Workshop I C: "How to attract and nurture quality Think Tank researchers?"

**Time:** 11.00-13.00, 19th June

**Resource Persons:** Priyanthi Fernando/ Romeshun Kulasabanathan (CEPA, Sri Lanka); Jean Mensa (IEA-Ghana); Antonia Mutoro (IPAR-Rwanda); Orazio Belletini (Grupo FARO, Ecuador); Mome Salim (SDPI, Pakistan; Peter Taylor (TTI) (Facilitator)

**Preamble**

Attracting and nurturing quality research staff presents big challenges for many think tanks. When attracting research staff, do think tanks consider academic qualifications only, or also other needed characteristics? How do think tanks go about finding quality researchers, what strategies do they use and where do they advertise? Is there more potential to develop their existing staff? Once the desired research staff are in place, how can think tanks create an enabling environment for researchers? How can the tone, facilities and orientation of the organization help motivate staff to do quality research? What is the role of the executive / management, the role of senior researchers through mentoring? How do monetary and non-monetary incentives work for the team and the individual, and how can think tanks approach these most effectively?

This workshop explores such questions, firstly considering how think tanks find quality researchers, including the strategies they use to develop a cadre of research staff whose abilities are best suited to the mission of the organization. It highlights strategies such as attracting researchers from outside the organization as well as “bringing on” younger staff with potential to do quality work. Secondly, it investigates how think tanks can create an enabling environment for researchers, with particular emphasis on internal culture, leadership and incentives.

**Objectives**

The workshop will:

1. Provide insights into think tanks’ efforts in strengthening their overall research quality
2. Highlight lessons learned on what does and what does not incentivise research staff to produce quality work
3. Share experiences on how think tanks build capacity of quality researchers, and otherwise seek to retain them
4. Identify strategies to help mentor, build capacity and key competencies of young research staff through a participatory environment for public policy academicians, planners and practitioners

**Approach and outcomes**

The workshop draws on lessons learned from five think tanks supported by the TTI who are engaged in an action research process exploring different aspects of organizational capacity building. All have been grappling with the questions posed above, and aim to share their experiences along with those of other participants in the workshop. Participants will be encouraged to share both what has worked as well as what has been tried and not worked. Emphasis will be placed on approaches that are new and innovative.

Practical outcomes from the workshop may include knowledge of tried and tested approaches used by think tanks in different contexts, as well as lists of networks and other resources used by think tanks to enable them to find and provide support to the best policy researchers.