

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic project data

▪ Country/Region:	Regional
▪ TC Name:	Strengthening of the research capacity of relatively small countries to promote better informed policymaking
▪ TC Number:	RG-T2553
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Alejandro Izquierdo (RES/RES) co-team leader, Osmel Manzano (CID/CID) co-team leader, Inder Ruprah (CCB/CCB) co-team leader, Myriam Escobar (RES/RES), Anna Nill (VPS/VPS), Escarlata Baza (LEG/SGO), Sabine Engelhard (BDA/ACP)
▪ Indicate if: Operational Support, Client Support, or Research & Dissemination.	Research & Dissemination
▪ If Operational Support TC, give number and name of Operation Supported by the TC:	NA
▪ Reference to Request ¹ : (IDB docs #)	NA
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	November 14, 2014
▪ Beneficiary (countries or entities which are the recipient of the technical assistance):	Selected CID and CCB Countries
▪ Executing Agency and contact name (Organization or entity responsible for executing the TC Program) {If Bank: Contracting entity} {If the same as Beneficiary, please indicate}	The Bank through RES/RES
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$350,000
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	
▪ Disbursement period (which includes execution period):	30 months
▪ Required start date:	January 15, 2015
▪ Types of consultants (firm or individual consultants):	Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	RES/RES, CCB/CCB, CID/CID, VPS/VPS
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	RES/RES
▪ Included in Country Strategy (y/n);	NA
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	NA
▪ GCI-9 Sector Priority:	Institutions for Growth and Social Welfare

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 Unlike larger countries, the small countries' capacity in research is severely limited. This follows from limited resources (small pool of qualified researchers and inadequate public or

¹ A copy of the Letter of Request, Programming/Portfolio Review Mission Aide Memoire or Report requesting the TC should be submitted with the Abstract.

private financing) and where often only one entity is available in each country. In the Caribbean the situation is worse. There is only one university of note, the University of West Indies (UWI), for all six countries. Among 2000 universities, only one university of both Central America and the Caribbean is ranked in terms of citations (<http://www.urapcenter.org/>).

- 2.2 These deficiencies are also present in applied policy research. No country of both regions has won awards from the PEER program of USAID (http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PEER/PGA_152068). Similarly, in the GDN working paper series, there is only one referred to a country of the region from a partnership of local consultants with two foreign institutions. (Rebecca Thornton, Laurel Hatt, Mursaleena Islam, Erica Field, Freddy Solís and Martha Azuzena González Moncada, 2009, Social Security Health Insurance for the Informal Sector in Nicaragua: A Randomized Evaluation, GDN Working Paper Series, Working Paper No. 8).
- 2.3 Evidence-based policy (EBP) is policy informed by objective evidence, often from academic research. Evidence-based decisions can produce more effective policy decisions, and as a result, better outcomes for the community. The advantages are: (i) helps ensure that policies are responding to the real needs of the community; (ii) enables information sharing amongst other members of the public sector, in regard to what policies have or have not worked; (iii) can reduce government expenditure which may otherwise be directed into ineffective policies or programs which could be costly; and (iv) ensures that decisions are made in a way that is consistent with democratic and political processes, which are characterized by transparency and accountability. However, the relationship between research, policy and practice is complex, multi-factorial, non-linear, and highly context specific. The later suggests that promoting EBP to have success should be tailored to country specific or sub-regional (containing countries with shared political and cultural mores) initiatives.
- 2.4 The objective of this TC is to strengthen the research capabilities of relatively small countries of the Region through expert knowledge transfer and the creation of two sub-regional networks. The ultimate goal of the project is to support better informed policy decisions in LAC.
- 2.5 Given its focus on institutional strengthening, this TC is in line with the priorities of the Special Program for Institutional Development (SPID) and the IDB's sector priority on Institutions for Growth and Social Welfare.

III. Description of activities and outputs

- 3.1 **Component 1. Diagnostics on institutional gaps to promote research capabilities.** This component will include the hiring of an international firm to conduct a regional assessment on the current institutional gaps to develop research capability necessary to support evidence-based policy.

- 3.2 **Component 2. Research agenda to improve evidence-based policymaking.** Under this component, a consultancy firm will elaborate a research agenda proposing the development of studies on key governance issues, methodologies on how to improve the study of these issues, and a proposal for governments of the region on how to incorporate evidence-based decisions in the policymaking process. It will include the production of country studies by research centers in a minimum of six countries in the Caribbean and Central America. In Caribbean countries the studies will explore the issue of unproductive rent seeking and its role in policy making, hence on implications on economic growth. In Central American countries the studies will focus on the efficiency of public services. In order to support the national research teams and strengthen their research capabilities, the consultancy firm will accompany their research efforts and provide technical guidance. For the selection of research institutions, there will be a call for proposals and invitations will be sent to institutions that could benefit from the program.
- 3.3 **Component 3. Recommendations for policymakers and dissemination of results.** This component will include the elaboration of recommendations specifically targeted to policymakers for each of the sub-regions, based on the main topics selected. To this end, the hired consultancy firm will produce a brief document, based on the main findings included in the institutional diagnostics and the sub-regional studies. The component will also include the dissemination of results and the exchange of knowledge produced through one workshop per sub-region. These workshops will count with the participation and interaction of research centers, experts, and policymakers in the subject-matter. An expected outcome of this component will be the creation of sub-regional networks on the above-mentioned subjects. National research teams will benefit from continuous dialogue with peers and experts.

IV. Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	Description	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
1. Diagnostics on institutional gaps to promote research capabilities	Hiring of a consultancy firm to produce the diagnostics	50,000		50,000
2. Research agenda to improve evidence-based policymaking	Hiring of a consultancy firm to develop a research agenda and provide technical guidance	50,000		230,000
	Six studies	180,000		
3. Dissemination of results	Two workshops with policymakers	60,000		70,000
	One note	10,000		

V. Executing agency and execution structure

- 5.1 The Bank through RES/RES will be the executing agency.

VI. Project Risks and issues

- 6.1 The risk that researchers will not successfully gain access to decision makers, public and private, could undermine the TC's objective. However, the selection of UWI, which is often the alma mater of decision makers, should reduce this risk in the Caribbean. In addition, IDB's leverage with policy makers could help the dissemination of the results. A second risk is that researchers might not deliver the products. Therefore, a careful assessment of capabilities and necessary support from the outside should be carried out before.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

- 7.1 There are no environmental or social risks associated with the activities outlined in this TC, therefore its environmental classification is C.