conversation with the STAs, and reported back internally to GDN management. Considering this is a pilot project, GDN project management hopes

that this will become more institutionalised in the future and that GDN as an organization will be able to recognize the needs of institutional beneficiaries such as universities and research centres as opposed to now primarily focusing its capacity building activities on individual researchers or teams of researchers.

3.1.2 Effectiveness

1. Did the OP support in identifiable ways the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions? What explains different outcomes across different grantees?

This evaluation finds that the GDN Program in all IPs contributed to supporting the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions. The grantee institutions are all active in the area of teaching and research. In the case of the IP in Vietnam/Cambodia, the emphasis was placed on teaching or training of students. This was supported through the GDN Program primarily by providing funds, but also through the technical assistance of the mentor (particularly in supporting the selection of theme and keynote speakers for the summer school). The Overall Program ensured that the IP continued already existing educational training models, but did not include a strong component of building research capacity of staff from the grantee institution.

This was for example more emphasised in the case of Bhutan where the GDN Program activities were focused on teaching staff of the grantee institution, particularly early career researchers, and less so on the immediate teaching needs of the grantee institution. Arguably, this project was more directed at institutional research capacity building where the OP funded a project that otherwise would not have materialised as such.

The same can be said about the IP in Ethiopia. In fact, this IP was supported by GDN, both in its research and teaching mandate targeting staff and students, arguably delivering the most innovative institutional capacity building exercise. Very important has been that the OP supported an IP that contributed to the completion of educational programmes of the institution.

2. Has the OP design (including monitoring and results frameworks) facilitated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions, beyond the implementing teams, that informed project implementation?

This evaluation identified some evidence of an internal learning feedback loop. For example, in the case of the Ethiopian IP the involvement of a management committee ensured that the learnings from project implementation spilled over to wider management. In the case of the IP in Vietnam/Laos, the involvement of the IP team

members from Cambodia led to a spill over from existing project implementation knowledge in relation to the JTD from the members from Vietnam to the members in Cambodia. In addition, the members also applied together for an international grant. GDN feedback suggested that, on the basis of the quality of reporting to GDN by the IP teams, in particular project management skills improved for the Bhutan and Ethiopian IP teams. In the case of Bhutan, a final internal assessment meeting facilitated by GDN in Kathmandu contributed to this. Improvements in project management skills were also supported by feedback from the STAs. GDN feedback also noted that project management skills from the IP team in Vietnam was of high quality. However, questions were raised to what extent there was a feedback loop within the team to the Cambodian IP members. GDN expressed on several occasions concerns that there was limited spill over from the experience of IP members in Vietnam to the team in Cambodia in relation to how to organise a summer school program. In the case of Bhutan, GDN feedback suggested that significant improvement was noted in progress and financial reporting compared to the start and end of the OP. In the case of Ethiopia, it was noted that the team operated in a systematic way which was reflected in solid project management and reporting to GDN.

3. Has GDN's support been instrumental in filling specific gaps in IP design and management, and enhancing the capability of each team (and institution) to further its goals and vision in terms of IP project implementation? Has GDN's support, including mentors, contributed instrumentally to the quality and institutionalization of the research capacity building activities planned by each grantee?

Survey feedback from the IP members suggests that support of GDN has been very positive across the spectrum. Only two out of ten respondents noted that support for dissemination/outreach and networking activity were considered of average quality. It was noted however by the team's PC that this task was largely covered by support from the STA who helped them reach out in Europe. From the survey findings it is particularly shown that the GDN administrative support (i.e. on processing of contracts and payments) was considered very good. This falls in line with the intended approach by the GDN project management to remotely manage the projects and leave the strategic decisions to the individual IPs.

Figure 2: Rating of all IP team members of organisational support received from GDN
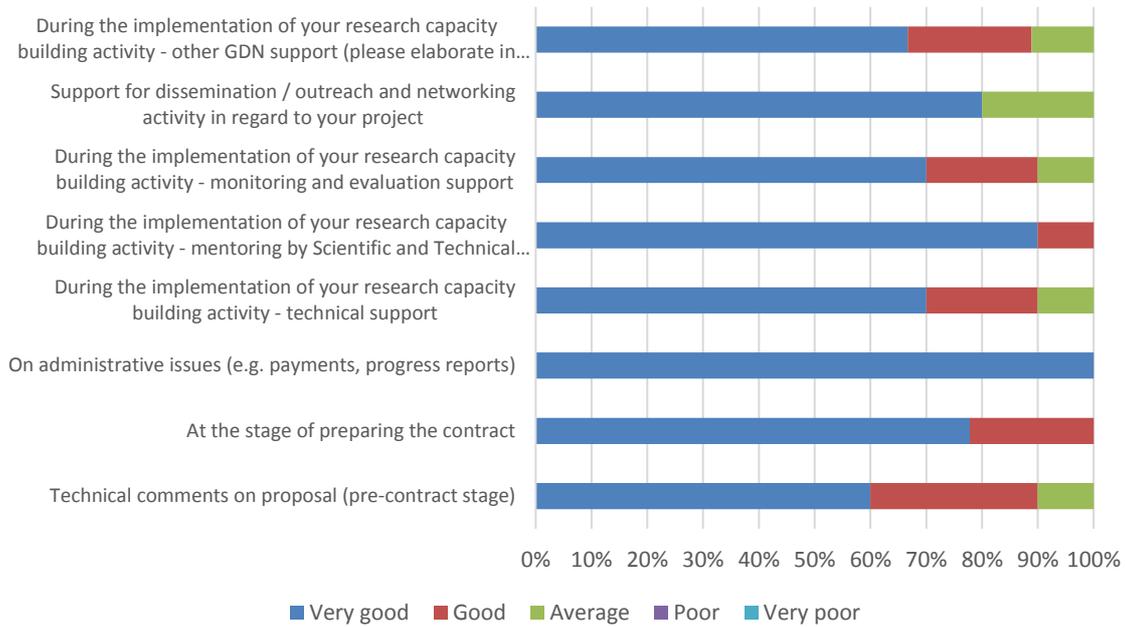
Source: IP team survey

The IP team members rated support by GDN very positive. In two instances, respondents considered GDN's support in providing access to training and to research as poor primarily due to the limited need for the beneficiary. In other words, the type of support has limited relevance for these beneficiaries. It is important to highlight the positive rating for the mentoring support. Interview feedback also confirms that without any exception, the mentor role is seen as a major asset in to the GDN Program.

Figure 3: Rating of all IP team members of quality services provided by GDN
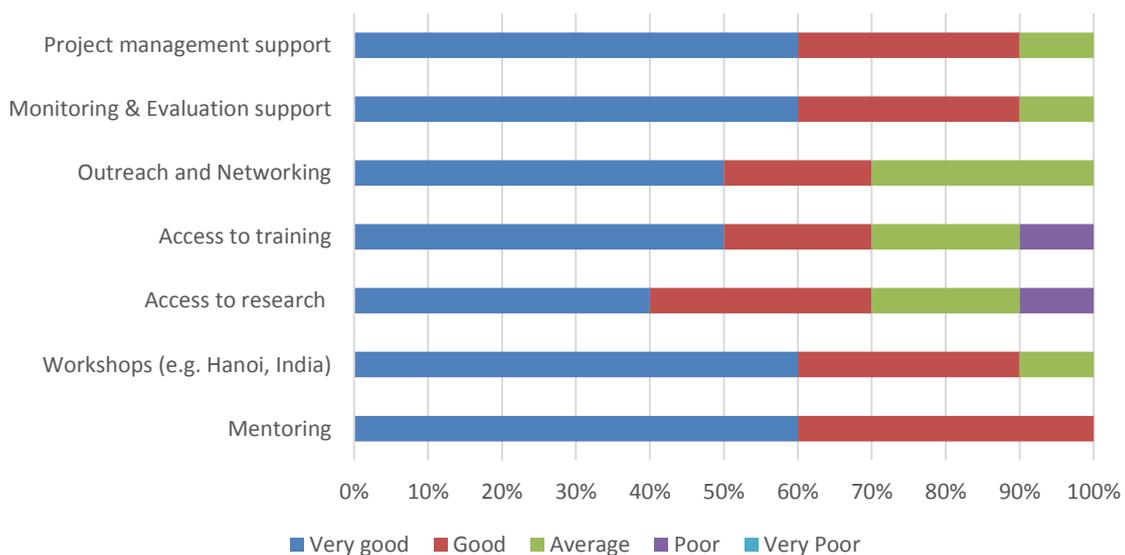
3.1.3   Impact

1. To what degree has the OP achieved its stated goals, impacting on the capability of researchers and capacity of institutions?

The IP team survey shows that the respondents consider their understanding and knowledge of institutional research capacity building very high. This is understandable given that the IP members already are engaged professionally in related activities. For example, interview feedback notes that the IP team from Ethiopia and Vietnam had extensive experience with externally-funded projects and therefore performed well on project management tasks. Nonetheless, the survey respondents almost unanimously confirmed that they experienced improvement during the GDN Program concerning knowledge and understanding of institutional RCB, and that to a large extent this related to participation in the Program. The figures below show that the respondents rated on a Likert scale (from 5 very high to 1 very low) their knowledge very high on RCB (4,5), outreach and networking (4,4), monitoring and evaluation (4,4) and project management (4,5). At the same time, the participation in the GDN Program contributed to improvements to knowledge and understanding on the same elements. While across the board positive, in particular for project management (3,9) and monitoring and evaluation (4,1) the respondents related improvements to the GDN Program.

Source: IP team survey

Beyond the IP team members, also other stakeholders within institutions were exposed to IP activities such as staff, management, board members and students. The quality of interaction with these stakeholders was rated very positive. In one instance an IP respondent rated the interaction with board members of the respective institution of low quality.

Figure 5: Quality of interaction with institutional stakeholders
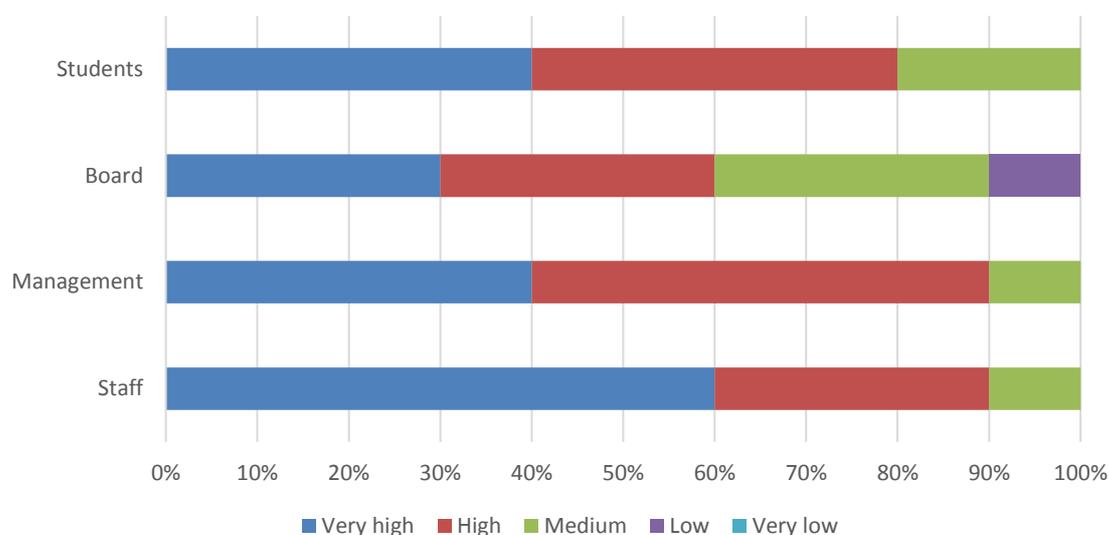
Source: IP team survey

The impact of the IP activities on beneficiaries of the research institutions has also been positive. According to the IP team respondents, collective research skills of students benefitted from the IPs confirming institutional spill-over. Collective skills on research methods of the students rated particularly high (4,4) in the view of the IP team respondents. In addition, improvements were also considered to be very much related to participation in the Program (4,1).

Figure 6: OP rating collective research skills beneficiaries

	Rating skills[19]	Improvement	Relation with Program
Research methods – theoretical knowledge (understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application)	4,40	Yes (10/10)	4,10
Statistical analysis (use of SPSS, SAS or similar statistical package)	3,90	Yes (8/10 – 2 no)	3,50
Multidisciplinary research	3,80	Yes (10/10)	3,80
Qualitative research methods	4,20	Yes (10/10)	3,60
Quantitative research methods	4,20	Yes (10/10)	3,70
Mixed methods	4,20	Yes (10/10)	3,70

Source: IP team survey

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[19] The IP team members were asked to rate the collective research skills of students and rate to which extent the Program contributed to this ability. Ratings was done on the Likert scale from 5 very high to 1 very low.

2. To what degree has the OP reached beyond its stated goals, with institutional spill-over effect on the involved institutions in terms of research and research training initiatives?

3. To what degree has the OP succeeded in supporting institutions to link their own strengthening to larger national policy debates on higher educational reform?

In terms of wider objectives such as facilitating policy dialogue, the IP team respondents showed different ratings in terms of confidence and awareness on communication and dissemination skills. While overall positive, the findings show that improvement is possible in particular in relation to the ability to extract (3,7) and introduce (3,2) policy recommendations. Also the improvements during the Program were partially attributable to participation (respectively 3,6 and 3,3). Interview feedback from GDN also acknowledged that the element of extracting and introducing policy recommendations was challenging. It was therefore that GDN included this component also in the workshop schedule for Hanoi, inviting decision-makers from Vietnamese universities and the government. Also during the visits to Bhutan and Ethiopia, management of grantee institutions were invited and attended meetings.

GDN feedback notes that the objective of strengthening policy debates could have been far-fetching, rather a long term objective with indirect links to the OP and IP implementation than a direct effect of the project activities. The evaluators agree that possible policy implications as a result of IP and OP activities could need more time to materialise after the project ends. It can therefor not be determined at this stage with certainty that efforts regarding extracting and introducing policy recommendations have resulted in change. However, from this evaluation it is clear that beneficiaries consider the activities that contribute to such change to be challenging.

Figure 7: Rating awareness and confidence communication and dissemination skills

Source: IP team survey

Table 11: Rating awareness and confidence in communication and dissemination

	Rating awareness[20]	Relation with Program
Professional visibility (amongst peer groups, policymakers, press etc.)	3,90	3,90
Ability to extract policy recommendations from your activities	3,70	3,60

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[20] The IP team members were asked to rate awareness and confidence regarding communication/dissemination skills and rate to which extent the Program contributed to these skills. Ratings was done on the Likert scale from 5 very high to 1 very low.

Ability to introduce policy recommendations into the public debate	3,20	3,30
Communication skills (working with media, organize events, targeting audiences)	4,10	3,80
Networking skills with contacts within your region	4,20	3,90
Networking skills with contacts outside your region	3,80	3,70

Source: IP team survey

Table 12: GDN Annual Conference

GDN Annual Conference

The 2016 GDN Annual Global Development Conference took place in Lima, Peru, on 17-18 March. A session was dedicated to the Program titled: "*Small is beautiful? Piloting change in research capacity in least developed countries (LDCs) – through example*"[1]. The donor IDRC chaired the panel which included speakers from GDN[1] and from the three grantee teams[1] and one discussant[1].The session during the conference highlighted the challenges with building research capacity in LDCs and pointed to the relevance of *pilot* programmes to "*plant the seed of broader change in a complex higher education system, through example*"[1]. By reaffirming the essence of the Program, GDN set the stage for the grantees from Cambodia, Bhutan and Ethiopia to present their experience of piloting new ways of doing research capacity building in their respective institutions and their use of GDN's support. With the session, GDN aimed also to present a conceptual framework to help assess the impact of RCB pilots at the institutional and systemic level, and to suggest avenues for future funding and programming approaches for IOs committed to strengthening tertiary education.

Participant	Title paper
Francesco Obino	Reforming through example. A conceptual framework for understanding the impact of research capacity building pilots in the higher education system in least developed countries
Jamba Tobden	Aspirations for Research Development at the Royal University of Bhutan
Laurent Mesmann	Tam Dao Days: Building Momentum Towards a Regional Model for Research Capacity Development in South East Asia
Mengistu Katema Aredo	Building Research Capacity in Economics and Agribusiness: Implications of GDN's Program in Ethiopia

Despite of the room for improvement for awareness and confidence on dissemination and communication skills, the IP teams did use a variety of strategies to disseminate activity output during the Program period. The use of social media as a dissemination strategy is limited.

Table 13: Use of dissemination strategies

Dissemination strategies	Yes	No
Distributing report, paper, or policy brief to potential	9	1

policymakers (via email, paper, etc.)		
Discuss ideas related to the activities with potential policymakers	9	1
Distributing ideas through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	5	5
Presenting at conferences, seminars, etc. and organisation of events	10	0

Source: IP team survey

The usefulness of the different dissemination strategies is clear from the IP team members' views. It is noticeable that discussing ideas related to the activities with potential policy makers is considered less useful which perhaps could be linked to the lower confidence and awareness of IP team members in extracting and introducing policy recommendation into the public debate.

Figure 8: Usefulness of dissemination strategies
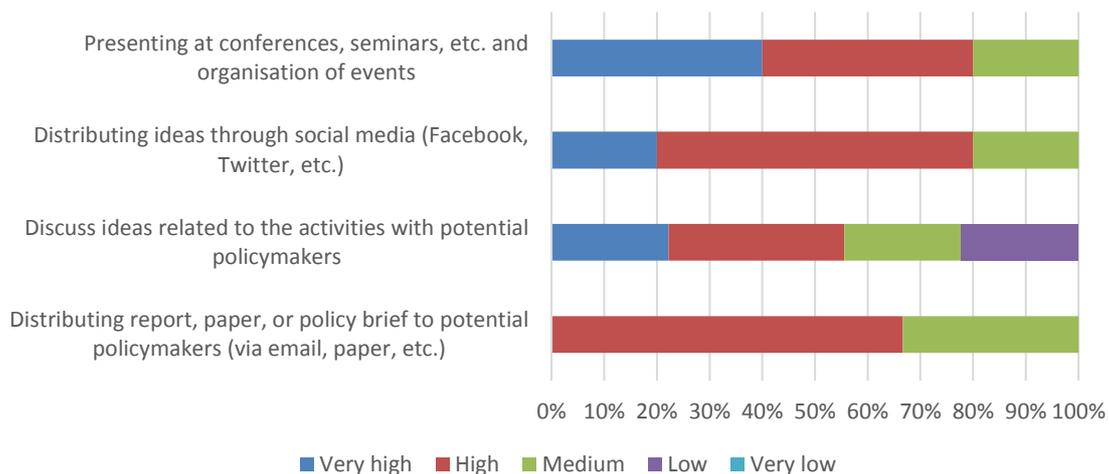
Source: IP team survey

In terms of exposure to the work of the IP teams, the evaluation finds that in particular stakeholders from research institutes were exposed (administrators and academia), followed by civil society, media and politicians. The quality of interaction was considered particularly high with administrators and academia, as well as think tanks. Although positive overall, IP respondents rated the quality of interaction with politicians slightly lower.

Table 14: Exposure IP activities

	Yes	No
Politicians	8	2
Administrators	10	0

Academia	10	0
Think tank	4	6
Civil society	9	0
Private sector	7	3
Media	9	1

Source: IP team survey

Figure 9: Quality interaction with stakeholders
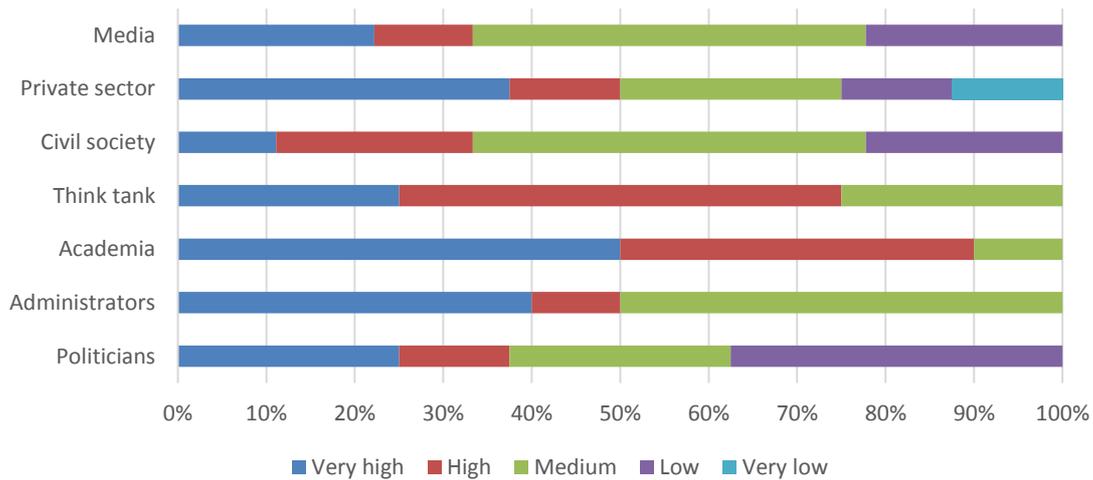
Source: IP team survey

3.1.4   Sustainability

1. How could the OP have delivered greater value, specifically for the grantee institution (beyond the implementation team)?

Interview feedback suggests that the OP could have benefited from more face-to-face interaction between GDN Program management and the IP teams, as well as interaction between STAs and IP teams. GDN understood the relevance of such meetings in particular to generate trust, but also to better understand the needs of the beneficiaries. It was noted by GDN that the missions to the IP countries allowed them to also liaise with other stakeholders in the respective institutions such as university management. For example, a visit towards the end of the Program to Ethiopia allowed GDN Program management to have open discussions with university stakeholders on the needs for research capacity building. GDN learned also that timing of such visits were essential. For example, in the case of Bhutan GDN Program management was not sure whether or when to visit the IP team. They wanted to make sure that when visiting the team, they could actually complement their work in a valuable way. This evaluation finds that GDN struggled with finding a right balance between providing active support to IP teams when being needed in the eyes of GDN without undermining the intention to have requests for support actually coming from the IP

teams themselves, the essence of having a demand-driven approach. In order to strike the right balance, the OP could have benefitted from having more face-to-face interaction between GDN staff, the STAs and the IP team members.

2. To what extent are the RCB initiatives likely to continue after the OP closes? Has the OP been able to equip the grantee institutions with new research toolboxes and institutional links that help them deliver quality research and research training to their research communities of reference and beyond? What lessons does the OP and model offer in terms of sustainability of benefits and results?

Interview feedback suggests that the objectives established for the respective IPs remain a priority for the institutions. Whether the activities will continue in the same way and with the same intensity as during the OP Program cannot be fully determined. The GDN Program has according to the IP team members contributed to successfully exploring and securing funding for follow-up research capacity building activities. IP teams in particular focused on exploring international grants and in several occasions also succeeded in winning these. A key element in exploring and securing grants for the IP team in Vietnam has been the involvement of the STA. Interview feedback confirmed that the mentors played a more important role than GDN Program management equipping the teams with institutional links. GDN confirmed also that that was part of the design of the Program rather than an issue of performance. This evaluation has not identified specific research toolboxes that were provided by the OP and helped IP teams to deliver quality research and research training. Also in this area, the mentor arguably played somewhat of a role by helping IP teams to identify international trainers for some of the activities (i.e. in the case of Ethiopia). One element that did stand out was the delivery of monitoring and evaluation toolboxes through the Program. GDN Program management helped delivering this tool through the Hanoi workshop and also promoted the use of self-evaluation during the visits to Ethiopia and Bhutan which resulted in an internal assessment report by the team in all three IPs.

Mid-term workshop in Hanoi

GDN organised a mid-term workshop in Hanoi from the 23rd to 25th of January 2016. The grantees from Ethiopia, Bhutan and Cambodia / Vietnam participated, as well as all the STAs (including the STA from the Senegalese team) and various external experts. Also a member of our evaluation team participated in the workshop allowing for first hand observation on the effectiveness of the activities organised by GDN. The workshop aimed to share experiences and knowledge across the team, kick-start an informed reflection on the impact of the Program and training of project management as well as M&E.

Day I: The workshop started with an introductory session in which all the teams presented their IPs. The STA from the Senegalese team presented lessons learnt from the failed grant. The workshop was the first in-person meeting with all the grantees, which proved useful from a peer-to-peer learning perspective. After each introductory presentation, the STAs and GDN reflected on the respective IPs, which resulted in a critical but constructive discussion. After this session, the grantees met with the STAs, GDN and external experts in face-to-face meetings to discuss progress and reflect on the feedback received in the first sessions. This proved valuable for the teams especially given that some had not yet met with the STA in person. Also, GDN was able to learn at first hand what challenges the teams were facing, allowing for participants to think of mitigation measures. The first day was wrapped up with a group session on project management.

Day II: The second day focused during the first half on evaluation and during the second half on fundraising. GDN organised the sessions in way that first grantees were introduced to M&E by an external expert, followed by break-out sessions in which teams would work on building an evaluation methodology. GDN, STAs and external experts would support the teams on this exercise and steer them into the right direction whenever needed. Based on our observation, the teams varied in the degree of experience with evaluation. For example, the existing experience with M&E of the Cambodia / Vietnam team allowed for the participants to draw on previous evolution work and further detailing the indicators for their IP. The Bhutan team showed during this exercise their strength in constructively building indicators for measuring impact. Arguably, GDN should have organised such a session earlier in the Program. However, the open-mindedness of the Bhutan team did show that also while IP activities were in full motion, the participants were able to construct an intervention logic. The second part of the day focused on fundraising. An informative presentation was given by an experienced external expert focusing on the changing international landscape and priorities of donors. GDN provided training on technical aspects concerning fundraising which proved valuable to ensure sustainability post-Program. By doing so, in our view, GDN showed dedication to ensure that today's grantees do not adopt a passive but rather a pro-active approach towards fundraising for the future.

Day III: The last day included a session by an external expert on institutional RCB and policy making. This was follow-up by a session in which high-level speakers were invited from the Vietnamese universities and the Ministry of Education and Training. The open dialogue with policy-makers and academics provided an interesting insight in RBC in Vietnam. During the last day, GDN also hosted a lunch meeting with all the STAs. This meeting allowed the STAs to reflect on the workshop and openly speak to each other about progress in the different team. Also, the STAs debated during the meeting about their views on institutional RCB. The day and workshop was closed with an exposure visit to the campus of the Académie des Sciences Sociales du Vietnam, hosted by the Vietnamese / Cambodian team.

