

Research-Policy Linkage in Ethiopia: A Focus on Selected Ministries/Government Agencies and Research Institutions

Abate Kassaw Selamawit Weldselassie
Ethiopian Civil Service University

Abstract

This study tries to describe and explore the status of research policy linkage in selected government ministries/agencies at the federal level in Ethiopia. It also attempted to describe the major factors that contribute to the current status of the linkage. Qualitative tools of data collection such as semi structured interview and review of relevant documents were used to collect data. Interview was administered to thirty interviewees from research institutes and government organizations. The findings show that the research-policy linkage is not satisfactory. Factors such as the non-participatory nature of the government, absence/lack of proper linkage between researchers and policymakers, ineffective communication and dissemination strategies, and lack of relevance to local context of the researches produced were identified as contributing to the weak research-policy linkage that was observed. The research also found out that researchers face different challenges such as low demand for research, inadequate incentive/motivation strategy, poor information management, diminishing research grant, absence of strong linkages among stakeholders, lack of awareness among the public, etc. The study also found out different problems that face policymakers in accessing and using research findings. The problems are related to issues such as lack of time, poor communication and interaction between researchers and policymakers, lack of quality and relevance in the researches, accessibility problems, and lack of reading culture.

Key words: communication/dissemination, in-house research, linkage, policymakers, researchers

Acronyms

ATA	Agricultural Transformation Agency
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAG	Development Assistance Group
DCI	Development Cooperation Ireland
DFID	Department for International Development
EDRI	Ethiopian Development Research Institute
EEA	Ethiopian Economics Association
EEPRI	Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute
ESDP I	Education Sector Development Program
ESSP	Ethiopian Strategic Support Program
ESTC	Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HICE	Household Income and Consumption Expenditure
IDA	International Development Association
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
ND	NO Date
NETP	National Education and Training Policy
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PASDEP	A Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Process/Program
RAPID	Research and Policy in Development
R & D	Research and Development
RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy
SAP	Strategic Adjustment Program(s)
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
STI	Science and Technology Innovation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction

Ethiopia has been implementing major national policies and programs that are aimed at improving socio-

economic conditions of its people. However, full realization of these policy objectives requires the cooperation of all citizens in general and those of researchers and policymakers in particular. The policymakers in the country should now, more than ever, be prepared to employ more scientific approaches in policy decision. As Derebessa (2004) indicated they must give considerable attention to the development and efficient use of scientifically tested research outputs. In addition to strengthening research and analytic capacity in the country, policymakers must equally be very much concerned about improving the level of up taking and applying research findings in the formulation and implementation of major policies, strategies and programs.

Researchers, academic or others alike, in the country must, on their part, be very much engaged on conducting research and analyses to produce and disseminate new knowledge and ideas. Most importantly, they should give a prime attention to conducting, and properly communicating, research whose findings are relevant to and can be used by policymakers. In addition, a link should be created among researchers/research institutions themselves and among research institutions and the productive sectors of the economy in the country.

The current government of Ethiopia seems to have realized the importance of research and its contribution to the realization of the country's development objectives. The government has, among other things, put in place institutional as well as national policy and legal frame works that govern research activities in the country. It has introduced an STI policy whose objective, among others, is to promote research. Research and the linkage between research institutions and the industry constitute two of the eleven policy issues that the policy addresses (STI Policy, 2012). There are also other policy documents that are introduced to facilitate the research activity. Mention can be made to the Research Award Directive No.10/2015 and the Procedural Directive for the Linkage of Education and Training, Research Institutions and Industries, which was introduced in 2013. The former is aimed at honoring and awarding researchers for their achievements and promoting research and technological development while the latter is mainly concerned with putting in place frameworks in which the major actors of the linkage will engage collaboratively and creating an organizational structure to coordinate, lead and monitor the activities, functions and responsibilities of the different actors in the linkage.

These and other efforts by the government are undoubtedly believed to contribute, at least in the years to come, positively to a better research-policy linkage in the country. Yet, the research-policy linkage in the country seems to be weak and full of problems (Habtamu, 2000 as cited in Derebassa, 2004; Dessalegn, 2008; Derebassa, 2004). Availability of policy relevant research is very limited pushing the naturally disinterested policymakers away from research-based information. Concern has also been raised on the readiness and receptiveness of policymakers to work with researchers as well as to apply research findings in making policy decisions. In both cases the research-policy linkage is seriously constrained. As the research world lacks relevance and quality to the information needs of the policymaker, the latter will be forced to look for other options. Similarly, if the policymakers are not open-minded, tolerant of, and receptive to alternative views, this could discourage researchers from taking further research undertakings.

The objective of this study was to find out the extent of research-policy linkage and its challenges in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the major problem that was investigated in this paper was the weak research-policy linkage and the major factors that are accounted for it. The paper particularly attempts to give answers to the following research questions:

1. What does the research policy-linkage look like?
2. What are the main challenges of researchers in conducting, and communicating, policy relevant research?
3. What are the main challenges of policymakers in using research findings?

2. Methodology

Methodologically, a qualitative approach was employed for this study. Both primary and secondary data were collected using semi-structured interview and document analysis. Secondary data were generated from both published and unpublished materials that are directly related to the topic. On the other hand, the primary data were collected using thirty face-to-face interviews with key informants from research institutes (government affiliated ones as well as independent think tanks) and government ministries/agencies. While twelve officials and researchers were interviewed from five research institutes, the remaining 18 respondents were composed of members of parliament, advisors to ministers, directors of departments, leaders of teams, senior research staff (who were engaged in conducting in-house research) in government offices as well as members of parliament.

3. The Concept of Research-Policy Linkage

Policymaking is a complex process and full of uncertainties. This is because policies are not made in vacuum. Rather, they emerge from different sides involving different interest groups with different vested interests and lobbying strategies and power (Banks, 2009). Policymakers therefore need, and should use, evidence/knowledge/information in the policymaking process. Without evidence, policy making would depend mainly on "intuition, ideology or conventional wisdom-or at best theory alone" (Banks, 2009, p. 4). It is also

argued that policies that have not been grounded on evidence and analyses could often lead to costly mistakes and bring unintended consequences (Banks, 2009; Ponge, 2013).

