

**Project Title:** TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support

**IDRC project Number:** 107907-001

**Institution Name:** Economic and Social Research Foundation

**Location:** 51 Uporoto Street, Ursino Estates, Dar es Salaam. Tanzania

**Final Technical Report**

**Date of Submission:** Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019

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## Executive summary

### **Provide an informative summary of the key results, and significant or important outcomes arising from support from the Think Tank Initiative (TTI), with a focus on the enhancement of organizational capacities.**

Think Tank Initiative (TTI) is an initiative supported by a consortium of five donors aiming at strengthening the capacity of independent policy research institutions in developing countries. Think Tank Initiative (TTI) supports 43 think tanks in 20 countries; one of those think tanks is the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The ultimate objective of think tank initiative is nurture long term sustainability of think tanks it funds. The think tank initiative undertakes this function through institutional funding to strengthen think tanks in three areas namely (a) research methods and skills, (b) policy engagement and communication, and (c) general organizational effectiveness. The think tank initiative has been operational for the past ten (10) years from 2009 to 2019. The initiative came to an end in March 2019. Synthesis below is a brief summary of the key results and significant outcomes arising from support from TTI with a focus on enhancement of organizational capacities for ESRF.

The Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) was established in 1994 as an independent, not-for-profit institution for research and policy analysis. The formation of ESRF was based on the assumption that there was need and demand for an improved understanding of policy options and development management issues, and that the capacity for this was lacking in the Tanzania civil service. The primary objectives and purposes of the foundation are to initiate and coordinate studies in economic and social issues, to promote public understanding of economic and social conditions and public policy issues, to explore options of public economic and social policies, to collaborate with Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, government agencies, donor organizations and other research institutions and entities to enhance the national capacity for public analysis and development management. The ESRF is one of the leading policy think tanks in Tanzania today. In this year, the ESRF is celebrating 25 years anniversary, the Foundation has been receiving support from TTI initiative in 10 out of all the 25 years.

During the past 10 years, with TTI support, the ESRF has implemented a number of impactful activities in support of policy processes in Tanzania. Some of these activities include review of Tanzania Development Vision 2025 in 2009, formulation of First and Second Years Development Plans i.e. FYDP I (2011/12 – 2015/16 “Unleashing Tanzania’s Latent Growth Potentials”) and FYDP II (2015/16 – 2020/21 “Nurturing Industrialization for Economic Transformation and Human Development”). Some few research work implemented at sector level in the near past include conducting a review of National Micro Finance Policy (2000) for Ministry of Finance, National Environmental Policy (1997) for Vice President’s Office and National Energy Policy (2003) for Ministry of Energy and Minerals, National Youth Policy Review (2007) for Ministry of Labor, Employment and Youth Development, National Tourism Policy Review (1999) for Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. In the near past, the Foundation has also been at the fore front in supporting policy development processes at local government levels. In this regard, in the period of 2017 and 2018 alone, the Foundation has supported 12 regions in identifying investment opportunities in their regions and preparation of regional investment guides.

## Objectives and Progress towards Milestones

Briefly describe achievement and progress towards the overall organizational objectives related to the three pillars of (1) research quality, (2) organizational performance, and (3) policy engagement for the reporting period (TTI Phase 2). Provide any evidence that milestones were achieved, and refer to evidence in previous reports and/or attached annexes (as needed). If applicable, explain why any milestones were not achieved.

### 1. Research quality

The IDRC/TTI grant has made a contribution in enhancing quality of foundation's research output in a number of ways including the following:-

**Firstly**, the grant has enabled the ESRF to undertake some supply driven research projects of topic relevancy to policy process in Tanzania. Some of these projects include

- (a) Assessment of achievements and challenges in utilization of renewable energy sources e.g. gas, bio fuel, solar and wind in Tanzania.
- (b) Assessment of Private Public Partnership (PPP) in Tanzania – the way it is understood, challenges and the way forward.
- (c) Mapping Locally manufactured basic good in Tanzania Supermarkets

**Secondly**, the grant has enabled the ESRF to recruit and retain senior researchers including paying salary of Director of Research Programs and that of Head of Globalization,/Regional Integration/Trade and Senior researcher Micro-economics.

**Thirdly**, the grant has supported capacity development of researchers through training on a number of areas including Training on Writing Fundable Proposal and negotiation Skills as well as training on the use of ICT equipments.

**Fourthly**, the grant has also enabled networking among researchers and international travel for research scientists which has enabled exposure to new frontiers of knowledge.

### 2. Organizational performance

The IDRC/TTI grant has made a contribution in enhancing organizational performance in a number of ways including the following:-

**Firstly**, the grant has enabled the foundation to recruit and retain some of most critical workforce including part of the salaries for Finance Manager, salary for head of department of Strategic Research and Publications, part of the salary for Director of Programmes as well as salaries for support staff.

**Secondly**, the grant has supported improvement of welfare of Foundation staff and therefore making a contribution in their retention. Some of the benefits supported by TTI grant include payments of medical insurance and employee's gratuity equal to 10% of their basic salary.

**Thirdly**, the grant has enabled the foundation to recruit external audits for a number of years.

**Fourthly**, the grant has assisted the Foundation to implement meetings of the board especially audit committee

**Fifthly**, the grant has supported the Foundation with preparation and printing of some of important documents such as annual reports, newsletters, policy briefs and discussion papers.

