



Concept note for the 2010 ATPS Annual Conference & Workshop tagged Strengthening Linkages Between Policy Research and Policymaking for African Development

1. Background

For research to have the impact of guaranteeing development gains in Africa, research results must inform and shape policies and programmes, and be adopted into practice. Developments at various levels are hinged on the generation and implementation of appropriate policies, the building of requisite human capabilities, adequate technological infrastructure, as well as enterprise capital base to bolster the various development initiatives.

While the linkage between policy and national development is often moderated by other factors, it cannot be denied that the absence of a strong and appropriate policy framework, that incorporates solid theoretical and empirical research and the points of view of multiple stakeholders, may spell disaster for any national development agenda. Fortunately, African leaders have seen the wisdom on the need to empower policy creators, even though this effort is in its early stages, in virtually all the domains linked to national development, particularly in science and technology, economic transformation, food security and health – key factors in any positive national growth agenda.

In spite of sporadic progress in some African countries, the use of policy heavily informed by research evidence in critical domains in policymaking still leaves much to be desired. Africa's policy agenda has not fully exploited the expertise of African professionals, leaving the African policy landscape much too influenced by the agendas of external development agencies, consultants, and bilateral development partners. This has raised the question of whether Africa's priorities are truly at the heart of its development agenda. There exists a high propensity for African governments to readily overlook local research capacity in favour of expatriate researchers and ad hoc consultancies.¹

It has therefore become imperative to review the linkages between research, policy and practice with a view to identifying strategies for strengthening the uptake of development research into policy and practice in Africa. It is important to note that sustainable policy research and implementation linkages in Africa will require the development of a strategic vision and a proactive approach that contextualizes the research agenda and its consequent activities. It requires a proper understanding of research communication and knowledge translation so as to facilitate the use of research evidence to influence policies and effect change in practice. This can be achieved through sustained systematic interactions and capacity building amongst key stakeholders including researchers, policymakers, and the practitioners. This forms the focus of the proposed international conference.

The proposed conference aims to strengthen the gains from an initial consultative workshop on strengthening linkages between policy research and policymaking for African development held in Mombasa, Kenya in February 2011 and organized by the African Technology Studies Network (ATPS), in partnership with the African Population and Health

¹Hoffman J. 1995, Linking Economic Research and Policy-Making: The Role of AERC



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Research Center (APHRC), Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPRAN) and African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET). During the consultative workshop, stakeholders recognized the importance of appropriate policies derived from research evidence in fostering national priorities for African development. Stakeholders were cognizant of the gap between policy research and policymaking in Africa and its negative influence on national developments. They recalled the commitments of African leaders to the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) flagship programmes including; agriculture and food security; climate change and natural resource management; regional integration and infrastructure; human development; economic and cooperate governance; gender and capacity building; and their pledge to allocate 10% of national budgets to agriculture, and 1% of GDP for research and development (R&D) in support of the above programmes.

The outcomes from this workshop has further guided the consultative group on the way forward for engaging a wider stakeholder group for making better impacts on strategies for strengthening linkages between research, policy and practice for African development.

2. Conference Venue and Date

The conference will take place from 7-10 November 2011 in Mombasa, Kenya.

3. Conference objectives

The overall purpose of the conference is to engage relevant stakeholders to address the gap between research, policy and practice with a view to designing a proactive way forward for bridging this gap for African development. Specific objectives include:

- i) Understanding the context-specific reasons for the gaps between research, policy and practice in Africa;
- ii) Enhancing knowledge brokerage and communication among researchers, policymakers and practitioners for African development;
- iii) Identifying and prioritizing strategies to improve linkages amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Africa;
- iv) Improving the use of home-grown policy research evidence in policymaking and policy implementation;
- v) Drawing lessons learnt from the successive cases of good partnerships amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Africa and elsewhere; and
- vi) Establishing a trans-disciplinary consortium/network of policy research institutions, policymakers and practitioners in Africa for African development.