Research constitutes one of the sources of evidence that policymakers use to gather knowledge and information about social problems before they decide on policy alternatives. Research findings and analyses that are “robust and publicly available can serve policy makers as an important counter weight to the influence of sectional interests” (Banks, 2009, p.7) enabling both voters and policymakers to be informed of what is at stake in the policy proposals. In addition, reliable facts and analyses in the form of research findings also help policymakers to better understand the problems and come up with more realistic and effective policy solutions (Datta & Jones, 2011). This does not, however, mean that policy should always depend only on rigorous evidence/research findings. One might argue, for instance, that it could be difficult - if not impossible - to find sufficiently good research particularly when decisions have to be made urgently. It is also difficult to certainly predict the outcomes of a policy that has even been made based on good research as policy outcomes might depend on a number of other factors, other than information. Yet, policy makers should not fly blindfold.

Ideally, it is believed that the relationship between the two is straightforward. In other words, the more policy takes research outputs as inputs, the better it achieves societal goals. Nonetheless, this direct relationship has been difficult, if not impossible, in the real world (Brownson, Royer, Ewing, & McBride, 2006). However, the difference between the two worlds is not something insurmountable. In fact, the two elites (researchers and policymakers) are “complementary but not reducible” (Majchrzak, 1984, p. 7). Therefore, a close collaboration and effective communication between them is still possible and can lead to meaningful policies. This, however, needs the commitment of both parties. The researcher needs to understand, above all, the complexity of the policymaking process. Policymakers, on their part, also need to understand, cooperate with and be receptive to researchers and their findings. The implementation of both research findings and policies should be viewed as a shared responsibility which both researchers and policymakers have to share equally.

Generally, different models of interaction have been forwarded by different scholars. This study, however, focuses on the four models namely linear, problem solving, social interaction, and the sedimentation models. The linear or knowledge driven model assumes that knowledge produced by research will be linearly consumed by policy makers. It views the linkage as a linear process whereby research findings are directly transferred from the research sphere in to policy sphere (Vibe, Hovland & Young, 2002). According to the proponents of this model, as long as the evidence/research is credible it is easy to persuade the policymakers. The linear model has been criticized, most importantly, for ignoring the political context and other realities of policymaking (Court & Young, 2003; Aberman, Schiffer, Johnson, & Oboh, 2009; Marouan & Ayuk, 2007).

The problem solving or policy driven model on the other hand, sees the relationship between researchers and policymakers as that of between supplier and demander. Accordingly, researcher identifies and assesses alternative solutions and provides research that is relevant and responsive to the actual needs of the policymaker as the latter sets the research questions. While it also follows a linear sequence, this model assumes that proper mechanisms are put in place to facilitate the exchange of information between the supplier and the consumer. The linear and problem solving models consider researchers and policymakers as two different communities having a clear divide between them (Vibe, Hovland & Young, 2002).

The social interaction model, which is a variant of the problem solving approach, assumes that linkage between research and policy is not an exclusive area of the two communities. Rather, it involves interaction with other users and stakeholders other than researchers and policymakers. In this case, the move from research to policy is no longer linear (Marouan & Ayuk, 2007). The sedimentation model argues that the influence of research on policy is not direct and immediate. Instead, it takes place gradually as insights, theories, concepts and perspectives enlighten society and decision makers (Marouan & Ayuk, 2007). Emphasizing the rather imperfect and indirect utilization of research in policymaking, this model argues that research feeds into the policy process over time through discourse and learning and through the influence of many other actors other than the researcher and policymakers. Research findings ultimately become important and influence policymakers by increasing their knowledge about what works and what does not, eventually altering their perspectives. The model recognizes the role of many more players, especially civil society networks, advocacy coalitions, discourse, and epistemic communities (Aberman & et al, 2009).

4. The Research-Policy Environment in Ethiopia

The creation and application of modern knowledge using scientific methods is a relatively recent phenomenon in Ethiopia going back only to the early 1950s. Particularly, R&D activities started with the establishment of modern higher education institutions such as the University College of Addis Ababa (Abebe, nd). In 1975, a governance structure, known as the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission (ESTC), was created to plan, encourage, guide, coordinate, select, approve and support research programs and projects of importance to national development (Mouton & Boshoff, nd). The transitional government of Ethiopia also introduced a new science and technology policy in 1993 particularly realizing that lack of a clearly articulated science and

technology policy was hindering research from contributing to national development. Policies and structures have been repeatedly revised that currently the Ministry of Science and Technology is in charge the issues of R&D activities. A new policy has also been introduced in 2012 to govern Science, Technology and Innovation and R&D activities in the country.

In Ethiopia, the government is an important and dominant source of R&D fund covering about 79.1% of the total fund allocated for R&D activities in the country. The share of foreign sources accounted only to about 2.1%. In fact, according to a report by the Ethiopian Science and Technology Center, the contribution of foreign sources to R&D fund in the country has significantly dropped from 30% in the year 2010 to only 2.1% in 2013. Besides, the share of the R&D budget to the GDP has reached to 0.61% of the GDP which is closer to the 1% limit set by the Executive Council of the African Union on Science and Technology in 2006. The 2013 R&D budget has shown a threefold surge compared to the 0.24% in 2010. R&D activities in higher education institutions and government sector consume about 98.4% of the R&D fund indicating the low level of R&D investment in business sector in Ethiopia (Science and Technology, 2014).

The policy making process in Ethiopia tends to follow elitist and incremental approaches (Dereje, 2012; Taye Assefa, 2008). In the former, a well-informed elite group sets the agenda from the top and decides on alternatives. Therefore, it is likely that the elite will only consume researches that favor elite values. In the case of incremental approach, policymaking follows a gradual and step-by-step process in which new policies will be introduced based upon existing ones. It being conservative and resistant to innovative ideas, research outputs are not likely to attract the attention of policy makers and influence policy decision.

On the other hand, the culture of open discussion in the country is far from being robust that policy debates often go to the verge of intolerance because of personalizing and politicizing the issues (Dessalegn, 2008). Independent policy institutions are also a recent development in the country, dating only back to the early 1990s, and operate under difficult political environment. The research world in the country has also been largely dominated by academic institutions serving especially academic interests (Dessalegn, 2008). Accordingly, most of the research undertaking is carried out either by academic staff or by graduate students. These all make the research lack relevance to policy making.

