Implementation of Doing Research Assessment in Asia 2024-2025

Introduction to Doing Research

The implementation of the global agenda for sustainable development requires local research capacity to ensure that the scientific community is equipped to critically analyse development and policy challenges, and to inform policies and reforms with contextualized knowledge of the local environment. Doing Research global initiative (launched in 2014) is a Global Development Network (GDN) initiative that aims to systematically assess how the characteristics of a national research system impact the capacity to produce, diffuse and use high-quality social science research for social and economic development.

Building on a two-year pilot phase in 11 countries (2014-2016) across Africa, Asia and Latin America, the programme expanded into a global initiative and developed a standard methodology called Doing Research Assessment (DRA). To date, Doing Research Assessments have been implemented in partnership with national research institutions in Bolivia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria and Venezuela (a preliminary study) – between 2018-2021. The global roll-out has doubled with the ongoing implementation between (2022-2025) in 5 countries in Francophone African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, and Mali, and 1 MENA region: Tunisia. Currently the program is being expanded in Asia, with 3-6 new country assessments starting in late 2024: India, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, and Fiji.

By providing new data and research on these aspects through a new comparative framework, the Doing Research program aims to help national policy makers, national and international donors, research institutions, and academics to strategize their efforts to strengthen the local production of quality academic research and its contribution to public debate and sustainable development policy.

How does the DR initiative work?

Through a pro-active partnership building exercise at the country level, GDN identifies quality local partners, both in key ministries and with independent researchers, to carry out a landscape study of research capacity at the country level, with a focus on social and economic research. In these studies, research capacity is defined as the set of processes, institutions and regulations that shape the *production, circulation and uptake* of applied social research on a country's development questions. These studies, known as 'Doing Research Assessments', follow a comparative framework that combines a 'deep dive' into the country with data collection that allows to compare country experiences and pathways across one or more regions. The reports have proven an excellent starting point for evidence-based discussions on research policies, and research-policy interactions on how to support national planning and development debates with

local evidence, in countries such as Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia (in Asia), Nigeria (in sub-Saharan Africa), and Bolivia and El Salvador (in South America).

DRA in India

In India, the Global Development Network (GDN) is teaming up with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) to implement the DRA in the period between June 2024 and April 2026.

Major contribution of DRA to regional development in Asia

The DRA represents an innovative opportunity to learn about and act on the status and future of social and economic sciences in developing countries. The vision of the initiative is one where countries can rely on strong local researchers and local research institutions, to feed evidence into policy debates, planning exercises, and policy making, across a number of development domains. We believe a thriving local research system, i.e. a system that is capable of locally generating, debating and using research-based evidence in policy processes, is a strategic component of a resilient society and governance system that can leverage international connections and local actors alike.

Objectives

- Identify strengths and weaknesses affecting the production and dissemination of social science research.
- Establish challenges and opportunities in supporting uptake of research into public policy development and implementation.
- Collect original data on social science research systems to guide research policy and capacity building programs at the national level.
- Provide a standard reference for cross-country comparison and cumulative learning, as well as longitudinal observations through the implementation of the DRA exercise at regular intervals in Asia.

Outputs

The DRA has the following planned outputs.

- An original analysis of the social research context and its interrelations with political, economic, social and international reality of a given country.
- Comprehensive list of active social science research stakeholders in a given country, and an analytical mapping of their relations.
- Dataset of a country's social science research system based on 54 DRA indicators across production, diffusion and uptake. The dataset will be freely accessible on the DR's global visualization tool (to be launched soon).
- 3-part DRA final report in English language available in open access.

