

Planning for the Future and Managing Change in Research Institutes and Think-tanks

Europe contains a wide range of research institutes and think-tanks working on international development: from large to small, from specialist to multi-disciplinary, from research-oriented to policy-oriented, and from fully core-funded to zero-funded. Despite the diversity, however, we all face common institutional challenges:

- To ensure that our programmes and workstreams are forward-looking, relevant and adapted to an international agenda which is constantly in flux;
- To ensure that we acknowledge the range of capacities in the sector, in Europe, but more importantly among the growing research and think-tank community in developing countries; and
- To ensure that we are communicating effectively for policy impact, using new technologies as they become available.

These challenges are practical, not theoretical. Should we have new programmes on urbanisation, or migration, or security? How do we respond to the new dilemmas of globalisation set by India and China? How do we respond to climate change and other emerging challenges at global level? As we answer these questions, how do we take account of growing capacity in developing countries, and of the need for new partnerships? And as our work programmes develop, how do we adjust to the shift in communication towards shorter and often more ephemeral outputs, whether they be Briefing Papers, blogs or video clips on Youtube?

The leadership teams of research institutes and think-tanks constantly confront questions like these as they think about the future. Specific decisions need to be made about staffing and the competencies of staff, about partnership arrangements, about institutional structures and infrastructures, and about the business models which underpin change. How do we make these decisions? Even more challenging, how do we implement them? What can we learn from our own experience of planning for the future and managing change?

This EADI workstream will be led by the Directors and senior management teams of EADI Member Institutes. They will collaborate in a series of short case studies describing change management processes in different kinds of institute. Some of the cases will be institute-wide. Others may deal with more specific episodes of change - for example, introducing a new workstream or changing the format of communications. In all cases, the emphasis will be on the same core questions: Why was change thought to be needed? How was it planned? What were the opportunities and constraints? How was change delivered? Was it successful?

The case studies were discussed as part of the EADI conference on 24 June, 2008. See the [Report of the Workshop](#) at the EADI General Conference, June 2008.

It is worth saying that this is not simply an academic project. It is expected to be of immediate practical use to current and future EADI Directors, but also to their counterparts in other regions. The project could eventually lead to a long-term EADI Management Development workstream.

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