The lack of relevance also emanates partly from the way the research priority is set. In Ethiopia, setting the research agenda and direction is largely dominated by the researcher and the funding sources leaving little room for active participation of stakeholders and users (DFID, 2007). Furthermore, the research policy-linkage in the country has been constrained by lack of awareness of the policy context, lack of interest and willingness to use some findings, and poor communication (DFID, 2007). It is also argued that only research findings that are in favor of and support the governments' political ideology may be used in policy making while politically sensitive ones are often ignored regardless of their merits and strength (DFID, 2007). Moreover, the lack of capacity (financial, technical, material, etc.), poor infrastructure, lack of motivation, and brain-drain handicapped research institutions in the country from making quality research (Dessalegn, 2008).

5. Discussion and Interpretations of findings

5.1. Utilization of research findings in policymaking

It has been found out that policymakers in government organizations use research in the process of formulating and implementing policies. In fact, the process of preparing policy documents began by conducting survey researches which were particularly designed for the consumption of their respective policies. Conducting a particular research for particular policy consumption could have produced information which is directly relevant to the policy issue at hand. However, the survey researches they conducted differ, from organization to organization, in their geographical coverage; the composition of people who conducted them; and the way stakeholders were engaged in the process. Geographically, they vary from collecting data only from Addis Ababa to conducting a national survey covering all regional states. In terms of composition of the researchers, the surveys were conducted either by in-house researchers/experts or by consultants or by a special research team specifically designed only for the purpose of conducting the survey. On the other hand, stakeholders' involvement in the survey researches was limited mainly in the process of data collection, ignoring the stakeholders' engagement in other stages of research such as problem identification and verification of the survey results. However, the limited area coverage and participation of stakeholders might have negatively contributed to the quality of the researches which in turn affects the quality of the policies to be designed or being implemented.

There is also a culture of using earlier researches. The NETP for instance was said to be based on researches conducted before such as those for the education sector review (Solomon, 2008). The preparation of the ESDP I by the ministry of education could be another example. Apart from reports and earlier researches, no less than three researches were commissioned and conducted throughout the process of designing the first ESDP I alone (Martin, Oksanen, & Tuomas, 2000). The preparation of the PSADEP could also provide another example of government's effort to make evidence-based policy. The PASDEP depended for its information

source on Welfare Monitoring Surveys (WMSs); Household Income, Consumption, Expenditure Surveys (HICES), the 2004/05 Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA); the Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment Study for Ethiopia as well as a retrospective evaluation of the achievement of the earlier PRSP (MoFED, 2006; Amdissa, 2006). As it was claimed in the plan, the PASDEP was also informed by “a number of” papers and studies prepared by government ministries and experts, as well as “several” major recent studies that were conducted in the years before (MoFED, 2006). Research findings from different governmental and non-governmental research institutes and organizations such as the EDRI/IFPRI, EEA/EEPRI, the World Bank, etc. were also consulted and used in the process to inform the document (Amdissa, 2006).

The findings from the interviews also seem to suggest the possibility of both direct (linear) and indirect (non-linear) uptake of research into policy. The cases of the survey researches conducted by government institutions for specific policy documents are one example of direct research influence. The establishment of institutions such as ATA, ECX, and Ale-bejimela (a wholesaler organization recently established by the government) also signifies that research, if it is relevant and goes in line with the policy context, can be successful in influencing policymaking. The demand driven researches which the government outsources to consultants and research institutes also indicate the application of the problem solving or policy driven model in the research-policy linkage in the country. Moreover, non-linear models such as the sedimentation model can also be seen in the form of research outputs being used by academia or other users. Overall, however, the influence of research on policy is mainly limited to establishing institutions, producing policy documents such as guide lines and proclamations, and making changes/alterations in the way major policies /programs/projects are implemented. Apart from that, no major policy change has been introduced as a result of research recommendations, at least in the organizations under investigation)

Moreover, although government uses research, it mainly uses or prefers to use research outputs from its own institutions and the main reason for this seems to be a matter of trust. The government trusts its own institutions as opposed to independent research institutes. Policymakers often want research findings that can help them legitimate their own policy positions (Stone, Maxwell, & Keating, 2001) and, probably, no institute would fulfill this other than their own institutions. Policymakers in Ethiopia seem not to be exceptional as the DFID (2007) report indicated that in Ethiopia only research findings that support the prevailing political ideology have the potential to be used in policy making while others are often ignored regardless of their merits and strength.

It is also worth to see the government's reliance, for its research need, on its own institutions in relation to the availability of research by non-governmental research institutes. The 2014 Science and Technology report indicated that government institutions (45%) and higher education (41%) made up the highest sectors engaged in R&D activities in the country. Business enterprises and nonprofit organizations took only a small share of the R&D activity in the country (Science and Tech center, 2014) perhaps indicating limited research output available from the private sector.

On the other hand, over reliance on own institutions could yet limit the number of options the government may have. It can also affect the quality of evidence-based information that government can access. Especially, given the poor quality of in-house research, unreserved reliance on these research outputs for policy consumption may affect the quality of the policy too.

5.2. Influence of research on policy making

The government of Ethiopia exerting efforts to link research to policymaking. Policy documents have been prepared to link higher education research with industries and higher education institutions are expanding perhaps bringing in an ever increasing volume of research outputs in to the market. There are also many research institutions that are specialized in conducting research in selected sectors in the country. The higher education proclamation emphasizes that universities engage mainly on applied research. In addition, the 2014 ST report indicated that out of the total R&D budget of the country, 56% was allocated to applied research followed by experimental research(33%). Basic research was reported to have consumed only 10% of the R&D budget for the report year. Moreover, the report also indicated that the total budget for R&D activities in the country increased from 0.24% of the GDP in 2010 to 0.61% in 2014 coming “closer” to the at least 1 % criterion set by the African Union (Science and Technology Center, 2014). However, the mere presence of these, and other, infrastructures does not guarantee a higher level of research uptake in to policy. In fact they may indicate the commitment of the government. The relationship between research and policy in general and the uptake of research into policy in particular goes beyond lying infrastructures and this is why research is not influencing policymaking, in the country, to the desired level. The reasons that are attributed to this unsatisfactory linkage between research and policy include the absence of a systematic, organized, and institutionalized system of research-policy linkage; the political context in the country; the nature of the researches conducted (quality, relevance, the way they are communicated, etc), the linkage that exists between the different groups, and external forces.

5.2.1 The absence of institutionalized system as a factor

The primary objective of researchers/ institutes is to conduct research and disseminate the outputs so that they can help policy makers make informed decision. Doing so requires researchers/institutes to establish a system that brings all stakeholders either side on board. Indeed, for researchers to make influence on policy and for policymakers to move towards evidence-based policymaking, they need to device and adopt systems that can facilitate evidence based policymaking and maximize the uptake of research into policymaking.

