



THINK TANK FUNDING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: STATUS AND OUTLOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is structured into two main sections. The first section provides this report's background and purpose, key questions, scope, methods, and limitations. The second section is organized by the key questions and provides information on think tank funders, their rationales for funding think tanks, the trajectory of funding, and issues suggested for further discussion by stakeholders. The appendices provide background on the research methods and sources.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Think Tank Initiative (TTI) provides 43 policy research organizations in 20 countries with core support, technical assistance, and learning exchange. TTI provides core support to strengthen think tanks worldwide so that they can develop their organizations, improve their research, and engage in and inform local and global policy debates. In addition to its provision of core support, TTI uniquely combines a large scale effort with a long-term commitment of ten years of operation across two phases and a geographic reach across West Africa, East Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.¹ TTI is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DFID), and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).² It is managed by IDRC.

Think tank sustainability has long been a concern for think tanks and their funders, including TTI's funders. TTI and other think tank supporters have previously convened two Think Tank Funders' Forums in 2012 and 2014. Almost four years ago, TTI commissioned "Understanding Donor Commitment to Strengthening Local Knowledge Organizations," a landscaping by Kirton Associates that outlined major trends, including austerity in donor countries. In addition, TTI's Phase 2 includes specific goals related to financial sustainability, including funder diversification.

TTI is widely acknowledged to have played an influential role in developing country think tank funding—from providing support through the financial crisis to helping think tanks expand their access to funders (Makoni, 2013). In 2019, TTI plans to end its current programming. This next year is a crucial time to discuss the future. Thus, the Hewlett Foundation, with IDRC's support, commissioned this landscaping to provide an updated status on think tank funding at the global and regional levels as an input for future discussions.

1.2 GOALS AND KEY QUESTIONS

The main goal of this report is to provide a catalogue of relevant funders and their strategic rationales for supporting think tanks, as well as their future plans. A particular emphasis is placed on identifying new or previously unknown funders. Finally, an auxiliary goal is to surface issues from funders as they consider their future strategies.

¹ The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), which started operations in 1991, has provided core funding to its think tank grantees from one to four phases (or a maximum of 16 years). One major difference between TTI and ACBF is regional coverage.

² The Government of the Netherlands co-funded TTI during the first phase.

A matrix of questions related to these goals was developed to systematize the research: see Appendix 1. This report focuses on a subset of these questions to facilitate future discussion, specifically:

- Which funders support think tanks in developing countries across the world, across a region, or in multiple countries?
- How do think tanks fit in funders' strategies and theories of change, and what are their selection criteria?
- How do these funders fund think tanks?
- What has been the trajectory of funding, and what is the direction of future support?
- What are some of the top concerns and issues?

1.3 SCOPE

Many other scans have looked at research funding or research capacity funding, while this report is focused on funders of think tanks specifically. The working definition of think tank is an independent policy research organization with the following characteristics:

- Is an organization rather than a network or for-profit consulting firm³
- Has some level of intellectual autonomy from government and political parties
- Focuses on research or evidence, either undertaken by itself or in partnership with others or synthesized and translated from other sources
- Oriented toward policy or practical relevance

Thus, non-government organizations (NGOs), advocacy organizations, issue networks, universities, governmental bodies, think tanks associated with political parties, and scientific and academic research without connections to policy or practice are not generally included. However, many interviewees wanted to discuss this definition and the value of focusing on this kind of organization: see section 2.6 for more.

This report is also focused on a certain type of funder, mainly those that have decision authority over the originating budget (hereafter called primary funders). Intermediaries and re-granters are also included if particularly relevant. Additional key filtering criteria for funders include:

- Providing a larger scale of support, i.e. more than USD \$50,000 on one project and an overall portfolio of support of more than USD \$1,000,000 per year
- Funding institutions or ecosystems and not solely individuals
- Providing core support or support beyond very narrow and directed projects, or at least considering more flexible support
- Supporting think tanks in developing countries
- Supporting think tanks at a global or regional level, or at least in more than one country

Although there was not a specific sectoral filter, there was a preference for funders that work across more than one sector. As found in previous scans (Jones, Bailey, & Lyytikäinen, 2008), some of the largest flows of funds to research capacity strengthening and institutional support are in health, agriculture and food security, and environment and climate change. Further research would need to be undertaken to comprehensively document

³ Mendizabal (2013) and others have noted that think tanks sometimes register as businesses. Pure consulting businesses are excluded—the organization needs to have an explicit public purpose.

these efforts. Finally, this report focuses more on funders supporting think tanks in the regions where TTI operates: Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia. Only a few other initiatives are discussed outside of these regions.

1.4 METHODS AND SOURCES

The methodology of this report is primarily qualitative. It brings together a variety of sources of information to triangulate answers to the key questions. The key sources include:

- Key informant interviews with 39 individuals from 25 organizations, of which 14 were primary funders. These interviews were semi-structured and based on the comprehensive list of questions. The interviewee list is provided in Appendix 2. In addition, there were email exchanges with three other primary funders that contained relevant content.
- A desktop review of donor scans, Think Tank Funders' Forum notes provided by IDRC, and the sites of Politics & Ideas, On Think Tanks, Go To Think Tanks, SciDev, and Transparify. In addition, web-based searches were added to uncover additional grey literature. See Appendix 3 for the list of search terms and works reviewed.
- A scan of websites of think tanks that are based in TTI regions. Since the goal was to find funders, the first step was to check the websites of think tanks that were reviewed as more transparent by Transparify (2016). This list was then expanded to include TTI think tanks to ensure there was more coverage in each region. Finally, a few other well-known entities, such as the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and CIPPEC were checked. A total of 45 websites were reviewed, 34 of which had funding information. See Appendix 4 for the list of sites consulted.
- A review of funders' websites for details on strategies, grantees, and budget. The websites, including the relevant strategy documents, of all funders mentioned in this document were reviewed.
- A survey sent to TTI program officers (PO) in the regions asking about funders, networks, and trends in instruments and modalities. All POs received the survey, and four responses were received. Responses were received from POs in each of the regions: Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.

Finally, the data on Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) were also reviewed to provide a quantitative benchmark for assumptions about research funding trends (OECD.Stat, 2016). As previously noted by Kirton Associates, the DAC codes do not allow for searches of funding to think tanks specifically. This report uses code 43082, which designates aid to research or scientific institutions labeled as "other multisectoral," as a proxy. The definition of "other multisectoral" appears to be used when there is many sectors or the sector is not clear.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

The findings in this report are subject to data constraints and biases, similar to other funding landscapes. Perhaps most importantly, this was a rapid non-comprehensive effort that uses key informants as a primary source. The reliance on known contacts and networks means that this report may be missing funders outside of the sphere of actors that have worked with TTI. In addition, due to the rapid nature of this undertaking, some data sources were not consulted. Not all funders could be reached for interviews, and IATI reporting and academic databases were not searched. The literature review was also not a systematic review.

Additional limitations and biases include:

- Reliance on English, leading to a bias against finding funders operating in other languages
- Variation in reporting on strategies and funds by funder agencies (also noted by Jones & Young (2007))
- Different terms and lack of consensus on terms used to describe think tanks and research for policy
- Variation in how think tanks report on funders, which Transparify has been flagging⁴
- Lack of systematic and comparable financial data on think tanks

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 WHICH FUNDERS SUPPORT THINK TANKS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ACROSS THE WORLD, ACROSS A REGION, OR IN MULTIPLE COUNTRIES?

