

Sustaining quality in economic policy research – lessons learned from institutional approaches

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Presentation at a workshop in the IDRC TTI Exchange Forum,
18–20 June 2012, Cape Town, South Africa

Perspectives on research quality

- ▶ **Scientific validity** –
 - *conceptual and logic*
- ▶ **Empirical proof** –
 - *methodological soundness*
- ▶ **Reliability of results** –
 - *precision, accuracy and confidence*

Three-in-One Nature of Research Quality: Substance, Style and Process

Research Quality is

**Multidimensional, Multifunctional, Multistage
Attribute of the Research Process...**

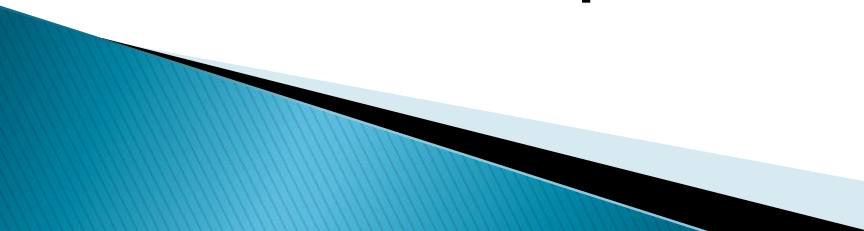
**...from Problem Identification, Study Design,
Analysis Plan, Report Paradigm, Validation to
Dissemination**

Ingredients of good quality policy research

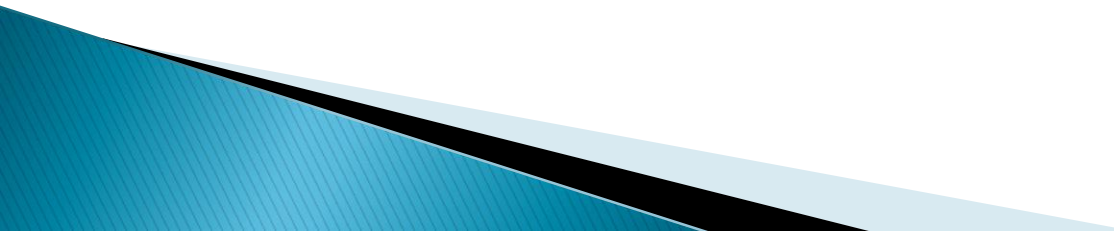
*rigour, credibility, relevance,
timeliness, completeness,
digestibility and legitimacy*

.....(Phillips and Seck, 2004)

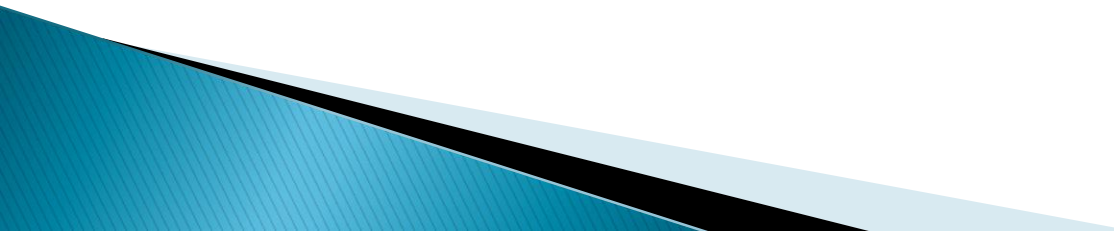
Proof of research quality

- ▶ Citations in science and non-specialist literature – number and profile
 - ▶ End-user acknowledgement/perception
 - ▶ Science peers' acknowledgement
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Prerequisites for research quality

- ▶ Well-motivated knowledgeable and competent researchers
 - ▶ Anonymous peer review mechanism
 - ▶ Workshop-based methodological scrutiny for transparency sake
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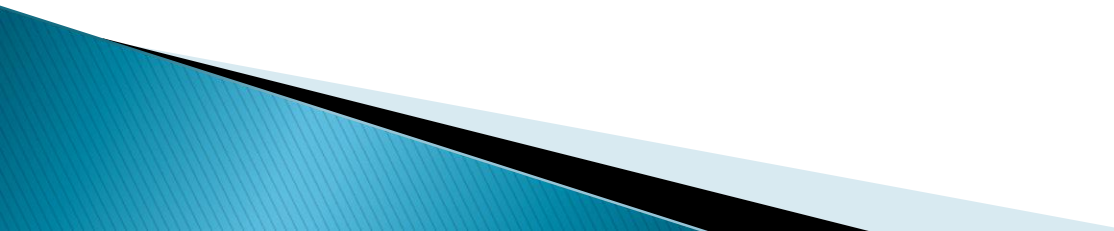
Prerequisites for research quality

- ▶ State-of-the-art literature
 - ▶ Value proposition – discernible value-adding research product
 - ▶ Adequate and appropriate research facilities
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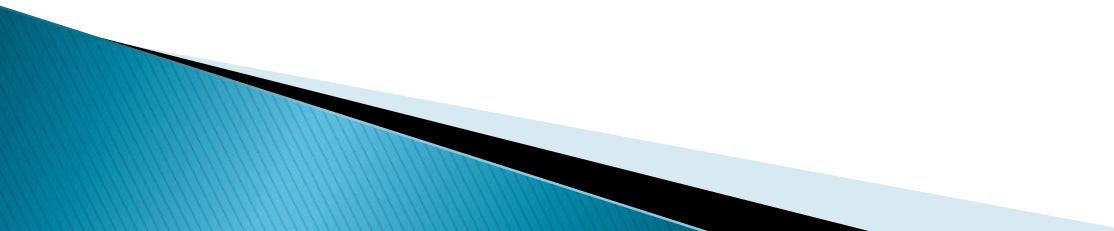
Principles of Research Quality Assurance at AIAE

- ▶ **End-user feedback, validation**
 - Seminar at inception
 - Seminar at conclusion
- ▶ **Policy relevance**
 - Policymakers' involvement in problem definition
 - Policymakers' involvement in results validation
- ▶ **Science procedures**
 - Follow scientific protocols and notions
 - Internal content and construct validity tests

Challenges to research quality

- ▶ Distractive nature of short-term studies and consultancies – lack of concentration
 - ▶ Research capacity and staff retention – getting the right mix of incentives
 - ▶ Paucity of research funding leading to stoppages, downsizing and incomplete study packages
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Important lessons for quality assurance

- ▶ Linking to research networks (regional, international) pays off very well
 - ▶ Establishing institutional collaboration and linkages to leverage other's strengths
 - ▶ Establish quality markers or footprints at every stage of the research process
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Important lessons for quality assurance

- ▶ Seminar/Workshop Approach in Validation and Feedback
 - ▶ Team building, mentoring and cumulative learning
 - Complementing each other
 - ▶ Adequate and up-to-date library and e-resources
 - ▶ Timeliness is crucial, particularly for policy research to influence reforms
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