Workshop I A: "Enhancing organizational governance and the role of the Board in think tanks"  
Time: 11.00-13.00, 19th June

Resource Persons: Maureen O’Neil (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation); Carmen Lorena Ortiz (ASIES, Guatemala); Shekhar Shah (NCAER, India); Diakalia Sanogo (TTI) (Facilitator)

Preamble
Institutional governance remains one of the critical difficulties facing think tanks in their effort of enhancing their organizational performance. However, the issue remains broadly unexplored. There are a variety of views about the roles and responsibilities of a Board of Directors depending on think tanks’ governance structures. In this session we will discuss governance and its importance for organizational performance development.

The workshop aims to help participating Think Tank Initiative grantee institutions to feel more comfortable about how to structure their boards and to get the best from them. It will discuss a number of issues, including the nature of corporate governance; identification of, and accountability to key stakeholders; and role and composition of the Board.

Objectives
The workshop will:
1. Share good practices in institutional governance for think tanks
2. Review a range of tactics to help think tanks make the best use of their board
3. Identify mechanisms and procedures that promote think tank accountability internally and externally

Approach and outcomes
The workshop will be organized in two sessions. The first will comprise a series of short introductory presentations by the three resource persons, relating to the main issues noted above. Each resource person will draw on their personal experience to reflect on specific aspects of organizational governance and the role of the Board. The second session will involve groups of participants engaging in an active dialogue on specific issues and developing a list of good practices for improving organizational governance of think tanks that may be shared with other groups, and a wider audience. These issues will include:

- Identification of stakeholders, good practices in accounting to stakeholders, highlighting of duties and liabilities of the board in accounting to stakeholders, relevant model of Board oversight (depending on organizational history, structure, etc.)
- In-depth discussion of governing, managing & advisory role of Boards (strategic direction, financial oversight, oversight of management, risk management)
- Getting the best from the organization’s Board, including Board composition (how selected, mix of skills, experience, independence, term length, turnover); orientation role of Board (meetings organization, numbers, frequency); continuing education opportunities focussing on unique needs of organization; Board self-assessment; and clarity on roles of Board and members (TOR, other effective documentation)

A summary report of the workshop documenting a list of good practices for improving organizational governance of think tanks will be produced.