Against this, the research institutes under study lack a system that goes beyond the common-to-all dissemination strategies and establish permanent link with policymakers or other body that uses research. One may appreciate the efforts to organize inner-circle meetings with policymakers by research institutes such as EDRI and ESSP as good beginnings but those efforts are dependent mainly on the personality of individuals such as those leading the organizations. While they can temporarily bring a relatively better interaction of the two-the policymakers and researchers, these kinds of relations may not guarantee a permanent relationship as they are vulnerable to a change of leadership, on both sides, over time.

Proper and institutionalized linkage, coordination and communication between research institutions and end users are missing. In fact, there is no such a permanent mechanism/forum or body, both in the research institutes and in the government organizations, that brings together researchers, users and other stakeholders to exchange views and information either on setting research agenda or on how to apply the findings at the completion of research. Moreover, research institutes and researchers also lack any meaningful mechanism by which they can actively and consistently engage stakeholders in general and policy makers in particular. Having proper mechanisms of engaging policymakers and other users/stakeholders could elicit demand for research. A proper research uptake management system seems also to be lacking, especially on the part of the research institutes. Research uptake management system requires identifying more targeted and acceptable strategies for stimulating the demand for research amongst knowledge users.

Efforts are made in the policies to coordinate R&D activities at the national level. The national STI policy has for instance created a national STI governance structure, known as National Science, Technology and Innovation Council, to coordinate science and technology and innovation as well as R &D activities in the country. Accordingly, the main actors of innovation system are stated to include the Council itself; Ministry of Science and Technology; and other related ministries and Innovation Support and Research System. The innovation support and research system comprises universities, government research institutions, national laboratories, TVET institutions, among others (STI Policy, 2012). National and regional forums are also created to facilitate the linkage between industry and higher education and research institutions. Unfortunately, the national STI and R&D governance system seem even to exclude independent research institutes as stakeholders.

However, despite this effort to coordinate research and technology activities in the country at the national level, the efforts that are exerted to systematically and institutionally coordinate research activities at the line ministries are very weak. It is not common to see a national research system and policy in the different ministries /agencies. A better organized system to link the different stakeholders is observed only in the agricultural sector (Mouton & Boshoff, n.d.). The Agricultural sector has a national agricultural research policy that has identified research priority areas and major research programs. The sector has its own National Agricultural Research System which is composed of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), the Regional Agricultural Research Institutes (RARIs) and higher learning institutions. The activities of the National Agricultural Research System are coordinated by a body called the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Council (EARC). The EARC is responsible for federal-level research issues, such as policy formulation, coordination, governance, priority setting, and capacity building.

Moreover, efforts are also made to closely link farmers to formal research and development partners in a systematic manner so that research findings solve the problems that farmers face. Particularly a special body known as Agricultural Development Partners Linkage Advisory Councils has been put in place to foster linkage among stakeholders in the sector. However, despite a better organized research system, the research system in the agricultural sector has got its own limitations. Most importantly, none of the agricultural research centers, so far, has attained a level of center of excellence (Mouton & Boshoff, n.d.).

Apart from this, there is no established forum or system in government ministries that, along with stakeholders, can identify national research gaps of policy relevance and communicate them to researchers and research institutes. Ministries and agencies also lack an institutionalized data base that archives, and make accessible, currently available research outputs and on-going policy relevant research activities that are related to their respective mandates. It is also not common to see, in the government ministries and agencies, an established organ in their structure that can coordinate and promote inter-institutional and cross-sectorial cooperation and networking efforts between different relevant stakeholders that have actual and potential involvement in research, either by conducting it or consuming the findings.

5.2.2 The Political Context as a Factor

The Political Context refers to the political and policymaking process in a country (Crew and Young, 2002; ODI,

2004). Particularly, the presence of political freedom, political contests, institutional pressure and vested interests, power relations, etc are some of the important factors that shape research-policy linkage in a country. Stone & et al (2001) also argue that independent sources of research are encouraged in a political system where freedom of speech and strong civil societies are present. Moreover, independent sources of research are also encouraged wherein political and public tolerance of alternative perspectives in public debate is prevalent.

In light of this, it appears that the political situation in Ethiopia creates a fairly unfavorable situation for research-policy linkage. The political system lacks, among others, openness and tends to be non-participatory and rigid. One cannot, however, exclude the government's efforts to engage the public in policy dialogue especially those during the course of preparing the various poverty reduction strategy plans and other major policy directions. Indeed, many argue that the preparation of the PRSPs was exceptionally participatory, some even labeling it as the "first of its kind" to engage the public in the policy process in the country's history (IDA & IMF, 2002).

Others (see IDA & IMF, 2002; Amdissa, 2006) on the other hand argue that the consultations were mostly used to provide reactions to the government's existing policies and programs, rather than to craft new ones and that there was nothing new that came out of these consultations as such, apart from involving the public and sharpening the poverty focus. Amdissa (2006) even boiled down the contributions of the consultations to nothing "more than endorsing the policies and strategies the government has been pursuing well before the PRSP initiative" (p.6). Despite this, the programs were appreciated by many and even the government was believed to have shown interest to place greater emphasis on issues that were raised during the consultations, especially private sector development reforms and decentralization (IDA & IMF, 2002). In fact, one can attribute the way the government tried to address these issues in the PASDEP as lessons learnt from consultation programs in earlier poverty reduction programs such as the SDPRP and the interim PRSP.

In addition, the much applauded participation of the civil societies' community was also questioned by many arguing that they had played little influence over the PRSP process. This was because their participation was limited only to activities such as moderating, observing, and attending consultative programs. Apart from these, the NGOs community was not represented as members in either the PRSP Steering Committee or the Technical Committee that played the central role in the preparation of the papers (Amdissa, 2006).

Whatever the processes in the early PRSPs could be, it seems that the government has become less open and less participatory afterwards. For instance, in terms of consultation, the PASDEP process is said to have failed to sustain the experience of its predecessors such as I-PRSP and SDPRP, perhaps indicating that the government has become more closed and non-participatory following the May 2005 National Election.