The criteria described above select for funders of a certain financial size, breadth of geographic scope, and vision for progress. The funders that fit these criteria are mainly bilateral public funders, private philanthropies based in the United States or Europe, and the World Bank. In addition, a few intermediaries also provide support that fits the criteria. Table 1 provides the list of primary funders and intermediaries with some of the relevant details on type and geography; in most cases, the intermediaries are also funded by the same primary funders in this table. In terms of geography, most funders are global while others have regional specializations, such as African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) in Africa, Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE) in the Western Balkans and select post-Soviet states, and Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) in West Africa.

TABLE 1. THINK TANK FUNDERS BY TYPE, INDICATIVE SCALE OF FUNDING, AND REGIONAL FOCUS

<i>Funder name</i>	Type	Global?	Regions?
<i>Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)</i>	Bilateral	No	Indo-Pacific, Indonesia
<i>Canada: Global Affairs Canada</i>	Bilateral	Yes	25 focus countries in Americas, Asia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Africa
<i>Denmark: Danida (name of development cooperation activity under Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA))⁵</i>	Bilateral	Yes, for international research projects	Priority countries include Ghana, Nepal, Tanzania, and Vietnam; countries with Danish embassies
<i>Germany: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)</i>	Bilateral	Yes	All

⁴ Think tanks that show their funders are likely to have different kinds of funders than those that do not.

⁵ Some of the funders, including Denmark and Norway, also disburse funds from their MFAs through in-country embassies. Similarly, the British High Commission was also listed by four think tanks.

<i>Norway: Norad</i>	Bilateral	Yes	Africa pre-dominantly, as well as Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Middle East
<i>Sweden: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)</i>	Bilateral	Yes	Bolivia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine
<i>Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)</i>	Bilateral	Yes	Africa, LAC, Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia
<i>United Kingdom: DFID</i>	Bilateral	Yes	Africa, Asia, Latin America
<i>United States: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)</i>	Bilateral	Yes	All
<i>Canada: IDRC</i>	Bilateral and re-granter	Yes	Africa, Asia, LAC, MENA
<i>African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)</i>	Intermediary and re-granter	No	Africa
<i>European Union (EU)</i>	Multilateral	Yes	All
<i>World Bank</i>	Multilateral	Yes	All
<i>Global Development Network (GDN)</i>	Network and re-granter	Yes	All
<i>Ford Foundation</i>	Philanthropy	Yes	Africa, Asia, LAC, Middle East
<i>Gates Foundation</i>	Philanthropy	Yes	Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia
<i>Hewlett Foundation</i>	Philanthropy	Yes	Sub-Saharan Africa
<i>MacArthur Foundation</i>	Philanthropy	Yes, on certain issues	India, Nigeria, Mexico, plus over 40 other countries
<i>Oak Foundation</i>	Philanthropy	Yes	Brazil, Denmark, India, Zimbabwe, plus many others
<i>Open Society Foundations (OSF)⁶</i>	Philanthropy	Yes	OSF covers all; OSIFE works in the Western Balkans and three post-Soviet states
<i>Rockefeller Foundation</i>	Philanthropy	Yes	Offices in Italy, Kenya, and Thailand, as well as work in other countries

In addition, a bottom-up view was created based on a review of think tank websites, with 34 of 45 providing funding information. The bottom-up view mostly confirmed the list of major funders across regions, though think tank websites did not report whether funding was project, program, general operations, or conference support. IDRC was mentioned by more think tanks than any other funder, though there was significant selection bias as TTI think tanks were intentionally included. Other funders with six or more mentions were the World Bank, European Union, DFID, USAID, GIZ, UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, the Gates Foundation, UNDP, and Canada.

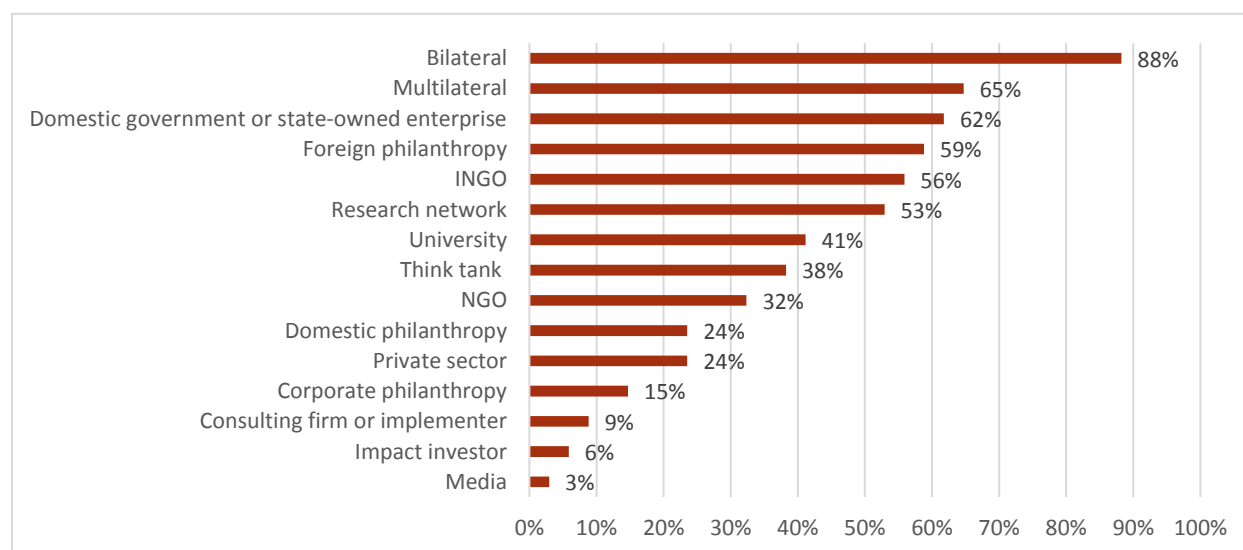
⁶ OSF is uniquely structured. Some geographic entities are independent and have their own boards, and some of the thematic work is run from other locations. For the purposes of the scan, the most relevant entities appear to be OSIFE, OSF for South Africa, and OSIWA. One interviewee also noted that an OSF-affiliated entity supports think tank work in Myanmar.

Considering funding levels, spread, strategy fits, and current level of engagements with think tanks, the following funders rose to the top in terms of relevance to global and regional programming for think tanks: DFID, GIZ, Hewlett, IDRC, Norad, SDC, Sida, and USAID. Some of the philanthropies were open to future discussions, though they are much more likely to provide support at the regional level rather than the global level.

From the think tank level, there are many more funders than the 21 listed in Table 1. Figure 1 below provides some indicative frequency of funder types based on the think tank scan described in 1.4 Methods. Bilateral donors and multilaterals are the most frequently listed.⁷ More than half of the 34 think tanks listed domestic government entities, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (e.g. the International Budget Partnership), and research and issue networks (e.g. PEPNet and Southern Voice) as funders. A fifth to one half listed domestic philanthropy, NGOs, private sector entities, other think tanks, and universities. One caveat is that the larger funders also fund INGOs, research and issue networks, domestic or regional NGOs, and think tanks, so in some cases, the original source of funds is the same.

There appears to be variation regionally, with considerably more domestic philanthropy in India and South Africa, more private sector funding in South Asia,⁸ and less funding by domestic governments in Latin America, which Lauer (2012) also noted. There also appears to be more corporate philanthropy in India, almost certainly due to the Indian law mandating that 2% of profits go to charity (Balch, 2016). Think tanks and their supporters have been discussing these sources recently as potential avenues for diversified funding (Yeo, 2013 and Mendizabal, 2014c).

