



Start now with a light-touch cross case analysis for research uptake!

- Employment for Stability research programme -

The Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law and its Working Group Employment for Stability are keen to maximise the social impact of its research programme 'Employment for Stability.'

Consequently, the research programme has an emphasis on how to promote research uptake and communications, among practitioners and policy makers as well as representatives of the private sector, both in the Global North and Global South.

On 13 November the consortia that were awarded by NWO-WOTRO and their researches are made known. This is the moment that the research consortia move from the planning stages to concrete actions and priorities. The aim of the study is to come up with practical recommendations to the Platform and other stakeholders.

Against this backdrop the Working Group Employment for Stability prepared a draft study and discussed it at an event on 20 Nov, chaired by Guus van Westen (International Development Studies/Utrecht). At this expert meeting representatives of NWO-WOTRO, Universities, NGOs as SOMO and Cordaid, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Clingendael and Double Loop were present. Thea Hilhorst, the leader of a predecessor research programme viz. the IS-Academy on Human Security in Fragile States (HSFS), was invited to share some lessons learnt. She stated that research uptake is very much an issue of strategic planning and of assigning responsibilities in the process. At the same time, she argued that research uptake is as much a responsibility of the research consortia as of the institutions at the receiving end.

Subsequently, John Young from the Overseas Development Organisation (ODI) dwelling on more than 10 years' experience with the Research and Policy in Development Programme (RAPID), pointed out the essential ingredients for policy engagement and influence: clarity on what you want (the objectives), an understanding of the context, a coherent theory of change, strategic communication, systematic monitoring and evaluation and presentation of interim results. Most interesting is the Rapid Outcome mapping approach guide (ROMA) which can be used as a reference guide for putting these ambitions into practise.

A first recommendation made in this study to the Platform is to use the momentum and prepare as soon as possible a light-touch cross case analysis of the awarded researches of the Call Employment for Stability. This analysis would examine possible synergies and uptake possibilities regarding research methodologies and thematic and geographical overlap.

Subsequently, it is recommended to have a meeting that includes the Platform partners, Working Group members and the research consortia. Related researchers and research consortia could be invited. The cross case analysis and meeting are a reality check whether supply of and demand for research meet and whether individual and organisational capacities

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are sufficient to meet the expected research uptake or whether additional efforts are required regarding Employment for Stability Research Programme

Secondly, based on prior experiences it is very important that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assigns within the Ministry clear responsibilities for planning and strategic communication in order to have actual research uptake and knowledge management to take place. There should be a civil servant responsible for coordination and communication with the Platform and for facilitating the research uptake within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Thirdly, it is important to realise that planning for uptake should be prepared now, otherwise it might not happen. At the same time, planning also involves realism about what can be reached during the lifespan (three years) of the programme. This holds particularly for the planning of uptake processes in more difficult environments as post conflict countries. Here well-timed and contextualised research communications is required, in which particularly the local research institute plays a role. Since research has shown that mere collaboration with a research institute does not automatically lead to improved capacity, additional attention to the role of the local research institute is recommended.

The final research study will be made available in the coming weeks on this website.

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