- Multiple high-level convening efforts, before, during and after the study completion, to boost evidence-based debated on national research policies.
- A network of local researchers interested in independent analysis of research systems, with access to DR's global network of Southern scholars working on these issues.
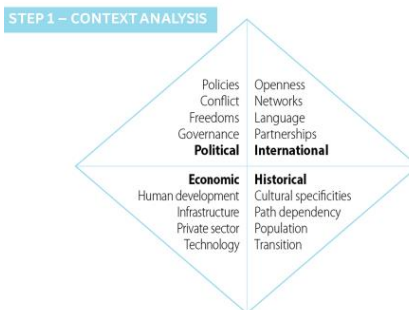
Outcomes
- Increased understanding of the state of social science research in a given country, its systemic determinants, and its contributions to socio-economic development.
- Increased knowledge by key stakeholders, of opportunities to support stronger social science research in the country (its production, diffusion and use).
- Strengthened capacity of social science researchers in a country to produce and communicate evidence on the state of the research system, through supporting the emergence of a cohort of researchers specialized in DRA framework with direct access to policy actors.
- Increased network of local researchers interested in independent analysis of research systems, with access to DR's global network of Southern scholars working on these issues.
- Increased support of national policymakers, national and international donors and academics to strategize their efforts to boost local production of quality academic research and its contribution to public debate and sustainable development policies.

Expected timeframe to implement DRA in India
The duration of the DRA is 12-15 months, and it develops along 4 interrelated steps:

Step 1 – Context Analysis
- The purpose of a context analysis is to identify relevant factors that affect the performance of the research system in terms of the three functions, namely (research) production, diffusion and uptake. The context analysis must highlight the relevant sociopolitical, economic and international dimensions.
- **Key Outputs:** Context Analysis standalone document, and list of data sources at national and international level.

Step 2 – Stakeholder Mapping

- The second step is to identify and classify stakeholders implicated at all levels of the social science research ecosystem in India. Map out the relationships between them to obtain a sense of how the system is structured and how relevant actors interact with one another.
- **Key Outputs:** Complete list of research stakeholders, list of documents consulted, and Stakeholder Mapping standalone document.

Step 3 – DRA Framework

- The third step involves collecting data with harmonized quantitative and qualitative indicators.
- **Key Outputs:** Dataset populated with the indicators relating to the 12 determinants of the framework, and final dataset based on the DRA framework.

STEP 3 - FRAMEWORK	Research system functions	1. Production	2. Diffusion	3. Uptake
		Process through which research is created by researchers and research organizations, including necessary inputs and activities which directly enter the production function.	Research-based products and the channels through which they are diffused to different audience groups (incl. academia, policymakers, civil society, the private sector) and discussed within these circles.	Action of exploiting and adopting research-based products for practical use, or applying research results and methods in specific and direct ways.
Inputs	People and resources needed to produce robust social science research	1.1 RESEARCH INPUTS	2.1 ACTORS & NETWORKS	3.1 POLICY-FRIENDLY RESEARCH
Activities	Set of rules, ethical principles, activities and interactions producing and promoting research	1.2 RESEARCH CULTURE AND SUPPORT SERVICES	2.2 RESEARCH COMMUNICATION PRACTICES	3.2 RESEARCH-BASED POLICY MAKING
Outputs	Tangible products of research including publications, communications & people trained in producing and using good research	1.3 RESEARCH OUTPUT & TRAINING	2.3 RESEARCH COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS	3.3 RESEARCH-BASED POLICY TOOLS
Outcomes	Policymakers, practitioners and the public actively support and use research-based evidence and knowledge	1.4 OPPORTUNITIES & SUSTAINABILITY	2.4 POPULARIZATION OF SCIENCE	3.4 RESEARCH FOR BETTER POLICIES