FIGURE 1. ILLUSTRATIVE FREQUENCY OF FUNDER TYPES LISTED BY 34 THINK TANKS



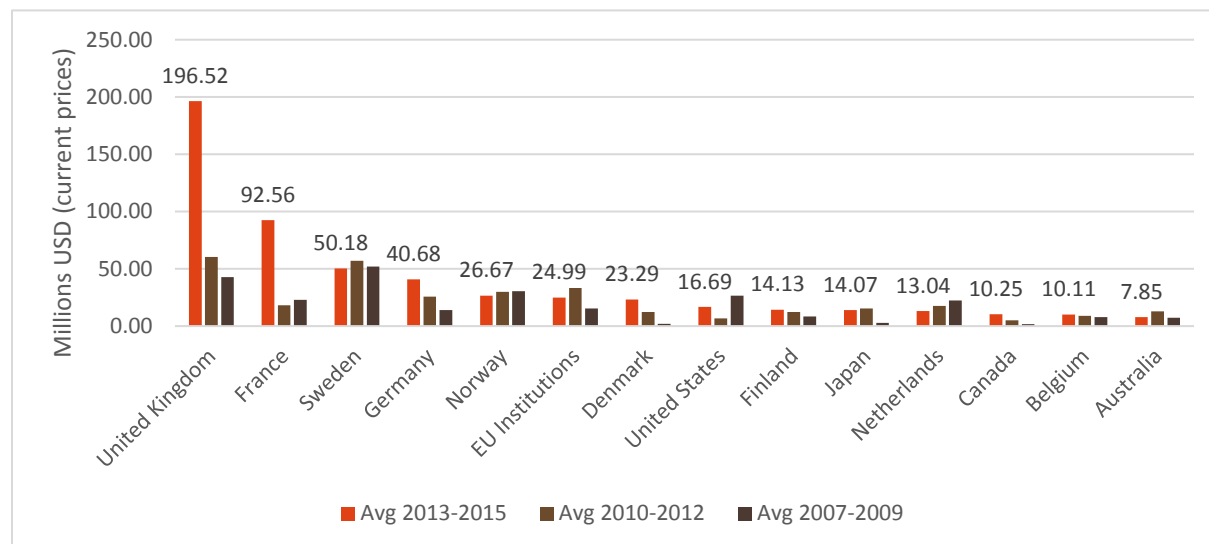
Finally, given that neither the program data in Table 1 nor the bottom-up data from the think tank scan could provide comparable funding information, DAC data on “other multisector” research institutions (code 43082) were analyzed to provide a proxy measure of funding from the top bilaterals. Figure 2 provides the funders of at least \$7 million based on their yearly average gross disbursements from 2013 to 2015. These figures should be considered

⁷ TTI, which is managed by IDRC, is coded as support coming from a bilateral.

⁸ A confounding factor is that more environmental, health, and science think tanks were reviewed in South Asia, and these think tanks received more private sector funding.

indicative of research funding rather than funding of Southern think tanks as this code covers a variety of institutions that are not think tanks, as well as funding within donor countries.

FIGURE 2. TOP BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PROVIDERS OF ODA GROSS DISBURSEMENTS TO “OTHER MULTISECTOR” RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS (CODE 43082) THROUGH ALL CHANNELS



These data suggested looking more closely at France, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Japan, all of which were mentioned much less frequently by interviewees. To better understand these countries' funding, their websites, programs, and previous policy statements were reviewed, and the DAC data was further dissected by channel. It appears that these funders tend to support research entities other than developing country think tanks, specifically:

- France's support goes to public sector entities, apparently the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). IRD focuses on science and uses a model of in-country offices and North-South partnerships. According to two interviewees, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the French MFA have also provided support to select think tanks in Francophone countries. This support tends to focus on more academic research.
- Belgium appears to fund its own scientific institutions and universities.
- Japan appears to focus on science, such as its Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development, and Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA's) Research Institute. JICA was listed by one think tank as a funder, and JICA supports GDN and the African Institute for Capacity Development.
- The Netherlands transitioned to supporting knowledge platforms on Dutch priorities a few years ago, which was discussed at the 2012 Think Tank Funders' Forum. The Embassy of the Netherlands was listed by two think tanks as a funder.
- Finland's website lists sectoral research programs, a country-based program (Scaling Up Research and Capacity Building on Improved Development Policy in Mozambique), and support to the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER). The Embassy of Finland was listed by one think tank as a funder.

2.1 Key Takeaways

- **Select bilaterals are major funders of think tanks in developing countries.**
 - The largest funder in terms of size is DFID.
 - The funder with the greatest spread is IDRC.
 - Other key funders are GIZ, Norad, Sida, SDC, and USAID.
- **Some larger philanthropies from Europe and the US also fund think tanks at the global or regional level in the developing world.**
 - The Hewlett Foundation appears to be the only one with an explicit strategy related to Southern think tanks.
 - Most other funders have a country or issue focus, such as the MacArthur Foundation and Oak Foundation.
 - The Think Tank Fund (TTF) is now part of the Open Society initiative for Europe (OSIFE) and is undergoing a programmatic transition.
- **The World Bank is the main relevant multilateral, but it has changed its strategy: see section 2.4.**
- **At the think tank level, there is a greater diversity of funders, including domestic government.**
 - Some of the other funders, like INGOs, may also be funded by bilaterals and philanthropy.
 - Currently, domestic philanthropy appears to be concentrated in relatively few countries.
 - Research networks are another main channel of support.

2.2 HOW DO THINK TANKS FIT IN FUNDERS' STRATEGIES AND THEORIES OF CHANGE, AND WHAT ARE THEIR SELECTION CRITERIA?

Funders have many rationales for supporting think tanks, and one funder may have a variety of programs, each with their own rationale for funding think tanks. A typology was developed to group these rationales and show some of the similarities in instruments and modalities,⁹ criteria, and desired outcomes. This typology, shown in Table 2, was developed in conversation with TTI staff.¹⁰ Prior to this research, I expected to find a category of funders supporting democracy and accountability. However, this is not included because 1) some funders that may have had this rationale have shifted funding strategies away from think tanks, and 2) others fit in the issue specific category, such as the Omidyar Network's support on budget transparency.¹¹

⁹ This report will use the definitions given by Merle Jacob for the OECD (2013). Instruments refer to financing arrangements such as grants or contracts, and modalities referring to the specifications of instruments, such as "performance-based" contracts. The term "approach" is also used to encompass the aspects of funding beyond the instruments and modalities, such as using the knowledge value chain as a funding framework.

¹⁰ This typology was developed before reviewing Farley (2007), which gives a relevant typology. Farley categorizes science, technology, and innovation (STI) funding as follows: 1) global or regional public goods initiatives, 2) initiatives to deepen local STI capacity, 3) linkage initiatives (e.g. exchanges), and 4) integrated initiatives covering multiple approaches and system-level work.

¹¹ There is a Network of Democracy Research Institutes hosted by the National Endowment for Democracy, but it appears to be an issue network rather than one that provides funding.