Moreover, there is a tendency on the part of government and its institutions to be selective in using information depending on who generated it. The government and its institutions lack interest and willingness to use some findings, especially which are not in line with the prevailing ideology and strategy in the country. The government also seems not to trust research outputs from independent institutes and rely mainly on its own institutions. The heavy reliance on its own institutions may also indicate that the government is exclusionary. The exclusionary nature of the government in turn seems to have brought lack of transparency and meaningful participation of research institutions and other stakeholders in the policy process. It has also limited dialogue and discussion on policy issues. In fact, it is not uncommon to see policies, which are often prepared by a team of experts and the political echelon, introduced to the public as surprise gifts in what the government calls "consultative programs". This process might have limited the opportunity of generating, and considering, alternatives from feedbacks from the outset. Besides, the government's rigidity to consider research outputs from non-government institutes can potentially delay research findings and the policy messages they carry from being applied on time.

The political system has also limited policy areas in which researchers could research in to. Particularly, the Charities and Associations Proclamation, in its article 14/5, bars organizations that generate more than 10% of their budget from foreign source from engaging on advocacy activities in the areas of governance and democracy. The law specifically prohibits these civil societies from engaging in the promotion of human and democratic rights, disability and children's rights, promotion of conflict resolution and reconciliation, and promotion of the efficiency of the justice and law enforcement services (Charities and Associations Proclamation, 2009). These areas are exclusively left only to what the law calls "Ethiopian charities/societies", and perhaps to the government's institutions.

On the other hand, the influence of the political environment can also be felt in government owned/affiliated research institutes themselves. While they can have an insider's advantage to criticize and shape government policies from inside, using the trust it has upon them, the prevalence of self-censorship among researchers can also make them avoid investigating serious problems or policy issues. The political system also seemed to have a limited environment for civil societies and for advocacy thereby limiting the possibility of research institutes using such societies to pick up their research works and lobby the government.

The government's heavy reliance on its own institutions, and the subsequent feeling of alienation it has

created on the independent institutes, has also created a sort of “we” and “them” tension between the government affiliated institutions and the independent institutes. While the government institutes rely on the trust they command from and the formal communication channels they have created with the government for their “success”, the independent institutes seem to dwell comfortably in the independence they have from the government. Often, the independent institutes refer their counter parts as being “captured” by the government, hence doing what they are told to do by same. The government affiliated ones on their part consider the independent institutes as lobbyists who are trying to influence government policy through research.

It should be clear, however, that being closer to the government does not necessarily mean being captured. Neither should being engaged on advocacy bear you the name “lobbyist”, one who is trying to mix up research and politics, perhaps. “Capture”, in its extreme sense, refers to:

“...the extent to which a research institute is constrained in its ability to identify researchable topics that judged to be relevant, collect or obtain necessary data, pursue appropriate analysis, or disseminate technical results and policy findings (Renkow & Slade, 2013; P.35).

So, if one considers this definition, it is perhaps difficult to imagine an institution being fully captured. Therefore, if the independent institutes are using “capture” in this sense perhaps their point does not make sense. However, one cannot over rule the possibility of partial capture given the structure of these institutes in Ethiopia.

On the other hand, labeling independent research institutes as “lobbyists” by itself has its own negative connotation. After all, research institutes cannot be totally independent; that is free of any interest. Most importantly, however, advocacy or lobbying is one of the strategies (one of the best, perhaps?) research institutes use to influence policy through research. It is even very much advisable for a research institute to maintain independence in the sense of following a non-partial approach.

5.2.3 The Nature of the Research as a Factor

Dessalegn (2008) and DFID (2007) have argued that research in Ethiopia lacks relevance partly from the way the research priority is set and partly from who conducts it. In Ethiopia, setting the research agenda and direction is largely dominated by the researcher and the funding sources leaving little room for active participation of stakeholders and users (DFID, 2007). Furthermore, the research policy-linkage in the country has been constrained by lack of awareness of the policy context, lack of interest and willingness to use some findings, and poor communication (DFID, 2007).

In relation to the findings, one can tell, against what Dessalegn (2008) and DFID (2007) claimed it to be, that research process in the research institutes to be fairly good contributing to the quality and relevance of the researches. Research agenda and direction are shaped by some of the major policies and strategies of the country. Efforts are also made to make the researches as relevant, timely and country specific as possible. Until recently, research priority was predominantly determined either by individual researchers or by funding agencies (DFID, 2007). But it seems now from the experience of the research institutes under study that institutes are trying to develop their own research strategies that enable them concentrate on critical priority areas. Besides, one cannot compromise the relevance of the demand-driven researches which the institutes conduct for the government. Indeed, one of the important significance of demand-driven research is that it responds to research and policy needs of the government or the user. Government institutions also conduct researches which are specifically designed to meet their particular information needs contributing to relevance of research.

However, it is naivety to take quality or relevance of research for granted. What may well be relevant or quality is not necessary influential and utilized directly by policy makers. On the other hand, what may be not influential today may become so relevant and influential in generations to come. Therefore, the indicators of quality or relevance may not so well guarantee the research institutes of direct influence on policy. In addition, the concept of “influence” can also be defined differently by different groups. Besides, policy makers value other things too, not only quality /influence, such as ideology.

Therefore, it seems that because of these points (that is, the way both quality or relevance and influence are taken) that the difference lies between the research institutes and policy makers in this research. While the research process in the research institutes is acceptable to ensure quality or relevance, that does not, however, satisfy policy makers. Therefore, many of them reported saying that the researches from outside sources lack quality, go-of-truck of local context and become theoretical and subjective and which the policymakers attributed to lack of awareness of the policy context.

The condition of in-house research in the government organizations, however, appears to be disturbing. Olomula (2007) argues that research results that are generated using in-house research outfit may not be presented in a critical and useful manner to warrant meaningful application in policy process. This is because of their poor qualities which emanates from limited skill and expertise of the people producing them, lack of time and resource to concentrate on the research, and their failure to generate independent data analysis. They are assumed to be affiliated with government or the organization that conducts them, producing a predetermined answer.

It can be argued that the situation of in-house researches is not different in Ethiopia. Contrary to this,

however, it appears that the government institutions rely much on these researches. In fact, paradoxically to what Olomola (2007) argues, government institutions in Ethiopia prefer these researches to researches from non-government institutions. Their explanation, they do not “trust” researches from non-government institutions. While it is good that they are conducted, it should be clear that the poor quality of these researches could also be reflected on the quality of policies they are used for. During the preparation of the PASDEP, for instance, DAG expressed its concern on the quality of information used in planning the PASDEP. It specifically indicated that “key poverty data were missing” from the plan and the government especially using data from the HICE analysis which was yet incomplete and whose findings were not reviewed (DAG, 2006). Given the government’s heavy reliance on information sources from its own institutions in preparing the PASDEP document, one can clearly see the problem of using in-house researches and other information sources for policy formulation or implementation purpose.