**Sixthly**, the grant has enabled the Foundation to improve its ICT infrastructure through acquisition and maintenance of 10 new computers powerful servers

**Seventhly**, the grant has assisted the Foundation in conducting institutional Review/Evaluation of ESRF and preparation of Medium Term Strategic Plan 2016-2020

### 3. **Policy engagement**

The IDRC/TTI grant has made a contribution in enhancing policy engagement in a number of ways including the following:-

- (a) The grant has greatly enabled the Foundation to implement policy dialogue and knowledge sharing workshops. These are important vehicles of the Foundation in the dissemination and sharing of research outputs with key stakeholders and thereby influencing policy making. A total of 16 sessions are implemented annually and some of these have been supported by IDRC/TTI grant.
- (b) The grant has made a useful contribution in the implementation of a series of Annual Conferences. Since 2012, the ESRF has been conducting a series of Annual Conferences aiming at influencing Tanzania policy processes in particular themes. Some of the conferences implemented the recent past include the following.
  - (i) 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (2018): “Equitable Growth and Human Development in Resource Based Economy: Dialogue on Stockholm Statement for Tanzania”
  - (ii) 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (2017): “High Level Thinkers Dialogue on Development Cooperation between Tanzania and China Focusing on Investments and Trade”
  - (iii) 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (2016): “Social Policy in the Context of Economic Transformation in Tanzania”

### Synthesis of results

Reflect on the main outcomes from the grant. In particular, reflect on:

♣ **Changes in behaviour, capacities, actions, or relationships within your think tank, its researchers or organizational staff, relation to networks or other research institutions?**

Research capacity of Foundation’s staff has improved which is demonstrated by the ability to execute important research programmes making an impact in policy process in Tanzania. The ability of our researchers to engage with other researchers and senior policy makers policy process has also improved.

♣ **Changes in behaviour, capacities, actions, or relationships of research users or those affected by the research process or findings?**

Reputation of the ESRF as credible policy think tank has improved also improved and thereby attracting demanders of research services to request advisory services from ESRF to increase.

♣ **Policy influence (e.g., expanded policy engagement capacities of researchers; strengthened communications function; broadening policy horizons of policymakers; and specific policy influence stories, including any development outcome of the influence)?”**

During the past 10 years of TTI support, the ESRF has implemented many projects with substantial influence in policy making process in Tanzania. Many sectoral policies have been reviewed at the ESRF and thereby making a lot of policy influence. The story of fish cage worth to reiterate; the ESRF has been at the fore front in demonstrating the use of fish cages as a suitable method fish farming method. Initially there was considerable resistance from array of stakeholders with an assumption that Tanzania has enough fish but towards the end, with demonstration from ESRF, Tanzania has accepted to promote fish cage in its aquaculture development strategies. In 2014, also Tanzania produced Tanzania Human Development Report 2014 “Economic Transformation for Human Development”; this report substantially supported the Government to buy in the idea of human development in its second five years development plan “Nurturing Transformation for Economic Transformation and Human Development”.

♣ **Lessons learned about approaches to elements for organizational strengthening, building capacity, or influencing policy or practice? What problems arose, and what changes in orientation occurred? Were certain aspects of project design particularly important to the degree of success of the project?**

The flexibility of the funding was extremely useful as it enabled the institutional to direct resources in areas it perceived to require huge resources for a given period. This was a positive element of the program design.

♣ **What contributed to these results and what lessons did you draw from the experience?**

The IDRC grant made a contribution in the realization of the results by making ESRF a thriving institution for 10 years. At the moment, ESRF similar to many other think tanks in the developing world still needs institutional support to make it a vibrant institution making substantial contribution in policy process in Tanzania and beyond. Another useful lesson and means which contributed to the results is the fact that TTI had created a community of think tanks in developing countries with common interest, with similar circumstances and pursuing common agenda. This community made a lot of learning from each other in management of think tanks. It is important to find ways of ensuring that this community continues.

- ♣ **What was the role of other organizations or donors in this project? How was this relationship managed?**

Institutional support provided by TTI made the ESRF to function and thereby creating a platform for other organizations to implement collaborative programmes with substantial impact in policy process in Tanzania.

### Problems and Challenges

**Have there been any problems or challenges faced by the project? These could include delays, problems amongst stakeholders, with research activities etc. Highlight any risks that might have emerged in the project, and innovative ways you have found to deal with these risks.**

The project was implemented fairly well with minimum challenges. The impact of TTI grant in improving Foundation's organizational performance could have been better if the ESRF could have had some other forms of institutional support. At the same time, we observe that it is becoming quite challenging to get good staff remuneration out of research projects especially strategic research. The Foundation is adopting some of the skills learnt from business models training to cover incorporate staff costs in projects budgets.

### Administrative Reflections and Recommendations

**This section is about administrative recommendations for IDRC. What would you do differently as a result of this experience, and what general and useful lessons can be derived for improving future projects?**

**What recommendations would you make to IDRC with respect to the administration of the project, related to the scope, duration, or budget? Candid observations about the overall experience with the project are encouraged. However, any sensitive or confidential information should be addressed through a direct exchange with the program officer, and documented and filed separately.**

As mentioned earlier, implementation of this project over the past 10 years has been extremely useful and the design of the project was very good because of flexibility in the use of funds. Given the situation that many think tanks in developing countries are going through especially in the area of funding, it is our suggestion for IDRC to consider finding some other ways of providing institutional support to think tanks in developing countries especially African countries.