TABLE 2. TYPOLOGY OF FUNDER PERSPECTIVES AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS, CRITERIA, AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

Perspective	Example funders	Typical description of how think tanks fit	Common instruments and modalities	Example criteria for selecting partners	Desired outcomes
Global research and knowledge production	USAID PEER program, SDC, DFID's East Africa Research Hub, GDN research programs	Think tanks may be included to the extent that they deliver research quality, as well as other aspects like enhanced global exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open calls • Calls for North-South partnerships • Twinning • Fellowships for individual researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research quality usually measured through peer review • Expertise on issue • Priority country for donor • Formal qualifications (e.g. Ph.D.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-reviewed publications and citations • Exchanges between scholars
Knowledge systems	Sida, Danida, Norad	Local ownership is critical, so think tanks may fit depending on country context, demand, or role in the knowledge value chain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core support (often on five year terms) to universities, research councils, and programs working at a system-wide level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term commitments • Priority country for donor • Partner country priorities in knowledge system • Pre-existing capacities in knowledge system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge system solves local problems and supports sustainable capacity for research • Diversity of research
Evidence informed policy-making (EIP) and capacity for EIP	Hewlett, IDRC, DFID Research and Evidence Division, current ACBF strategy, GDN	Think tanks play a key role in the policy ecosystem and act as knowledge translators and brokers of connections between various stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core support to think tanks • Support to capacity to use evidence in government and other bodies, such as INASP's programs • Support to field-building and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term commitments • Capacity and innovation in policy engagement • Country context for EIP • In ACBF's case, request of government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy engagement metrics, such as presence in policy discussions and media • Expanded networks • Uptake in policy or practice • Organizational development and sustainability

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness to local agendas • Contribution to global debates
Place-based	Gates India Country Office, DFAT-supported KSI in Indonesia	Think tanks fit into country-based programming for EIP, research, or public administration. Depending on the context, they may be critical actors in the ecosystem in terms of agenda setting, evaluation, and policy debate. (This differs from knowledge systems and EIP in focus on one country.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project, program, and core support grants to think tanks • Support to a prime entity that then re-grants • Enabling environment investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority country and location for donor • Research quality usually judged by credibility domestically • Longer term prospects for financial sustainability • Governance of entity • Extent of influence with key stakeholders and networks • Domestic government views • Past work on specific topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue leadership in country debates • Quality of discussion • Diversity of perspectives • Progress in enabling environment, e.g. developing associations of professionals or media use of evidence
Issue-focused or sectoral	Oak Foundation's Environmental program, Ford's new strategy on inequality, Gates sectoral funding; numerous funder programs in health, climate change, and agriculture	Think tanks are supported based on their contributions to a sector or issue, including policy relevant research and public engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project and program grants • Re-grants from issue networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise and credibility on issue • Engagement in issue networks • Contributions to ecosystem • Capacity to deliver research and policy engagement • Organizational health • Relationships with other actors, especially domestic government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy-relevant outputs and uptake of research • Value to other actors in ecosystem • Research quality judged by sectoral experts or program officers

Of these categories, EIP funders are the most focused on think tanks qua think tanks, while place-based funders and knowledge system funders are interested in think tanks depending on the context and their role in an ecosystem or value chain. Research and issue funders may also support think tanks but are not focused on them as institutions but rather on their contributions to an issue or ability to deliver quality research. Place-based funders obviously have a location focus, but many of the other categories do too: even global research funding is used to strengthen exchanges with specific countries, such as the UK's Newton Fund's focus on 16 countries.

2.2 Key Takeaways

- **Funders' perspectives, which set the foundation for their strategies and modalities, can be grouped into the following categories:**
 - Global research and knowledge production
 - Knowledge systems
 - Evidence informed policy-making (EIP) and capacity for EIP
 - Place-based
 - Issue-focused or sectoral
- **The most common types are issue-focused or place-based.**
- **Of these perspectives, EIP funders are the most focused on think tanks in developing countries.**
- **In terms of criteria for selection, location is one of the most dominant. Other common criteria include reputation, research quality, and organizational strength.**

2.3 HOW DO THESE FUNDERS FUND THINK TANKS?

As noted in Table 2 above, funders vary their instruments, modalities, and approaches with the purpose of the funding which was also noted by the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and UNESCO (2013). In addition, the nature of the funder, its governance, its budget and strategy cycles, law and policy, and its default set of instruments are critical factors and constraints. For example, it is difficult for US-based private foundations to grant core support to entities that do not have the status of a US charitable non-profit due to laws regulating private foundation giving. Public funders more frequently use open and competitive calls, likely due to procurement rules. For all funders, best practices, trends, and inertia are factors that shape the options set. Here are two examples: various funders are trying adaptive programming as a new best practice, and Farley (2007) suggests that public funders were influenced by the Grand Challenge model re-popularized by philanthropy.

Many funders consistently use project contracts or grants. There are many reasons for this, including those listed above. Project grants or contracts are often the default instruments and have been set that way for reasons such as: 1) demands from the funders' governing bodies for clear lines of accountability, 2) fears about misuse of resources, and 3) desire to specifically steer outputs (Jacob, 2013). This has long been discussed in the literature: see McGann (2004); Laws, Harper, Jones, & Marcus (2003); and Ghaffar, IJsselmuiden, & Zicker (2005).¹² In

¹² This research did not uncover documentation on the kind of support provided by the private sector or corporate philanthropy. There is considerable concern about their use of project funding, especially following media reports about top US think tanks being influenced by corporate funds (Braun-Dorrella, 2014a).

addition, even when funders have other options, they may prefer project modalities when there is a lack of close alignment with their strategies.

The size of the funding also plays a role in choice of approach. Larger funders are more likely to create re-granting and intermediary relationships through prime contractors, re-granters, intermediaries, and research networks. This is well described by Mendizabal (2014b). For example, DFID funds the Evidence and Lessons from Latin America (ELLA) program, which is managed by Practical Action Consulting. Practical Action provides sub-awards to partner think tanks and organizations in Latin America and Africa, and it also undertakes its own research, brokers the learning alliances and partnerships, hosts meetings and study tours, and produces research communications. DFID also works through PriceWaterhouseCoopers for its East Africa and South Asia Research Hubs. Mouton (2010) in the World Social Science Report also noted an increase in support to transnational research networks over specific institutions.

Maturity of a field or portfolio also plays a role in modalities. Several interviewees noted that funders increasingly want to fund think tanks in their priority countries directly rather than through intermediaries. IDRC noted an uptick in interest in parallel funding, meaning that donors align funding streams but do not contribute to a common pool. This was speculated to be due to the maturity of a portfolio, deepened funder experience in a country or on an issue, think tanks becoming known globally, and the increased capacity of think tanks to accept larger funds directly. However, one funder also suggested that more mature portfolios tend to diversify over time, so a young portfolio with a substantial share of funding going to think tanks would tend to see that share decline over time.

Of particular interest to the post-TTI future are the prospects for institutional support or at least more flexible funding. When asked about the prospects for the provision of institutional support to think tanks specifically, relatively few funders reported being able, interested, and willing. In contrast, most funders saw potential for flexible support, defined as funding for elements beyond narrow research project inputs and outputs. These additional elements could include organizational development, communications, and networking. As detailed in the typology above, core support to think tanks without a sector connection is most commonly found from funders supporting EIP and place-based ecosystems. A few more funders thought it would be possible if there were a specific issue focus or if there were a connection to the knowledge system, e.g. through collaboration between science and policy research.

Several interviewees commented that long-term dedication to core support is rare, while other interviewees noted a dedication to institutional support but not necessarily to think tanks. One interviewee said it was particularly difficult for public funders to maintain institutional support given the turnover of political leadership and the demands to account for the impact and financial management of funds at regular intervals. Some private funders commented that it would not be acceptable to their governing entities, which demand short-term proof of results. This was also noted in the UK Parliament's report on private foundations (Commons Select Committee, 2012).

It has been suggested by a variety of sources that demand for proof of impact is a major barrier to long-term institutional support for research (Perkins, 2016), including by several interviewees. One interviewee noted that the lack of clear outputs and outcomes likely lead to waning enthusiasm for core support. However, primary funders generally prioritized other factors, such as shifts in strategy, unrelated budget cuts, or emphasis on short-term efforts (also see Piotrowski, 2013).