5.2.4 Linkage as a Factor

Researchers are also expected to understand and identify the role of intermediaries and create links with key actors and stakeholders in the policy environment. That way, they could access and easily influence policy makers. In this way, different associations, think tanks and pressure groups use many different strategies to make their research policy relevant and publicly accessible. Above all, they create links with such bodies as legislative body, bureaucrats and in-house researches in government offices, higher education institutions, the public and civil societies and policy networks (Stone & et al, 2001).

Particularly legislative bodies are taken as main institutional targets. On the other hand, it is the bureaucrats who make the actual work of drafting policy documents. So, it pays-off if researchers create and cultivate relations links with those bodies. Moreover, researchers also can appeal to the public and civil societies and shape the climate of opinion among public for policy change. It is also advisable to forge linkage with higher education institutions and policy network (Stone & et al, 2001).

Against this back ground, it appears that the research institutions’ strategies of dissemination stop at holding conferences in which they said invite senior policy makers, the effectiveness of which many question. They have only limited linkage with other intermediaries such as civil societies and other interest groups that can use the former’s research to influence policymaking. Moreover, other efforts such as creating linkage with bureaucrats, in-house researches, parliamentarians and civil societies seem to be non-existence or very weak. Although the legislative body is particularly the center of policy formulation, especially in Ethiopian situation, it is the bureaucrats, in-house researchers and other senior government officials in the executive who make the actual work of initiating and drafting policy documents. So, it pays-off if researchers create and cultivate relations links with those bodies.

The main linkages research institutes in Ethiopia have seem to be mainly with higher education institutions (both in Ethiopia and abroad). Although partnership with foreign universities could help to solve both financial and manpower capacity limitations the research institutes have, this kind of partnership may, however, have its own limitations on the usability of the research output delivered. Particularly, the foreign universities may not always design their research to answer questions related to addressing societal problems in Ethiopia. On the other hand, although local universities have tremendous capacity to conduct research with, they are not often considered as good partners for policy-relevant research as they trickle to basic research. One may, however, hope and argue that higher education institutions in Ethiopia are these days obliged by the government’s policies to concentrate mainly on conducting applied research that can be consumed to solve local problems. In fact, the 2009 higher education proclamation, in its article 24/3, clearly stated that public higher education institutions undertake research that shall take into account the priority needs of the country. So, in light of this, it is possible to say that the kind of linkage research institutes have with higher education institutions in the country is appreciable although the latter are not engaged in advocacy activities and contribute little to influencing the government to apply particular research findings. On the other hand, given the trust the government institutions have on public higher education institutions, forging linkage with them could pay-off the research institutes in getting their researches used indirectly.

On the other hand, the linkage among the research institutes themselves seems to be weak. Especially the relationship between the government-owned research institutes and the independent research institutions seems to be strained. This is, however, not good for the research policy linkage in the country. It may for instance create competition between them and this may in turn hinder research institutes from collaboratively playing their role in conducting and translating research that can solve societal problems. Above all, it may lead to redundancy and duplication of research efforts and themes bringing inefficiency in resource utilization.

5.2.5 The Role of External Forces as a Factor

The RAPID approach emphasizes the impact of external forces such as donors on the research policy nexus especially in developing countries. One important element of external forces is outlined to be international politics and process. The other one is the impact of general donor policies and funding instruments (ODI, 2004).

With external forces come external policies which are not based on local research findings while research focus and activities in developing countries sway with the interests of donors. However, efforts have been made to minimize the influence of external forces on policies and research outputs in Africa. Particularly, the dismal from the SAP made African countries to re-think the importance of conducting sound research and policy analysis leading to the establishment of research and policy institutes across Africa. So, when latter the poverty reduction strategy papers were prepared local research units in Africa were able to make contributions through research (Daffe and Diagne, 2007; Kibua and Oyugi, 2007). Yet, it is argued that many researches outputs on developing countries are conducted either in developed countries or by researchers from developed countries. This makes the researches lack relevance and ownership contributing less to solving local problems there (ODI, 2004).

When it comes to the Ethiopian context, it is legitimately argued by some respondents that the government has been strong and resistant to external influence. Donors are not in a position to influence both government and research agenda in the country and make government accept the findings. It also seems that both donors and research institutes have come to understand this and began to change their strategy towards supporting and cooperate with the government. Perhaps, the birth of ESSP itself was, for instance, the result of a change of strategy, by IFPRI and other donors, to contribute to and improve evidence based policy making in the country. The ESSP was formally initiated in September 2004 and has been running since then. It receives funding support from a consortium of donors such as the USAID, RNE, CIDA, DFID, and DCI.

The ESSP has the core objectives, among others, of generating policy research to fill key knowledge gaps, building a stronger and more integrated knowledge support system within the country, and strengthening the capacity of Ethiopian policy research institutions through active collaboration in applied policy research. In addition, it was/is also meant to generate momentum within the research community and enhance communication between researchers and policymakers (Colman & Mellor, n.d.). To this end, donors agreed to support IFPRI by pooling their funding so that the former could, among others, conduct research and generate relevant knowledge that could be consumed by policymakers in the country. Particularly, they agreed to place control over the ESSP agenda and priority setting in the hands of Ethiopian government representatives in the program. They agreed that the ESSP be guided by a specially formed high-level National Advisory Committee which is chaired by the chief economic advisor to the Prime Minister and to which also high level government officials and relevant ministries and agencies are represented. This body is also given the mandate to set and decide on research priorities for the program there by contributing to the relevance of the researches to the local context. ESSP is also made to work with the EDRI, a semi-autonomous institution, whose executive director is once again the chief economic advisor, and that has more capacity to make decisions than most Ethiopian government-related institutes (Colman, D & Mellor, n.d).

This kind of structure and arrangement were meant to allow for more direct transmission of the policy implications of ESSP's work to policymakers. However, it is argued by some that these efforts by donors and external research institutes to influence government policies through research come only in vain as the ESSP is "captured" by the government. In fact, the political and ideological position of the incumbent government has been obstructing the research activities of external forces. The government's position has been an obstacle, for instance, to IFPRI's research findings by delaying the "timely adoption of the research-based policy messages, making the ESSP shy away from controversial issues and making the ESSP focus on institutional development activities" (Renkow & Slade, 2013; p. xi). Therefore, it seems that many research outputs that are produced by donors or other external forces find it difficult to attract the appetite of the Ethiopian government making them stay on the shelves only.