3.1.5 Relevance and added value

1. Does the OP fill a real gap in the research and research training landscape of each of the LDCs?

2. What have been the unexpected results (positive and negative) and missed opportunities?

3. How has GDN positioned itself to add-value in a demand-led, tailored research capacity building approach in LDCs?

One of GDN's first projects focused on institutional research capacity building was the Global Research Project titled: `Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public Expenditure Accountability' (PEM)[21]. This project ran from 2008-2013 and aimed at building the capacity of 14 participating developing country organisations to monitor and analyse public expenditure choices and processes, and to engage constructively with policy officials on various policy options in the three sectors of health, education and water. Similar to the GDN Program under evaluation, this project had an integrated monitoring and evaluation components. However, the difference was that the GRC project integrated this as an independent component through the National Opinion Research Centre at the University of Chicago. The GDN project implementation team provided capacity building through workshops, mentoring, peer engagement and the development of a informative website open to the beneficiaries[22]. A "learning by doing" approach was adopted allowing the beneficiaries to implement what they learned through the project activities, while at the same time receiving technical support from advisors and the project management team.

Interview feedback from GDN noted that the PEM project was one of the first of its kind and learning did feed into the design of the LDC Program. An identified difference with the GDN Program under evaluation was that the latter included LDCs which caused for variety in projects and therefor the need for more GDN management. The PEM project's size allowed GDN to organise, together with local partners, numerous workshops which due to similarities between the beneficiaries could also be reproduced. This was more difficult in the LDC Program but was attempted through the Hanoi meeting.

Also, different types of mentors with institutional capacity building skills and regional expertise were needed. The variety of projects within the LDC complicated peer reviewing, which was more feasible through the PEM project. This is also why the review function in the LDC Program was more placed with the mentor.

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[21] http://www.gdn.int/html/page2.php?MID=3&SID=24&SSID=5&SCID=6
[22] http://www.gdn.int/admin/uploads/editor/files/PEM_final_evaluation_report.pdf

When discussing relevance of the Program it is important to discuss its origin. GDN noted that previous programmes that provided research grants to individual researchers or research teams included almost no participation of LDCs. GDN assumed that the reason for this was that LDCs faced disproportionate barriers in accessing RCB opportunities. As a result, the pilot Program was designed to break through the 'low research capacity trap'. In other words, GDN identified demand for a RCB program that targets specifically LDCs. At the same time, GDN also identified that there was no *supply* of such programmes by other international RCB institutions similar to GDN. The demand for RCB programmes for LDC can be evidenced by the high amount of expressions of Interest (EoI) received after the call was made public (over 230 EoI were received). This resulted in 23 applicants from 18 different countries. The added-value of GDN piloting such a programme is the idea that the organisation has a vast track-record in building research capacity in developing countries (institutional memory and experience), access to international donor organizations (funding), and already has established the organisational set-up (in-house expertise on project management, M&E, etc.) to provide such services. In other words, GDN arguably was the right player to pilot such a programme considering fewer steps were to be made in order to launch or adapt their normal RCB approach (meaning RCB of individual researchers / research teams) to this new institutional approach to RCB. We find that with this, GDN has proven to innovative and re-invent their role in RCB and therefor ensure sustainability of the organisation.

Compared to other programmes of GDN, a new feature in this Program is the demand-driven program design. GDN set only the eligibility criteria for application concerning the need to be from a LDC and the need to present on a RCB on the institutional level. Based on these criteria, applicants were to put forward a project that they themselves designed. This ensured 1) ownership by the grantees from the start, and 2) applicability of the project in the contextual setting of the LDC. In other words, the projects were tailor-made to the needs of the institutions, after all the ones that best understand the higher education environment in which they operate.

There are variations in understandings of how research capacity building (RCB) can be conceptualised. Deborah Eade (1997) provides a commonly accepted conceptual framework in her book 'Capacity-building: An Approach to People-Centred Development'.[23] She conceptualises CB as means, process or ends which can be directed at society as whole or at an organisation (1997: 35). The matrix below presents this framework:

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[23] http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/capacity-building-an-approach-to-people-centred-development-122906

Table 16: RCB variations Eade

	Capacity building as means	Capacity building as process	Capacity building as ends
Capacity building in the organisation	Strengthen organisation to perform specified activities (one of which may be to build capacity among primary stakeholders)	Process of reflection, leadership, inspiration, adaptation and search for greater coherence between organisation's mission, structure and activities	Strengthen organisation to survive and fulfil its mission as defined by the organisation
Capacity building in society	Strengthen capacity of primary stakeholders to implement defined activities	Fostering communication: processes of debate, relationship building, conflict resolution and improved ability of society to deal with its differences	Strengthen capacity of primary stakeholders to participate in political and socio-economic arena according to objectives defined by them

Although targeting CB and not specifically research CB, the relevance of Eade's framework lies in the fact that in reality the differences between these points in the matrix are not clear cut. This can be argued in the case of the GDN Program. In the view of the evaluators, the Program represents different elements of RCB. For example, Eade highlights that capacity-building should not create dependency nor weaken the responsibilities of the beneficiary. Also, CB is not a separate activity, meaning it can be done instead of supporting or undertaking education programmes. Finally, Eade also highlights that sustainability should not depend entirely on financial self-reliance, especially on the area of education. More important are less tangible area of social, political, organisation and managerial sustainability. In other words, institutions are just as likely to collapse due to lack of commitment by its members as by budget cuts (1997: 32). This evaluation aimed to look at RCB innovation presented by GDN through its Program. In order to do so, we looked at whether there are other organisations funding projects that aim for research capacity building, whether these projects target individual researchers or teams of researchers and/or institutions (i.e. universities), and whether these projects target LDCs specifically. Subsequently we looked at whether these projects include similar features as the GDN Program. For example, do they support the beneficiaries not only with money but also with "technical assistance" on project management, monitoring and evaluation, outreach and communication, and research (i.e. on the use of research methods, etc.).

The following table presents an overview of some of the identified programs[24] and to what extent these include the elements provided to beneficiaries by the GDN Program.

Organisation	Research capacity building	Targets researchers & research institutions	Focus on LDCs	Technical assistance by organisation*	Demand-driven research**	Researcher/university + mentor
Global Development Network (GDN)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Think Tank Initiative (TTI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Global Change SysTem for Analysis, Research & Training (START)	✓	✓	✓			
Norad > The Norwegian Programme for Capacity > Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
USAID and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) > Partnership for enhanced engagement in research (PEER)	✓	✓	✓			
The Elsevier Foundation & Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) > Sustainability Visiting Expert Programme	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
International Foundation for Science (IFS)	✓	✓	✓			

Source: Own elaboration

* Technical assistance was broadly defined as support provided by the donor organisation to the beneficiary besides money, such as project management, monitoring and evaluation, outreach and communication, and research.

** Demand-driven research was broadly defined as the beneficiary was involved in the identification of area of cooperation and need or contributed to the research project design

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[24] The following key words in various combinations and order were entered in the Google-search engine: 'research capacity building and strengthening', 'LDCs', 'Least Developed Countries', 'low income countries', 'funding program', 'academic and research institutions.'

All organisations listed in the table are dedicated to building and strengthening research capacity in LDCs. However, the majority does not exclusively focus on LDCs, but instead on low income countries in general. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that most organisations listed limit their support to researchers and research institutions that do research in a specific research thematic area, such as sustainability or climate change related issues.

GDN's Program stands out among other research capacity building programmes with its three key programme features offered to beneficiaries, namely technical assistance, demand-driven research, and mentorship. First, GDN partners with academic and research institutions to implement and monitor specific research capability building programs. The beneficiary receives not only financial support, but also obtains technical assistance from GDN to assure efficient implementation and sustainability of the programme. Similarly, TTI's programme incorporates capacity development support by program officers and external experts in a number of areas that assist the beneficiary in its capacity building efforts. To some extend this feature is also reflected in Norad's programme, but in a much more limited sense, since it only entails monitoring and evaluation.

Second, GDN's Program is tailored to the needs of the beneficiary, like no other programme with similar focus, since the receiving institution proposes and designs the research capacity building programme. Many donor organisations assess and decide the need of the research institution without prior involvement of the beneficiary in the developing country. In addition, the donor organisation's agenda is often pre-set by the donor organisation's objectives or the home country's aid policy, like in the case of NORAD and USAID, which arguably leave little room for the receiving individual or institution to influence the research capacity building programme. The Sustainability Visiting Expert Programme of the Elsevier Foundation and TWAS allows the host institution to invite a scholar of their choice within the field of sustainability, which represents a rather limited way of influencing the design of the overall programme. The NORHED programme is very responsive to higher education sector priorities of the developing country and considers the needs and priorities identified by the beneficiary. Nevertheless, the research institutions do not propose or design the programmes or are otherwise involved in this regard.

Third, GDN's mentorship feature supports beneficiaries by providing an expert in the field to guide the beneficiary in its efforts to build its research capacity. Mentoring is also one of the three channels of delivery of TTI's capacity development program. As part of the Elsevier Foundation's and TWAS's programme, the visiting sustainability expert may function within the brief period of his/her stay as mentor. However, mentoring individual researchers or advice the institution on sustainability matters in general is not his/her primary purpose.

In conclusion, GDN's Program in LDCs is tailored in a way that allows for a comprehensive, effective and sustainable development of a beneficiary's research capacity. Other programmes from donor organisations often only provide financial support and lack a long-term perspective to escape the low-research capacity trap. Enhancing the ability of researchers and research institutions in these countries to undertake credible work and inform the policymaking community with timely, reliable analysis and evidence, benefits the development of the beneficiary's country's intellectual resources, competent workforces, visionary leaders, and human rights. Thus, it is of vital importance to constantly re-evaluate and adjust to the needs of beneficiaries and strive for responsive and sustainable research capacity programmes.

3.2 Project Cambodia/Vietnam

Table 17: Info sheet Cambodia/Vietnam

Country	Cambodia / Vietnam
Program name	Université régionale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques Les Journées deTam Dao (JTD) – Cambodge, Laos, Vietnam
Implementing Partner	Université Royale de Droit et des Sciences Economiques du Cambodge Académie des Sciences Sociales du Vietnam
Team	Stéphane Lagrée (PC), Laurent Mesmann (TM), Hoài Nam Do (TM), Thu Trang Bui (TM), Hong Trang Nguyen (TM)
IP brief	This program extends the 'Summer School in Tam Dao,' run by the *Académie des Sciences Sociales du Vietnam*; to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Madagascar. The purpose is to approach the essential skills and instruments for the appropriate study of social reality and to provide researchers with theoretical basis as well as methodologies in preparation of qualified scientific research projects. The objective is to support training on social sciences and to contribute to higher education research strategies in South-East Asia and beyond.
Main objectives	1. Propose training 2. Ensure knowledge transfer 3. Dissemination and optimisation of training 4. Raise awareness of multidisciplinary collaborations
Main activities	Identification of global thematic area / creation of a committee Identification of trainers Identification of workshop trainers Realisation of a work plan Awareness raising for Vietnamese trainees / conference presentation / website presentation Awareness raising for regional trainees / conference presentation / website presentation Selection of trainees Preparation of translation team Selection of literature Appointing trainers to trainees Identify training facility Dissemination activities Development of a scientific and educational report on the training Publication of book in three languages Media material

Table 18: Info sheet Cambodia / Vietnam

3.2.1 Theory of change

Figure 10: Theory of change IP Cambodia/Vietnam

Theory of Change
Cambodia / Vietnam

Objectives address needs ⟵ Intervention aims to achieve objectives

Needs
Research institution
Staff (researchers and project managers)
Students
Donor GDN

Objectives

Wider objectives
Institutionalize research capacity
Facilitate policy dialogue

Specific objectives
Ensure knowledge transfer
Raise awareness of multidisciplinary collaborations
Raise individual capacities to engage in multidisciplinary collaborations

Operational objectives
Organise summer school:
Identify global thematic areas
Identify and appoint trainers
Realise work plan
Raise awareness of summer school
Prepare website
Select trainers
Prepare translation

Capacity Needs
Need to access high-quality, practical training on social science research methodologies and approaches
Lack of skills and instruments for the appropriate study of social reality
Lack of theoretical basis and understanding of methodologies in preparation of qualified research

Intervention

Long-term outcome
Better policy debates
Institutionalized research capacity

Intermediate outcomes
Better supported training on social sciences
Researchers and development professionals are aware of multidisciplinary collaborations

Immediate outcomes
Access to research projects for academic staff
Access to best practices in CoE
Implementation action plans
Trained staff and students

Outputs
Organise summer school (work plan, trainers, translators, book publications, etc.)

Inputs
Resources: money; staff; technical expertise

Source: own elaboration

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3.2.2 Efficiency

1. Were the IP targets achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations? What were the challenges and what was done to mitigate risks?

The IP team met the contractual obligations towards GDN according to the original time schedule. The team noted that no deviation was recorded in relation to the final expenditure compared to the proposed budget. No delays were recorded of payments from GDN to the IP team.

The IP considered that the targets were realistic given the scale of operations. An important contribution in the eyes of the interviewed IP team members was the existing experience within the Vietnamese team with organizing the summer school.

2. What trade-offs and adjustments, if any, have been made by the IP in order to drive efficiency?

No specific trade-offs or adjustments were identified in order to drive for efficiency. However, the team did note that adopting a flexible approach for the team itself, but also by the GDN Program management, allowed to navigate through unexpected difficulties or take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.

3. What has been the learning in terms of IP implementation for the grantee institution, including in terms of peer-review, mentorship and informal learning and sharing across teams?

The IP team rated overall positively their ability related to various statements concerning the IP implementation. Also, the IP team considered to some extent that this ability related to participation in the GDN Program. It is noted here that in particular the IP team member from Cambodia responded highly positive to the relation with the Program. Interview feedback noted that the existing experience with organising the JTD (*Journées deTam Dao*) for the IP team from Vietnam influences the learnings that could come out of the involvement in the GDN Program. GDN feedback suggests that Program management during the period expressed concerns to the team in relation to spill over from the Vietnam members to the Cambodian members. This seems to have had effect given that in particular the IP member from Cambodia as newly exposed to the JTD related the level of ability highly to the GDN Program. Although there is arguably a lack of counter-factual, there is reason to suggest that without the repeated warnings from GDN, improvements would have been limited.

	Rating ability	Relation with program
I have the ability to design and implement M&E systems for programmes within my institution	3,5 (very high, high, medium, low)	3,3 (high, medium, medium, medium)
I have the ability to design and implement research capacity building programmes that address the needs of my institution	3,5 (very high, high, medium, low)	3,3 (high, medium, medium, medium)
I have the ability to manage research capacity building programmes	3,8 (very high, high, medium, medium)	3,3 (high, medium, medium, medium)
I have the ability to reach out and communicate on the performance and results of research capacity building programmes	3,5 (very high, high, medium, low)	3,3 (high, medium, medium, medium)
I have the ability to facilitate policy debate relating research capacity building	3 (high, high, medium, very low)	3,3 (high, medium, medium, medium)

Source: IP team survey

The IP team also rated their understanding of aspects of managing a research capacity building project positively. Also the extent of which participation in the GDN Program has contributed to this is positive, in particular for communications between team members. The GDN Program allowed the JTD to become cross-country with the involvement of the IP team members from Cambodia.

Table 20: Ratings understanding RCB management Cambodia / Vietnam

	Rating understanding	Relation with program
Budget	4,3 (very high, high, high, high)	3,3 (high, medium, medium, medium)
Timeline	4,5 (very high, very high, high, high)	3,5 (high, high, medium, medium)
Communications between (cross country) team members	4 (high, high, high, high)	4 (high, high, high, high)

Source: IP team survey

4. To what extent is the current staffing at an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the IPs (quality and quantity)?

It is suggested that in particular management of the JTD is affected by limited resources. The JTD is funded through different channels and budget cuts from some donors as well as depreciation of the EUR has put pressure on the operational resources for the program. According to reporting by the IP team the funding received through the GDN Program allowed to these problems to be mitigated. While funding

for the management remains precarious to date, staffing as a result of the GDN Program was at an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the IP.

3.2.3   Effectiveness

1. Did the OP support in identifiable ways the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions?

The GDN Program clearly supported the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions given that the JTD programme was an established programme that through funding of the GDN Program could be continued. The Vietnamese/Cambodian IP focused through the JTD largely on the teaching mandate but also contained an institutional research capacity building component through the link between the experienced Vietnamese team (in organizing the JTD) to the less-experienced Cambodian team. Also outreach efforts through the OP supported the institutions (i.e. videos and annual reports translated in different languages).

2. Has the OP design (including monitoring and results frameworks) facilitated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions, beyond the implementing teams, that informed project implementation?

Interview feedback suggests that the GDN Program design fostered collaboration between the IP team members in Cambodia and in Vietnam. With this IP being a first time that team members collaborated, the GDN Program ensured that this collaboration was to a degree systematised. As a result, project implementation went without major obstacles and also reduced the risk of the team members from Cambodia, newly exposed to organising a JTD, not to be involved in project activities which for older team members could be considered routine.

3. Has GDN's support been instrumental in filling specific gaps in IP design and management, and enhancing the capability of the team (and institution) to further its goals and vision in terms of IP project implementation? Has GDN's support, including mentors, contributed instrumentally to the quality and institutionalization of the research capacity building activities planned by each grantee?

The IP team rated the support of the GDN very positive. Potential improvements can be made in support for dissemination/outreach and networking activity in regard to the IP. The IP team members were particularly positive about the support from GDN to explore extension of the activities to Myanmar and Madagascar. Also the swift responsiveness to requests from the IP team were noted.
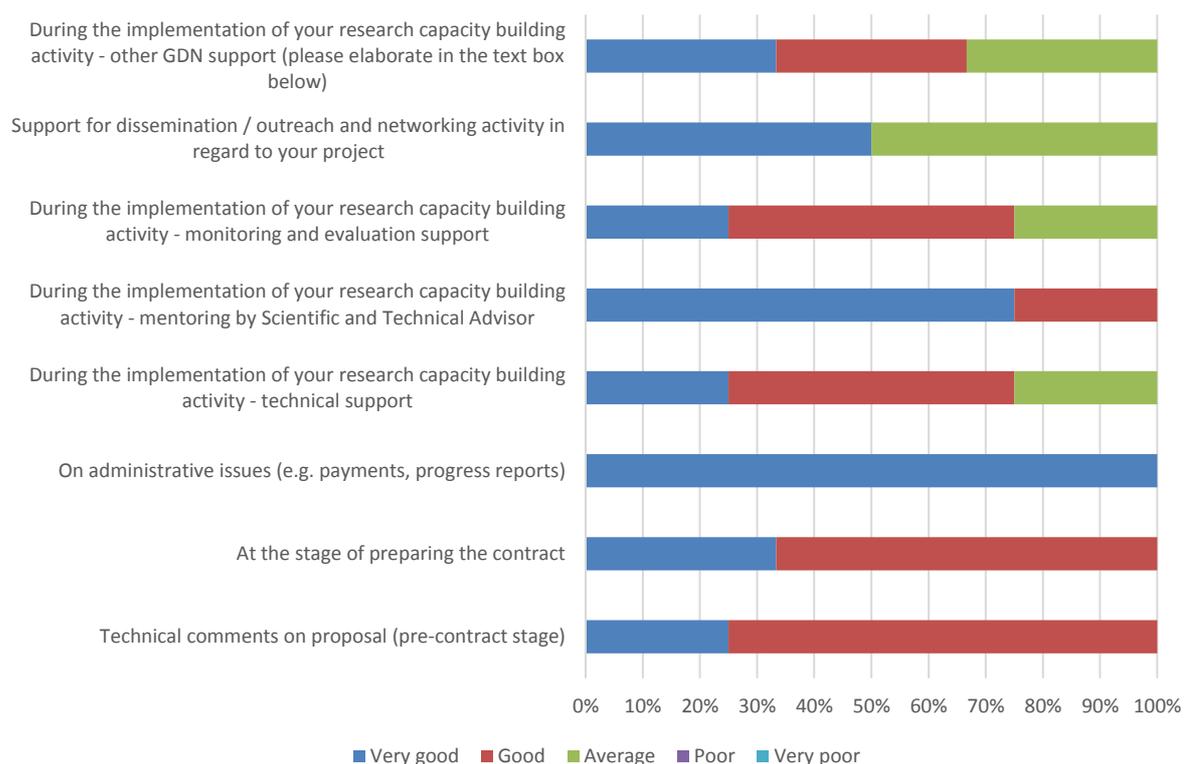
Source: IP team survey

The overall quality of the services provided by GDN was satisfactory. In particular, the mentoring was rated positively (very good, very good, good, good). The support from the mentor was also highlighted through the interviews with IP team members. Support on access to training and access to research was rated average (very good, average, average, poor). Interview feedback suggests that in this case the support of GDN also was not necessarily required. Previous experience with organising the JTD and existing network of academic collaborators have largely covered access to research and access to training needs.

Figure 12: Rating of Cambodian / Vietnamese IP team members of quality services provided by GDN
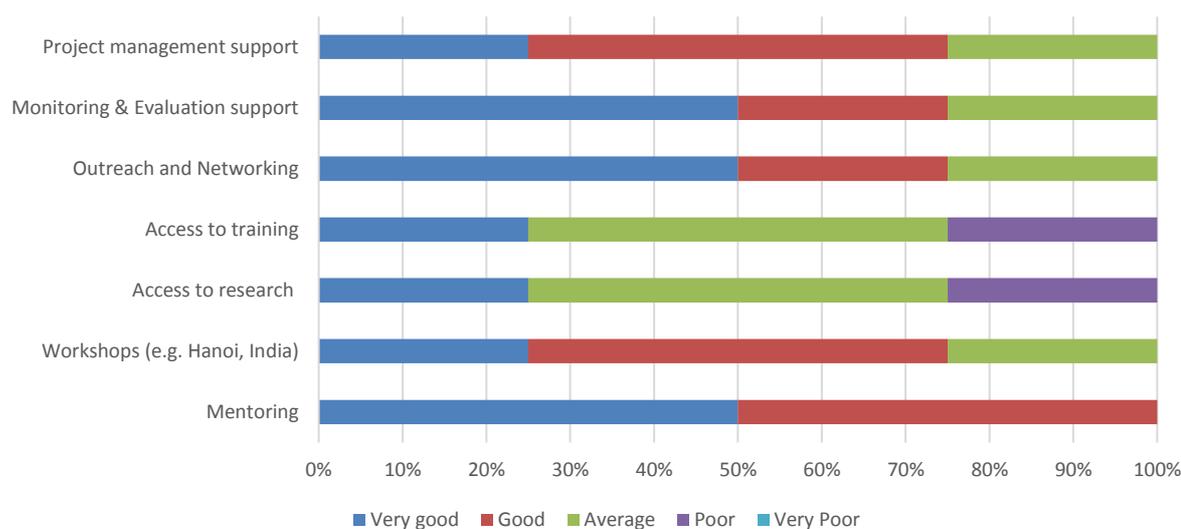
Source: IP team survey

3.2.4   Impact

1. To what degree has the IP achieved its stated goals, impacting on the capability of researchers and capacity of institutions?

In the eyes of the IP team, objectives were met and realistic given the scale of operations. The IP team rated their respective understanding and knowledge of institutional research capacity building high. In most instances, the IP team members experienced during the GDN Program improvement concerning knowledge and understanding. One IP team members noted no improvement during the GDN Program. IP team members related the improvement on research capacity building to some extent to the participation in the GDN Program (high, medium, medium, medium). The IP team member related the participation in the GDN Program more positively in having generated improvement of knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issue related to M&E (high, high, high, medium), project management (high, high, medium), and outreach and networking (high, high, high, high).

Table 21: Ratings IP team Vietnam / Cambodia on RCB knowledge and improvements due to the GDN Program

Knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issues related to:	Knowledge	Improvement	Relation
research capacity building	4,0	Yes (4/4)	3,3
monitoring and evaluation	4,0	Yes (4/4)	3,8
project management	4,0	Yes (3/4 – 1 no)	3,7
outreach and networking	4,3	Yes (4/4)	4,0

Various institutional stakeholders were exposed by the IP activities. This included staff, management, Board and students. The quality of interaction generally was rated positively.

Figure 13: Quality of interaction with institutional stakeholders Vietnam / Cambodia
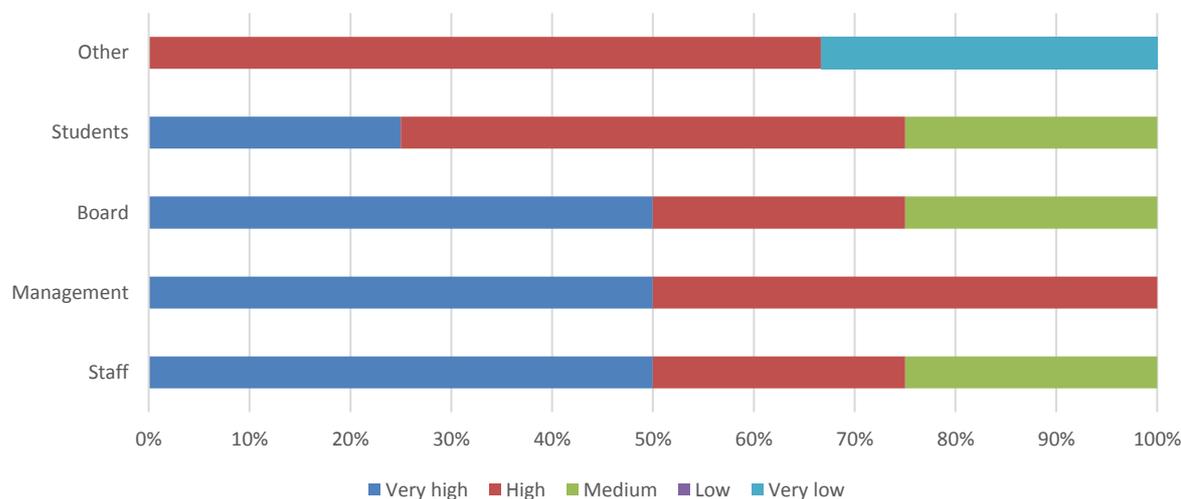
The impact on the JTD students in the eyes of the IP team has been satisfactory. The survey of the IP team showed that they perceived improvement of the collective research skills of the trainees during the participation in the IP. The IP team members clearly relate the improvement to the participation in the program. It is noticeable that the IP team members already at the start of the program rated the skills of the trainees high and very high. The impact of the participation in the JTD resulted nevertheless in improvement of research skills.