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4. Expected Outputs

- i) Proceedings of the international conference on strategies for strengthening linkages between research, policy and practice for African development.
- ii) Documented practical examples of successful partnerships between research, policy and practice in Africa and elsewhere.
- iii) A framework of planned actions for the operation of the trans-disciplinary consortium/network of policy research institutions, policymakers and practitioners in Africa.
- iv) Book volume from the conference papers
- v) A communiqué

5. Expected Outcomes

- i) Improved linkages amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Africa
- ii) Improved utilization of home-grown research evidence for policymaking and practice;
- iii) Establishment of a trans-disciplinary consortium/network of like-minded institutions that will promote effective linkages amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Africa.

6. Conference Methodology

In order to unearth the context-specific lessons from the mix of researchers, policymakers and practitioners; learn from the successful cases; as well as identify and strategize on how to improve the linkages between research, policy and practice, the workshop will adopt multiple approaches to ensure active participation of each stakeholder groupings in the dialogue, identification of gaps and prioritization of strategies for improvement.

- ❖ **Plenary sessions:** This will involve keynote lectures by selected renowned researchers, policymakers and practitioners in the different thematic areas. These keynote presentations will focus more on practical experiences and less on theoretical issues. They will provide details on the experiences of the presenters and their institutions (both successes as well as frustrations) and the contextual reasons for the successes and failures.
- ❖ **Facilitated questions and answer (Q&A) sessions:** This session will afford the presenters the opportunity to respond to specific issues raised by the participants using practical experiences.
- ❖ **Country case studies:** This aims to highlight the experiences of different countries and regions in the linkages between research, policy and practice. These case studies will emphasize specific scenarios of linkages amongst research, policy and practice and the roles of each stakeholder in fostering the relationship for a specific development initiative/agenda. It will also buttress on the lessons learnt from the process.



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- ❖ **Working group sessions:** Participants will be divided into groups representing a mix of researchers, policymakers and practitioners with the aim of identifying and prioritizing strategies to improve linkages amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Africa for African development.

7. Call for Papers

Papers are invited from our range of stakeholders including researchers, policy makers, private sectors, civil society organization, non-governmental organization, farmers' organization, etc. that will address any of the following conference sub-themes:

i) Conceptualizing research, policy and practice for sustainable African development

This subtheme seeks papers that will address the concepts of research, policy and practice; the theory and practice of research engagement for policy and practices; strategies and methodologies for conducting policy relevant research; strategies for use of research evidence in policymaking and policy analysis; pathways for translating research evidence through policy to practice; and institutional arrangements for stakeholders' engagement in strengthening linkages amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners.

ii) Youth and Gender empowerment

Papers under this subtheme should address youth and gender issues that would promote effective linkages between research, policy and practice; youth and gender contributions in research, policy and practice; challenges face can be overcome to enhance their contribution to policy, research and practices linkages; lessons that could be drawn from gender mainstreaming initiatives, where the relationships between researchers, policymakers and practitioners have arguably been better institutionalised.

iii) Mechanisms and Approaches for effective linkages amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners

Papers should address various functional models, mechanisms, tools and approaches for effectively linking research, policy and practice especially in the African context. Case examples of successful models, mechanisms, tools and approaches that have led to successful linkages of the stakeholders form top in the list of papers under this subtheme. Papers should examine factors that interact dynamically to determine the sort of evidence likely to be adopted by policymakers and also discuss enabling tools to build a broader consensus on the role of empirical evidence in good policymaking and implementation. Other issues covered under this subtheme include; investments in research, policy and practice; international cooperation and partnerships; curriculum reforms; and intellectual property rights, access and benefit sharing.

iv) The role of capacity development

Papers should focus on new knowledge, skills, and infrastructure required for effective research, policy and practice for African development. How best can the capacity of the relevant actors be strengthened in the short, medium and long terms in order to achieve effective policy research that will lead to policymaking and implementation. Papers should emphasize the good practices that exist in capacity development to realize effective linkages among the actors.



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v) *Research uptake, communication, advocacy and brokerage*

Papers under this subtheme should emphasize innovative strategies and channels for communicating research outputs for policymaking and policy implementation. It should emphasize the role of the media in research uptake, communication, advocacy and brokerage. Others include; the incentive structures and enabling environment for effective communication of research outputs to policymakers for use by practitioners;

vi) *Challenges and Opportunities for effective linkages between research, policy and practice*

Emphasis should dwell on the economic, social, political, environmental, cultural and other factors that constrain effective linkages between and amongst the actors. Papers should also show the prospects and opportunities of an effective linkage under prevailing conditions.