Finally, in general, multilaterals currently do not provide institutional support to broader efforts to build institutions, including think tanks. Many multilaterals, such as regional development banks and UN agencies, have convened think tank networks that provide little to no financial support (Mendizabal, 2012a; UNDP, 2016), and

they often provide project-specific support. One interviewee noted that multilaterals actually compete with think tanks for funds. There are always exceptions, such as the World Bank's funding of ACBF, which is due to end, and past funding of GDN, which both provide capacity building support.¹³ However, the World Bank has moved away from institutional support, which is further described in section 2.4.

2.3 Key Takeaways

- **Project funding continues to be a dominant modality, and there are a variety of reasons for this, including demands from funders' governing bodies for accountability, financial tracking, and tighter direction of the work.**
- **Relatively few entities can commit core support, and not all of those that do are interested in giving core support to think tanks.**
- **Almost all funders said that they had flexibility in how they fund, e.g. to include budget for communications and networking.**
- **Larger funders are more likely to work through other entities to sub-award to think tanks.**

2.4 WHAT HAS BEEN THE TRAJECTORY OF FUNDING, AND WHAT IS THE DIRECTION OF FUTURE SUPPORT?

The trajectory of funding is difficult to ascertain definitively due to data restrictions. The key sources were the literature, the interviews, and the PO survey, as well as a check on the DAC data. The interviewees and PO survey generally reflected concern about the availability of funds for think tanks and research institutions in developing countries. Most felt that the global trajectory of flexible funding was downward and more focused on project and issue funding. This feeling is connected to recent decisions made by some influential funders, and, given the relatively small market for funding, these shifts are broadly felt. However, many funders themselves did not have plans to change their current strategies, and a few interviewees saw no change or even an increase in opportunities available for think tanks. These perspectives appear connected to regional variation and the perspective from the think tank level, which reflects a greater diversity of funders and models. The remainder of this section outlines the reverberating funder decisions and some of the factors driving them.

Since 2012, the think tank community has seen a series of decisions to either reduce support or re-orient strategy. These are presented roughly in order of announcement below:

- The Netherlands did not continue TTI funding for Phase 2 and said it would support knowledge platforms that featured North-South exchange. This was part of a larger re-orientation in its aid programming.
- From 2007 to 2012, the Gates Foundation had a policy strategy that emphasized providing institutional support without a sector lens. Following a re-organization, the current policy office focuses on support to institutions in priority countries working on priority issues, such as country finance. Gates's contribution to TTI Phase 2 was much lower than its contribution to Phase 1.

¹³ The World Bank's funding of GDN through the Development Grant Facility (DGF) ended in 2014. GDN can still receive support through Trust Funds and projects.

- In 2013, CIDA merged into Canada's DFAIT, becoming DFATD and later Global Affairs Canada. Global Affairs Canada will announce a new strategy in 2017.
- In 2013, AusAID was merged into Australia's DFAT. Its overall budget was cut, including resources for research, and its geographical scope limited to Asia and the Pacific. Australia had previously been increasing its ODA spending, and its research spending had gone from \$19 million in 2005-2006 to \$181.5 million in 2012-2013 (Young, David, Sherlock, Pasanen, & Shaxson, 2015). DFAT continues to support KSI in Indonesia.
- DFID reduced its commitment to Phase 2 of TTI by £8.3 million in order to re-direct funding to other priorities. DFID had previously announced that it would greatly reduce its aid to India. The Civil Society Partnership Review recently outlined that think tanks would most likely receive support through the new UK Aid Connect mechanism, which plans to fund up to 15 North-South consortia over the next four years (DFID, 2016). Details, such as the thematic areas, are not yet determined.
- The World Bank plans to conclude its support to ACBF at the end of its current commitment in December 2017. It does not have any plans to support think tanks in general. Project funding to think tanks will continue, as well as such efforts like the Africa Think Tank Alliance.
- The Ford Foundation announced Ford Forward and its focus on inequality in November 2015. Ford is emphasizing institutional support, but grantees will need to fit into the new strategy and related priorities, such as civic engagement, inclusive economies, and internet freedom.
- TTF is now a part of OSIFE. It is currently going through a transition period and expects to fund priority issues related to wider European issues rather than provide core support.

Many factors were behind these complex developments. Four in particular stand out:

1. In some countries, domestic policy became less favorable toward foreign aid. In some cases, there was a call for prioritizing the national interest and focusing on private-sector led growth. This usually led to foreign aid being cut or a shift to modalities that fund donor institutions and North-South exchange. The March 2011 letter from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the House of Representatives is a paradigmatic example of some of these trends.
2. For some time, donor countries have been decreasing aid to middle income countries (MICs) and consolidating the number of country programs. As one interviewee noted, why should a donor fund a good foreign policy or trade program at a think tank if the MIC government could but does not?
3. Over time, organizations change leadership and strategies, leading to new budget envelopes and levels. These kinds of changes frequently lead to re-evaluation of allocations and approaches.
4. Think tanks themselves are being questioned on a variety of dimensions. Some philanthropies see them as elite institutions that may be detrimental to citizen participation. In addition, the media and other observers have questioned their very independence from corporate and foreign influence (Bruckner, 2015 and Karunakaran, 2014).¹⁴ Relatedly, depending on how think tanks interact in a particular system, some are thought to be overly political (Thunert, n.d.). For example, see Pankaj Mishra's dismissal of Brookings India in *The New York Times* (2016).

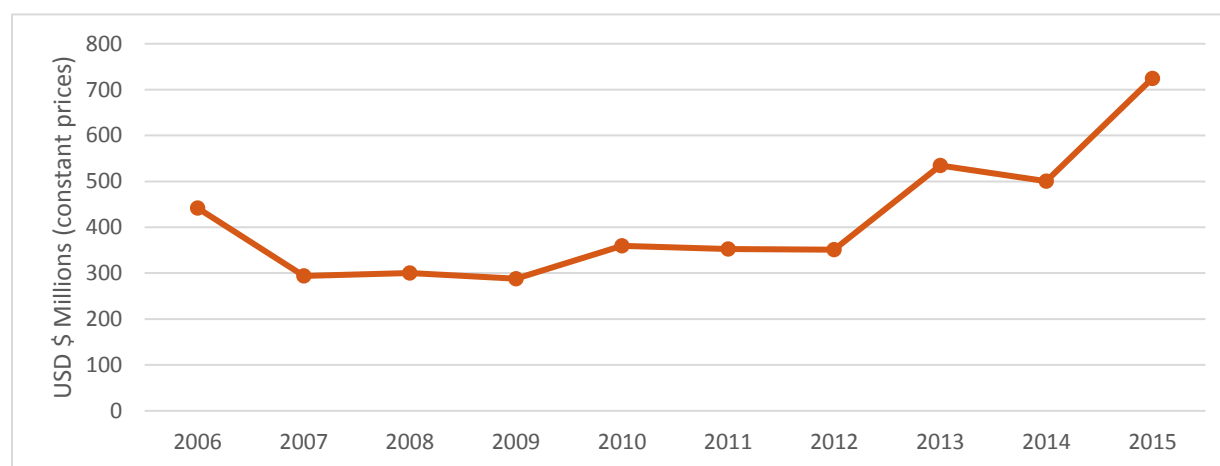
¹⁴ Dan Drezner (2017) noted that bankers and consultancies may be replacing think tanks just as non-profit think tanks are being criticized for their funding sources.