Table 22: Rating collective research skills beneficiaries Vietnam Cambodia

	Knowledge	Improvement	Relation
Research methods – theoretical knowledge (understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application)	4,5	Yes (4/4)	4,0
Statistical analysis (use of SPSS, SAS or similar statistical package)	4,3	Yes (3/4 – 1 no)	3,3
Multidisciplinary research	4,8	Yes (4/4)	4,3
Qualitative research methods	4,5	Yes (4/4)	3,8
Quantitative research methods	4,3	Yes (4/4)	3,5
Mixed methods	4,5	Yes (4/4)	3,8

2. To what degree has the IP reached beyond its stated goals, with institutional spill-over effect on the involved institutions in terms of research and research training initiatives?

3. To what degree has the IP succeeded in linking their own strengthening to larger national policy debates on higher educational reform?

The level of awareness of the IP team and confidence regarding communication and dissemination skills is considered satisfactory. The main areas that suggest slight lower levels of awareness and confidence are: in the ability to introduce policy recommendation into the public debate; and ability to extract policy recommendations from research.

Table 23: Rating awareness and confidence communication and dissemination skills Vietnam / Cambodia

	Skills	Relation
Professional visibility (amongst peer groups, policymakers, press etc.)	3,50	3,50
Ability to extract policy recommendations from your research	3,00	3,00
Ability to introduce policy recommendations into the public debate	2,80	2,80
Communication skills (working with media, organize events, targeting audiences)	3,80	3,80
Networking skills with contacts within your region	4,00	4,00
Networking skills with contacts outside your region	4,00	4,00

Source: IP team survey

The IP team used several strategies to disseminate activity output during the OP period. This included the publication of an annual scientific report which allowed linking the outcomes of the activities to larger national and international policy debates[25]. Important was the effort to translate the publication to Vietnamese, French and English. The publication forms part of the AFD's collection in co-publication with EFEO. The IP team considered overall that the adopted strategies were useful. One respondent noted that discussing ideas related to the activities with potential policymakers was not considered useful. Two respondents noted that they themselves did not engage in discussing ideas with policymakers, nor distributing ideas through social media.

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[25] See: http://www.tamdaoconf.com/en/

Figure 14: Usefulness of dissemination strategies Vietnam / Cambodia
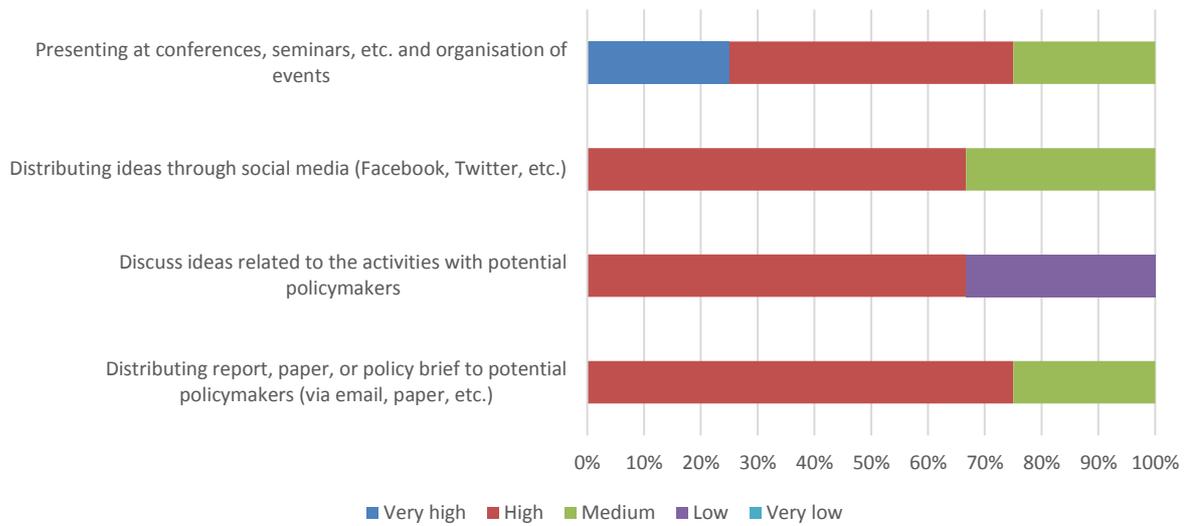
Source: IP team survey

The IP team reached out to various stakeholders outside their own organisation. This mostly included administrators, academia and civil society representatives. However, most respondents also reached out to politicians, private sector and media stakeholders. The quality of interaction generally was rated positively, in particularly academia, administrators and think tanks.

Figure 15: Quality interaction with stakeholders Vietnam / Cambodia
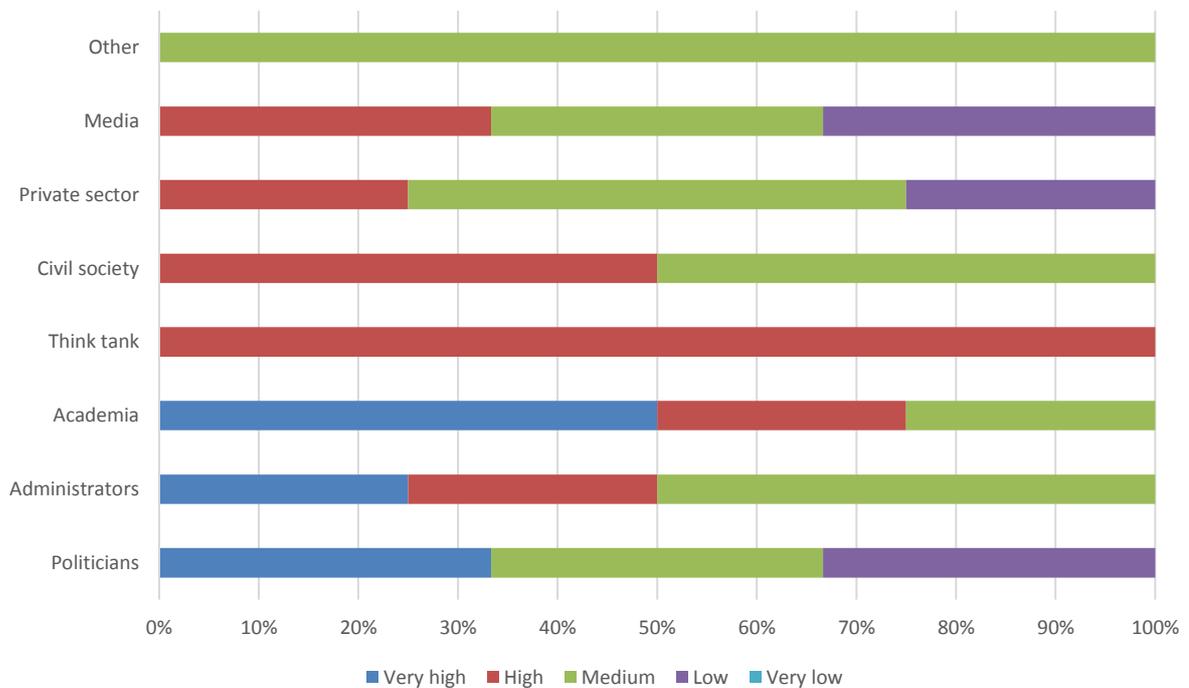
Source: IP team survey

3.2.5   Sustainability

1. How could the OP have delivered greater value, specifically for the grantee institution (beyond the implementation team)?

IP team interview feedback suggested the need to receive additional support on fundraising. In particular, the identification of opportunities has been an area in which the GDN Program could have delivered greater value. Interview feedback suggests that in particular identifying the right persons within donor organisations has been challenging. The STA apparently has been helpful in supporting on this. GDN feedback confirmed the role of the STA by helping to get a keynote speaker to the JTD and follow up on possible funding. As a result, GDN was actively involved in discussing plans to scale-up of the summer school to the region. GDN, together with a potential donor organisation asked the IP team to respond to this and submit a funding request. Unfortunately, here was no follow-up from the IP team. However, the idea to scale-up the JTD in the region was used by the IP team when submitting a proposal for an international grant (Erasmus+) in collaboration with a European university as lead partner. GDN also noted that they pushed the IP team to explore local funding options by asking local universities to pay fees for students attending the JTD. It is unclear whether the IP team followed up on this. From the feedback it appears that the IP team had different expectations in relation to support. While GDN considered its role to support grantee institutions in fundraising, the IP team considered GDN to provide future funds.

2. To what extent has the IP become further institutionalized, including through stronger management, wider outreach among potential trainees and increased visibility in their region and among national authorities and potential funders?

The GDN Program allowed for consolidation of the JTD in Laos and Cambodia, and opened up channels to expansion in Myanmar and Madagascar. Also, the participation in the GDN Program gave new impetus to already existing collaboration between partners to the JTD, further strengthening institutionalisation beyond the GDN Program period.

According to the IP team, the participation in the GDN Program also laid the foundations for scaling up participation to the JTD. Partially this is done by the development of audio-visual tools and the development of an online platform with training modules. The visual recording of the JTD allows trainees to re-visit presentations and by adding English subtitles also expand viewer base.

Finally, the collaboration with the JTD partners through the GDN Program also resulted in joined efforts to secure future funding.

3. To what extent are the RCB initiatives likely to continue after the OP closes? Has the OP been able to equip the grantee institutions with new research toolboxes and institutional links that help them deliver quality research and research training to their research communities of reference and beyond?

IP team members explored both research contracts as well as grants on the national and international level. At the stage of surveying the IP team members, one national research contract was awarded and one pending decision. The respondent considered that the GDN Program contributed highly to this. The same can be said of international grant awards explored and awarded during the Program period. Two respondents indicated having been awarded an international grant to which the the Program contributed highly.

3.2.6 Relevance and added value

1. What specific research and research training gaps has the IP filled?

The JTD objectives cater a series of identified capacity needs for researchers in the region. This includes: the need to access to training on social sciences; the lack of skills and instruments for the appropriate study of social reality; and the lack of theoretical basis and understanding of methodologies in preparation of qualified research. The structure of the 2016 JTD Programme suggests that the event has been designed to address these capacity needs. The programme includes a series of plenary sessions dealing primarily with thematic areas in order to provide a common theoretical basis of knowledge for all trainees. For example, this includes an intervention on understanding energy transition, and the state of art, determinants, dynamics and controversies on bioenergy sectors in Southern countries. Subsequently special workshops deal with research tools and methodological approaches to research in relation to the thematic area. For example, focus is placed on tools for analysing local bioenergy production lines.

Apart from providing access to training to the trainees, the participation of the IP team in the GDN Program also allowed for addressing institutional capacity needs. The survey of the IP team shows that the GDN Program was successful in catering needs ranging from providing effective training on project management and monitoring and evaluation (both elements rated very high, very high, high, medium). Particularly strong ratings were given to the support of the GDN Program in promoting networking and institutional outreach (both elements rated very high, very high, very high, high). An area in which the GDN Program to a limited extent addressed needs for the IP

members was on providing access to research (high, medium, medium, medium). The reason given for this was the limited involvement of the GDN Program in determining the thematic area of the JTD. Interview feedback suggested that this topic originated from discussion with other partner organisations as well as the STA.

Figure 16: Ratings institutional capacity needs Vietnam/Cambodia
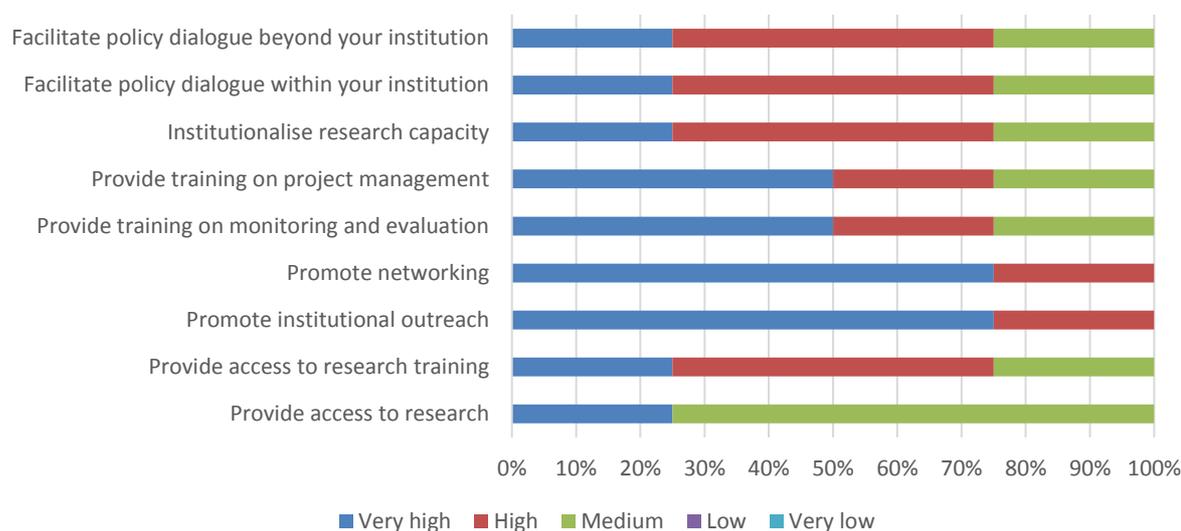
Source: IP team survey

2. Are the RCB projects supported relevant to the country institutions involved?

According to feedback from the IP team, the JTDs were during the period 2007-2014 able to develop and meet the growing expectations of an academic and non-academic audience. In fact, the JTD in 2009 also opened to the region. In 2014, more than 450 applications were registered mainly in Vietnam but also in Cambodia and Laos. Nevertheless, the dynamics of training to strengthen research capacity called for certain strategic levers to be activated. According to the IP team, the educational system of these three countries are evolving but continue to be organized on dual teaching and research which could be unfavourable to the development of new scientific methods. While not opposing, the institutions do not necessarily value an approach to research capacity building that caters new needs of beneficiaries, particularly in terms of multidisciplinarity. It is therefor the IP team considered that a consolidation and a change of scale for the JTD had to be carried out for more systemic development in research capacity building. In order to scale up, the JTDs could not rely on a single partner (ASSV-GASS), particularly in view of the universities which develop their potential for research and international cooperation. Through its participation in the GDN Program, the Cambodian partner URDSE was able to take this step without risking undermining existing activities of the institution.

3. Is the IP designed in line with the overall objectives and goals of the OP?

Considering the JTD has been a yearly event since 2007, it is hard to argue that the project was designed in line with the overall objectives and goals of the OP. Arguably the GDN Program was a good fit for the JTD. In fact, when looking at the list of activities in which the GDN Program could offer support (section 1.3) many of those match the activities carried out by the IP team. Activities offered by the GDN Program such as small grants to researchers do not match the activities of the IP. It is also noted that activities organised by the IP team largely focused on students rather than employees of the institutions. Overall, the relevance of activities offered through the GDN Program are confirmed.

Figure 17: Relevance activities Vietnam/Cambodia
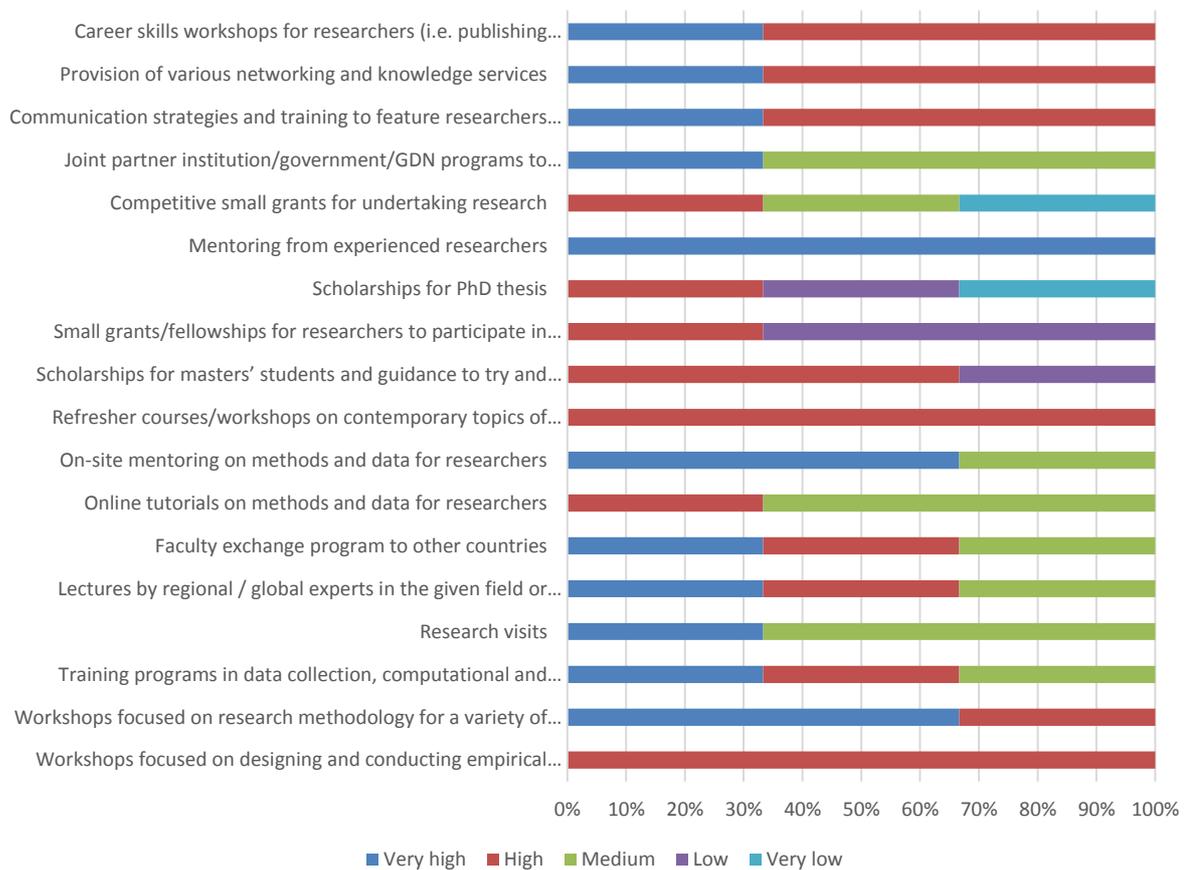
Source: IP team survey

However, an important element of the IP, namely the regionalization, does fall in line with the overall objectives of the OP. Of particular relevance to the JTD have been the efforts to scale-up the JTD to the region in English which significantly expands its user-base given that English is a common language in many countries. Also, the regionalisation allows for the JTD to make use of a wider pool of donor organisations, not only catering needs in Vietnam.

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3.3 Project Ethiopia

Table 24: Info sheet Ethiopia

Country	Ethiopia
Program name	Building Ethiopia's research capacity in economics and agribusiness
Implementing Partner	Haramaya University
Team	Mengistu Ketema Aredo (PC), Degye Goshu Habteyesus (TM)
IP brief	The program intends to develop skilled professionals who will be recognized as providers of high quality research services and education in their disciplines. It targets the University's Ph.D. and M.Sc. students through grants and training on statistics, econometrics, data collection and analysis. To improve the quality of theses supervision, the program also provides training and mentoring for its academic staff.
Main objectives	1. Small research grants 2. Training workshops 3. Staff exchange program for mentoring skills
Main activities	Call for proposals Selection of grantees Announcing grantees Contractual agreements Releasing grants Evaluating status of student research Six workshops (four themes) Staff exchange program for mentoring skills

Source: Own elaboration

3.3.1 Theory of change

Figure 18: Theory of change IP Ethiopia

Theory of Change
Ethiopia

Objectives address needs ← Intervention aims to achieve objectives

Needs
Research institution
Staff (researchers and project managers)
Students
Donor GDN

Objectives

Wider objectives
Institutionalize research capacity
Facilitate policy dialogue

Specific objectives
Improve quality of theses / dissertation in economic and agribusiness
Enhance research skills students
Improve mentoring skills staff
Improve staff research skills and expertise
Improve national and international networking

Operational objectives
Alleviate budget constraints students
Provide assess to training
Provide access to global networks

Capacity Needs
Limited RCB efforts in economics and related areas
Limited capacity MSc and PhD students to use new methods and models which adversely affects the quality and relevance of scientific research output
Budget limitations for students which leads to less attractive concept notes and less quality research

Intervention

Long-term outcome
Better policy debates
Institutionalized research capacity
Recognized professionals as providers of high quality research and educational services

Intermediate outcomes
Better quality research
More networks with universities
Better research skills staff and students
Better mentoring / training skills staff

Immediate outcomes
Alleviated budget constraints for students
Access to training on research methods
Access to global networks of universities

Outputs
Small research grants
Training workshops
Staff exchange program
Global networks

Inputs
Resources: money; staff; technical expertise

Source : Own elaboration

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3.3.2 Efficiency

1. Were the IP targets achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations? What were the challenges and what was done to mitigate risks?

The IP ran from November 2014 to January 2017 (24 months with a three-month extension) and aimed to attain the four main objectives with three pillars of activities:

1) by awarding small research grants to MSc and PhD student;
2) by offering training workshops for students and staff on empirical research techniques and tools; and
3) by conducting staff exchanges to international Universities to improve mentorship skills as well as the development of project collaboration and an international research network.

The initiation process started with a call for proposals followed by a selection of the grantees. The grantees were to engage in a contractual agreement, which immediately opened the release of the first payment tranche of the GDN grant. The other tranches were released following several deliverables, namely the progress report and budget statement documenting on the trainings and the staff exchange program. The agreement with GDN was enforced in November 2014 and the program was supposed to be completed in November 2016. However, BERCEA asked for a cost-free, three-month extension, which was granted by the GDN postponing the closing of the program to January 2017[26]. The delays by the IP team were considered legitimate given they depended on the progress of students on their dissertations which was in line with the regulations of the Haramaya University.

This evaluation finds that the team achieved the IP targets on time. The team did request GDN for an extension of the project in order to accommodate their beneficiaries that were in the process of completing their research. GDN ensured that this was agreed by IDRC and supported the team in extending IP activities.

Concerning the question whether IP targets were realistic given the scale of operations, this evaluation has not identified major issues in relation to the realistic achievement of targets. However, there have been various challenges in the implementation of the IP.

First of all, this evaluation has noted, that the grant activities were to fit into a wider activities of academic life of PhD and MSc students. This meant that the mentoring and

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[26] Desk review, Third Progress Report, November 2015-April 2016.

training activities were to support students in completing their degrees and therefore made the team dependent of factors beyond their control. From the survey feedback collected from the grantees, it shows that despite this dependency, the grant program established by BERCEA was perceived by the students themselves to have established realistic targets. The BERCEA grantees performed highly satisfactory by fulfilling grant obligations towards BERCEA according to the original time schedule and budget. One grantee partially met grant obligations due to health problems resulting in research delays. Interview feedback from the team suggested that despite these delays, the grantee was able to fulfil obligations and successfully defend the thesis at the end of the program, partially due to the no-cost extension. Feedback from the trainees provided several reasons why they were able to achieve the objectives of their research. This included:

- The financial support of the grant (particularly allowing grantees to do field research);
- The technical support of the project coordinators (particularly in defining clear and realistic research objectives);
- The acquired knowledge from the training activities.

Another challenge identified concerned the fact that, according to the grant agreement annex, support would be given to about 20 MSc and 10 PhD students. It further stated that 50% of the grant awardees will be selected from Harayama University. The other half would be recruited from other universities as well as public and private institutions. The final meeting of GDN at Haramaya University pointed out that many Haramaya students already had scholarships which made them ineligible for funding through the IP. Nonetheless, also early-career lecturers from other universities, ministries and research centres, placed at Haramaya University were considered eligible in the eyes of the IP team. Each PhD grant awardee would receive USD 3500 and each MSc awardee USD 2000. The number of grant awardees mentioned in the annex of the grant agreement does not correspond to the actual number of grant awardees reported in the Third Progress Report. The report states that 23 students were awarded a grant. Out of these 23 grant awardees, five are PhD and 18 are MSc students. The Third Progress Report does not indicate whether 50% of the awardees are students at Harayama University[27]. However, the First Progress Report states, that only one out of 14 PhD applicants comes from Harayama University. The report further explains that most of the MSc applicants were based in private and public institutions[28]. Interview feedback confirmed the difficulty in finding PhD students. The main reason identified was the fact that funding through the grant scheme was limited and therefor arguably not sufficiently adequate for PhD students

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[27] Desk review, Third Progress Report, November 2015-April 2016.

[28] Desk review, First Progress Report, October 2014-April 2015.

that are seeking longer-term funding. Nevertheless, the team did actively pursue the involvement of PhD students and also managed to guide several PhD students to the thesis defence.

The third challenge identified concerns the consideration of gender equality. The grant agreement annexes mention that special affirmative measures would be considered to incorporate female participants[29]. However, the First Progress Report indicates that after the first call for proposals, all of the grant winners were male[30]. As a consequence, the STA requested a separate call aiming to ensure female grantees. This meant that the new grantees started later and missed the first training sessions. This was problematic considering the first workshop was a prerequisite to attend the second workshop. Interview feedback notes that in order to accommodate the second batch of grantees, the first to training sessions were repeated which allowed the entire group of grantees to come together for the third and fourth sessions.

Finally, the grant agreement envisaged that 25% of the overall budget would be channelled into four different training modules which were expected to last eight to ten days. The training themes are:

1) Empirical Research Methods in Economics;
2) Analysis of Cross-sectional, Time series and Panel Data using Stata and Eviews;
3) Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty and Inequality using DASP; and
4) Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) and Modelling and Analysis using GAMS.