8. Submission guidelines:

We particularly invite contributions to the Conference that address the above sub-themes from an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach.

i) Abstracts:

Abstracts of 350-500 words are invited from prospective conference participants. The abstracts should contain the title of the paper, name(s) of the author(s), contact information, 5 keywords and biographical notes about the author(s). Authors are also invited to indicate the conference sub-theme pertaining to their papers. All abstracts will be anonymously evaluated by the Conference Technical Committee on the basis of the following criteria: originality and creativity; clarity of content; contribution to the knowledge base/ evidence base; linkages with research, policy and practice; relevance and timeliness in terms of findings and conclusion. Abstract will also be selected based on their relevance to one or more of the conference subthemes. A book of selected abstracts will be published and made available during the conference. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 11 October 2011. All submissions should be made to: atpsconferences2011@atpsnet.org.

ii) Full Paper submission:

Candidates whose abstracts are selected are expected to submit their full papers by 25 October 2011. The papers shall be evidence-based and can be theoretical, empirical or policy oriented, and can approach the issues from a range of disciplinary or trans-disciplinary perspectives. Papers submitted will be peer-reviewed for originality, technical and research contents, depth correctness, relevance to the conference themes, contribution to knowledge, readability, etc.

The full paper should be between 4000-6000 words, A4 word format, one column, font size: 12pt, Times New Roman, 1.5 spaces, margin width (2cm if possible). Papers shall include the following: Title of the paper, Full name(s) of the author(s), contact details, Abstract (250words), 5 keywords. All submissions should be made to: atpsconferences2011@atpsnet.org.



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9. Conference Language:

The official languages of the conference are English and French. Submission of abstract can be in English or French; however, full papers must be submitted in English. Simultaneous interpretation during the conference will be ensured.

10. Conference Proceedings:

Selected papers will be considered for publication as a book volume. This book will be extensively reviewed to meet all the scientific requirements and add value to existing knowledge base in Africa.

11. Conference Homepage:

The ATPS website is <http://www.atpsnet.org/> while the conference website is <http://www.atpsnet.org/conferences/index.php>.

12. Summary of conference schedule:

Dates	Activities
13 September 2011	Announcement of the call for papers
11 October 2011	Deadline for submission of abstract
15 October 2011	Notification of Abstract Acceptance
25 October 2011	Deadline for the submission of full papers to be considered for publication
03 November 2011	Deadline for the submission of PowerPoint Presentation

13. Registration:

All conference participants are required to register and at least one author per paper must attend. Conference registration conditions vary depending on the origin and the package chosen. However, online registration is open until 30 October 2011 at <http://www.atpsnet.org/conferences/registration/index.php>

The registration rates as follows:

Delegates from developing countries	US\$100
Delegates from developed countries	US \$300
Post graduate students	US \$50
Exhibition fee	US \$1000

Delegates will be responsible for their travel, accommodation and subsistence during the conference period.



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14. Available Support

ATPS plans to support the participation of pre-selected delegates including officials and key stakeholders: delegates from its Board of Governors, Regional Council; international Responsible STI council members; National Chapter Coordinators/Focal points; Secretarial Staff; Program Regional and National Steering Committees members; AWFST Executives; AYSFT Executives; Program Coordinators; Selected Policy Makers from the 29 countries where ATPS has national chapters; Keynote Speakers, and selected conference presenters only.

All pre-selected candidates who will receive conference support will be pre-informed in writing by the ATPS Executive Director.

15. Exhibitions and Other Activities

An exhibition will be organized during the conference at the same venue. To exhibit at the conference, exhibitors need to apply ahead of time to atpsconferences2011@atpsnet.org. Spaces for exhibition will be very limited and will be based on first come first served. Target Exhibitors will be on innovative science, technology and innovation products, prototypes, etc. produced as a result of research, good policies and practical applications of innovations.

16. Visits

Visit to cultural and historic sites in Mombasa will be arranged. Participant will be responsible for all charges.

17. Contacts

Executive Conference Organizing Committee (ECOC)
African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS)
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