Of the other major funders, several plan to either continue on current strategies (e.g. Norad and Sida) or are at a decision-making juncture.¹⁵ Specifically, Hewlett will continue its EIP strategy but is deciding the shape and scale of its future funding to think tanks, and it does not plan to maintain the same level of support it previously provided to TTI. IDRC has pluralized TTI to be Think Tank Initiatives and would like to continue work in this area. USAID's Center for Development Research is in the process of revising its strategy and looking at knowledge translation. Finally, some of the philanthropies are in the process of launching new strategies or otherwise increasing support to certain issues and countries and would consider support to think tanks. For example, the India Country Office of the Gates Foundation plans to increase its work with think tanks related to health systems strengthening.

Finally, although domestic philanthropists appear to focus on their own countries, many interviewees flagged this as the most urgently needed funding source for think tanks. India and South Africa already have philanthropic organizations funding research. Various experts believe that other new philanthropists may be interested after they learn more about the role of think tanks, though this could take some time. However, one interviewee cautioned that newly wealthy philanthropists were infrequently interested in research due to their personal experiences and characteristics. The suggestion was to instead focus more on professional philanthropy, which tends to fund more research.

The discussion above suggests an overall decline in funding from the larger global and regional funders, though domestic and other actors may be giving more. To check this assessment, the proxy DAC data of "other multisectoral" research institutions (code 43082) was analyzed for a sense of general research funding trends among bilateral donors. Bilaterals cut funding significantly during the financial crisis and are now increasing funding under this area. Although these may not be think tanks, this suggests there are more funds available for development-related research overall. The gross disbursements of all DAC donors increased from \$442 million in 2006 to \$725 million in 2015 in constant prices; see Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. TREND IN ODA GROSS DISBURSEMENTS FROM ALL DAC MEMBER DONORS TO "OTHER MULTISECTOR" RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTES (CODE 43082), ALL CHANNELS



Jennie Dodson (2016) also notes the rising level of investment for development research, not only by donors but also by low- and middle-income countries. Dodson describes this rise as "uneven," meaning not consistent across

¹⁵ Some bilaterals, including large funders such as GIZ, were not available for an interview within the research timeframe.

or even within countries' funding agencies. A substantial share of this funding increase is due to the UK alone. The UK has launched a set of large funds to support development research, including the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), Ross Fund for infectious diseases, and Newton Fund for research and innovation partnerships. Of these, GCRF (£1.5 billion over five years) is the most relevant: it will support interdisciplinary research and research capacity. All of the UK research councils, academies, and Space Agency have budget allocations from it, with a large common pot for joint funding calls (Matthews, 2016 and Dodson, personal communication). The funding agencies vary in their approaches, with some focused more on capacity in the Global South while others are focused more on technology or UK capacity (Wilton Park, 2016).

2.4 Key Takeaways

- **Most interviewees saw that global and regional funders of think tanks are decreasing in number or reducing their budget.**
- **The reasons for these cuts include political shifts toward the private sector and reduction of aid, overall decline in aid to MICs, organizations changing leadership and strategies over time, and concerns about think tanks' independence and role.**
- **Based on a series of past cuts, it is generally assumed that the overall funding available to think tanks is down. However, zooming in at the think tank or national level, there may be the same or even more funds available from other sources. Most interviewees had hopes that domestic philanthropy or government support would fill the gap.**
- **Overall funding for research appears to be on an upward trend, with the UK contributing considerably to this. This new financing appears to be flowing through donor-based institutions, open research calls, and North-South models.**

2.5 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOP CONCERNS AND ISSUES?

The review by Kirton Associates previously touched on some of the major trends in funding, such as austerity policies. Rather than attempt a thorough analysis of all trends, which Dodson (2016) already carried out, this section focuses on trends and issues raised by interviewees as future discussion topics. Interviewees brought up three categories: 1) challenges in the space, 2) questions on how to improve some aspect of work, and 3) ideas for the future of funding. Ideas for the future are further categorized by those that would be implemented by a) think tanks, b) funders, and c) the broader community. See 2.5 Key Takeaways at the end of this section for a summary table.

2.5.1 CHALLENGES

The top challenge mentioned by funders was **civic space**. Many governments, both donor and developing, are concerned about foreign funding of civil society, including of think tanks. Many low- and middle-income countries have enacted regulations on civic society, including access to foreign funding (Dupuy, Ron, & Prakash, 2016). This is often referred to as closing or shrinking civic space. Beyond regulations, some interviewees speculate that funders

will increasingly seek to align with domestic governments to avoid controversy, leading to increasing conservatism around what entities and issues may be funded. See Mendizabal (2015b).

The next highest concern was the state of **funding** availability and evaporation of funders. Interviewees saw varying reasons for these trends: political, institutional, and values. In terms of political incentives, those were described earlier. In terms of institutional issues, some saw the challenge as being about the kind of funding: more flexible support to local institutions has been difficult to maintain, let alone increase. On values, one interviewee finds that funders are valuing evidence and ideas less as they contemplate an increasingly politically polarized world.

Let me add one more theory on the threads underlying the funding landscape: there has been a shift in the discourse on knowledge reflecting changing ideological landscapes. Yeo (2013) and Ofosu-Amaah (2011) describe how the 1980s through 1990s saw the rise of a discourse about the importance of capacity for local knowledge production, leading the World Bank to issue its *Knowledge for Development World Development Report* in 1998. This scan found considerable literature from the 1990s to early 2000s about supporting locally-owned research and the creation of the organizations of GDN, ACBF, and the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), as well as the Secretariat for Institutional Support in Economics Research in Africa (SISERA) program (1997) at IDRC (Ayuk & Marouani, 2007). Now, the knowledge for development (K4D) terminology is out of use and has shifted to the more private sector-oriented “innovation,” which has also happened in the OECD’s materials (2016). “Innovation” connotes efforts to spur economic growth, though some funders like the Rockefeller Foundation have tried to direct it toward social purposes.

About one third of the interviewees wanted to discuss the definition of “think tank” because there are many entities that undertake similar roles. This points to the need for think tanks to **consider their ecosystem** and possibly **competition by a variety of organizations**, and this has been raised by think tanks themselves at previous TTI Exchanges. From the angle of funding competition, the analysis of funders’ strategies and grants found that substantial funding goes to policy research but not to think tanks in the developing world. Recipients are multilaterals, major consortia (e.g. CGIAR and Future Earth), INGO policy units, and think tanks, universities, and consulting firms based in donor countries. Furthermore, many American think tanks have created branches in other countries and have been successful raising money. From the angle of the ecosystem, the variety of organizations and evolving landscape suggest that think tanks should consider monitoring their environment and competition, staying agile, and adapting to changes, as well as advocating for change at a systemic level.

2.5.2 QUESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE

Several funders that focus on research production and knowledge systems were interested in connecting **science to policy**. In terms of science to policy, one funder found that focusing on science alone without translation into implementation or policy has led the community to ask new sets of questions about how research can be used. There is also an interest in how policy needs could inform the shaping of scientific research. Relatedly, one funder described the need for more investment in the role of **broker of knowledge to policy** to balance the already significant investments in knowledge production and policy advice. The lack of adequate investment in the broker function was speculated to be due to the undervaluing of synthesis, curation, and networking of diverse stakeholders. It may also be due to a lack of comprehensive understanding of how leaders can be persuaded to act. However, this funder was not sure that think tanks were the only or even main solution; it may be that think tanks need to partner with brokers, such as well-networked and informed individuals.