All grant awardees were supposed take part in the four training schemes[31]. According to the Third Progress Report the BERCEA team was confronted with challenges regarding the training workshops. The first two modules were taught by Ethiopian experts, however the DASP and GAMS workshops required skillsets not easily available in Ethiopia, which had implicationswith regard to the recruitment of qualified trainers. One of the main challenges was that the daily remuneration rate for an external DASP trainer was set too low and therefore the BERCEA call was not able to attract a trainer. Following the intervention of the GDN and the STA, a Canadian trainer was found. Because of major challenges concerning the international payment procedure, GDN effected the payment with the understanding of a deduction of the amount from the BERCEA budget. Finally, several trainings had to be rescheduled. In the second round, training 2 and 4 took place one month and four months earlier than planned.

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[29] Desk review, Grant agreement, 5 November 2014.

[30] Desk review, First progress report, November 2014- April 2015.

[31] Desk review, Grant Agreement Annexe, 5 November 2014.

2. What trade-offs and adjustments, if any, have been made by the IP in order to drive efficiency?

The first trade-off identified by the evaluators was that for the extension no additional costs would be issued to the GDN program. The extension had no bearing on the team's timely delivery of financial reporting and progress reporting. Interview feedback from the STA confirms the adequate responsiveness of the team, ensuring this way a constructive collaboration between the STA and the team but also GDN. Also, the team confirmed that GDN ensured timely payments in order not to delay IP activities.

The second trade-off identified in order to drive for efficiency was that in order to aim for achieving the target ratios for PhD-MSc, gender and Haramaya vs. non-Haramaya, the team was to launch a second call for grantees and consequently repeat the first to trainings in order to ensure that the grantee group ultimately had equal access to the IP activities.

3. What has been the learning in terms of IP implementation for the team?

The survey of the team confirmed improvement of knowledge and understanding of institutional research capacity building during the IP period.

Table 25: Rating institutional research capacity improvements Ethiopia

	Improvement during the program	Relation with program
Knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issues related to the research capacity building	Yes (2/2)	4,00 (high, high)
Knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issues related to monitoring and evaluation	Yes (2/2)	5,00 (very high, very high)
Knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issues related to project management	Yes (2/2)	4,00 (very high, medium)
Knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issues related to outreach and networking	Yes (2/2)	4,50 (very high, high)

Source: IP team survey

More concretely, the team confirmed that the participation in the GDN program contributed to the ability to design and implement M&E systems for programs within the institution, design, implement and manage research capacity building programs, as well as reaching out and communicating on the performance and results of research

capacity building programs and facilitate policy debate relating research capacity building. Overall the team relates the ability to the participation in the GDN program. Interview feedback confirms the learning curve in terms of M&E in which particularly the mid-term meeting in Hanoi was considered relevant. Interview feedback from the STA also confirmed on the basis of the progress reports and periodical Skype call with the team an increasing awareness of communication on the performance of the IP.

Table 26: Rating of learnings for the IP team members Ethiopia

	Rating ability	Relation with program
I have the ability to design and implement M&E systems for programmes within my institution	5 (very high, very high)	4,5 (very high, high)
I have the ability to design and implement research capacity building programmes that address the needs of my institution	5 (very high, very high)	3,5 (high, medium)
I have the ability to manage research capacity building programmes	5 (very high, very high)	4 (high, high)
I have the ability to reach out and communicate on the performance and results of research capacity building programmes	5 (very high, very high)	4,5 (very high, high)
I have the ability to facilitate policy debate relating research capacity building	4 (high, high)	3,5 (high, medium)

Source: IP team survey

Finally, it is noted that learning across the teams has been perceived as limited to the organized events by GDN in which the teams met in person. Partially the lack of cross-team learning has to do with the differences in the respective IPs. However, interaction on issues that can be considered horizontal across the IPs, such as project management and M&E, has been limited.

The IP team also rated their understanding of aspects of managing a research capacity building project positively. Also the extent of which participation in the GDN Program has contributed to this is positive, in particular for communications between team members and budgetary affairs.

Table 27: Ratings understanding RCB management Ethiopia

	Rating understanding	Relation with program
Budget	5 (very high, very high)	4 (high, high)
Timeline	5 (very high, very high)	3,5 (high, medium)
Communications between (cross country)	4 (high, high)	4 (high, high)

team members		

Source: IP team survey

4. To what extent is the current staffing at an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the IPs?

The BERCEA program (IP) was mentored by an international expert on educational research capacity building (STA) and coordinated by the BERCEA Management Committee chaired by the Vice-President for Research Affairs of Harayama University. The committee consists of the BERCEA Program Coordinator (also the PC for the GDN program), the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences and the Head of the School of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. The committee's role was to approve the grant awardees, to select the trainers and the decision of timing and venues of events[32].

The Grant Agreement names GDN and Haramaya University as partners to the contract. The agreement sets forth an overall budget, disbursed in six payment tranches. Upon the approval of the program proposal, budget, work plan and team, the first tranche is released. The agreement explains that further tranches will be released based on the utilization statements of the funds and the progress reports. Moreover, GDN withholds 20% of the overall grant which will be disbursed upon a successful fulfilment of the program[33]. The latest budget statement available to the evaluators dated from 19 April 2016, covering the period from 1 October 2014 until 30 April 2016 and states that until that date an amount of USD 93967 had been disbursed. The second progress report outlines several reallocations of budget parts. The intended budget for the second round of PhD students has been reallocated to MSc students and trainings because potential second round PhD students would not have been able to finish their research within the program timeframe[34]. Feedback received from the team suggests that the IP registered between 5-10% over-expenditure on travel and mentorship activities. Concerning the former, the team noted that the originally foreseen expenses for the visits to Germany were estimated too low. In addition, the team originally only had foreseen the travel of one member. With the support of the STA and upon approval of GDN the duration of the visit to Germany was reduced, this way allowing for both members of the team to travel to Germany. Interview feedback suggests that it was important to have both members participating in the exchange visit in order to ensure that more staff would be exposed to possible learnings from the visit.

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[32] Desk review, Organogram of BERCEA program at Harayama University.

[33] Desk review, Grant Agreement, 5 November 2014.

[34] Desk review, Second Progress Report, May 2015-October 2015.

Interview feedback suggests that the team was effective and efficient in implementing the project. Some concerns were voiced that the IP depended largely on the professional investment of the PC, risking limited spill-over to the institution. In addition, the degree of involvement of the BERCEA Management Committee was not always clear to GDN and the STA. The team was therefor recommended to ensure governance procedures, such as sharing minutes of meetings, in order to clarify the involvement of different stakeholder within the university and evidence possible spill-over of the IP to the institution. Feedback from the final visit of GDN to Ethiopia confirmed that indeed spill-over to the institution happened. GDN Program management and the STA met with key decision-makers at the university who expressed interest in the operationalisation of the IP. Further, also survey feedback from the team suggests that staff, management, Board, and students were exposed to the IP. The quality of interaction with staff and students were considered very high. This is understandable from the perspective that both categories were engaged through the grantee program and the training sessions. The interaction with management was also considered high (one response very high and one response high). Interaction with the grantee institution's Board was considered medium-low (one response medium and one response low).

3.3.3   Effectiveness

1. Did the IP support in identifiable ways the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions?

This evaluation finds that the BERCEA project clearly supported the institutional mandate of the Haramaya University by allowing training participants to improve knowledge on research models and methods, but more importantly allowing through the grant program that students of the university successfully complete their degrees.

2. Has the OP design (including monitoring and results frameworks) facilitated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions, beyond the implementing teams, that informed project implementation?

This evaluation finds that in particular the involvement of the BERCEA Management committee provided for a possible platform to facilitate the learning feedback loop within the Haramaya University. However, it is noted that the initially the involvement of the committee was not clear to the GDN and the STA. At the time, GDN asked the IP team to explain how decisions were taken in the committee. In hindsight, GDN Program management considers that lack of face-to-face meetings in the beginning of

the project and online communication problems resulted in them not clearly understanding the involvement of the committee. However, GDN soon noted that the IP team was able to implement recommendations made through the effective involvement of the BERCEA Management committee.

Further, it is noted that the M&E activities largely depended on the PC. Considering that the PC also was tasked with project implementation activities, the element of M&E was not always clearly visible to GDN and the STA. However, it is noted that the reporting on activities and internal reflection on the effectiveness and impact improved on the basis of GDN and STA intervention, as well as learnings from the Hanoi workshop.

3. Has GDN's support been instrumental in filling specific gaps in IP design and management, and enhancing the capability of the IP team (and institution) to further its goals and vision in terms of IP project implementation? Has GDN's support, including mentors, contributed instrumentally to the quality and institutionalization of the research capacity building activities planned by each grantee?

The IP team rated the quality of the services provided by GDN during the grant period very positive, suggesting that the support has been perceived as instrumental to achieve output.

Figure 19: Rating of Ethiopian IP team members of quality services provided by GDN
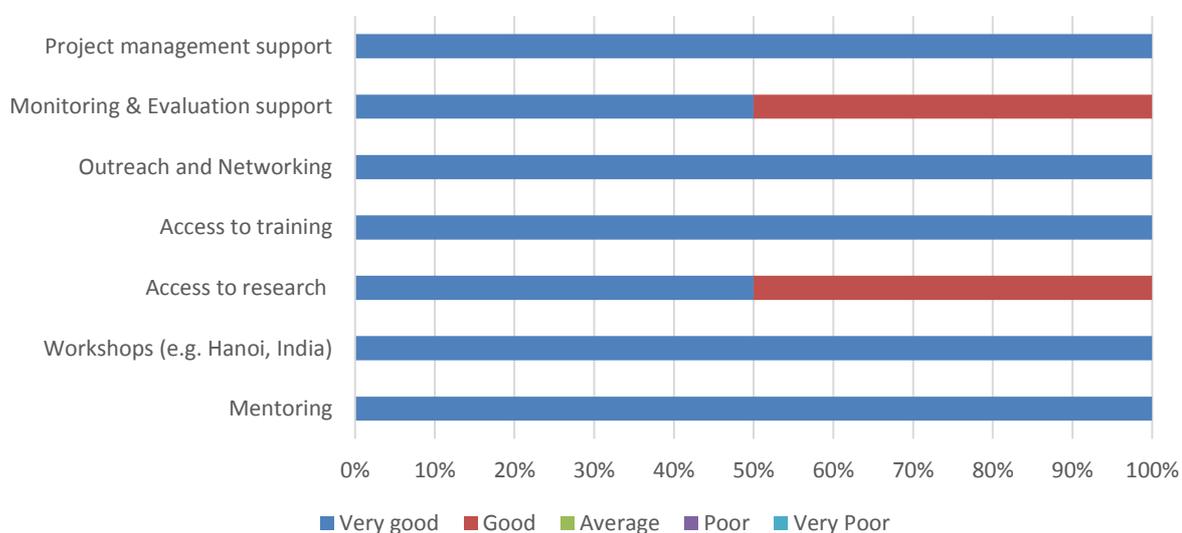
Source: IP team survey

Concerning contribution to quality and institutionalisation of research capacity building activities, the STA points at several challenges particularly regarding the

management and coordination of the Program[35]. At the start of the IP, the technical problems related to the Internet connection were noted as well as a lack of communication and sharing of documents. The STA stresses though, that the communication with the PC was very constructive. In fact, again after recommendations from the STA, the IP team immediately reacted by putting all documentation on the BERCEA website. Further the STA identified lack of understanding how the decision-making of the Committee works as well as the lack of Conflict of Interest precaution. He further stated that more power must be given to the project management committee. Other issues addressed by the STA is the separate call for female applicants, stronger and steady monitoring of the grant awardees and a better use of the website[36]. The GDN Deputy Director of Programs reacted to the First BERCEA Progress Report by asking for more substantive details on the progress so that GDN could better report on the progress of the program to the donor organisation[37]. In the First Progress Report, the PC lists the measures that have been implemented to improve the communication and transparency challenges. A weekly Skype call between the STA and the BERCEA coordination as well as a monthly call with the GDN coordination have been implemented and all documentation including email and meeting summaries have been uploaded to a Dropbox folder which is accessible to all three parties[38].

3.3.4   Impact

1. To what degree has the IP achieved its stated goals, impacting on the capability of researchers and capacity of institutions?

In the eyes of the IP team members the objectives of the IP were met and realistic given the scale of operations. The IP members rated their knowledge very high and attributed improvement during the IP period highly to the GDN Program. In particular on monitoring and evaluation the IP team members considered improvement in knowledge and understanding due to the GDN Program.

Table 28: Ratings IP team Ethiopia on RCB knowledge and improvements due to the GDN Program

Knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issues related to:	Knowledge	Improvement	Relation
research capacity building	5,0	Yes (2/2)	4,0
monitoring and evaluation	4,5	Yes (2/2)	5,0
project management	4,5	Yes (2/2)	4,0
outreach and networking	5,0	Yes (2/2)	4,5

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[35] Desk review, Midterm Notes.

[36] Desk review, Midterm Notes 1,2

[37] Desk review, GDN Feedback, 8 May 2015.

[38] Desk review, First Progress Report, November 2014-April 2015.

Source: IP team survey

Beyond the IP team members, also other stakeholders within institutions were exposed to IP activities such as staff, management, board members and students. The quality of interaction with these stakeholders was rated very positive. IP activities primarily focused on students and staff which explains the highly rated quality of interaction. Focus was less so on the Board and more so on management through the specially appointed management committee. Interview feedback from GDN noted that there was some interaction with the Board of the University through this committee and that the field visit by the STA and GDN to Ethiopia provided good feedback from the Board member on the Program.

Figure 20: Quality of interaction with institutional stakeholders Ethiopia
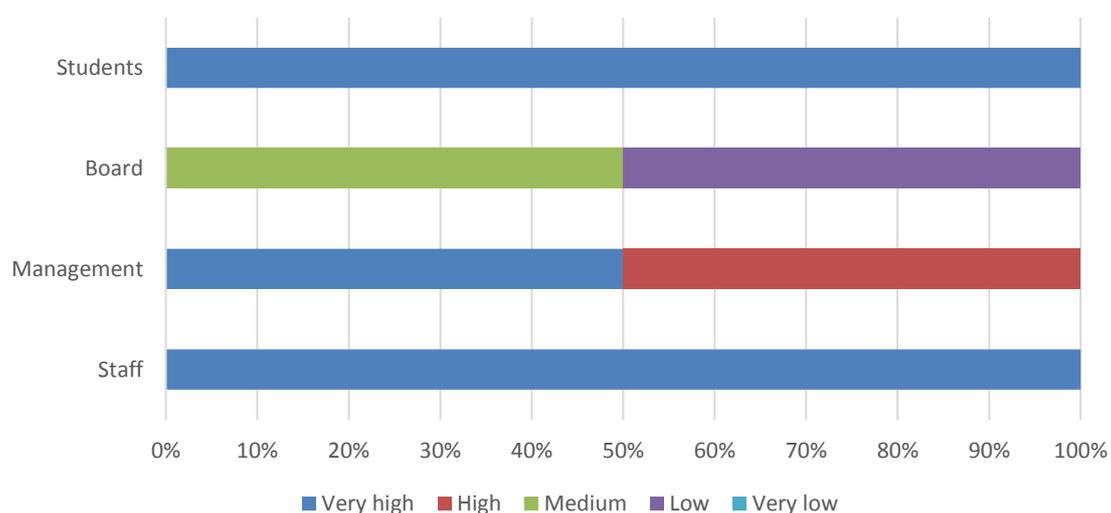
Source: IP team survey

When asked about the extent to which the beneficiaries (grantees and training participants) of their activities benefitted from the IP, the team noted that collective research skills of the students were high or very high. Slightly lower level of skills were on qualitative research methods, but nevertheless the IP team members were convinced that improvement could be attributed to the Program.

Table 29: Rating collective research skills beneficiaries Ethiopia

|	Knowledge	Improvement	Relation
Research methods – theoretical knowledge (understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application)	5,0	Yes (2/2)	5,0
Statistical analysis (use of SPSS, SAS or similar statistical package)	5,0	Yes (2/2)	5,0

|			
Multidisciplinary research	4,0	Yes (2/2)	4,5
Qualitative research methods	3,50	Yes (2/2)	3,5
Quantitative research methods	5,0	Yes (2/2)	5,0
Mixed methods	4,5	Yes (2/2)	4,5

Source: IP team survey

Concerning the impact of the trainings, this evaluation finds that grantees and training participants perceive that the trainings have improved skills and knowledge. As for the relevance of the training, also here one grantee and two training participants disagree with having improved skills in analyzing and designing national development policies through CGE models by employing GAMS software. In fact, when asked which learnings from the trainings were applied in research work, the grantees only noted the empirical research methods in economics and the analysis of cross-sectional, time series and panel data using Stata and EViews. To illustrate, one training participant noted that '*time given and details of practical skills were not sufficient for CGE model'*. Also this training participant noted that '*lack of GAM software prohibits from exercising and applying the acquired knowledge in future research*', suggesting limited access to the software. The survey feedback further suggested that the practical application of the GAMS model and CGE model was not fully clarified to the grantees. In addition, it was noted that a more detailed application of EViews was expected as well as more focus on qualitative analysis. One training participant also noted the limited time available to sufficiently familiarize with the models as well as concerns in relation to the balance between theory and practice.

Figure 21: Learning grantees and training participants
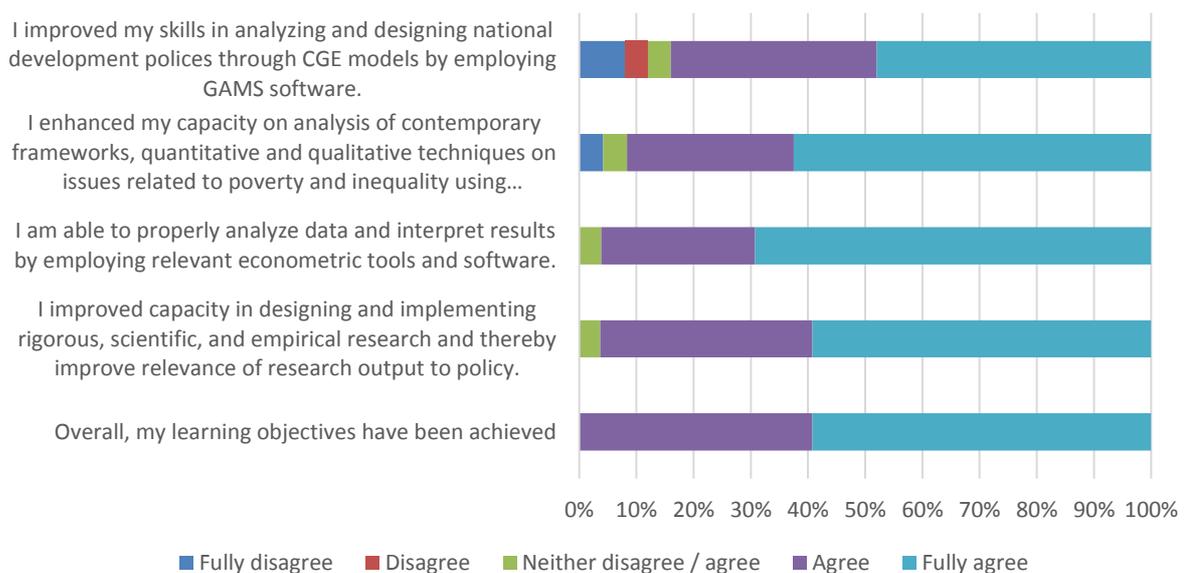
Source: Grantee and training participant surveys

Figure 22: Comparison learnings grantees and training participants
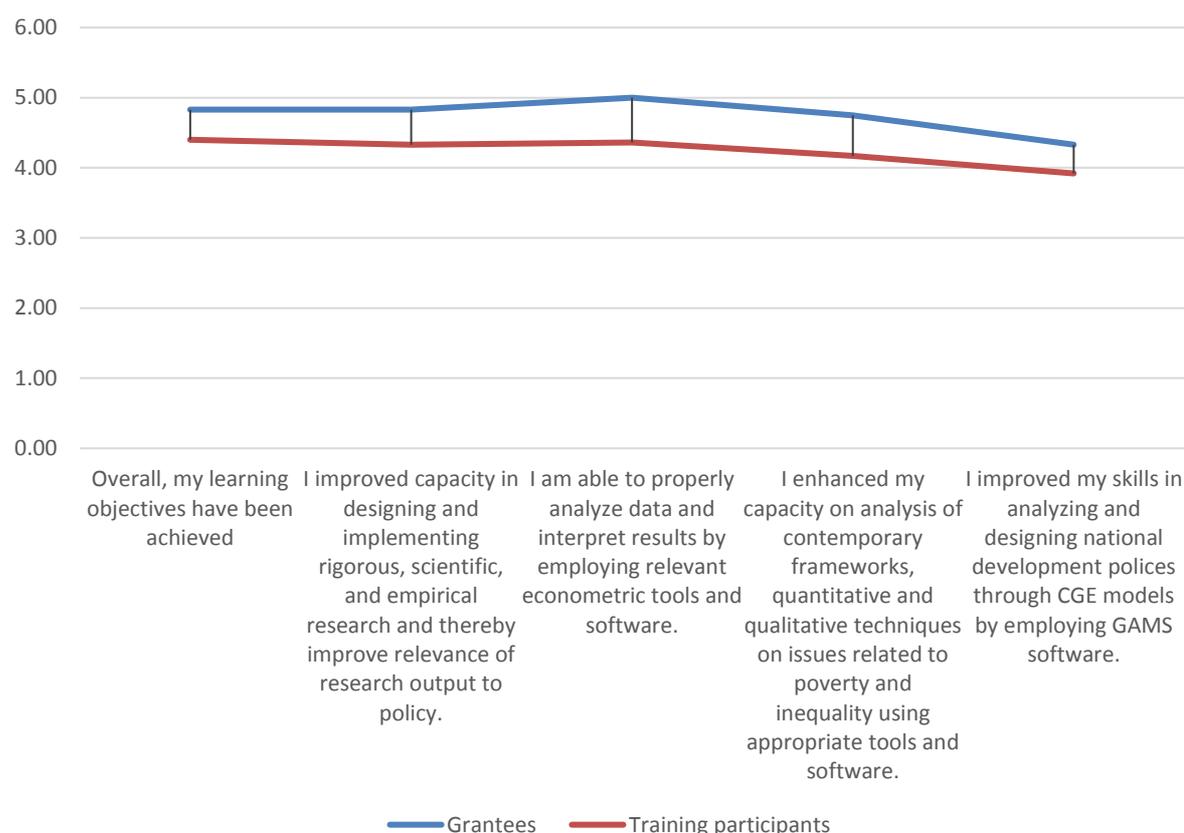
Source: Grantee and training participant surveys

The BERCEA grantee survey shows that overall the grantees rate their understanding and knowledge of the grant research area and research skills as high and confirm that improvements were made during the grant period. It is noted that the areas where grantees rate their knowledge lowest, also less improvement has been observed in relation to the project (i.e. on qualitative research and mixed methods). Considering that the rating are nonetheless very high, the evaluators cannot place too much weight on these findings. However, it is noted that the training provided to the grantees largely focused on quantitative research which could explain the slight difference in perception. In addition, the slightly lower rating results from two respondents that considered their knowledge very low and did not perceive improvement during the grant period. This does raise the possibility that this area is underexposed.

Table 30: Grantees and training participants research skills

	Knowledge	Improvement	Relation
Key concepts and issues related to the research topic of my proposal for the BERCEA grant	4,80	4,80	4,80
Key concepts and issues related to outreach and networking	4,50	4,70	4,60
Research methods – theoretical knowledge (understanding of	4,80	4,80	4,80

relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application within study area)			
Statistical analysis (use STATA, Eviews, DASP, and SPSS or similar statistical package)	4,50	4,50	4,60
Multidisciplinary research	4,50	4,70	4,70
Qualitative research methods	4,10	3,80	3,70
Quantitative research methods	4,60	4,70	4,70
Mixed methods	4,10	4,20	4,20

Source: Grantee and training participant surveys

The level of awareness of grantees and confidence regarding communication and dissemination skills is considered high. The grantees consider to a large extent that the participation in the grant program contributed to this. The main areas that suggest slight lower levels of awareness and confidence in in the communication skills as well as networking with contacts outside the region.

Table 31: Awareness regarding communication / dissemination skills grantees and training participants

	Skills	Relation
Professional visibility (amongst peer groups, policymakers, press etc.)	4,60	4,60
Ability to extract policy recommendations from your research	4,70	4,70
Ability to introduce policy recommendations into the public debate	4,40	4,40
Communication skills (working with media, organize events, targeting audiences)	4,20	4,20
Networking skills with contacts within your region	4,60	4,60
Networking skills with contacts outside your region	4,20	4,20
Professional visibility (amongst peer groups, policymakers, press etc.)	4,60	4,60
Ability to extract policy recommendations from your research	4,70	4,70

Source: Grantee and training participant surveys

2. To what degree has the IP reached beyond its stated goals, with institutional spill-over effect on the involved institutions in terms of research and research training initiatives?

3. To what degree has the IP succeeded in linking their own strengthening to larger national policy debates on higher educational reform?

The level of awareness of the IP team and confidence regarding communication and dissemination skills is considered satisfactory.

Table 32: Rating awareness and confidence communication and dissemination skills Ethiopia

	Skills	Relation
Professional visibility (amongst peer groups, policymakers, press etc.)	5,00	4,00
Ability to extract policy recommendations from your research	5,00	4,00
Ability to introduce policy recommendations into the public debate	4,00	3,50
Communication skills (working with media, organize events, targeting audiences)	5,00	4,00
Networking skills with contacts within your region	5,00	3,50
Networking skills with contacts outside your region	4,00	3,50

Source: IP team survey

The IP team used a variety of strategies to disseminate activity output during the Program period. The use of social media as a dissemination strategy was non-existent.

**Table 33: Use dissemination strategies Ethiopia**

Dissemination strategies	Yes	No
Distributing report, paper, or policy brief to potential policymakers (via email, paper, etc.)	1	1
Discuss ideas related to the activities with potential policymakers	2	0
Distributing ideas through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	0	0
Presenting at conferences, seminars, etc. and organisation of events	2	0

Source: IP team survey

IP team members consider all dissemination activities highly useful. The IP team survey further suggests that the team considered the interaction with administrators and academia, as well as the private sector of very high quality. Interaction with politicians was considered medium-high, with the media medium-very high and with civil society low.