5.2.6 Communication/Dissemination as a factor)

Researchers use different communication and dissemination strategies so that their findings reach policymakers or any other end users. The common ones include strategies such as publishing research papers, holding seminars/conferences, advertising research results, media coverage, distributing brochures/pamphlets, newsletters, research reports, and above all policy briefs (Stone & et al, 2001). However, these strategies have their own limitations to prescribe them to every researcher in every country. To begin with, most of them represent a one-way flow of ideas-mainly from the researcher to the policymaker. In other words, many of them lack interactive processes that also include feedback. Moreover, they are also very general in the sense they do not target particular client groups. Last, but not least, these strategies cannot be applied, and be equally effective, for all countries. Indeed, as Stone & et al (2001) put it, while dissemination occurs in a social and political vacuum, these strategies tend not to be country specific.

In light of this one can fairly argue that while the research institutes in Ethiopia widely use the common-to-all strategies above, they lack to device and use other dissemination strategies that tend to be more of interactive. In fact, further follow up mechanisms to establish and maintain permanent contact with government offices in general and policymakers in particular were seen by some respondents as "lobbying" or "interfering" in the activities of the government. However, lobbying, while maintaining independence, is one

strategy of dissemination which many use. Hansohm (2007) argues “for trust to be developed [between researchers and policy makers] continuous direct communication with top policymakers is important. They [top policymakers] tend not to appreciate advice on what they are supposed to do appearing in the press” (p.234). It seems this attitude is lacking especially among the researchers in the independent institutes when they often refer their counterparts in government owned/affiliated institutes as being “captured”. Unless proper communication and dissemination strategies are designed and applied, most research findings would remain on the shelf without contributing to solving societal problems. The research institutes also focus on producing research reports and scientific publications as ultimate targets. Even these materials are often prepared in English, too technical and sophisticated for most users to understand (Renkow & Slade, 2013; DFID, 2007).

5.3. Challenges of Researchers

Researchers in Ethiopia face a number of challenges that hamper their efforts of conducting and informing/influencing policymaking. Particularly low demand for research, inadequate incentive/motivation strategy, poor information management, capacity of institutions, the research environment, diminishing research grant or fund, and absence of strong linkages among government and research institute and among research institutes themselves and lack of awareness among the public were reported as serious challenges.

The demand for research from the government and the private sector is reported to be very low. The lack of demand for research discourages researchers from investing their time and resources on doing more research. Particularly, it limits the amount of applied research available for policymakers as people give more emphasis to basic research which they can publish on and get financial benefits from it. Poor and discouraging motivation/incentive system also limits researcher's full time engagement on applied research. Low salaries and incentive systems make both government and research institutes lose their experienced researchers to better-paying institutions. Absence of better salary and appropriate incentive system also affects the commitment of the researchers especially in-house researchers in government organizations while it makes researchers in research institutes to focus more on researches that can be published as an alternative to get financial benefits.

The poor information management in the government organizations has tremendous effect on the quality and relevance of the research outputs researchers have to produce. Data/information are either inaccessible or, while they are, lack quality and validity. The type and quality of data the researcher uses contributes to whether his/her research will be accepted, or not, by policymakers. Kibua and Oyungi (2007) wrote, “...depending on which data the results are founded and government's perception of those sources, policymakers may decide to accept or reject research results.” (p.255). The poor quality of data available reduces the quality of the research output they produce which in turn affects the validity of the researches and their level of uptake. On the other hand, accessibility problems (such as poor retrieval system and bureaucratic stringent) take too much of researchers time in getting data, leaving them with meager time for thorough analysis. Moreover, the fact that government offices and officials are suspicious of independent researchers or research institutes means that they could not even get the data at all or miss important information, or perhaps depend on outdated data all of which negatively affect the relevance and quality of the research output produced.

While skills/knowledge/experience related problems mainly hamper the research activities in government offices (in-house research), financial related issues such as ever diminishing research fund from external sources are becoming serious problems of the research institutes. The absence of a national or sectorial research system and policies to set priorities, coordinate research efforts and promote research uptake among end users could lead to duplication of efforts and failure to notice important research findings that have been currently available for use which in turn leads to wastage of resources and the researches remaining on shelves. The absence of proper research uptake management system and strong linkage and interaction between the different stakeholders (such as between government offices and research institutes, between research institutes themselves, and between the private sector and research institutes) have also hinders the research-policy linkage making researches which otherwise could have contribute to social change remain on shelves. The poor attitude people have towards researchers and research affects researcher's motivation to do research. It also affects the quality of data/information researchers get from research subjects as people would fail to take the researchers' questions seriously and provide relevant and reliable answers.

5.4 Challenges of Policymakers

Regarding the challenges of policy makers, a number of problems were reported to have constrained policymakers from bringing research into policies in the country. The problems are related to issues such as lack of time, poor communication and interaction between researchers and policymakers/government offices, lack of quality and relevance in the researches, and accessibility problems. Few policymakers reported lack of culture, especially of reading research outputs as one factor.

Policymakers are required to make policy decisions in a short period of time and this may not give them enough time to go through existing researches or wait for new ones to be conducted and tell them what to

do. On the other hand, policy makers often have busy schedules that they do not have enough time to read and comprehend lengthy research reports as well as to regularly interact with researchers. However, it is also worth mentioning here that few respondents attributed the “lack of time” by policy makers as an “excuse” to the former’s “lack of interest” to use research outputs or their deliberate need to “avoid public discussions” on policy issues.

On the other hand, this “busy-by-nature” life of policymakers requires researchers to devise planned communication strategy that understands and meets the situation of policymakers. It seems, however, that the researchers are ineffective in the way they are communicating and interacting with policymakers. Policymakers complained of research institutes lacking any meaningful mechanisms of engaging government officials other than sending policy briefs or inviting them to attend conferences. It is true that policy-relevant researches are mainly conducted to solve societal problems. On the other hand, although researchers and research institutes have a mandate to define problems for their research and provide alternative solutions to certain societal problems, they may not be able to prioritize national problems and try to provide solutions without any consultation with concerned bodies. Defining and prioritizing national problems and calling up on all concerned to provide practical solutions is mainly the responsibility of the government. Therefore, researchers/research institutes could not be effective in getting their research findings influence or inform policymaking unless they effectively engage and work with this power that is legitimate to decide on national priority areas.

