



Workshop II C: "Effective leadership of think tanks"

Time: 14.00-16.00, 19th June

Resource Persons: Nicolás Ducoté (Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Government of the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina); Hans Gutbrod (Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) & incoming Program Manager of TTI); Sue Soal (Associate Practitioner, CDRA, South Africa); Samar Verma (TTI) (Facilitator)

Preamble

Strategic and effective leadership is a critical factor for think tank success, and raises several sets of questions. Firstly, the WHAT question: What constitutes an effective leadership style and how is this delivered within and outside the think tank? What does it take to build/renew institutions, and make them successful? Is effective leadership gender-neutral? Secondly, the HOW question: How and when do heads of think tanks assume institutional leadership roles? Or are they synonymous? How do they know their leadership's impact on organisational effectiveness and how do they improve this as leaders? How do they achieve this in the context of competing interests and resource constraint challenges? Thirdly, the RISKS question: What is the nature of risks that leaders encounter? How do they anticipate and manage them, and how do they cope with fallout of such risks? How do they ensure organisational learning from such experiences?

Objectives

The workshop will:

1. identify key characteristics of effective leadership of think tanks
2. share concrete approaches for strengthening leadership
3. draw lessons learned from less successful leadership practices

Approach and outcomes

This workshop addresses the questions raised above and the three main objectives, by seeking to capture the kaleidoscopic dimensions of the vital leadership question. It will attempt to draw out lessons from the shared knowledge that are useful for leadership development. Resource persons will lead the collective reflection and participation process through a set of key guiding questions and knowledge-sharing drawn from their own experience. Within the short time frame available for the workshop, structured efforts will be made to draw the experience and knowledge of every participant into the collective conversation, with a view to creating a deeper understanding of leadership effectiveness within and outside the organisation. Emphasis will be on sharing concrete experiences and reflections on lessons learnt.

Participants are invited to reflect and share their own experience of leadership (in position and in relationship with others) and to come prepared to share their concrete experiences and lessons that are of wider use across the larger think tank community.

The key outcome from the workshop will be a summary of key highlights emerging from the discussions.