The difficulties of working across funders was also noted: several interviewees described how **collaboration across funders can be challenging**. Factors include different goals and expectations, changing strategies and budgets, turnover in personnel and leadership, lack of familiarity, previous experiences leading to lack of trust, high transaction costs for collaboration without concomitant benefits, desire for control over a project, and desire to fund something branded or new. For more on these factors, see Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar & Andersson (2001) and Gulrajani (2016). However, there is also recognition that funder fragmentation may lead to high transaction costs for think tanks that do not have the ability to handle diverse types of funder needs.

Finally, several interviewees raised the problem of **balancing research quality with capacity building**, a perennial issue. There was a request for ways to think about this: are tools needed, or is it about a division of labor? For example, the UK has a “dual support” model whereby institutional support is provided by one entity and research funding by others. GDN has also struggled with this issue for many years, and its new strategy separates the work of capacity building from the production of quality research. One interviewee speculated that funders who currently targeted their funding to narrow projects will re-discover in five to ten years that institutions have to be supported to have sustainable impact.

2.5.3 IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

FOR THINK TANKS

Many interviewees, funders’ strategies, and Dodson (2016) see **global agendas and the Data Revolution** as prime opportunities, and the underlying suggestion is for think tanks to work on “fundable” agendas. Most bilateral funders’ strategies explicitly reference Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it is hoped that funders will support more on the data side. Think tanks are well-placed to work on data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Southern Voice is a concrete example of a network of think tank working on these issues. An interesting side note is that the 2030 agenda may also be helpful in terms of pushing for longer-term programming: one interviewee from a philanthropy noted that the 2030 deadline allowed staff to argue for a strategy that lasted longer than three to five years.

Closer to home, some interviewees are excited by the opportunity to create greater accountability to domestic stakeholders through a shift in funding sources (Moncada, 2013). Relatedly, the think tank community has been exploring **new fundraising avenues** for some time. For example, see Garzón de la Roza (2015) and the recent short course on funding models offered by the On Think Tanks School. Options under discussion have included memberships, crowdfunding, building up fundraising capacity, charging for content, charging the real cost of project work (Mendizabal, 2016), and creating safeguards in order to accept funds from businesses or government. In addition, think tanks need to continuously assess their **cost and structural models**, including their staffing, facilities, use of networks and contractors, and even status as a not-for-profit or for-profit (Mendizabal, 2013).

FOR FUNDERS

One of the top recommendations that those in the community have for funders is to look for ways to speed the transition to **domestic funding** (Mendizabal, 2015a), although there were varying views about whether this should be domestic government or philanthropy. Most interviewees put their hopes in domestic philanthropy and thought high net worth individuals (HNWIs) should be approached in an ongoing way so that they learn more

about policy research and think tanks. As noted above, one dissenter finds that HNWIs are rarely interested in research.

On the government side, TTI and knowledge system funders have been engaging with domestic and regional research councils for some time. KSI also has had some success with supporting reform of procurement rules so that government could commission non-profit think tanks for work. There may be other opportunities that have yet to be explored.

More broadly, Mendizabal has laid out a variety of other ideas for funders to try in order to encourage domestic support to think tanks (2014a and 2015a):

- Encourage domestic funders to join shared funding mechanisms
- “Demand increasingly higher shares of domestic funding (2014a)” and plan how to exit long term
- Be aware of political cycles to encourage think tanks to adapt and find space to work with domestic funders under those conditions
- Provide funding through domestic research councils and funds
- “Condition funding to think tanks’ capacity to raise domestic funds (2015a)”
- Dialogue with domestic funders, especially peer-to-peer exchanges in philanthropy
- Raise visibility of think tanks through awards and appoint noteworthy locals to the selection panels
- Advocate directly with domestic philanthropies to support research in their country

Mendizabal (2012b) has also proposed that think tanks come together to **create shared reserves** that would create space to take risks, bridge funding, and prepare for projects without having to build an endowment. Donors could set up a fund for think tanks that meet certain conditions, and they could even require that think tanks make a small membership contribution. Most outlays could be in the form of interest-free loans.

As project funding is not going away and North-South funding models continue to be a common modality of support, **improving research partnerships** has been suggested as a pragmatic way forward. One obvious example would be to advocate for funders to pay the real costs of project grants, meaning sufficient margins or overhead to support the ongoing functioning of think tanks as institutions. Another suggestion was for funders to ensure that a larger share of funds go to local institutions rather than prime contractors. Dodson (2017) and the UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS) published “Building Partnerships of Equals” in April 2017, which profiles 11 collaborations and themes in fairness of opportunity, process, and sharing of benefits, costs, and outcomes. Furthermore, there is at least one relevant active effort: the Research Fairness Initiative aims to “create a reporting system that encourages governments, business, organisations and funders to describe how they take measures to create trusting, lasting, transparent and effective partnerships in research and innovation (COHRED, n.d.).”

Several interviewees, including funders, were interested in the idea of **regional or national-level pooled funding** for think tanks. This would allow funders with geographic interests to take advantage of a more holistic multi-stakeholder model. It would also allow funders with less expertise to upgrade the quality of their support. ACBF and GDN already have some similar work in place. For example, ACBF has established the African Think Tank Network as a platform for resource mobilization.

Finally, several interviewees want to ensure that assessing think tank support as part of a **whole system** stays on the agenda (also see Mendizabal, 2014a). Several funders already look across the knowledge system, which includes universities and research councils, and would not want to lose this perspective. Another interviewee noted that from a perspective of supply and demand, more funding in the face of scarcity may simply cause a rise in prices, and this may occur where there are few highly-educated scholars. Looking across the whole system could also yield some more innovative ideas on how to support institutions, such as providing free convening spaces or staff time.

FOR THE BROADER COMMUNITY

A few interviewees suggested that think tanks might look to the governments of and organizations in **emerging economies** for more funding. This scan found very little funding from these sources currently. China appears to support networks and exchanges, such as the China-Africa Think Tanks Forum, and although no current funding partnerships were found, there was mention of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences as a possible partner. Even without funding, these networks and exchanges may yield new kinds of opportunities for learning, influence, and impact.

In addition, one interviewee from an intermediary organization described many experiences setting up and working with North-South networks. This person suggested that the community could work on how **intermediaries could provide better support**. In this brief conversation, issues such as trust, person-to-person interactions, leadership support, funder parameters on sub-awards, capacity gaps, overreliance on known entities, and lack of aligned incentives and interests were all raised. Many of these are also covered by Dodson (2017). Presumably, intermediaries could learn from each other and their Southern partners to co-create standards and frameworks.

Finally, several interviewees were passionate about think tanks solving their own problems through the **creation of communities**. In a fast-changing world, learning from others' experiences is invaluable. Even more importantly, these communities open up new worlds, models, and ways of thinking to think tank staff.