When looking at feedback from the grantees and training participants, academics were most exposed to the research of grantees (19%/14), followed by administrators (15%/11) and politicians (12%/9). Grantees also targeted other stakeholders such as think tanks, private sector media and civil society (each 11%/8). In addition, grantees also noted that other stakeholders were exposed such as union representatives, development agents, religious leaders, and citizens (households).

Figure 23: Exposure IP activities grantees and training participants
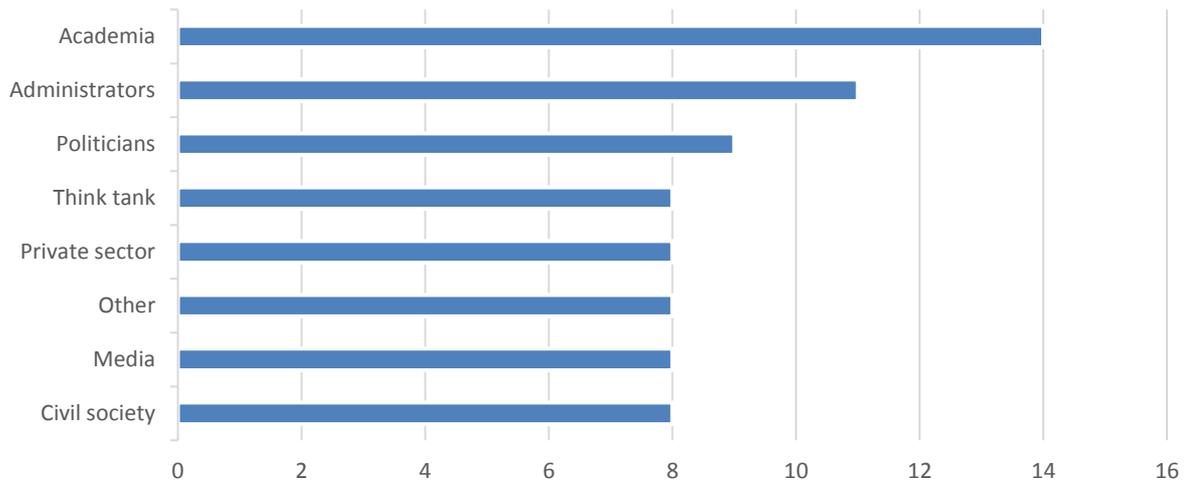
Source: BERCEA grantees survey – Q7

The grantees overall rated the interaction positively, in particular the interaction with stakeholder positively academia (93%/12 very high and high), civil society (85%/6) and administrators (82%/9). Although positively perceiving the interaction with think tanks and the media, here some grantees did rate the quality of interaction as medium (each 40%/2).

Figure 24: Quality interaction with stakeholders grantees and training participants
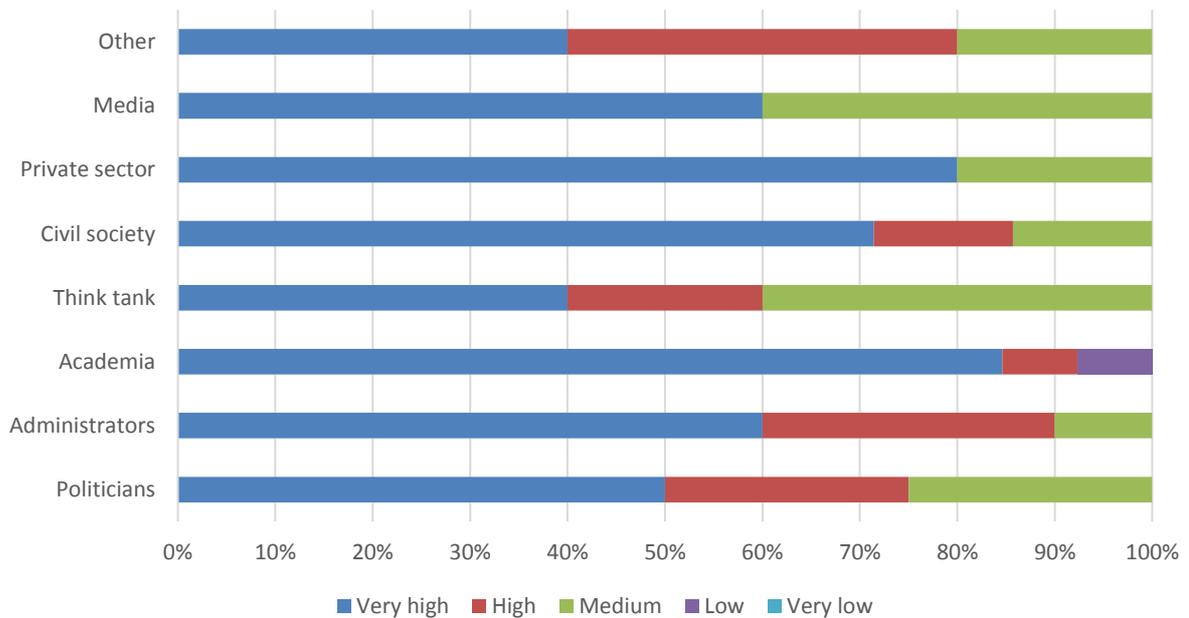
Source: BERCEA grantees survey – Q7

The grantees overall were very positive about the support received from BERCEA (average 4,74 on a Likert scale from 1 very poor to 5 very good). On administrative issues (e.g. payments, progress reports) the grantees rated all very positive (average 5). On technical comments on grant proposals (pre-contract stage), technical support during the implementation on research activity, and mentoring, the grantees also rated largely positive (respectively 4,86 on average, 4,79, and 4,71). Although largely positive (4,43 on average), on support for dissemination / outreach and networking activity in regard to the research, some grantees perceived the support as average (3 out of 14). The grantees noted in addition that the support received by BERCEA through the training was considered important. One grantee mentioned in particular the certificate received for the training while another highlighted that the engagement of BERCEA was encouraging.

The quality of the services provided through the BERCEA project were positively viewed by the grantees (average 4,81 on a Likert scale from 1 very poor to 5 very good). In particular the access to training and mentoring scored high (respectively on average 5, and 4,86). Also access to research, project management, and outreach and dissemination support services were considered high quality (respectively on average 4,79 and 4,77, and 4,64). The latter two did receive from one respondent an average rating. One grantee recommended more interaction with international PhD students.

Also the delivery of trainings was perceived positive. BERCEA managed to deliver training that was perceived balanced in terms of theory and practice. Also the level of demanding of the training was adequate. Concerning the speakers and trainers, the grantees responded positive to their responsiveness as well as effectiveness in delivering the training. The grantees also perceived the trainers and speakers as knowledgeable on the material.

The added value of the trainings was also confirmed by the grantees noting that the modules were complimentary and the sessions coherent. However, it notes that three respondents considered the training sessions not to be complementary. These views pertain to training participants and can be explained by the fact that as opposed to grantees, the training participants attended not all different modules. The pace and length of the training were adequate.

Concerning the utility of the training, the grantees noted that the material was adequate for the skill level and useful for the future. While overall the grantees received the necessary material for the training prior to the event, one grantee neither

agreed nor disagreed with this statement and one training participant noted not having received the necessary material prior to the event.

Delivery - grantees and training participants
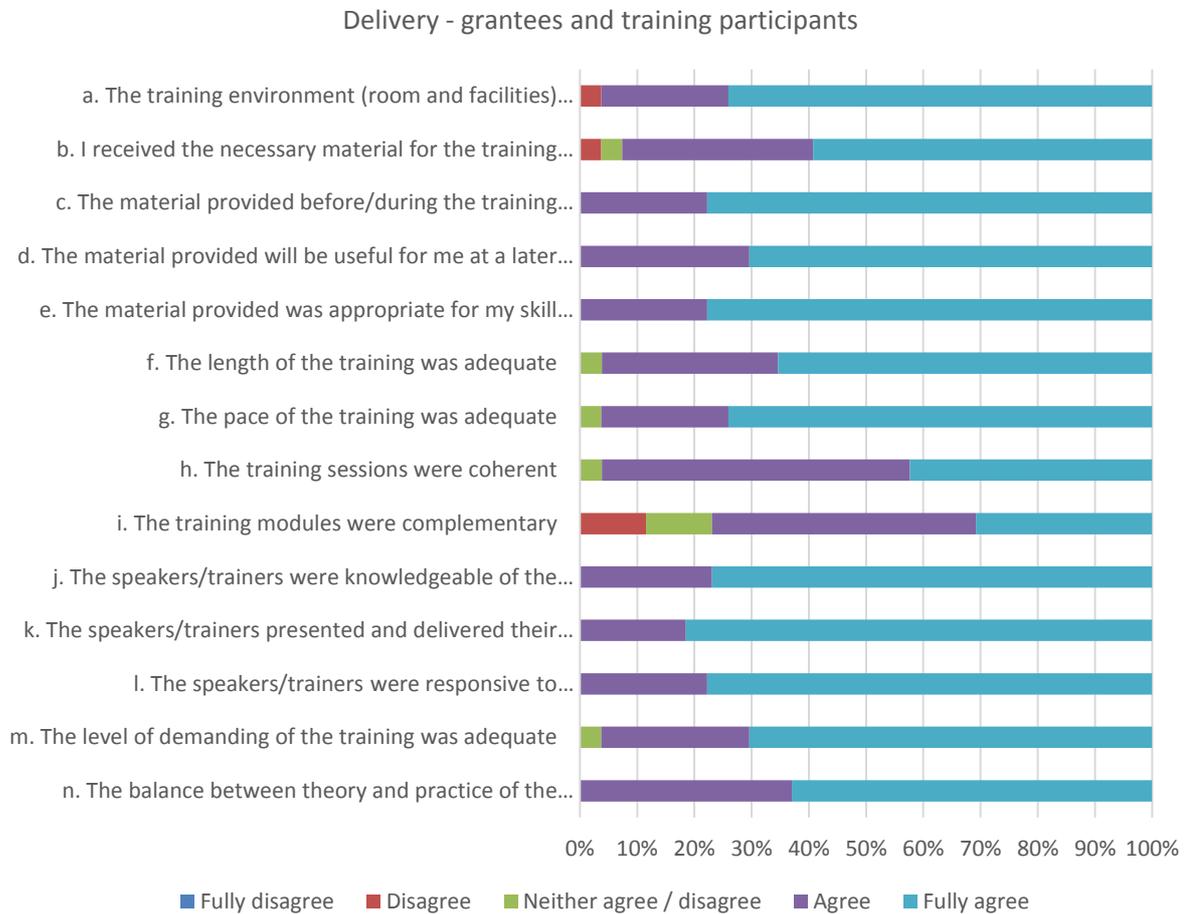
Source: BERCEA grantees survey

Comparing the views of grantees versus training participants shows that overall the delivery is higher rated by grantees. This is valuable from the perspective that the grantees participate in a wider array of BERCEA activities. Arguably this suggests that the delivery of the training modules corresponded to the services offered through grant program. However, it has to be said that the training participants also rated the delivery highly satisfactory regardless of some differences in rating compared to grantees. In particular, the length of trainings and coherence of session received slight lower rating but this can be explained by the fact that training participants only took part in this specific service delivered by BERCEA. While generally positive, the slightly negative view on these elements suggests that there is room for improvement to ensure that also the students/staff that only participate in the training and not the grant program received adequate services.

Comparison average delivery
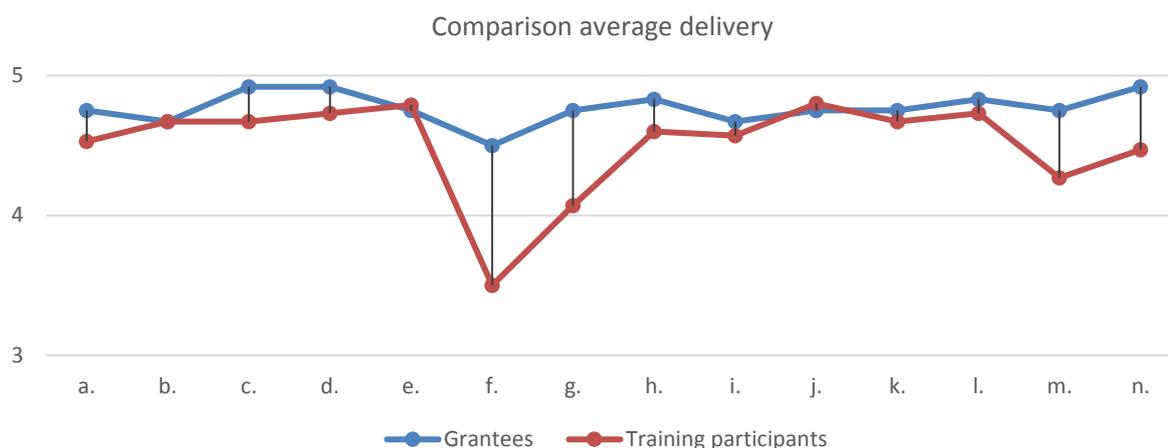
Source: BERCEA grantees survey

The grant agreement envisages two rounds of staff exchanges (one per year) with the Humboldt University of Berlin aiming at improving mentoring skills and networking. The agreement stated that two staff members (one per round) will participate in a three-month exchange with qualified professionals from the host University[39]. As stated in the Progress Reports, the Haramaya University (with the approval of GDN) decided to send two staff members per round to Berlin staying one month instead of three. The date of the first exchange round had to be postponed due to an overload of teaching and research work of the staff. The budget allocation for the staff exchange was increased (upon approval of GDN) from USD 1 750 to USD 2 200 considering that initial budget estimation was considered too low for Germany. According to the Second Progress Report the first staff exchange took place between 25 September 2015 and 20 October 2015. The IP team participated in the *Tropentag* and another workshop on value chain food security with world-class speakers such as Esther Duflo. The two staff members had three meetings with host Professor Bokelmann, discussing possibilities of future collaboration as well as funding sources. Further activities included desk research for an agricultural project in Eastern Ethiopia as well as the preparation of three proposals for DAAD and the German Ministry of Research and Education funding[40]. The second staff exchange took place in Mai and June 2016 and the Haramaya staff members identified various experienced professors from Humboldt University, University of Hohenheim and Freie Universitaet Berlin beforehand. The staff members discovered different course delivery and assessment methods which they are planning to replicate in Ethiopia. Moreover, they were involved in a write up of a World Health Organisation (WHO) project for the creation of an *African Centre of Excellence in Climate Smart Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation*. Haramaya won

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[39] Desk review, Grant Agreement, 5 November 2014.

[40] Desk review, Second Progress Report, Mai 2015-October 2015.

the 6 Million USD grant. The two staff members furthermore participated in the KOSMOS conference taking place on the 30 and 31 of May 2016[41].

Overall, the Third Progress Report describes the trainings as a success. Following a request of the Haramaya Research Affairs Office, the BERCEA team offered training to 30 staff members in applied data management and analysis using STATA. The cost of the training was covered by the University. Hence, the team highlights the IP impact and the possibility of sustaining the activities and transforming Haramaya University into a centre of excellence in policy analysis in Ethiopia[42]. The First Progress Report underlines a notable student satisfaction with the trainers demonstrated by a highly positive evaluation[43].

3.3.5 Sustainability

1. How could the OP have delivered greater value, specifically for the grantee institution (beyond the implementation team)?

This evaluation has not identified specific needs of the grantee institution that could have been addressed by the OP in order to deliver greater value.

2. To what extent are the RCB initiatives likely to continue after the OP closes? Has the OP been able to equip the grantee institutions with new research toolboxes and institutional links that help them deliver quality research and research training to their research communities of reference and beyond?

The BERCEA grantee survey suggests that grantees have been quite successful in exploring and securing follow-up funding for research activities, in particular research contracts/grants on the national level. The contribution of the BERCEA grant has been limited. For national research contracts and grants this related for 50% of the cases (very) highly to the BERCEA program (6) and respectively for 25% (3) and 17% (2) somewhat to the program. It is noticeable that the grantees relate the BERCEA program to a limited extent to international grants and contracts explored and secured during the grant period (respectively 55%/6 and 58%/7 very low and low).

All grantees confirmed the intention to continue with research related to the BERCEA grant after the grant period.

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[41] Desk review, Staff Exchange Report, second round.

[42] Desk review, Third Progress Report, November 2015- April 2016.

[43] Desk review, First Progress Report, October 2014- April 2015.

The sustainability of the IP is primarily guaranteed by the fact that grantees noted repeatedly that without the financial support, they would not have been able to complete their degree in time or successfully.

3. To what extent has the IP become further institutionalized, including through stronger management, wider outreach among potential trainees and increased visibility in their region and among national authorities and potential funders?

The visit of GDN and the STA to Ethiopia towards the end of the OP provided instrumental in understanding possible institutionalization of the IP. The visit included meetings with VPs of the Haramaya University as well as some deans and researchers affiliated to the organization. The outcome from the visit showed that IP results were clearly communicated to management of the university which gave reason to believe that activities could become institutionalized on the long-run. According to GDN Program management the political will to continue activities was clearly present.

3.3.6 Relevance and added value

1. What specific research and research training gaps have the IPs filled?

The grant awarded by GDN to Haramaya University in Ethiopia aimed at building stronger research capacities in the field of Economics and Agribusiness with a wider perspective of contributing to the fulfilment of national development goals. The BERCEA program aimed to tackle the inadequate knowledge of research methodologies, a lack of mentoring support for the students, the absence of procedures to maintain research quality and a poor budget. To achieve the named goals, the program intended to improve[44]: 1) the quality of thesis research on master as well as a doctorate level; 2) the students' skills engaging in problem-solving and cutting edge research; 3) the staff's research skills as well as mentoring and supervision competence and; 4) the cultivation of international collaborations and networking.

For the purpose of this evaluation, BERCEA provided the evaluators with a list of grantees and trainees that participated in the IP:

- 23 grantees were selected on the basis of two calls for proposals. This included 18 MSc students and 5 PhD students. 87% (20) of grantees are male against 13% (3) female. All women participating in the BERCEA grant program were MSc students.
- In addition to the grantees, another 32 trainees participated in the training activities, 13 of which are BERCEA staff members and the rest (19) training students. From the trainees, the majority are MSc students (89%/17) and only a

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[44] Desk review, First Progress Report, November 2014-April 2015.

few PhD (11%/2). 26% (5) of training students are female and 74% (14) male. Among staff participating in training activities, two (15%) are female and the other 19 male (85%).

- In total, the list of beneficiaries of BERCEA's grant program and training activities included 56 persons out of which 10 were female (38%).

Concerning the efforts to tackle the inadequate knowledge of research methodologies, this evaluation looked at the effectiveness of the trainings. This shows that the grantees and training participants considered that the short-term trainings were effective in achieving the objectives. In particular, the grantees considered the evaluation meetings after the training to take stock of acquired knowledge very effective. Also the training themes provided in the eyes of grantees, and also the training participants, a good overview of main issues relating the grantees' respective research themes. No significant differences are noted between the views of grantees versus the views of training participants.

Figure 27: Effectiveness of trainings BERCEA
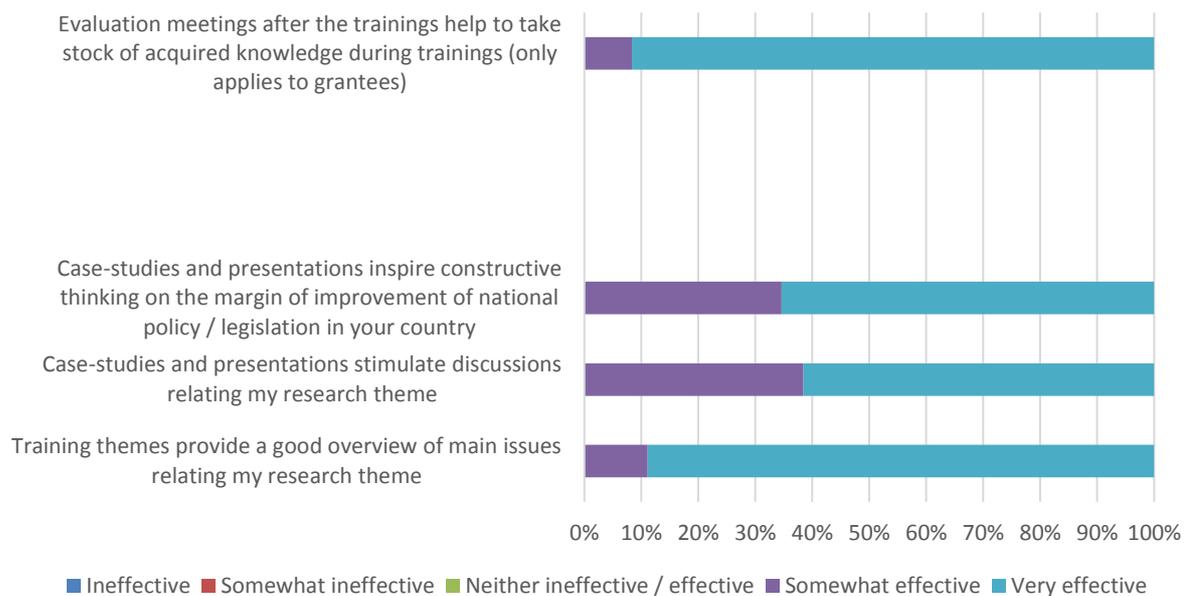
Source: Grantee and training participant surveys

Concerning lack of mentoring support for students, this evaluation firstly confirms that the grantee program allowed both MSc and PhD student to receive mentor support. Further, as discussed above the evaluation briefing after meetings were considered effective in helping to take stock of acquired knowledge during the trainings.

Further gaps such as absence of procedures to maintain research quality have been addressed by the multi-session trainings dealing with specific research methods and

models, allowing students to generate better research output. Budget limitations were also addressed through the IP by allowing students to participate in a grant program.

2. Are the RCB projects supported relevant to the country institutions involved?

This evaluation looked in Ethiopia at the relevance of the training themes in order to consider the relevance because grantees and training participants originated from a variety of institutions apart from the Haramaya University.

The grantees and the training participants particularly considered the empirical research methods in economics as very relevant. The GAMS and DASP training were considered relevant but did show that some respondents considering this neither relevant nor irrelevant and in one instance very irrelevant for a grantee. The evaluators note that these workshops are considered technical which could be the reason for the mixed responses. No significant differences are noted between the views of grantees versus the views of training participants.

Grantees and training participants were surveyed on the relevance and expectations of the trainings. This showed that overall the needs of the grantees were adequately catered through the training modules. For one training participant, the short-term trainings were not relevant to his/her teaching. Noticeable is that all respondents considered that the training themes are very relevant to their respective jobs/research and that the objectives of the training were clearly defined. No significant deviation has been observed between the ratings by grantees versus the ratings by training participants.

Figure 28: Relevance and expectations of grantees and training participants

Source: Grantee and training participant surveys

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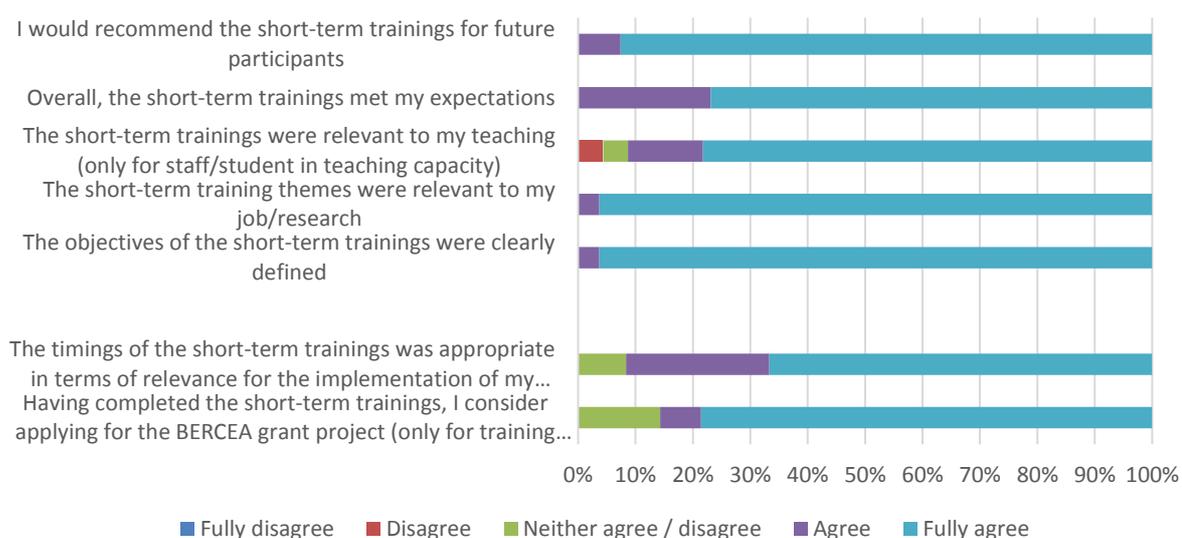
Figure 29: Content relevance of grantees and training participants
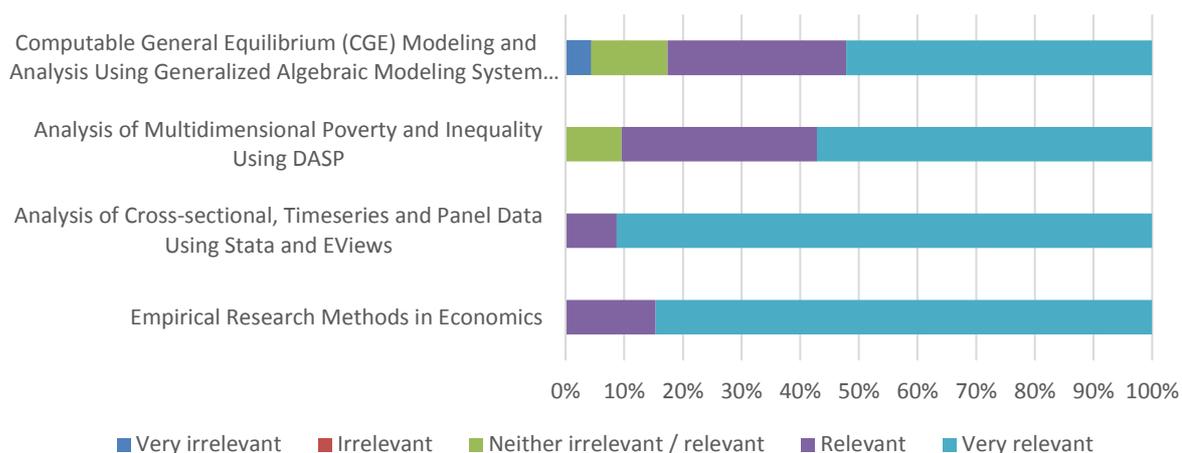
Source: Grantee and training participant surveys

3. Is the IP designed by grantees in line with the overall objectives and goals of the OP?

The IP can be considered in line with the overall objectives and goals of the IP. Activities organized by the IP team support wider OP objectives. For example, grant activities made available to students by funding of GDN mean that the OP grants access to research. Training activities organized by BERCEA with GDN grant money means that the OP provides access to research training. Improving staff research skills and expertise supports institutional research capacity building.