In trying to interact and communicate with government bodies, researchers need to be conscious and selective of the kinds of strategies they employ. Policymakers are not as such interested in the style and narrative of researcher’s presentation. Perhaps, also, they are not interested in the complexity of the methodology the researcher has adopted. They rather look for something short precise and understandable version of the whole complex and bulky research finding which the researchers are not delivering.

It also seems that policymakers in Ethiopia are not satisfied with the quality and relevance of the research available for them. Some respondents for instance reported that research outputs, especially those from external bodies, often lack objectivity, go off track, and being fragmented and shallow in their analysis of practical problems focusing mainly on theoretical aspects. Often, policymakers need research that supports their position. And this kind of research is one that comprehends the policy environment in the country. Unless it addresses the political realities in which the policymakers are in, research may not influence policy.

Whether research is accessible or not also matters for policymakers in Ethiopia. In fact, some times, there could be a lot of research that could be used and there could be the willingness to use but people may not know where to find it. This is particularly true for developing countries where information centers such as libraries and archives are not strong or not accessible. A report by DFID (2007) has for example, indicated that most respondents to that report indicated that they rely on personal contacts, and internet to access information. The report also indicated that they also obtain information accidentally, not through planned communication. The report stressed that access to information is so difficult in Ethiopia that people get access to them “if and only if the holder wishes to release them” (DFID, 2007).

Part of the problem, perhaps the lions share, of accessing research outputs lies in the way the researchers disseminate and communicate their researches. The research institutes often do not give free copies of their outputs to key stakeholders. The outputs are found only in the libraries of the research institutes themselves or in those of higher education institutions. So, accessing them is difficult as it requires one to go in person where these libraries are found. Even worse, it is difficult to know what kind of research output is available and where as there is no national or sectorial data base, or any inventory system, indicating both completed and ongoing researches in a particular policy area. On the other hand, many of the research outputs by local researchers/research institutes (including those by academic institutions) that are available on-line can most of the time be accessed only through subscription to web-sites of foreign organizations. Many of the government institutions in Ethiopia lack the system to access these kinds of research outputs.

It is also possible that even line ministries or agencies lack any mechanism of collecting, archiving and finally using research outputs that are relevant to their day-to-day activities. Particularly, they themselves lack an inventory of research works, that are completed or yet under way, which have relevance to their respective mandates. In other words, the search for research-related evidence begins only when the ministries or agencies have come to draft a particular policy document or have to make some other decision. This makes their potential to access and consult/use as many research outputs as they could difficult, especially when decisions have to be made quickly. The ministries seem to lack a body or system that coordinates and facilitates research information flow to themselves as well as to all stakeholders they are working with.

In addition, few policymakers reported lack of reading culture, especially of reading research outputs as one factor. It seems that this idea is supported by the findings of the DFID (2007) report. This report has found out that non-researchers lack the culture to push forward and seek for information or research findings.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The analysis and discussion of the data has shown that government organizations use research while formulating and implementing policies. However, the level of uptake is not satisfactory. The government of Ethiopia also largely depends on research outputs from its own institutions or those that have affiliations with it. The reason for heavy reliance on government related sources seemed to be trust. Lack of relevance, quality, and objectivity in the researches available from independent research institutions also contribute to the government institutions being disinterested in externally produced research outputs. On the other hand, the government institutions still highly depend on in-house research despite the serious quality problems they have.

Communication and dissemination strategies of research institutes also seem to be not effective. Apart from distributing publications, the researchers seem to be preoccupied with hosting conference and inviting senior politicians/policymakers to attend them. While this has its own contributions, many question its effectiveness. Researchers seem to fail to notice the role of bureaucrats (both street level and senior), in-house researchers and interest groups. Above all, advocacy activities and working with networks seem to lack from the strategies. The nature of the political environment has constrained the activities of some research institutes as in the case of the Charities and Societies' Proclamation. Most importantly, it has created a feeling of alienation among independent institutes. Lack of openness and transparency in the process of formulating policies has also limited the possibility of research institutes informing policy through their research.

The study has also shown that researchers work under difficult conditions all of which negatively contribute to the research-policy linkage. Problems that are related to accessibility of information, poor incentive system, unfavorable research environment, capacity limitations (financial as well as human resource), etc are hampering researchers from conducting and disseminating research. On the other hand, policy makers have also their own challenges. Particularly, lack of time, ineffective communication of research by researchers, lack of quality, relevance and objectivity in the research have made them disenchanted with using research findings.

6.2 Recommendations

The study has shed light on the factors that have constrained the research policy linkage in the selected government institutions in particular and in other federal government's institutions in general. The researcher strongly believes that the linkage between research and policy will be improved if research uptake management systems are established, proper dissemination strategies are devised, better comprehension of government policies and strategies is achieved, and above all, if trust is established between government officials/institutions and researchers. Accordingly, the researcher recommends the following points to both researchers and policymakers/government institutions.

- Government organizations should strengthen their research capacity. The findings show that government institutions highly depend on their own research outputs they produce in-house. It is also indicated that these researches lack quality. They should therefore build the capacity of their staff by arranging trainings, assigning mentors to share experience and other means. Government organizations should also improve their information management system by improving their data/information storage and retrieval mechanisms and access codes. The government should relax the political environment for advocacy activities. It should be able to entertain dialogues, discussions, criticisms/opposition, etc. It should make the policymaking process transparent and warrant early participation of stakeholders. The government should also consider establishing permanent policy and/or research units in government offices. These units can be used as an institutional link between the organization and research institutes.
- Researchers/research institutes should clearly understand both the policy process and the policy directions so that their research findings can be consumed for the desired purpose. They should establish effective and workable dissemination and communication strategies, both prepublication/conference and post-publication/conference strategies, which can make the greatest impact. In addition to looking for high profile politicians, such as ministers or state presidents who perhaps make opening remarks and leave, research institutes should also consider engaging senior bureaucrats and in-house researchers in their strategies, not forgetting who has the final say. Research institutes must also be able to strike the right balance between "capture" and "independence". They should go close enough to the policymakers to ensure that their findings are used but stay far away enough so that they are not unnecessarily swayed.
- Both government and researchers should build trust between them. They should understand each other's world and maintain continuous and direct communication. Government should appreciate the role of researchers in nation building. Research should be seen as a broader national issue. Researchers should also be realistic and focus on giving their balanced judgment and sharpening analysis of the issue they investigate.

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