Workshop I D: “Balancing commissioned work and long-term research”
11.00-13.00, 19th June

Resource Persons: Assefa Admassie (EEA/EEPRI, Ethiopia); Lykke Andersen (INESAD, Bolivia); Khalida Ghaus (SPDC, Pakistan); Kathryn Touré (IDRC) (Facilitator)

Preamble
Does commissioned work detract from a long-term research agenda, or should it be part and parcel of strategic planning for a think tank? Does a culture of consultancy kill research or can the two be mutually reinforcing? Is it feasible to undertake short-term work for international organizations whilst at the same time providing meaningful policy advice to government, regardless of the national context?

Objectives
The workshop will:
1) Identify approaches that help balance commissioned work and long-term research
2) Highlight specific strategies that combine these two different kinds of activities
3) Share tactics for meaningful output from both commissioned reports and scholarly publications

Approach and outcomes
This workshop enables leading think tanks from around the world to voice their experiences and opinions on such questions, and to share and learn from each other’s experiences through specific examples and mini-debates.

The workshop will follow the following process, through a highly interactive process:
Part 1: Building on the shoulders of scholars (theory)
Part 2: Results of rapid survey on “ideal” balance between commissioned work and long-term research
Part 3: Small group work sharing successful strategies to combine these two activities (based on practice of participants) plus plenary
Part 4: Evaluation
Part 5: A synthesis of the discussion will be proposed to participants by email after the workshop

As an outcome of the workshop, a series of lessons will be highlighted and articulated in a format that can be shared with participants’ own institutions and a much wider audience.