3.4   Project Bhutan

Table 34: Info sheet Bhutan

Country	Bhutan
Program name	Improving the quality of policy relevant research in Bhutan through leadership development, institution building and research practice
Implementing Partner	Institute for Gross National Happiness Studies, Royal University of Bhutan
Team	Dorji Thinley (PC – left during project), Sangay Thinley (TM), Kezang Sherab (TM), Jamba Tobden (TM – took over PC position)
IP brief	The program aims to develop stronger research leadership skills across the nine colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan to build 'Research Centers of Excellence' actively engaged in promoting research and community linkages in the country. It intends to enhance the knowledge and capacity of the academic staff to engage in independent research and supervision of students, and instil a culture of discourse, critical enquiry and practical solutions in the undergraduate and postgraduate students.
Main objectives	1. Training of faculty through hands-on mentoring and support for the development and execution of small research projects 2. Training of college of Deans through country visits to Asia 3. Institutional development of research centres 4. Student engagement in research
Main activities	Open call for brief concept notes Selection of concept notes / research and writing workshop / development concept notes to proposals Presentation proposals in workshop / selection of proposals Appointing mentors / research courses / research phase Final presentation findings Assistance for publication research Visit to centres of excellence in Asia Workshop on action plans for research centres Discussion of draft action plans Implementation of action plans Progress review Development framework for student engagement Teaching research

Source: own elaboration

3.4.1 Theory of change

Figure 30: Theory of Change Bhutan IP

Theory of Change
Bhutan

Objectives address needs → Intervention aims to achieve objectives

Needs
Research institution
Staff (researchers and project managers)
Students
Donor GDN

Objectives

Wider objectives
Institutionalize research capacity
Facilitate policy dialogue

Specific objectives
Develop strong research leadership
Build Research CoE
Enhance knowledge and capacity of staff
Instil a culture of discourse, critical enquiry and practical solutions among students

Operational objectives
Train academic staff
Train college Deans
Increase research centres
Create a student culture of research

Capacity Needs
Limited research leadership by the Deans
No CoE in all colleges of RUB
Lack of staff capacity to produce quality research and inspire students
Limited student research skills
Limited human resources to fulfil mandate to promote research

Intervention

Long-term outcome
Better policy debates
Institutionalized research capacity

Intermediate outcomes
Better research leadership
Stronger Centres of Excellence
Better research skills staff and awareness students

Immediate outcomes
Access to research projects for academic staff
Access to best practices in CoE
Implementation action plans
Trained staff and students

Outputs
Mentoring and support for small research projects for academic staff
Visits of Deans to CoE
Workshop to design strategic / action plans
Training on implementation plans
Research training workshop for undergraduate and post-graduate students

Inputs
Resources: money; staff; technical expertise

Source: own elaboration

1. Were the IP targets achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations? What were the challenges and what was done to mitigate risks?

The IP team met the contractual obligations towards GDN, however interview feedback and desk review of documentation pointed out that there have been several delays of submission of various documents as well as delays in responding to the GDN's request and delays in setting up Skype meetings which further postponed certain aspects of the project development. The main challenges faced by the IP team has been staff turn-over during the project as well as geographical spread off the team throughout the country. Feedback suggests that this complicated communication internally, but also with GDN and the STA.

Nevertheless, the IP team has met objectives of the project and suggest that these also were realistic given the scale of operations.

2. What trade-offs and adjustments, if any, have been made by the IP in order to drive efficiency?

No specific trade-offs or adjustments were identified in order to drive for efficiency.

3. What has been the learning in terms of IP implementation for the grantee institution, including in terms of peer-review, mentorship and informal learning and sharing across teams?

The IP team rated overall their ability related to various statements concerning the IP implementation very positively. Also, the IP team considered to large extent that this ability related to participation in the GDN Program.

Table 35: Rating of learnings for the IP team members Bhutan

	Rating ability	Relation with program
I have the ability to design and implement M&E systems for programmes within my institution	4,30 (very high, high, high, high)	4,30 (very high, high, high, high)
I have the ability to design and implement research capacity building programmes that address the needs of my institution	4,00 (very high, high, high, medium)	4,30 (very high, high, high, high)
I have the ability to manage research capacity building programmes	4,50 (very high, high, high, medium)	4,50 (very high, very high, high)

I have the ability to reach out and communicate on the performance and results of research capacity building programmes	4,00 (high, high, medium, medium)	4,00 (very high, high, high, medium)
I have the ability to facilitate policy debate relating research capacity building	3,50 (high, high, medium, medium)	3,50 (high, high, medium, medium)

Source: IP team survey

The IP team also rated their understanding of aspects of managing a research capacity building project positively. Also the extent of which participation in the GDN Program has contributed to this is positive, in particular for communications between team members and budgetary affairs.

Table 36: Ratings understanding RCB management Bhutan

	Rating understanding	Relation with program
Budget	4,80 (very high, high, medium, medium)	4,00 (very high, high, high, medium)
Timeline	4,80 (high, high, high, medium)	3,80 (high, high, high, medium)
Communications between (cross country) team members	4,00 (very high, high, high, medium)	4,00 (very high, high, high, medium)

Source: IP team survey

4. To what extent is the current staffing at an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the IPs (quality and quantity)?

The team consisted of one PC and three TMs. The initial PC left the IP and was substituted by one of the TMs. Additionally, two interns were hired to support the organisational framework of the IP. The external STA for the project was a Professor Emeritus from Kyoto University and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES). The iGNHaS reported initially to the GDN Deputy Director of Programs and afterwards to GDN's Program Manager.

Interview feedback from the STA and GDN suggest that staffing was not always sufficient to efficiently implement the IP, translating in sometimes difficult communication on reporting requirement. It was suggested that in particular the PC had a lot of additional work resulting in limited availability at times. The STA remarks repetitively that the progress reports or visit reports are lacking specificity and are limited in substance. The STA expresses his concerns about the human resources situation. He had the impression that the iGNHaS team is understaffed. One of the most crucial obstacles he remarks is the difficulty regarding internal coordination rooted in the physical location of the different colleges. The faculties are remotely located which seems to create communication difficulties and makes physical

meetings or common workshops problematic. He further points out that there have been several delays of submission of various documents as well as delays in responding to the GDN's request and delays in setting up skype meetings which further postponed certain aspects of the project development.

3.4.3   Effectiveness

1. Did the OP support in identifiable ways the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions? What explains different outcomes across different grantees?

This evaluation concludes that the GDN Program supported the institutional mandate of the grantee institution. The grantee institution in Bhutan is active in the area of teaching and research. The IP included university-wide research training of students based on a curriculum developed with the purview of the program. However, most activities focused building research capacity of staff from the grantee institution, an area where capacity needs were identified and considered important in order to be able 'instil a culture of discourse, critical enquiry and practical solutions among students'. In Bhutan, the GDN Program activities were predominantly focused on the staff of the grantee institution in order to sustainably strengthen the teaching mandate of the grantee institution. These activities catered various capacity needs identified such as: limited research leadership by the Deans and lack of staff capacity to produce quality research and this way inspire students.

2. Has the OP design (including monitoring and results frameworks) facilitated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions, beyond the implementing teams, that informed project implementation?

This evaluation finds that in particular the focus of GDN on monitoring and evaluation can be considered having generated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions. The sometimes difficult communication between GDN Program management and the IP team when dealing with reporting requirements challenged understanding of whether such internal learning took place. As a result, GDN asked the Bhutan team to conduct an internal assessment which can be considered effective in the sense that it allowed the team to self-reflect on activities and achieved objectives. Also, GDN Program management highlighted that the Kathmandu meeting accompanied and catalysed the work of the IP team and the institution on the results of the project.

3. Has GDN's support been instrumental in filling specific gaps in IP design and management, and enhancing the capability of the team (and institution) to further its goals and vision in terms of IP project implementation? Has GDN's support, including mentors, contributed instrumentally to the quality and institutionalization of the research capacity building activities planned by each grantee?

The IP team rated the support of the GDN very positive.

Figure 31: Rating of Bhutan IP team members of organisational support received from GDN
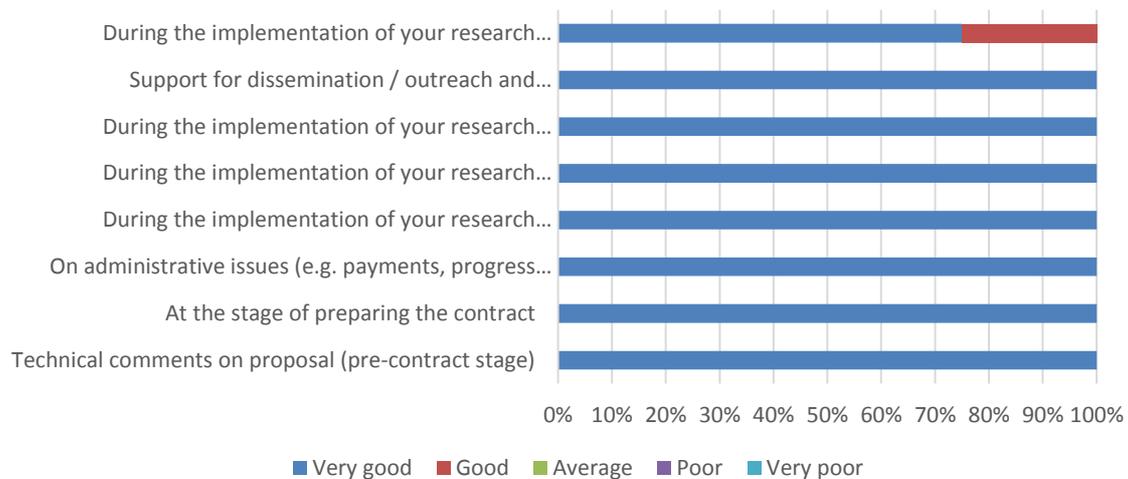

Source: IP team survey

The overall quality of the services provided by GDN was satisfactory. In particular, the project management and M&E support was rated positively. Outreach and networking support was rated average by the IP respondents. Considering there has been no interview feedback from the team, the evaluators cannot determine exactly what caused this average rating.

Figure 32: Rating of Bhutan IP team members of quality services provided by GDN
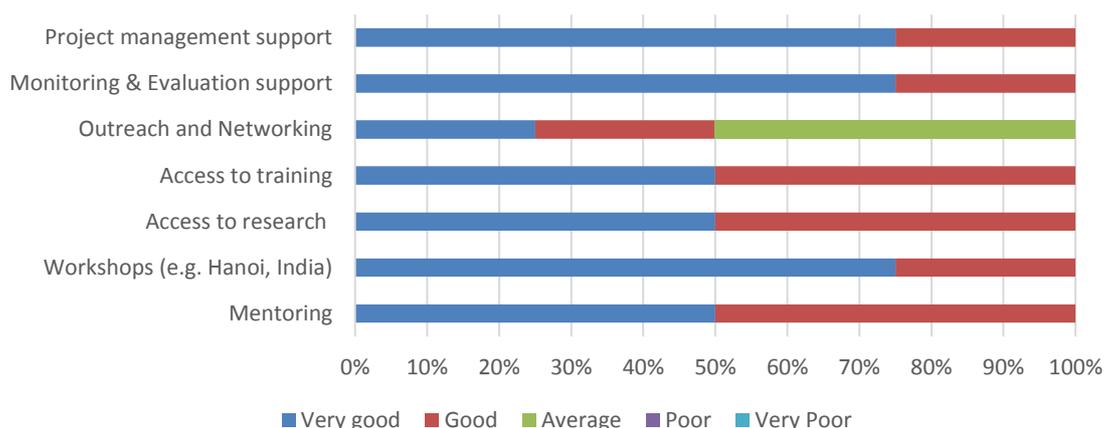
Source: IP team survey

3.4.4 Impact

1. To what degree has the IP achieved its stated goals, impacting on the capability of researchers and capacity of institutions?

In the eyes of the IP team members the objectives of the IP were met and realistic given the scale of operations. The IP members rated their knowledge very high and attributed improvement during the IP period highly to the GDN Program. In particular, on RCB the IP team members considered improvement in knowledge and understanding due to the GDN Program.

Table 37: Ratings IP team Bhutan on RCB knowledge and improvements due to the GDN Program

Knowledge and basic understanding of key concepts and issues related to:	Knowledge	Improvement	Relation
research capacity building	4,75	Yes (4/4)	4,25
monitoring and evaluation	4,75	Yes (4/4)	4,0
project management	4,75	Yes (4/4)	4,0
outreach and networking	4,50	Yes (4/4)	3,25

Source: IP team survey

Beyond the IP team members, also other stakeholders within institutions were exposed to IP activities such as staff, management, board members and students. The quality of interaction with these stakeholders was rated very positive. In one instance an IP respondent rated the interaction with students Board members and management of medium quality. In any case, IP activities primarily focused on staff, namely the DRILs.

Figure 33: Quality of interaction with institutional stakeholders Bhutan
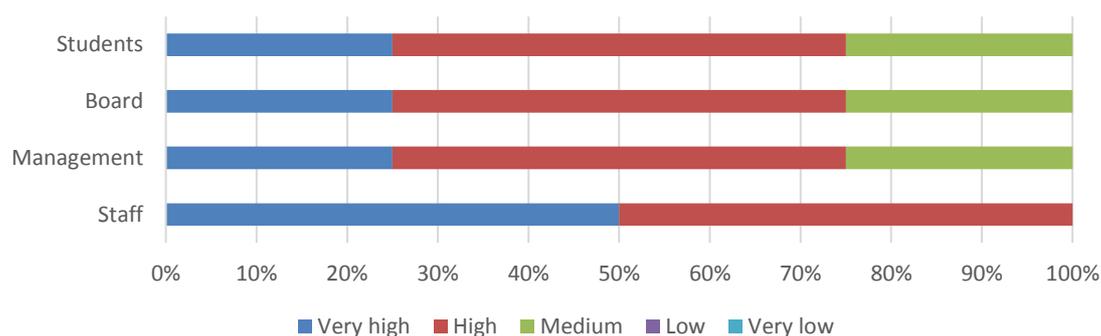
Source: IP team survey

When asked about the extent to which the beneficiaries (DRILS) of their activities benefitted from the IP, the team noted that collective research skills of the beneficiaries were high or very high. On statistical analysis and multidisciplinary research, skills were considered average. On both elements, the IP team members considered that improvement was partially attributable to the GDN Program.

Table 38: Rating collective research skills beneficiaries Bhutan

	Knowledge	Improvement	Relation
Research methods – theoretical knowledge (understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application)	4,0	Yes (4/4)	4,0
Statistical analysis (use of SPSS, SAS or similar statistical package)	3,0	Yes (3/4 – 1 no)	3,0
Multidisciplinary research	2,75	Yes (4/4)	2,75
Qualitative research methods	4,25	Yes (4/4)	4,25
Quantitative research methods	3,75	Yes (4/4)	3,75
Mixed methods	3,75	Yes (4/4)	3,75

Source: IP team survey

2. To what degree has the IP reached beyond its stated goals, with institutional spill-over effect on the involved institutions in terms of research and research training initiatives?

3. To what degree has the IP succeeded in linking their own strengthening to larger national policy debates on higher educational reform?

In terms of wider objectives such as facilitating policy dialogue, the IP team respondents from Bhutan showed high ratings in terms of confidence and awareness

on communication and dissemination skills, as well as networking skills outside the region. While overall positive, the findings show that improvement is possible in particular in relation to the ability to extract (3,75) and introduce (3,25) policy recommendations. Also the improvements during the Program were partially attributable to participation (respectively 3,75 and 3,50). The IP team also noted limited attribution of the GDN Program in improving networking skills outside the region.

Table 39: Rating awareness and confidence communication and dissemination skills Bhutan

	Skills	Relation
Professional visibility (amongst peer groups, policymakers, press etc.)	3,75	4,00
Ability to extract policy recommendations from your research	3,75	3,75
Ability to introduce policy recommendations into the public debate	3,25	3,50
Communication skills (working with media, organize events, targeting audiences)	4,00	3,75
Networking skills with contacts within your region	4,00	3,75
Networking skills with contacts outside your region	3,50	3,25

Source: IP team survey

The IP team used a variety of strategies to disseminate activity output during the Program period. The use of social media as a dissemination strategy was limited.

Table 40: Use dissemination strategies Bhutan

Dissemination strategies	Yes	No
Distributing report, paper, or policy brief to potential policymakers (via email, paper, etc.)	4	0
Discuss ideas related to the activities with potential policymakers	4	0
Distributing ideas through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	2	2
Presenting at conferences, seminars, etc. and organisation of events	4	0

Source: IP team survey

It is noticeable that discussing ideas related to the activities with potential policy makers is considered less useful which perhaps could be linked to the lower confidence and awareness of IP team members in extracting and introducing policy recommendation into the public debate. IP team members are most convinced about

the usefulness of presenting at conferences, but also show usefulness of social media despite the limited confidence in using such strategies.
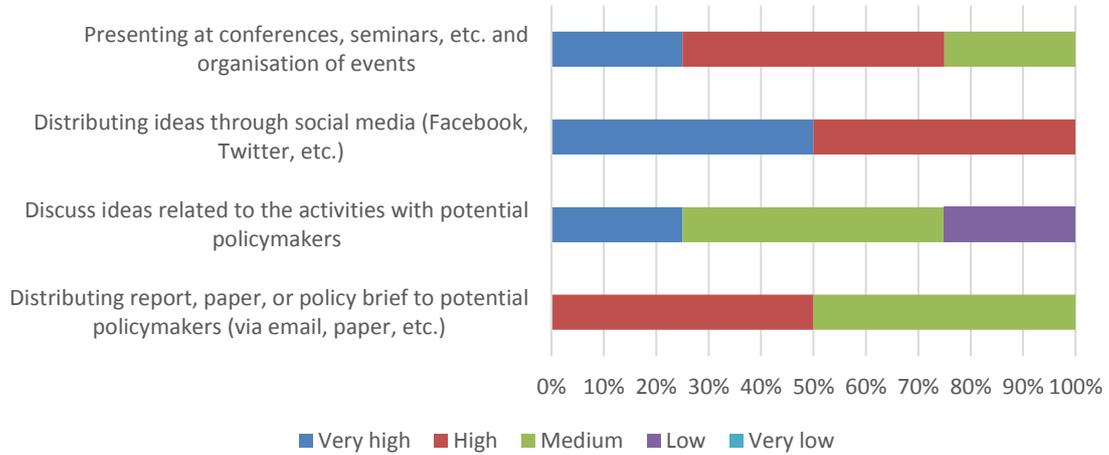
Source: IP team survey

In terms of exposure to the work of the IP team, the evaluation finds that in particular stakeholders from academia, administrators, civil society and the media were exposed to the IP. The quality of interaction was considered particularly high with academia and less so with administrators. Noticeable is the perceived low quality of interaction with politicians.

Source: IP team survey

100
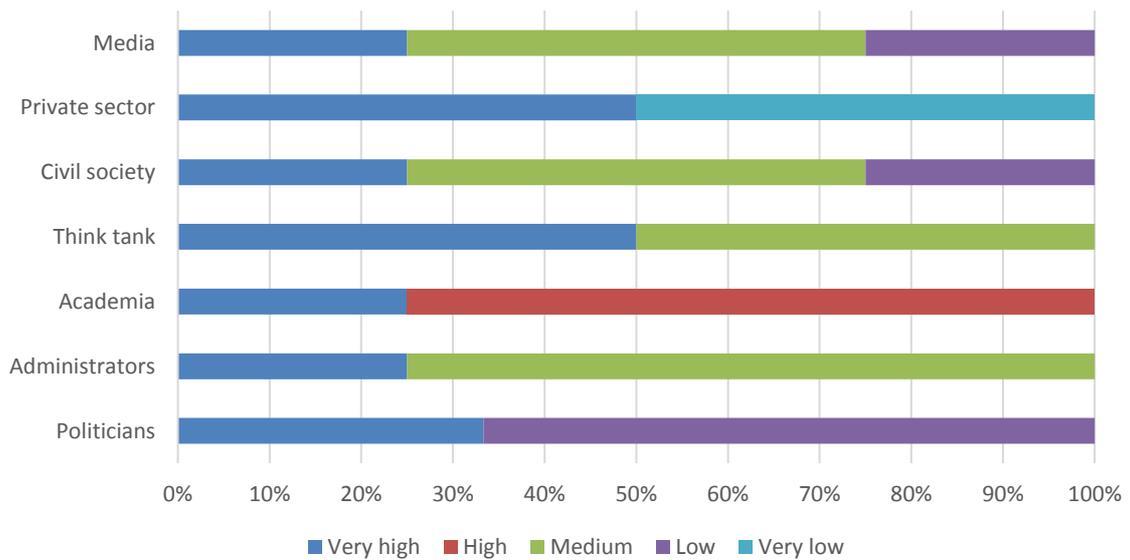
1. How could the OP have delivered greater value, specifically for the grantee institution (beyond the implementation team)?

Interview feedback from the STA and GDN suggested that more face-to-face interaction with the IP team could have delivered greater value. The IP team faced several capacity challenges throughout the implementation of the IP which suggested that such interaction would have helped to better understand the team's needs. No interview feedback was collected from the IP team for this evaluation which complicates assessing how the OP could have delivered greater value in the eyes of the team on the ground.

2. To what extent are the RCB initiatives likely to continue after the OP closes? Has the OP been able to equip the grantee institutions with new research toolboxes and institutional links that help them deliver quality research and research training to their research communities of reference and beyond?

IP survey feedback suggests that the IP team explored and was awarded both national and international research contracts and grants during the Program period. The IP team members considered the Program to have contributed to both exploring and winning these funding opportunities. The success of the team to secure follow-up funding gives an indication that RCB initiatives are likely to continue after the OP closes.

In addition, GDN Program management pushed the IP team to conduct an internal assessment of IP activities. The outcome of this is that the IP produced a sort of evaluation report which suggests that the grantee institution was equipped with a new tool to help future delivery of quality RCB activities. However, it has to be noted that a large part of activities was organized by the team's PC. At first instance, it was questionable whether the acquired skills of the PC would be institutionalized or at risk to be lost in case this person would leave the grantee institution. However, the additions to the team (two interns) were intended to allow for spill-over from the PC as these persons were to eventually become research centre coordinators in the different colleges. In a way, these positions were considered traineeships.

3. To what extent has the IP become further institutionalized, including through stronger management, wider outreach among potential trainees and increased visibility in their region and among national authorities and potential funders?

The IP team aimed to institutionalize a culture of research mentorship in the colleges of the RUB through its activities. According to the team, as a result of their activities, the DRILS in the faculties improved knowledge and '*understanding of research*

leadership models, research centre development and management (including policies), mobilization and management of research funds, development of research partnerships, development of research grants, balancing teaching and research, development of research programmes (especially PhD) and research supervision, developing policy-relevant research, research prioritization and developing the niche, research motivation and incentives, research capacity development, interdisciplinary research, and development and transfer of research-led technology'.[45] On the basis of this list, it can be argued that the potential is present for the IP to become further institutionalized. However, it is unclear from this to what extent the IP related activities can be isolated as the main factors contributing to this especially considering that many of these elements are by nature part of the work in the respective colleges of universities. From the evaluation point of view this complicates the possibility to draw lessons from the experience.

3.4.6 Relevance and added value

1. What specific research and research training gaps has the IP filled?

The GDN Program aimed at the improvement of the quality of policy research in Bhutan through leadership development, institutions building, and research practice. The Royal University of Bhutan was founded in 2003 and is the first university of the country. Research has been established as a priority since 2011. Therefore, according to the Grant Agreement, the research capacity should be enhanced in four areas: 1) research leadership by Deans of Research and Industrial Linkages (DRILs); 2) the development of Centres of Excellence in all colleges of the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB); 3) engagement of academic staff in research to enhance the quality of their research and to inspire their students and; 4) enhancement of student research skills.

The annex of the Grant Agreement states that the main challenges at RUB are lacking human resources and limited research experience of staff and students. Throughout the IP, the team further elaborated on the four areas by defining more concrete objectives or goals. This formed the basis of an internal evaluation exercise conducted by the team towards the end of the IP period. The report written by the team stated four main goals and a range of sub-goals[46]. The IP therefore proposes four interventions in order to reach the four above mentioned goals. iGNHaS in its role of the implementation agency would provide monitoring and evaluation on the projects.

Documentation on the IP suggests several activities that suggest to have catered a series of identified capacity needs. The first proposed intervention consists of trainings provided to the academic staff, offering support in the form of effective mentoring for

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[45] GDN consolidated report, p.15
[46] Desk review, Internal Evaluation Report, p. 6.

the development of small research projects. The second intervention should enhance the leadership qualities of the Deans of Research and Industrial Linkages (DRILS) through research visits to other centres of excellence in Asia. The third and fourth proposed interventions are formulated in a general manner and concern the institutional development of research centres in the colleges of RUB and a development of a culture of research among the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students of RUB.