2.5 Key Takeaways		
Challenges	How to	Ideas for the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Civic space- Funding environment and incentives- Competing research entities and overall ecosystem role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enhance the knowledge broker role, including connecting science to policy- Collaborate better- Balance capacity building and quality of research	For think tanks <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Leverage global agendas and Data Revolution opportunities- Pursue new fundraising avenues, charge real costs, and re-assess cost models
		For funders <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Incentivize domestic funding- Create shared reserves- Support better project funding and North-South models- Create regional or national funding pools- Look at the whole system for unintended consequences and innovative opportunities
		For the broader community

- Watch the new donor space
- Develop ways for intermediaries to improve
- Create community



APPENDIX 1. MATRIX OF QUESTION AND SOURCES

Questions by Theme	Sources (Key sources in bold)
<i>Cataloguing funders and programs</i>	
<p><i>The Basics</i></p> <p>Who are funders of think tanks in the developing world?</p> <p>What are the sub-units within larger funders that fund think tanks?</p> <p>Where are the funders based?</p> <p>What is the scale of funding (per portfolio and/or per strategy)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of existing materials from IDRC, previous TTFFs, etc. • Desk review of grey literature, such as scans of funders in related areas • Online searches verifying funder information • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible) • Interviews with key informants • Scraping of think tank websites • Survey of TTI staff • Use of OECD DAC or other databases
<p><i>Regions and sectors</i></p> <p>Under which strategies are think tanks supported?</p> <p>Which sectors fund think tanks? Do they fit more in: governance, evidence-informed policy, research, or other issue-specific?</p> <p>What are the regional emphases for think tank or social science research funding? Are there countries of focus? Which ones?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of existing materials from IDRC, previous TTFFs, etc. • Desk review of grey literature, such as scans of funders in related areas • Online searches verifying funder information • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible) • Survey of TTI staff
<p><i>Programmes and modalities</i></p> <p>What modalities do funders use to support think tanks (e.g. core support, project support, competitive research calls, collaborative research, capacity building, etc.)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why have they chosen the current mix? • What do they perceive as the pros and cons of the selected modalities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of grey literature, such as scans of funders in related areas • Online searches verifying funder information • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible) • Interviews with key informants • Survey of IDRC staff • Use of OECD DAC or other databases

What are the key think tank programs this funder is supporting?

- What is the level of support provided?
- What other networks, partnerships, or research funding platforms is this funder engaging in that are relevant to think tanks?
- Which other funders are involved in these?

For relevant modalities and programs:

- What is the period of time?
- How many think tanks were/are supported?
- What is the scale of funding to individual think tanks or initiatives working with think tanks?
- What are the sectors of focus?
- What are the types of funding mechanisms used?

Summarizing the funder strategies, criteria, and processes

Strategy

Where does support for think tanks fit within geographic, strategic, thematic, or sectoral priorities of each organization?

What are the strategic rationales that funders use to explain their support for think tanks and programs working with think tanks?

What are funders' theories of change in funding research institutions?

- Desk review of existing materials from IDRC, previous TTFFs, etc.
- Desk review of grey literature, such as scans of funders in related areas
- Online searches verifying funder information, particularly public statements and strategy documents
- **Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible)**

Criteria and processes

How do funders make decisions about which think tanks to support in terms of process?

What are the criteria funders use to decide which think tanks to fund?

- Online searches verifying funder information, particularly public calls for proposals describing funding processes and criteria
- **Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible)**

Outcomes

What kinds of outcomes do funders expect and track in funding think tanks and their research?

- Online searches verifying funder information, particularly logic frameworks
- **Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible)**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with key informants, such as evaluators of think tank programs
Future plans, evolution of plans, and interest in collaboration	
<p><i>Shifts over time</i></p> <p>How have funders shifted their modalities over time?</p> <p>Are funders that have traditionally offered more flexible support considering a shift toward more restricted or targeted support?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of existing materials from IDRC, previous TTFFs, etc. • Desk review of grey literature, such as scans of funders in related areas • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if interview not possible) • Survey of TTI staff
<p><i>Factors and trends in change</i></p> <p>What are the factors behind the shifts?</p> <p>What are the lessons learned and strategic decisions driving future funding strategies?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online searches for funder information, particularly public statements on direction • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible) • Interviews with key informants
<p><i>Future plans</i></p> <p>What are the future funding plans?</p> <p>Do the funders have appetite to shift towards long-term institutional strengthening and/or flexible support? If so, why, and under what conditions? If not, why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible)
<p><i>Interest in collaborating on think tank support</i></p> <p>What are the funders' levels of interest in working with other funders on think tank support? Is the interest limited to certain regions, countries, or sectors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible) • Interviews with key informants, particularly other research strengthening networks
Sense-making	
<p><i>Enabling environment</i></p> <p>To what extent are funders working intentionally to facilitate an enabling environment for think tanks to operate in nationally, regionally, or even globally?</p> <p>Where this is happening, how are they going about it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of grey literature, such as blogs and articles about funders working on enabling environment • Online searches verifying funder information, such as information on grantees working on enabling environment • Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if an interview is not possible) • Interviews with key informants • Survey of TTI staff

What are these funders' definitions of enabling environment? TTI is starting from the basis that this could include work on:

- demand, use, and access of evidence, such as work with policy-makers, media, or advocates in dialogue with researchers
- capacity building
- networking
- work on domestic finance.

Other macro-level trends

What are macro-level trends behind shifts in think tank support?

- **Desk review of existing materials from IDRC, previous TTFFs, etc.**
- **Desk review of grey literature, such as scans of funders in related areas**
- **Interviews with known funders (or written requests for information if interview not possible)**
- **Interviews with key informants, possibly including a few think tank heads**
- **Survey of TTI staff**

APPENDIX 2. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Names of individuals are grouped together if the interview was conducted jointly.

Interviews with primary funders

Name	Organization
Arief, Ria	DFAT Indonesia
Karetji, Petra	DFAT KSI
Keogh, Simon	DFID
Bardsley, Craig	ESRC
Rajani, Rakesh	Ford Foundation
Ghosh, Gargee	Gates Foundation Development Policy and Finance
Tytel, Brad and Liz Dobbs	Gates Foundation Development Policy and Finance
Menon, Hari	Gates Foundation Global Policy and Advocacy
Levine, Ruth	Hewlett Foundation
Lucas, Sarah	Hewlett Foundation
daCosta, Peter	Hewlett Foundation (advisor)
Taylor, Peter, Andrew Hurst, and Julie LaFrance	IDRC
Sengupta, Moutushi	MacArthur Foundation
Myhre, Knut	Norad
Chauhan, Sahba	Oak Foundation
Djordjevic, Masa	OSIFE
Pohjolainen, Katri	Sida
Wayman, Annica and Amit Mistry	USAID
Brown, Deryk	World Bank

Email communications with primary funders

- GIZ
- MasterCard Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation

Interviews with intermediaries and experts

Name	Affiliation
Atindehou, Roger	ACBF
Carver, Thomas	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Tavakoli, Heidi	The Commonwealth
Jacquet, Pierre and Ramona Naqvi	GDN
McGann, James	Go to Think Tanks
Richards, Clara	INASP
Struyk, Raymond	Independent
Frey, Linda	Independent consultant
Young, John	ODI
Stuart, Liz	ODI
Mendizabal, Enrique	On Think Tanks
Yeo, Stephen	On Think Tanks advisor
Weyrauch, Vanesa	Politics & Ideas and On Think Tanks School
Lewis, Mark	Practical Action Consulting
Dodson, Jennie	UKCDS

APPENDIX 3. SEARCH TERMS AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Google was used as the main search engine. Results for search terms were reviewed to the fifth page. Terms included:

- Think tank funders
- “think tank” funders
- “think tank” donors africa
- “Research capacity” funders
- “aid to research” international
- IFORD

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APPENDIX 4. LIST OF THINK TANK SITES REVIEWED

ACODE
AERC
AfriHeritage
ASIES
BIDPA
BIDS
CBGA
CCS India
CEPA
CIPPEC
CLASCO
Corruption Watch South Africa
CPD
CPR India
CRES
CSEA Nigeria
CSTEP
EEA
EPRC
ESRF
Fundacion Aru
Fundaungo
GRADE

Grupo Faro
ID
IEA Kenya
IEG
IEP
INESAD
IPAR Rwanda
IPAR Senegal
IPEA Brazil
IPPR Namibia
IPS
ISSER
KIPPRA
MISR
NCAER
PAC Bangalore
PHFI
REPOA
SAIIA
SDPI
SPDC
TERI

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