	1. Production (generation)	2. Diffusion (debate)	3. Uptake (policy)
Inputs	1.1 Research inputs 1.1.a People 1.1.b Funding 1.1.c Infrastructure 1.1.d Data and literature	2.1 Actors and networks 2.1.a Critical mass, diversity of actors and collaboration 2.1.b International exposure 2.1.c National geography of research	3.1 Policy-friendly research 3.1.a Policy-relevant research 3.1.b Research-to-policy nexus **DRA FRAMEWORK 12 DETERMINANTS**
Activities	1.2 Research culture and support services 1.2.a Research management and leadership 1.2.b Peer review culture 1.2.c Capacity building 1.2.d Research support and administration	2.2 Research communication practices 2.2.a Local journals 2.2.b Online visibility of research 2.2.c Research communication skills	3.2 Research-based policymaking 3.2.a Formal collaboration: researcher participation 3.2.b Informal collaboration: researcher consultation
Outputs	1.3 Research output and training 1.3.a Academic output 1.3.b Research training	2.3 Research communication products 2.3.a Conferences and debates 2.3.b Media and advocacy	3.3 Research-based policy products 3.3.a Instrumental utilization 3.3.b Symbolic utilization
Outcomes	1.4 Opportunities and sustainability 1.4.a Researcher job market 1.4.b Research evaluations 1.4.c Research integrity	2.4 Popularization of science 2.4.a Social appreciation of research 2.4.b Research culture and society	3.4 Research for better policies 3.4.a Influence of research on policy outcome 3.4.b Political value of research

DRA FRAMEWORK - INDICATORS

FACTOR	INDICATORS	TYPE	SOURCES
1.1.a People	➤ # of social science researchers, per million active people	Ratio	Desk review / UIS
	➤ % of social science researchers with PhDs	%	Desk review / Survey
	➤ % of female researchers	%	Desk review / UIS
1.2.b Peer review culture	➤ Quality of mentoring	Rating	Survey + interviews
	➤ # of peer-reviewed publications, per researcher	Absolute	Scopus/Survey
2.2.c International exposure	➤ % of international collaboration in social science	%	Scopus(SciMago)
	➤ # of international research projects, per institution	Absolute	Survey
	➤ Membership in networks, per researcher	Absolute	Survey
3.2.a Formal collaboration: researcher participation	➤ Share of researcher membership in bodies advising policy makers at the central and decentralized levels	%	Desk review+ survey
3.2.b Informal collaboration: researcher consultation	➤ Frequency of interaction with policymakers	Rating	Policy Community surveys/Researcher surveys
	➤ Perceived influence on policy development	Rating	Policy Community surveys/Researcher surveys

Step 4 – Dissemination and reporting

- The research team must organize the national-level dissemination of the research and draft a final report that summarizes the research conducted.
- **Result:** Research actors in the country are informed about the strengths, weaknesses and bottlenecks of the research system. The process is documented and relayed to GDN for further communications activities.
- **Key Outputs:** National-level workshop and outreach activities report, and final research report that integrates the feedback from the consulted actors, and the feedback from external reviewers.

About the Global Development Network (GDN)

GDN is a public international organization headquartered in New Delhi, India, and operating across the global South with a mandate to strengthen local research capacity for development research in the social sciences. Born in 1999, GDN has accumulated over two decades of experience in research capacity building across LMICs, innovating methods and practice for programs at the individual level (through mentoring and networking) and institutional level (by developing tools for managing demand-driven program and organizational mentoring). Working across a wide variety of themes and disciplines within the social sciences has allowed GDN to specialise in the methodology of research capacity strengthening programs in its own right. Since 2014, it launched and leads the 'Doing Research' global initiative, through which it mobilises Southern research capacity, in the form of a network of 'research on research' scholars spanning 27 countries, to grow the evidence based on Southern research systems (and their evolution) in a global comparative perspective. GDN is on the frontline of calls to develop evidence-based research and research capacity strengthening efforts.

In this project, GDN will mobilize its organizational capacity to lead the overall DRA management, provide technical backstopping support and harmonization of the national DRA with the global framework and dataset. GDN will also identify and mobilize world-class experts to work as scientific advisors/mentors on DRA in each participating country to support the program in an advisory and/or operation capacity. Finally, GDN will leverage its global reach, including its network and annual conferences, to give visibility to the experience of DRA in Asia.