The first intervention concerned the training of faculty through mentoring of small research grants. 27 proposals were submitted and 15 academics were selected to participate in a three-day workshop to improve their concept notes with the help of more experienced researchers/mentors both from Bhutan as from other Asian countries. In a second workshop the research proposals were presented by applicants. In addition, the research mentors presented on several topics such as statistics and statistical software, cost/benefit analysis, GIS tools, interview and survey techniques, discourse analysis, and research and communication. On the basis of the workshop outputs, a selection committee made a final decision on the proposals. The new grantees were paired with a mentor and assisted throughout the research process in order to publishing their research in the Bhutan Journal of Research and Development as well as other international journals. Eventually the grantees were invited to present the findings to a so-called Faculty Research Meet where possible policy implications were discussed in the presence of the mentors, other grantees and third party stakeholders such as government officials, private sector and civil society representatives.

The second intervention concerned the training of college DRILS through visits to centres of excellence in research, primarily in Asia. The DRILS have been appointed in the colleges in Bhutan in order to promote a culture of research where prior this was mainly focused on teaching. The main identified weakness was the lack in research leadership experience. The intervention therefor focused on institutional capacity building, human resource development and research fundraising. This translated into a visit of the DRILS to TERI (India) University and a visit of the grantees and the DRILS to Kyoto University. According to the internal evaluation report, these visits focused on[47]:

- *'Visioning and strategic planning for research center*
- *Mentorship for young researchers and creating incentives for research*
- *Developing Research Partnerships and networks*
- *Exploring and developing Research Grants*
- *Research trainings*
- *Research disseminations and advocacy'*

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[47] Desk review, Internal Evaluation Report, p. 8.

The visits were also supposed to be used to further strengthen the partnerships between the Universities. Following the visits, the DRILS convened a workshop and drafted action plans and strategies for the development of the research centres. Senior faculty members were engaged to assist the DRILS. This included assisting on drafting research centre visions, institutional development goals, annual work plans and progress reporting mechanisms. Also they were supposed to develop plans for website creation and centre-specific training modules. This support was offered in several stages in order to allow the DRILS to consult within their respective colleges.

Regarding the third line of interventions, the Grant Agreement suggested that an expert would be hired to assist in this planning process. The internal evaluation report however illustrates a slightly different angle in which in follow-up of the strategic plans drafted, the team supported the DRILS with the planning and implementation of the plans. The DRILS were supposed to present the plans within the respective colleges and receive feedback. This helped to further define the plan and identify the right people to assist in the implementation. The IP team provided oversight and made suggestions for improvement throughout 2015-2016 whenever needed.

Regarding the fourth line of intervention the Grant Agreement puts forward a series of workshops in each college tailored to specific research themes held by internal and international experts.

The lines of interventions which were tailored after the four goals of the project, include an aspect of attention to gender balance. Regarding the Deans of Research, it is mentioned in the annex of the Grant Agreement that gender balance was not an issue at that point because all Deans (all male) were already hired beforehand. However, except for the fact that two interns hired during the IP period were female, it does not become clear whether the IP took into consideration gender balance. The STA for example noted that the number of female applicants to the IP grants were consistently low and that measures were necessary in order to rectify the situation. The STA also emphasised that the criteria for the screening of research projects were not always transparent and that the figures and tables regarding the screening were unclear.

2. Are the RCB projects supported relevant to the country institutions involved?

The documentation on the IP suggests that indeed the activities are relevant to the country institutions involved. In particular, the relatively young age of the RUB supports the need for research capacity building activities. Although relevant, the aim to establish Centres of Excellence through the IP can be considered ambitious as this requires a longer-term vision. Nonetheless, the activities targeting the DRILS can be

considered useful as this potentially has strengthened research leadership throughout the RUB.

3. Is the IP designed by grantees in line with the overall objectives and goals of the OP?

On the basis of the theory of change developed for this evaluation, it can be argued that the objectives of the IP largely correspond to those of the GDN Program.

3.5 Programme de renforcement en capacités de recherché de la DRC-CESAG

CESAG is a business school located in Dakar, Senegal. The organisation conducts research and consulting activities around management science. In addition, CESAG also provides a range of teaching services. CESAG aims to study the organisational problems that companies face in the region and present and disseminate new management techniques, collaborate with partners to renew policies on professional education, and establish international partnerships[48].

CESAG highlighted in its IP proposal the need to strengthen capacity of the researchers to enable them to produce quality work. Specific gaps were identified such as the difficulty for researchers to choose and adapt the right methodology for research questions, the lack of fluency to communicate research and challenges to select and present relevant findings. CESAG also highlighted more technical aspects such as lack of data collection skills. Other challenges identified for researchers included difficulties in handling data, summarizing this, developing surveys, choosing target population, sampling, etc. Data processing and modelling techniques are often poorly controlled, resulting in weak results. CESAG specifically identified the "experimental economics" method as a way to enhance the organisation's role in the field of research on marketing, human resource management and corporate government. Therefor CESAG expressed interest to set up a dynamic working group focusing on experimental economics by implementing a behaviour simulation laboratory that could provide the appropriate conditions for interdisciplinary collaborations. The planned actions by CESAG for the IP included workshops, fellowships, and the creation of a new academic journal in management. In addition, CESAG aimed with the IP to develop skills to conduct "experimental economics".

3.5.1 Timeline Senegalese IP

According to GDN and the appointed STA, CESAG presented at the start of the Program a strong IP proposal[49]. An interdisciplinary team was presented and the proposed intervention was well structured. In October 2014, the IP started and in February 2015 the first workshop was organised with a slight delay. Soon after, in March and April, the second and third workshops were organised. A point of concern by the STA and GDN was that all three workshops included CESAG team members as main speakers. Also, CESAG suffered delays in relation to their reporting requirements to GDN. As a result, GDN and the STA warned CESAG about the lack of progress and decided to increase communication with CESAG by scheduling bi-weekly phone call with the team in Senegal. Together they decide to launch a public call for the last two workshops

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[48] Desk research: Annex 1 – Proposal.pdf
[49] Feedback STA and GDN during Hanoi meeting.

scheduled for 2015 in order to identify an external speaker. The goal was to identify a qualified speaker from the region, but instead they found European speakers for the fourth and fifth workshop hosted in May.

After a rocky start of the IP, two members of the Senegalese team left the project in June. Although considered an obstacle in an already challenging project implementation, both GDN and the STA acknowledge that the project can continue as long as the team members that left are replaced in due time. The contract is amended and the work plan adjusted but it is not until October that a new team is set up. With a delay, the CESAG team submits in November a progress report.

Based on the progress report, GDN consults the STA and informs CESAG in November that in their view the team does not consider sufficiently the advise provided in a "*systematic and consequential manner*"[50]. Also, they argue that the recommendations provided by GDN earlier that year in May were not implemented and that CESAG hardly took action since the last Program tranche payment. Also concerns were voiced about the quality of reporting and documentation provided by CESAG. As a result, GDN decided to terminate the contract and asked CESAG to return the uncommitted Program funds before the end of 2015.

The figure below provides an illustration of the IP's timeline.

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[50] Desk research, Final_Decision_November_ 2015_Letter_RCB4LDC_Senegal Team.pdf

Figure 36: Timeline IP Senegal

3.5.2   Reflections from GDN and STA

The decision taken by GDN in agreement with the STA was not taken lightly, especially given that they realized that the IP was on stand-by during the turnover in the team. However, apart from the workshops, the CESAG team for the rest did not show any significant progress in relation to the establishment of the experimental economics lab nor on the academic journal. Recommendations made by the STA and GDN were not consistently followed and reporting was done in a rush which affected quality. According to the STA, a key problem was that the new team did not posses the skills to develop an experimental economics laboratory. In addition, the team members were too burdened with other activities, such as teaching, which placed the IP on a side-track. Communication between the STA and the Senegalese team was difficult, also due to technical issues to connect through Skype.

GDN and STA stand behind the decision to terminate the contract but are self-critical about the way things proceeded. For example, in their view the efforts to change the direction of the IP started in retrospect too late. Also, perhaps it was not understood from the start by the Senegalese team that supervision would be "tight" during the IP. As a result, criticism by GDN and the STA came across as "hard". Also, it was noted that meet-ups with the other grantees could have been useful for the Senegalese team to better understand challenges they were facing. The mid-term workshop hosted in Hanoi could have been useful for them if organised by GDN earlier in the Program.

3.5.3   Reflection from Senegal

For this evaluation we have collected feedback from the Senegalese team on the chain of events during the IP period as well as on lessons learnt and the impact of the activities. The interview with the former PC of the Senegalese team provided overall positive feedback on the collaboration with GDN. He regretted the termination of the IP but nonetheless perceived the experience as valuable. In particular, the support GDN provided to CESAG was perceived as very good.

Three issues were highlighted by the interviewee concerning the implementation of the IP.

First of all, they noted that some of the activities that were planned and detailed in the proposal were in the end not approved and financed by GDN. As a result, CESAG had to finance some of the planned activities on its own. For them, the reasons why the activities could not be financed by GDN were not clear. In addition, the interviewee noted that CESAG contributed financially more to the activities than expected.

Secondly, the interviewee noted that they organised workshops for the IP following the same procedure they normally adopt at CESAG. However, they were forced to change their approach when GDN asked them to attract speakers through an open call. The interviewee noted that this proved useful but that this also resulted in a higher turnout than expected which increased budget costs that were at the end carried by CESAG. At the same time, the approach that was pushed by GDN did raise CESAG's visibility, especially within the region. For example, the workshops attracted also participants from Mali.

Thirdly, the interviewee from CESAG noted that they particularly struggled with timely reporting and communicating. Nonetheless, he highlighted that activities took place as planned.

Concerning the effectiveness of the Program, the interviewee noted that GDN's support was perceived as a huge success and gave more weight to their institution at the regional level. Most notably, the IP raised CESAG's profile and visibility. According to the interviewee, those outcomes have faded with the withdrawal of GDN's support. Nonetheless, the new research team currently in place at CESAG is enthusiastic about keeping up with the activities previously started.

Concerning the sustainability of the shortened IP, CESAG affirmed that they remain dedicated to the objectives they established at the start of the IP and today continue to organise the seminars that were put in place during the collaboration. In fact, CESAG is trying to continue all the activities of the proposal, and recently the creation of the experimental economics lab was internally approved. However, the withdrawal of financial support from GDN did significantly slow down the activities of CESAG. As a result, the organisation is currently looking for new partners.

4 Innovation and lessons learnt

This section presents the innovation and lessons learned from the GDN Program.

1. GDN's Program in LDCs is tailored in a way that allows for a comprehensive, effective and sustainable development of a beneficiary's research capacity. Similar programmes from other organisations tend to only provide financial support and/or lack a long-term perspective to escape the low-research capacity trap.

2. From this evaluation we learned that GDN carefully designed the Program to meet underexposed areas within its own activities, first of all by focusing on research institutions as opposed individual or teams of researchers and secondly by targeting countries underrepresented in GDN's activities.

3. In addition, from this evaluation we learned that GDN adopted a strong Program rationale by arguing that researchers operating in a low capacity research environment are virtually trapped in a vicious circle which restricts their ability to undertake and disseminate credible work.

4. From this evaluation we learned that by adopting a demand-driven approach, GDN exposed itself to possible resource-intensive support to beneficiaries and limited control over activities that depend for success on performance by the beneficiaries.

5. On the other hand, we learned that GDN choose with this approach for a more sustainable path given that a Program, tailor-made for the needs of beneficiaries, likely generates longer-lasting results. In order to mitigate the risks, GDN opted for the use of arguably one of its strongest tools for projects, the mentor. The variety of IPs limited the possibility of peer-learning which largely was now covered by mentors with institutional research capacity building expertise, research thematic expertise, and regional experience in LDCs.

6. We learned that GDN realised that the classic model of a mentor that provides academic support to individual researchers or teams of researchers might not fully address needs of research institutes. Therefore, mentors were partially selected on their academic research background, but also on the basis of institutional RCB knowledge, i.e. on monitoring and evaluation or fundraising network.

7. From this evaluation we learned that remote management of an institutional RCB program such as the one implemented by GDN is difficult. It is therefore that GDN focused on ensuring close, hands-on monitoring by the Program team and face-to-face meetings between IP teams and GDN and IP teams and STAs.

The experience of GDN has been that capacity is greatly enhanced through these face-to-face meetings.

8. From this evaluation we learned that there is capacity in the different countries and that the Program's competitive selection process allowed GDN to identify this capacity and support this. The demand-driven approach was considered very important. In many instances the activities of the beneficiaries were not entirely new. They were either part of their core activities or were dormant due to resources restraints. The GDN Program allowed them to continue these activities with additional support from GDN and the STAs.

9. From this evaluation we learned that the demand-driven approach used by GDN originated in a Program supporting four structurally different projects in LDC countries. This has posed management challenges, in particular in relation to remote management of projects.

10. We learned from this evaluation that GDN adopted a flexible approach to project management in order to allow both beneficiaries as well as its own Program management adapt to needs in relation to institutional RCB.

11. GDN adopted a similar approach to monitoring and evaluation given that the differences in the IPs resulted in different objectives, activities and outcomes. One way to address monitoring and evaluation has been to promote IP teams to do this internally which can be considered an innovative approach.

12. We learned from this evaluation that the differences in IPs also included projects that differ to some extent from activities GDN normally funds. For example, the IP in Cambodia/Vietnam contained less research production and more research training and conferencing, which ultimately is in large part event organisation.

13. From this evaluation we learned that beneficiaries of the Program consider that their participation has improved RCB ability. The main area of weakness is the contribution of the Program in developing the beneficiaries' abilities to facilitate policy debate relating RCB at the national level, in the short term, though significant contributions were made to debates about RCB within the respective institutions.

5   Conclusions and summary of recommendations

This section presents the conclusions and summary of recommendations.

5.1   Main conclusions overall program

Efficiency

This evaluation finds that in terms of efficiency, the GDN Program performed satisfactory. The demand-driven approach created diverse IPs which complicated timely management of the Program resulting on several occasions in delays. However, GDN Program management and the STAs effectively supported IP teams and managed to ensure targets were met nonetheless.

This evaluation finds that objectives of the OP were realistic given the scale of operations. GDN activities related to the relatively straightforward operational objectives of the GDN Program (to provide access to research and to provide access to research training) allowed for holistic and flexible support to the different IPs. This was required given that each IP had set its own objectives.

This evaluation finds that in terms of learnings from OP Implementation, GDN learned that remote management of an institutional RCB program is difficult. It is therefore that GDN focused on ensuring close, hands-on monitoring by the Program team and face-to-face meetings between IP teams and GDN and IP teams and STAs. The experience of GDN has been that capacity is greatly enhanced through these face-to-face meetings.

The level of staffing to efficiently and effectively implement the OP has been considered limited at times for GDN (as well as for individual IPs – see the section below). For GDN Program management the main challenge was time allocated to the Program in addition to other responsibilities at the organisation.

Effectiveness

This evaluation concludes that the GDN Program supported the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions in all IPs. The grantee institutions are all active in the area of teaching and research. The degree in which emphasis is placed on one or both of these areas differs. The demand-driven approach in combination with the hands-on support by GDN and the STA allowed the Program to strengthen institutional activities in those

areas already emphasised and promote the inclusion of activities in underexposed areas for the respective grantee institutions.

This evaluation identified some evidence of an internal feedback loop in the grantee institutions related to project management. However, the role of the PC has been strong in all IPs questioning the extent to which project management (and monitoring and evaluation) skills spilled over beyond the PCs to the rest of the team and beyond the team to the institution.

This evaluation finds that support from GDN was perceived very positively across the IP teams. In particular, the mentoring was highly valued by the IP team members as well as support on administrative issues (i.e. processing of payments, etc.).

Impact

This evaluation finds that understanding and knowledge of institutional RCB has improved due to participation in the GDN Program. Two components that strongly resonated in the improvement of knowledge and understanding is on project management and monitoring and evaluation. This suggests that despite lack of evidence on the extent of the internal feedback loop, the GDN Program did positively effect also IP team members apart from the PCs. Concerning the spill-over beyond the teams, this evaluation notes that the quality of interaction has been particularly high between the IP teams and other staff as well as management.

This evaluation also finds that collective research skills of IP beneficiaries improved throughout the course of the Program. The activities have particularly contributed to improving theoretical knowledge on research methods, such as understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application.

In terms of wider objectives such as facilitating policy dialogue, this evaluation finds that IP team member differ on confidence and awareness on communication and dissemination skills, in particular in relation to the ability to introduce and extract policy recommendations. Also GDN Program management acknowledged that providing support on this element is challenging given the remote management of the Program, but that significant achievements were done in leveraging the experience of the project to open and inform debates on RCB, its quality and its sustainability, at the level of institution

Further, this evaluation finds that the IP team adopted conventional communication and dissemination strategies such as distrusting reports, presenting at conferences, and discussing ideas with potential policy makers. More innovative social media

strategies were only used to a limited extent, but if used, considered highly useful. The usefulness of reaching out to potential policymakers as well as the quality of interaction are questioned. Then again, interaction with groups such as academia, think tanks and administrators, targeted through the more conventional strategies, were considered of better quality.

Sustainability

This evaluation finds that the GDN Program feedback could have delivered greater value for the grantee institutions by having used more face-to-face interaction between GDN Program management and the IP teams, as well as interaction between STAs and IP teams. GDN understood the relevance of such meetings, in particular to generate trust, but also to better understand the needs of the beneficiaries. It was therefor that throughout the Program GDN organised various meetings bringing together IP teams, organised various visits to IP countries and ensured more frequent face-to-face interaction between STAs and IP teams.

This evaluation finds that objectives established for the respective IPs remain a priority for the grantee institutions. Whether the activities will continue in the same way and with the same intensity as during the GDN Program cannot be fully determined. The GDN Program has according to the IP team members contributed to successfully exploring and securing funding for follow-up research capacity building activities. IP teams in particular focused on exploring international grants and in several occasions also succeeded in winning these. However, it has to be noted that the sustainability in most cases still depends largely on external funding. GDN confirmed the importance of sustainability through internal funds, with limited dependence on external funding.

Relevance and added value

This evaluation finds that the main added-value of GDN in piloting such a programme is the idea that the organisation has a vast track-record in building research capacity in developing countries (institutional memory and experience), access to international donor organisations (funding), and already has established the organisational set-up (in-house expertise on project management, M&E, etc.) to provide such services. In other words, GDN can be considered the right player to pilot such a programme considering fewer steps were to be made in order to launch or adapt their normal RCB approach (meaning RCB of individual researchers / research teams) to this new institutional approach to RCB. We find that with this, GDN has proven to innovative and re-invent their role in RCB and therefor ensure sustainability of the organisation.

Efficiency

In terms of efficiency, the Vietnamese/Cambodian IP performed satisfactory. A particular guarantee in terms of project management was the existing experience within the Vietnamese team with organising the IP activities. At the same time, this existing experience reduced the attribution of the GDN Program on improving RCB abilities for Vietnamese IP team members. At the same time, the participation in the GDN Program did very much contribute to improvements for the IP team members from Cambodia.

In terms of learning, the GDN Program allowed the existing model in Vietnam for the summer school to be replicated in other countries. Some concerns were voiced on the involvement of the Cambodian team members after which GDN repeatedly pushed for more collaboration between the team members in Vietnam Cambodia.

This evaluation finds that due to the funding received from GDN, the staffing for the organisation of the summer school was able to be maintained and therefore on an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the IP.

Effectiveness

This evaluation finds that the GDN Program supported the institutional mandate of the grantee institutions given that the summer school programme was an established programme that through funding of GDN could be continued. The Vietnamese/Cambodian IP focused largely on a teaching mandate but also contained an institutional RCB component through the link between the experienced Vietnamese team (in organizing the summer school) to the less-experienced Cambodian team.

The evaluation also finds that the GDN Program design fostered collaboration between the IP team members in Cambodia and in Vietnam which otherwise would not necessarily materialize. With this IP being a first time that team members collaborated, GDN ensured that this collaboration was to a degree systematised. Support from GDN was therefor also rated very positive. Possible improvement could be made in support for dissemination and outreach activities. Quality of services from GDN were rated high, in particular the mentoring component. Access to research and research training was considered less relevant to the team which covered this already through an existing network of academic collaborators.

Impact

This evaluation finds that IP objectives were met and realistic given the scale of operations. The IP team rated their respective understanding and knowledge of institutional research capacity building high. The impact of the IP activities on students is considered high, which also corresponds to past efforts by the Vietnamese IP team to measure the impact of their summer schools on participants.

Further, this evaluation finds that the level of awareness of the IP team and confidence regarding communication and dissemination skills is considered satisfactory with slightly lower levels of awareness and confidence in the ability to introduce and extract policy recommendation into the public debate. This also relates to limited use of dissemination strategies targeting policy makers. Instead the IP team strongly emphasises the use of social media, in particular audio-visual communication through social media. Quality of interaction was considered high with academia, administrators and think tank stakeholders.

Sustainability

This evaluation identified different views on the added value of the GDN Program in terms of support on fundraising. Expectations between the IP team and GDN differed. Nonetheless, fundraising needs was largely covered by proactive support from the mentor. The GDN Program allowed overall for the consolidation of the summer school program in Laos and Cambodia, and opened up channels to expansion in Myanmar and Madagascar. The GDN Program also gave new impetus to already existing collaboration between partners to the IP, further strengthening institutionalisation beyond the GDN Program period.

Relevance and added value

This evaluation finds that the IP objectives cater a series of identified capacity needs for researchers on the region. The participation in the GDN Program allowed the IP team to address institutional capacity needs, in particular on project management and monitoring and evaluation training.

5.2.2   Conclusions IP Ethiopia

Efficiency

This evaluation finds that the IP achieved the targets on time. The team did request GDN for an extension of the project in order to accommodate their beneficiaries that were in the process of completing their research. GDN ensured that this was agreed by

donor organisation and supported the team in extending IP activities. IP targets were realistic given the scale of operations and this evaluation has not identified major issues in relation to the realistic achievement of targets.

However, this evaluation has noted that the grant activities were to fit into a wider activities of academic life of PhD and MSc students at the grantee institution. This meant that the mentoring and training activities were to support students in completing their degrees and therefor made the IP team dependent of factors beyond their control. The no-cost extension covered delays due to this. IP beneficiaries noted that financial support through the IP grant contributed to them achieving targets, as well as technical support from the IP team and acquired knowledge from the IP activities.

In terms of learning, this evaluation finds that the participation in the GDN program contributed to the ability to design and implement M&E systems for programs within the grantee institution, design, implement and manage research capacity building programs, as well as reaching out and communicating on the performance and results of research capacity building programs and facilitate policy debate relating research capacity building. Stakeholder feedback confirms the learning curve in terms of M&E in which particularly the mid-term meeting in Hanoi was considered relevant as well as the frequent update calls with the mentor.

This evaluation finds that the IP team was effective and efficient in implementing the project, however notes that the IP depended largely on the professional investment of the PC, risking limited spill-over to the institution. The degree of involvement of the grantee institution beyond the implementing team was not always clear to GDN and the STA. The team was therefor recommended to ensure governance procedures in order to clarify the involvement of different stakeholder within the grantee institution and evidence possible spill-over.

Effectiveness

This evaluation finds that the IP supported the institutional mandate of the grantee institution by allowing training participants to improve knowledge on research models and methods, but more importantly allowing through the grant program that students of the university successfully complete their degrees.

An internal feedback loop was enabled through the involvement of a management committee consisting of grantee institutional stakeholders beyond the IP team members. The extent to which this materialised is not clear and some questions were

raised in relation to lack of spill-over on project management and M&E learnings from the IP team leader to other stakeholders.

Further this evaluation finds that GDN and STA support was considered very good. Initially during the IP some concerns were voiced on transparency and communication on decisions taken by the IP team. This was addressed by ensuring more frequent (face-to-face) communication.

Impact

The impact of the IP can be considered significant. Objectives were met and realistic given the scale of operations. IP team members strongly attributed improvements on knowledge and understanding of RCB to the participation in the GDN Program. Beyond the IP team, also staff, management and grantee institution board members were exposed to activities, largely through the use of a management committee. Particularly students were exposed to the IP activities through trainings and grants. This evaluation finds that these beneficiaries highly benefitted from these activities, themselves noting satisfactory levels of improvement in research skills as well as communication and dissemination skills.

This evaluation finds that the beneficiaries of the IP considered the support received from the IP team as well as the quality of the services highly satisfactory. The training delivered to the beneficiaries was perceived as balanced in terms of theory and practice, with an adequate level of demand. The effectiveness of the trainers used for the IP activities were also positively rated by the beneficiaries. The modules used were considered complimentary and coherent. This evaluation further finds that utility of the trainings was sufficient. It is noted that beneficiaries of the training activities that also participated in the grant program rated slightly more positive which indicates that the delivery of the training modules corresponded to the services offered through the grant program.

Sustainability

This evaluation finds that the IP team as well as grantee institution management intends to continue with activities related to the GDN Program but specifically on the grant component of the IP are dependent on external funding. The IP team has been successful in pursuing new grant opportunities but the extent to which these relate to the GDN Program are limited.

This evaluation further finds that the IP has been sustainable in the sense that is supported a series of students in finalising MSc and PhD degrees.

Relevance and added value

This evaluation confirms that the grant awarded by GDN contributed to addressing gaps such as the inadequate knowledge of research methodologies, a lack of mentoring support for the students, the absence of procedures to maintain research quality and a poor budget. Findings from the data collection shows that the grantees and training participants considered that the short-term trainings were effective in achieving the objectives. In particular, the grantees considered the evaluation meetings after the training to take stock of acquired knowledge very effective. Also the training themes provided in the eyes of grantees, and also the training participants, a good overview of main issues relating the grantees' respective research themes.

This evaluation finds that by providing students with grants, training and appointing mentors, the IP team's initiative resembles projects designed and implemented by GDN. In other words, the IP does not only fall in line with the GDN Program goals, it arguably also corresponds to the classic research capacity building activities of GDN. In the view of the evaluators, this increases the added value of the IP and also relevance of the IP for GDN.

5.2.3 Conclusions IP Bhutan

Efficiency

This evaluation finds the IP team met the contractual obligations towards GDN, but that the communication between GDN Program management, the STA and the IP team was challenging mainly due to staff turn-over during the IP as well as geographical spread off the team throughout the country.

This evaluation finds that particular the staffing for the IP has been problematic, resulting in particular heavy burden on the IP team leader. As a result, GDN Program management has repeatedly underlined that results from the IP were not adequately communicated in the periodical reporting. This contributed to the decision to ask the IP team to conduct a self-assessment of the IP towards the end of the GDN Program period.

