Sustaining quality in economic policy research – lessons learned from institutional approaches

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Perspectives on research quality

- Scientific validity –
  - conceptual and logic
- Empirical proof –
  - methodological soundness
- Reliability of results –
  - precision, accuracy and confidence
Three-in-One Nature of Research Quality: Substance, Style and Process

Research Quality is Multidimensional, Multifunctional, Multistage Attribute of the Research Process...

...from Problem Identification, Study Design, Analysis Plan, Report Paradigm, Validation to Dissemination
Ingredients of good quality policy research

rigour, credibility, relevance, timeliness, completeness, digestibility and legitimacy

........(Phillips and Seck, 2004)
Proof of research quality

- Citations in science and non-specialist literature – number and profile
- End-user acknowledgement/perception
- Science peers’ acknowledgement
Prerequisites for research quality

- Well-motivated knowledgeable and competent researchers
- Anonymous peer review mechanism
- Workshop-based methodological scrutiny for transparency sake
Prerequisites for research quality

- State-of-the-art literature
- Value proposition – discernible value-adding research product
- Adequate and appropriate research facilities
Principles of Research Quality Assurance at AIAE

- End-user feedback, validation
  - Seminar at inception
  - Seminar at conclusion

- Policy relevance
  - Policymakers’ involvement in problem definition
  - Policymakers’ involvement in results validation

- Science procedures
  - Follow scientific protocols and notions
  - Internal content and construct validity tests
Challenges to research quality

- Distractive nature of short-term studies and consultancies – lack of concentration
- Research capacity and staff retention – getting the right mix of incentives
- Paucity of research funding leading to stoppages, downsizing and incomplete study packages
Important lessons for quality assurance

- Linking to research networks (regional, international) pays off very well
- Establishing institutional collaboration and linkages to leverage other’s strengths
- Establish quality markers or footprints at every stage of the research process
Important lessons for quality assurance

- Seminar/Workshop Approach in Validation and Feedback

- Team building, mentoring and cumulative learning
  - Complementing each other

- Adequate and up-to-date library and e-resources

- Timeliness is crucial, particularly for policy research to influence reforms