Effectiveness

This evaluation concludes that the GDN Program supported the institutional mandate of the grantee institution. The grantee institution is active in the area of teaching and research. However, the IP included a stronger component of building research capacity of lecturers from the grantee institution, addressing their needs as researchers.

This evaluation finds that in particular the focus of GDN on monitoring and evaluation can be considered having generated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions which resulted in a solid self-assessment report.

Further, GDN support was considered very good and of high quality. The IP team only considered outreach and networking support by GDN of average quality. The evaluators were not able to determine what caused this average rating.

Impact

This evaluation notes that the objectives of the IP were met and despite staffing challenges realistic given the scale of operations. The IP members rated their knowledge very high and attributed improvement during the IP period highly to the GDN Program. In particular, on RCB the IP team members considered improvement in knowledge and understanding due to the GDN Program. Exposure of IP activities reached beyond the implementing team to, inter alia, staff members of the grantee institution. The quality of interaction was considered high.

This evaluation further finds that collective research skills of staff improved but limited focus was placed on statistical analysis and multidisciplinary research. In terms of wider objectives such as facilitating policy dialogue, this evaluation finds that the IP team showed high ratings in terms of confidence and awareness on communication and dissemination skills, as well as networking skills outside the region. While overall positive, the findings show that improvement is possible in particular in relation to the ability to extract and introduce policy recommendations.

Sustainability

This evaluation notes that more face-to-face interaction with the IP team could have delivered greater value. The IP team faced several capacity challenges throughout the implementation of the IP which suggested that such interaction would have helped to better understand the team's needs.

Further, the IP team aimed to institutionalize a culture of research mentorship in the colleges of the RUB through its activities. The evaluation finds that the potential is present for the IP to become further institutionalized post-GDN Program but it is unclear to what extent the IP related activities can be isolated as the main factors contributing to the results achieved in the eyes of the IP team. This is due to the fact that some of the results described by the IP team are by nature part of the work in the respective colleges of universities.

Relevance and added value

This evaluation finds that the IP design falls within the scope of the GDN Program which aimed at the improvement of the quality of policy research in Bhutan through leadership development, institutions building, and research practice. The documentation on the IP suggests that indeed the activities are relevant to the country institutions involved. In particular, the relatively young age of the grantee institution supports the need for research capacity building activities. Although relevant, the aim to establish Centres of Excellence through the IP can be considered ambitious as this requires a longer-term vision. Nonetheless, the activities targeting the deans of the university can be considered useful as this potentially has strengthened research leadership throughout the grantee institution.

5.2.4   Conclusions IP Senegal

This evaluation finds that the decision to terminate the IP in Senegal was taken by GDN in agreement with the STA and on the basis of solid argumentation. First of all, GDN tried to address challenges of the IP team when staff turn-over delayed activities significantly in Senegal. When the response to these challenges were perceived insufficient by both GDN and the STA, the decision materialised after careful consideration. In hindsight GDN Program management stands behind this decision but has been self-critical about the proceedings. In particular, GDN Program management considered that their intervention in the IP was initiated too late. Also, GDN was aware that the close monitoring of the IP was perceived negatively by the IP team further deteriorating relations. This could have been avoided if having communicated clearer the obligations of the IP team towards the GDN Program.

Concerning the effectiveness of the IP, the Senegalese team noted that their short participation in the GDN Program gave more weight to their institution at the regional level. Most notably, the IP raised the grantee institution's profile and visibility. Unfortunately, these outcomes have faded with the withdrawal of GDN's support. Despite this, the evaluation notes that the grantee institution remains dedicated to the objectives they established at the start of the IP and today continue to organise the seminars that were put in place during the collaboration.

5.3   Recommendations

On the basis of the lessons learnt and the conclusions, we have drafted a series of recommendations. Given the nature of this pilot Program, the recommendations will less so focus on individual IPs and more so on the future of the GDN Program to build institutional research capacity.

1. GDN has adopted a strong Program rationale and therefor **the evaluators recommend GDN to continue developing this institutional research capacity building initiative**.

   The evaluators note that in order to implement a demand-driven program, it is key to allow beneficiaries to design their own projects. However, the variety of projects within the Program put pressure on overall project management, especially when managing different projects in different LDCs. More importantly, cross-learning between the teams has also proven to be limited due to the different activities conducted. Without undermining the demand-driven and hands-on management approach adopted by GDN, **the evaluators recommended to support beneficiaries in the IP design in order to allow harmonized project implementation processes and foster cross-learning between teams on common areas such as project management and monitoring and evaluation**. In other words, the Program should remain demand-driven but within clearly defined IP design process boundaries. For example, beneficiaries could be allowed to propose their own activities (from a list of pre-defined activities eligible for GDN funding) as long as they meet shared change models defining operational, specific and wider objectives (i.e. on the basis of the OP Theory of Change proposed in this evaluation). This would harmonize IP structures across the Program, and in particular M&E as well as project management activities for GDN. At the same time, this could promote more interaction between the IP teams participating in the OP and foster cross-learning.

2. In line with the previous recommendation, **the evaluators recommend that GDN continues making use of its strengths, in particular the use of the mentor tool as well as the support on access to research and research training**. Both these elements are present within other GDN programs that focus on CB of individual researchers or teams of researchers, and therefor could reflect also in this institutional RCB initiative. Depending on the proposed project design by the beneficiary, GDN support on the basis of its strengths could look at follows:

   With financial and technical support of GDN, a grantee institution could develop a competitive grant program that provides its students with a platform to conduct research, *inter alia*, through training. Grantee institution staff can be deployed as mentors supporting the students. The grantee institution mentors can receive technical assistance from a GDN appointed mentor. The grantee institution implementing team can receive technical assistance from GDN on M&E and project management (PM). In a way, this example exports an existing and effective GDN program to an institution. The figure below provides a simplified illustration of how this could look.

GDN Program management   GDN mentor

PM and M&E support   Research support

IP team   IP mentors

PM and M&E support   Research support

IP student grantees
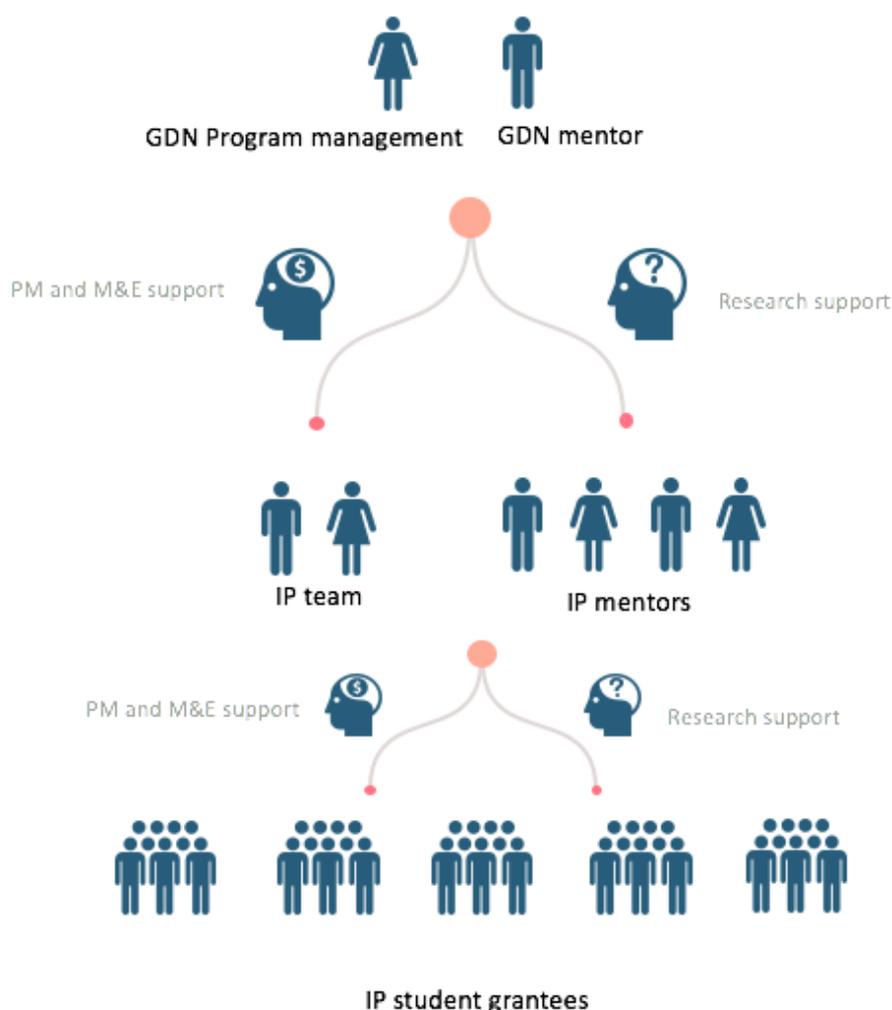
Source: own elaboration[51]

3. In terms of implementation of the Program, **the evaluators recommend a minimum of two face-to-face meetings between GDN Program management, the mentor and IP implementation teams**. These meetings ideally take place at the start and in the middle of the Program. The structure of the Hanoi meeting organised for this Program could be copied for both meetings. For efficiency and cross-learning, these can be joint-meetings with all IP teams present. A final meeting can be optional in which GDN Program management and the mentor visit the respective grantee institutions. The structure of the final visit to Ethiopia by GDN Program management and the mentor could be copied for this optional meeting.

4. Given the slightly different tasks of the mentor for support on institutional RCB, **the evaluators support GDN on-going efforts to develop a methodology to support the mentor's work**. Various skills could be considered relevant:

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[51] Icons from idiona.com.

research thematic skills; research methodology skills; project management skills; monitoring & evaluation skills; educational management skills; fundraising skills; social skills. It is likely that selected mentors cannot provide the same level of support for each of these skills. It is therefor recommendable that GDN Program management and mentors assess beforehand to what extent they can complement each other's provision of support.

5. Project management overall has been strong on the GDN Program level as well as IP level. However, some concerns were raised as to the quality of reporting to GDN on IP outcomes (not so much on reporting on output). **The evaluators recommend GDN to provide additional guidance on reporting standards, perhaps in combination with training on project monitoring and evaluation, including related terminology**.

6. The idea to ask the IP teams to conduct a self-assessment, and support them with technical expertise and feedback to carry it out if needed, is considered a good practice. **The evaluators recommend to request all future IP teams to conduct a self-assessment on the outcomes of the activities**.

7. The idea to invite several IP team members to presents on a panel during the GDN Annual Conference is considered a good practice. **The evaluators recommend to promote participation of IP team members in international conferences.** A competitive selection could be used to cover expenses for participation in such conferences.

8. The GDN Program encountered difficulties in fostering an environment that facilitates policy dialogue at the national level, but succeeded in catalyzing discussion on RCB quality, sustainability and funding within the larger institutions the IP were operating from. **The evaluators recommend that, for future Programs, GDN reflects on how to accommodate skills to extract and introduce recommendation in policy dialogue, as well as define the wider objective of facilitate policy dialogue in relation to institutional research capacity building**.

9. In a scenario where there are funds available, but decision-makers are risk averse and do not easily support demand-driven change, or do not know how to invest these funds, research institutions should be supported to capitalise on available funding and better define future requests for external funding. Rather than supporting institutions on fundraising, **the evaluators recommend that GDN continues to focus on supporting beneficiaries to determine how input is converted in output and contributes to the effectiveness and impact of their work in order to improve uptake of funding and strengthen future activities.**

6 Annex

6.1 Desk review

Collected from Neha Jagatdeb on 19th of January 2016

Folder for MIKE- For LDC:

Senegal papers
- 00 CESAG-GDN_ Rapport d'activités_Novembre 2015.docx
- Annex 1 - Proposal.pdf
- Annex 2 - Workplan.pdf
- Annexure 1- Revised Workplan.pdf
- Final_Decision_November_ 2015_Letter_RCB4LDC_Senegal Team.pdf
- GDN-Recommandation_mentor.pdf
- Grant Agreement_ CESAG.PDF
- Letter of Variation_Senegal_v2.pdf
- Letter of Variation_Senegal_v2_Signed.pdf
- N.Jacquemet_Report CESAG Project_July 2015.pdf
- NJ-Recommandation.pdf
- SIGNED_CESAG_GDN Grant Agreement_10nov.pdf

Individual grant agreements with workplans

Bhutan
- Annex 2 - Workplan.pdf
- SIGNED_Grant Agreement_iGNHaS.pdf

Cambodia
- Annex 2 - Workplan.pdf
- SIGNED_Grant Agreement GDN-GASS_opt.pdf

Ethiopia
- Annex 2 - Workplan.pdf
- SIGNED_Grant Agreement_Haramaya University.pdf

Progress reports from teams

Assessment Reports from Mentors
Comments on Partner Progress Reports
April 2015

Bhutan
- GDN_RUB_Evaluation_20150508.docx
- GDN_RUB_Observation_20150530.docx
- GDN_RUB_Observation_2by Prof. Matsushita.docx

Cambodia-Vietnam

- JPC Comments on Progress Report JTD 13th April 2015.docx

Ethiopia
- Mid term note BERCEA Project - BB.docx
- Progress report - comments.msg

July 2015
- B.Buclet_Report HU Project_July 2015.docx
- JP.Cling_Report VASS Project_July 2015.pdf
- K.Matsushita_Report_iGNHaS Project_July 2015.docx
- N.Jacquemet_Report CESAG Project_July 2015.pdf

Contract to IDRC
- GDN IDRC proposal revised Nov 2013.docx

Progress reports-November 2015

Cambodia-Vietnam

Advisor's Feedback
- JPC Comments on Progress Report JTD 13th April 2015.docx

GDN's Feedback
- Feedback on progress_GASS-Cambodia, Vietnam.docx
- Feedback on progress_GASS-Cambodia, Vietnam.pdf

Progress report

- JTD Progress Report Tranche 1.docx

Bhutan

1st draft of progress report
- Progress Report TemplateFINAL.docx

2nd draft of progress report
- Progress Report TemplateFINAL_GDN's reviewed.docx

3rd draft of progress report

Annexes
- Annexure 2 Visit to the research centers of excellence.pdf
- Annexure 3 Report on DRIL Workshop.docx
- Annexure 4 Centers vision mission and strategic plans (2).docx
- Annexure 4 Upcoming 7th FRM.docx
- CURRICULUM VITAE.docx
- kezang's cv_update.docx
- 2015 activity.xlsx
- iGNHaS' revised progress report.docx

Advisor's Feedback

- GDN_RUB_Evaluation_20150508.docx
- GDN_RUB_Observation_20150530.docx
- GDN_RUB_Observation_2by Prof. Matsushita.docx

GDN's Feedback
- Feedback on progress_iGNHaS-Bhutan.docx
- Feedback on progress_iGNHaS-Bhutan.pdf
- Progress Report TemplateFINAL_GDN's observations.docx

Ethiopia

1st draft of progress report
Annexes
- Annexes to the progress report.doc
- BERCEA Progress Report-1.docx

2nd draft of progress report
- BERCEA Progress Report-Revised post GDN comments.docx

Advisor's Feedback
- Mid term note BERCEA Project - BB.docx
- Progress report - comments.msg

GDN's Feedback
- BERCEA Progress Report-1_GDN observations.docx

- Feedback on progress_Haramaya University-Ethiopia.docx
- Feedback on progress_Haramaya University-Ethiopia.pdf

Progress reports-november 2015:

Bhutan
- Annexure 1 (7th FRM).docx
- Annexure 2 evaluation.docx
- Annexure 3 (8th FRM).docx
- Annexure 5.xlsx
- Comments K Matsushita_Progress Report November.docx
- Progress Report Template.docx

Cambodia-Vietnam
- Progress Report Tranche 2 021115.docx

Ethiopian
- Progress Report-2_Revised.docx

Collected during Hanoi meeting 2016

Team PPTs - GDN Ha Noi Mid-Review Workshop Jan 2016

BERCEA (Etiopia)
- Organogram of BERCEA program at Haramaya University.docx
- Presentation A_Haramaya_ready.pptx.pptx
- Presentation B_Haramaya_ready.pptx.pptx

JTD (Vietnam + Laos)
- SL Presentation A JTD ANG.pptx

iGNHas (Bhutan)
- iGNHas_pre_A.ppt

JTD (Vietnam + Laos)
- SL Presentation A JTD ANG.pptx
- SL Presentation B JTD ANG.pptx

Papers joseph Hofmann Hanoi conference
- RISE_WP-003_Hanson.pdf
- Tertiary-education-2014-Oketch2.pdf
- file.pdf

Collected via email from Francesco Obino on 10 March 2016

Papers Lima conference

- Katema & Goshu - 2016 - GDN's Program in Ethiopia-BERCEA_Revised.pdf
- Obino - 2016 - Reforming through example, a conceptual framework (paper for GDN 2016 Lima conference).pdf
- Proposal - LDC Panel @ GDN Lima Conf 2016.docx
- Tam Dao Days final ANG.pdf
- Tobden - 2016 - Aspirations for Research Development in Bhutan.pdf

Collected via email from Shelly Dahiya on 25 July 2016

- LDC Hanoi Workshop Participants' Feedback Report March 2016.docx

6.2 Surveys

The complete surveys are attached to the report

6.1 Evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators

The following table presents the evaluation questions, judgement criteria and multi-level focus for each question.

Table 41: Evaluation criteria and indicators

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Level-focus (Individual Program – IP) (Overall Program – OP) and indicators	Means of verification
Im pa	1. To what degree has the OP and	Professional engagement.	**OP** - PCs and TMs confirm that there is	Survey (OP

		each IP achieved its stated goals, impacting on the capability of researchers and capacity of institutions?	The OP has resulted in continuing professional engagement of the team members through outreach, training and research initiatives The OP has resulted in continuing RCB initiatives in the institutions. Educational engagement. The IP has resulted in continuing educational engagement of the beneficiaries through training and research initiatives	continuing professional engagement / expectations of continuing professional engagement through: establishment of networks; establishment of research programmes. **OP** – institutions continue RCB activities post projects **IP** – beneficiaries confirm there is a continuing education engagement through: identification of new research opportunities, using research skills learned through IP activities; new research collaborations based on networking through IP activities.	and IP) Interviews (OP) Field mission (OP)
		2. To what degree has each IP reached beyond its stated goals, with institutional spill-over effect on the involved institutions in terms of research and research training initiatives?	Contribution to thematic research areas The IP has resulted in additional thematic research areas for the institution. Contribution to new research programmes The IP has resulted in research programmes with higher enrolment.	IP - IP ensured incorporation of new educational training modules IP - Mentors consider the quality of educational training modules sufficient IP - IP ensured increased enrolment in research programmes	Survey Interviews

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Level-focus (Individual Program – IP) (Overall Program – OP) and indicators	Data collection methods
	3. To what degree has the OP succeeded in supporting institutions to link their own strengthening to larger national policy debates on higher educational reform?	Outreach and Connectivity The teams and institutions have enhanced knowledge, behaviour and skills needed to link to larger national policy debates on higher educational reform.	OP - GDN has supported institutions to disseminate work: output shared with policy-makers (i.e. reports, papers, policy briefs, etc.); output discussed with policy-makers; output shared through social media; output presented at conferences. IP - IP increased the level of awareness relating: professional visibility; communication skills; networking skills.	Survey Interviews

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Level-focus (Individual Program – IP) (Overall Program – OP) and indicators	Data collection methods
Effectiveness	4. What specific research and research training gaps have the IPs filled?	Research Capacity Building needs The IPs have addressed the RCB needs. The OP has responded to the demand of the IPs.	IP - IPs have (partially) closed capacity, demand and credibility gaps identified prior to launching the IPs (verified by teams, mentors and beneficiaries) IP - Proxy indicators of interest and enrolment in programmes OP - The OP has responded to the demands of the IP based on their RCB needs.	Survey Interviews Field mission
	5. Did the IP and the OP support in identifiable ways the institutional mandate of	Institutional development needs	IP - IPs ensured continuation of already existing educational training modules	Interviews

	the grantee institutions? What explains different outcomes across different grantees?	The OP supported the institutional mandate of the research institutions.	IP - IPs contributed to completion of educational programmes of institutions IPs funded research projects that otherwise would have not materialised	Field mission
	6. Has the OP design (including monitoring and results frameworks) facilitated an internal learning feedback loop in the grantee institutions, beyond the implementing teams, that informed project implementation?	Feedback loop The OP facilitated and the IP implemented methods to ensure monitoring and result analysis from activities.	IP - Research institutions adopted M&E practices as a result of the OP training / support OP – The OP allowed for financing M&E staffing IP – The IP included M&E staff IP – The IP mandated the team with M&E activities IP - Research institutions implemented M&E for programmes / for the institution, domestic learning	Survey Interviews Field mission
	7. Has GDN's support been instrumental in filling specific gaps in IP design and management, and enhancing the capability of each team (and institution) to further its goals and vision in terms of IP project implementation? 7a. Has GDN's support, including mentors, contributed instrumentally to the quality and institutionalization of the research capacity building activities planned by each grantee?	Project Management Capacity Building Teams and institutions have improved project management	OP - STA and GDN project managements support have been perceived by research institutions as instrumental to achieve output (Likert-scale) IP - Progress reports and feedback from STAs shows an increase in research quality and institutionalization of research capacity activities	Survey Interviews Field mission

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Criteria	Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Level-focus (Individual Program – IP) (Overall Program – OP) and indicators	Data collection methods
Efficiency	8. Were the OP and IP targets achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations? What were the challenges and what was done to mitigate risks?	Timeliness	IP - Output was produced according to the original schedule OP - Teams perceived the targets realistic given the scale of operations OP - GDN support was delivered on demand and did not delay IP schedules	Desk research Interviews
	9. What trade-offs and adjustments, if any, have been made by the IP in order to drive efficiency?	Open question on trade-offs and adjustments in order to comply with cost-effectiveness and timeliness of the implementation, i.e. researchers reduced non-IP activities to comply with IP's needs		Desk research Interviews
	10. What has been the learning in terms of IP implementation for each grantee institution, and for GDN, including in terms of peer-review, mentorship and informal learning and sharing across teams?	Open question which feeds into question 6, 7, and 7a.		Interviews

	11. To what extent is the current staffing at an appropriate level to effectively and efficiently implement the IPs and OP (quality and quantity)?	Value for money Efficient implementation / comparison of unit costs per output / adequacy of resources	IP - Output was produced without the need for additional staff resources IP - Delays suffered were due to other than factors than human resources OP - GDN replied timely and adequately to demands grantees OP - Grantees delivered timely and quality reporting to GDN	Desk research Interviews
	12. Is the OP tracking the outputs and outcomes of the IPs in a systematic way? Who reviews this data? Does a feedback loop exist? What information is important to the grantee institutions?	**Feedback loop** (feeds into question 6)	IP and OP - Monitoring data has been collected for each of the IPs by IP teams and GDN project management OP	Desk research Interviews

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Level-focus (Individual Program – IP) (Overall Program – OP) and indicators	Data collection methods
	13. To what extent has each IP become further institutionalized, including through stronger management, wider outreach among potential trainees and increased visibility in their region and among national authorities and potential funders?	Outreach and visibility (feeds into question 3)	OP - GDN project support elements have been adopted in wider management of the research institution – also look at challenges faced IP - Research institutions have expanded dissemination strategies beyond or within the country IP - Research institutions have increased the dissemination tools used IP - Research institution have garnered the interest of the higher education system in their countries by creating or becoming part of networks	Desk research Interviews
Sustainability	14. How could the Program have delivered greater value, specifically for the grantee institution (beyond the implementation team)?	Open questions on untapped or missed opportunities		Desk research Interviews

To what extent are the RCB initiatives likely to continue after the OP closes? 14a. Has the OP been able to equip the grantee institutions with new research toolboxes and institutional links that help them deliver quality research and research training to their research communities of reference and beyond? 14.b What lessons does the OP and model offer in terms of sustainability of benefits and results?	RCB development The IP will continue with RCB initiatives post-OP	IP - Research capacity building initiatives will be continued in its current form or in a "light" version and for what reasons (i.e. funding or mandate of organizations) Research institutions have adopted new tools for training that GDN included in its toolbox Open questions on added value of the Program in terms of sustainability of benefits and results (i.e. new research methods will be included in future core curriculum, institutional collaboration will be continued – in the case of Vietnam and Cambodia collaboration - , etc.)	Desk research Interviews Survey

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Level-focus (Individual Program – IP) (Overall Program – OP)	Data collection methods
Relevance	15. Does the Program fill a real gap in the research and research training landscape of each of the LDCs?	Research Capacity Building needs (feeds into question 4)	IPs have (partially) closed capacity, demand and credibility gaps identified for each LDC IPs introduce new or expand research training in their institution	Desk research Interviews
	16. Are the RCB projects supported relevant to the country institutions involved?	Institutional Development needs (feeds into question 5)	The IPs fall within the wider strategy / action plan / mission statement of the research institutions	Desk research Interviews
	17. Are the IPs designed by grantees in line with the overall objectives and goals of the OP?	OP needs	IP objectives fall in line with the objectives stated in the TOC of the OP, meaning institutionalize RC and facilitate policy dialogue IP reaches decision-makers, i.e. look at dissemination of outcome / participation of decision-makers in activities	Desk research Interviews

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Level-focus (Individual Program – IP) (Overall Program – OP)	Data collection methods
Added value	18. What have been the unexpected results (positive and negative) and missed opportunities?	Open questions on unexpected results (positive and negative), lessons learned and missed opportunities		Desk research Interviews
	19. How has GDN positioned itself to add-value in a demand-led, tailored research capacity building approach in LDCs?	Demand-led RCB approach	OP- The Program performs well in relation to other capacity building interventions (Benchmarking of a select sample from capacity building initiatives[52]) OP - Demand-led initiative adds value compared to supply-driven initiatives by GDN OP - Benchmarking GDN Program against common elements CDB	Desk research Interviews

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[52] UN agencies (UNDESA, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCAP, UNRISD) (ADB, AfDB, IDB, WB), multilateral International Organizations (DFID, ECDPM, IDRC, IDS, ODI), bi-lateral donors (Nordics in Europe, Japanese and Australian) and other initiatives (PEP and TTI).